**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**10/28/2020 Overflow Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm via ZOOM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**ROLL CALL**

* Present:
  + Michael Boatright - present
  + Indi Bose - present
  + Todd Collins - present
  + Heidi Dent - not present for roll call, arrived 3:15. Left early at 4:02pm.
  + Heather Mae Erickson – present
  + Garrett Fisher – present. Left early at 4:00.
  + Mariana Fisher - present
  + Enrique Gómez - present
  + Yancey Gulley - present
  + Ian Jeffress - present
  + Bora Karayaka - present
  + Marco Lam - present
  + Will Lehman - present
  + Niall Michelsen - present
  + Sean Mulholland – present
  + Kadence Otto - present
  + Carrie Rogers - present
  + Roya Scales - present
  + Provost Richard Starnes - present
  + Vicki Szabo – present
  + Drew Virtue – arrived 3:22. Left early at 4:20.
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - present
  + Elizabeth Wark - present
  + Laura Wright - present
  + Jessica Zellers - present
* Members with Proxies: David de Jong - proxy Yancey Gulley, Leigh Odom - proxy Niall Michelsen, Elizabeth Tait - proxy Elizabeth Wark, Martin Tanaka - proxy Bora Karayaka
* Members Absent: Chancellor Kelli Brown, Kristin Calvert, Matthew Rave

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Open Discussion on whether to use Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 SAI data for TPR and AFE - continued conversation from the 10/22/2020 regular business meeting of the senate**

Enrique Gómez introduced the following resolution that was seconded by Laura Wright. Resolution reads as follows:

**Resolution For The Suspension of Use of Student Assessment of Instruction Data For Spring and Fall 2020 on Faculty Evaluation Materials Pending The Adoption Of A New Student Perception of Learning Instrument**

(A) WHEREAS the Student Assessment of Instruction is a widely-used instrument listed in departmental collegial review documents to assess the quality of instruction of faculty alongside peer evaluations and is in use by collegial review committees and department heads to make decisions on Faculty reappointment, tenure and promotion, and

(B) WHEREAS similar instrument surveys for students to evaluate their instructors nation-wide have been found to demonstrate biases around the perceived gender of the instructor (Rivera and Gilcsik 2018, MacNell, Driscoll and Hunt 2014, Boring 2017), and

(C) WHEREAS a review of academic studies has shown that the perception of an instructor’s ethnicity also modifies the student perceptions of instructional quality in such instruments irrespective of content or pedagogy (Williams 2007), and

(D) WHEREAS studies have shown a lack of correlation between student evaluation of instruction results and demonstrated learning gains ((Uttl, White, and Gonzalez 2017) as well as selection biases on students who choose to complete assessments (Goos and Salomons 2017), and

(E) WHEREAS in April of 2019, the WCU Faculty Senate received a Report from the Task Force on Student Assessment of Instruction outlining a road map for redesign of student evaluations of teaching instruments at WCU and to adopt criteria for the incorporation of the survey results in faculty evaluation materials for review, and

(F) WHEREAS the Faculty Affairs Council of the Faculty Senate is currently working with the Provost Office in the design and deployment of the Student Perception of Learning instrument replacing the Student Assessment of Instruction to address the elements of bias and bring the focus on instructional quality and formative feedback on the instructor with a survey design that is pertinent to each discipline, and

(G) WHEREAS most courses taught at Western Carolina University in the Spring and Fall of 2020 were conducted in extraordinary hybrid or online modalities, which were not the choice of students nor faculty when they were made available for registration, and which were a consequence of a mandate by the Governor of the State of North Carolina and to comply with UNC Board of Governors request for instructional delivery because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

(H) WHEREAS the hybrid and online courses did not by and large receive the benefit of design based on the scholarship of teaching and learning for each subject and discipline, and were delivered on an outdated learning management system platform as found by the Learning Management System Steering Committee for which the Faculty Senate endorsed a proposal for its replacement at its August 2020 meeting,

(I) THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate finds that the Student Assessment of Instruction does not currently provide a meaningful measure of Students’ experience of learning for purposes of assessing Faculty instructional delivery but urges the inclusion in faculty evaluation documents of student provided data with alternative means if possible and at a later time,

(J) AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty should not include Student Assessment of Instruction data for Spring and Fall of 2020 in their faculty activity reporting documents NOR should Departments Heads nor Collegial Review Committees expect to have this data NOR count its absence as a negative element in their review determinations,

(K) AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that faculty should include the text of this resolution statement in their faculty review documents to add clarification to review committees and supervisors in their evaluation determination,

(L) AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the administration should suspend the further collection of Student Assessment of Instruction data as the Fall 2020 semester ends.

