

Meeting of the Villanova University Academic Policy Committee

Thursday, February 2, 2012
Mendel Science Center, room 103, 2:30 pm

MINUTES

Present: Louise Russo (chair), Mary Ann Cantrell, Christopher Haas, Mike Pagano, Ed Kresch, Bob Styer, Craig Wheeland, Adele Lindenmeyr, Joyce Willens, Letizia Modena, Mark Sullivan, Sridhar Santhanam, Matthew Pagano, Elizabeth Heurich, , Gerard Jones, Paul Bonfanti, Jim Trainer, Nurit Friedman

Not in Attendance: Lesley Perry, Paul Pasles, Chiji Akoma (sabbatical leave), Farid Zamani, (sabbatical leave), Fayette Veverka, Lowell Gustafson, Dennis Kuhn, Megan Copel , Ellie Garbade, Kathleen Carden, Susan Mackey-Kallis (fellowship leave), Wayne Bremser

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm.

- I. Minutes from the meeting of December 7, 2011 were officially approved.
- II. Committee discussion was focused on the complete CATS data report that was compiled by the external consultant, Dr. Luke Keele. Along with the report, the chair also provided the presentation file that Dr. Keele used at the December 7 meeting when he discussed his model and explained a few of the data trends in summary form. General discussion proceeded along the following lines of thought:
 - a. Considering that most of the variation in scores was not statistically significant, the study did not identify major problem areas nor indicate that the CATS is a fatally flawed assessment vehicle. However, there were still some areas with wide variability that could possibly have an effect on evaluation processes and therefore further efforts to disseminate these trends are essential.
 - b. Should the data trends be used to develop a "CATS Interpretation Guide" that would provide context for administrators, faculty, and students as to some areas where factors such as gender, self-reported workload and GPA, and grade do affect CATS scoring by students? There was general consensus that this is the correct approach to take and that the APC needs to have the primary role in developing this important document.
 - c. If an "Interpretation Guide" is generated, how will it be made available? It would be appropriate to post such information on the VPAA Office website. Efforts will need to be made to make certain that it is available to faculty, administrators, and students and so that people will know it exists and make use of it as necessary for preparation of R/T documents, evaluation reports, etc.
 - d. Should additional data from a previous analysis (through OPIR) that analyzed outcomes for particular questions which were not included in this recent study also be incorporated to create a fully comprehensive "Interpretation Guide?" OPIR colleagues are willing to provide additional information to create a compilation report/guide that effectively addresses a more comprehensive list of issues related to the CATS assessment vehicle.
 - e. Should CATS data be used as an evaluative component in rank and tenure or annual/triennial evaluation processes in light of the data trends that were uncovered by the study? Some members

believe that it should not be used for such a purpose in light of the trends uncovered in this report, however others indicated that CATS are but one measure of teaching effectiveness in such evaluation processes and therefore should not be excluded

After a period of open discussion, the chair asked for a motion to organize a sub-committee to work on crafting of an "Interpretation Guide" that will be used as an information source across the university by those who need to use or better understand CATS data. A majority vote approved this motion and the chair will solicit volunteers from among the APC constituency with the goal being at least one faculty representative from each college. Paul Bonfanti, Jim Trainer, and Nurit Friedman will also participate.

III. The committee discussed the idea of being an organizing force in development of a university task force to study interdisciplinary teaching. The topic stemmed from recent discussion at a VITAL workshop focused on the issues unique to interdisciplinary courses and was brought to the attention of the Faculty Congress by Dr. Lillian Cassell. The chair thus raised the topic for discussion which centered on the following main topics:

- a. What would be the primary purpose of this task force? General consensus was to make it a centralized action team which would collect information on different models for interdisciplinary teaching including issues related to faculty compensation.
- b. Considering the range of disciplines that could be involved in a single course offering, there will be a need for cross-college representation including faculty with experience in teaching these types of courses, faculty who have participated in analysis of interdisciplinary course models such as those who served recently on the College of Arts and sciences Task Force on Interdisciplinary and Cluster Courses, as well as Carol Weiss as director of VITAL who has expertise in instructional pedagogy. Therefore it was agreed to include external faculty participants who may be asked to serve by colleagues within their respective college in addition to a number of APC representatives.

The chair asked for a motion to have the APC serve as the organizing body for this task force. The measure was approved by majority vote. The chair will work with APC and Faculty Congress colleagues to identify participants. The composition of the task force will be a point of discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Louise Russo

Members of APC: Louise Russo (chair), Wayne Bremser, Fayette Veverka, Robert Styer, Adele Lindenmeyr, Christopher Haas, Mark Sullivan, Mary Ann Cantrell, Louise Fitzpatrick (represented by Lesley Perry), Joyce S. Willens, Mike Pagano, Paul Pasles, Chiji Akoma, Kail Ellis (represented by Craig Wheeland), Jean Ann Linney (represented by Lowell Gustafson), Gary Gabriele (represented by Gerard Jones), Kevin Clark (represented by Dennis Kuhn), Letizia Modena, Susan Mackey-Kallis, Farid Zamani, Ed Kresch, Sridhar Santhanam, Elizabeth Heurich, Kathleen Carden, Gabrielle Bruno, Megan Copel, Ellie Garbade, Matthew Pagano, Marisa Fetterman (non-voting member)