*References.*

*Boring, Anne. 2017. “Gender Biases in Student Evaluations of Teaching.” Journal of Public Economics 145: 27-41.*

*Goos, Maarten and Salomons, Anna. 2017. “Measuring Teaching Quality in Higher Education: Assessing Selection Bias in Course Evaluations.” Research in Higher Education 58: 341-64.*

*MacNell, Lillian, Driscoll, Adam and Hunt, Anna. 2014. 2015. “What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching.” Innovative Higher Education 40: 291-303.*

*Rivera, Lauren A., and Gilcsik, Andras. “Scaling Down Inequality: Rating Scales, Gender Bias, and the Architecture of Evaluation.” American Sociological Review. Forthcoming.*

*Uttl, Bob, Carmela A. White, and Daniela Wong Gonzalez. 2017. “Meta-Analysis of Faculty’s Teaching Effectiveness: Student Evaluation of Teaching Ratings and Student Learning are not Related.” Studies in Educational Evaluation. 54: 22-42.*

*Williams, Dana A. 2007. “Examining the Relation between Race and Student Evaluations of Faculty Members: A Literature Review.” Profession. 168-173.*

Discussion proceeded.

*Provost Starnes shared that it is the instrument faculty senate adopted years ago. UNC code 400.3.1.1[G] advises the following:*

*c. Review procedures for the evaluation of faculty performance to ensure (1) that student evaluations and formal methods of peer review are included in teaching evaluation procedures, (2) that student evaluations are conducted at regular intervals (at least one semester each year) and on an ongoing basis, (3) that peer review of faculty includes direct observation of the classroom teaching of new and non-tenured faculty and of graduate teaching assistants, and (4) that appropriate and timely feedback from evaluations of performance is provided to those persons being reviewed.*

*We are bound by the UNC code and by passing something eliminating student instruments, this would put the Chancellor in a position to either support the senate or the code.*

*Why not just use the current SAIs and make them for formative feedback to the faculty member only? Self-evaluation is part of the teaching evaluation. Let it go for fall and spring. By the following fall hopefully the CRC will have the new student instrument ready to employ. This would meet the code and give faculty a break. We do have a mechanism to encourage students to complete them. We would simply extend what we did in spring for the AY.*

*Question to Provost Starnes from Kadence Otto: To be clear, we would use SAI student written comments only for formative feedback to the faculty member to be used on AFE and TPR?  
Response: The whole instrument is written and numeric for AFE and TPR. The timing is critical. Many departments do AFE on a calendar year. We could include the resolution or statement in the files for those impacted this year and educate committees in future years so institutional memory remains strong. They would only go to the faculty member. The TPR narrative is written by the faculty members as they approach their own self-assessment of teaching.*

*Kadence Otto shared that she is not inclined to include numbers.*

*Indi Bose agreed with Provost Starnes. She has spoken with colleagues whose only issue in the resolution is part L.*

*Laura Wright shared that if we are going forward with the resolution that there is no way this will have any teeth with the Chancellor. We will be at odds. She also thinks this is different from what was done in spring, is it?*

*Response: Department Heads received them in the Spring, but they weren’t used.*

*Kadence Otto wondered if there is a chance that the code could have some sort of COVID exception. The code is at odds with the reality in which we are living.  
Response: That would require BOG approval.*

*Todd Collins shared that the timing is the problem. It is useful to have the feedback. You can get trends from the comments. It isn’t a good document for what we are doing now, but we don’t have time. He is asking his class and doing surveys. There is no time to reinvent the wheel. We should do what we did in the spring and ignore the numbers. It may be useful or not - if not, take it with a grain of salt and use what you can. His department feels the same way - use them as we did in the spring.*

*Roya Scales and Carrie Rogers agreed with Todd.*

*Will Lehman - question for Provost Starnes - why should the department heads not see the comments right now? It bothers him that the department heads would be shut out of the comment section of the SAI. Some students feel this is a place for them to make comments about behaviors, responsiveness, etc. and if students don’t know they have another way to bring this up, they only use the SAI comment section for that purpose. It is a way to voice a legitimate complaint for them.   
Response: To clarify, the SAI did go to department heads in the spring, but the guidance is not to use the information for AFE purposes. As a former DH, Provost Starnes concurred that the instrument could be a valuable route of information for students to raise issues unrelated to teaching.*

*Kadence Otto shared the exact language used in March:*

***\* Note: In March of this year, the university moved all instruction online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, while Spring SAIs were collected, they will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations.***

*Carrie Rogers asked if we could just update what was used previously?  
Response: It was guidance last year and not a resolution.*

*Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that it would need to include TPR language in addition to the AFE.*

*Vicki Szabo shared that items A-H are somewhat indisputable. Is there a way to complete a hybrid resolution? It is important to remind people why SAIs are problematic. Vicki asked folks to consider striking items I, K, and L and introducing language from last semester.*

*Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that she isn’t sure about including Item F. She likes the point but doesn’t want to convolve the ongoing process with this. Take it out or combine maybe? It is important to have a resolution - it is a stronger message to our CRCs and DHs.*

*Kadence Otto shared the proposed guidance to include in the resolution:*

***Faculty Senate Proposed Guidance to be Inserted into AFE & TPR for Fall 2020 & Spring 2021***

***\* Note: In March of 2020, the university moved all instruction online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the continuation of the pandemic, course modalities for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 have been modified to varying degrees and are not operating in the traditional face-to-face format. Therefore, SAIs for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 will be used for formative feedback only and will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations (AFE) or tenure and promotion (TPR).***

*The suggestion is to strike F, I, K, L altogether.*

*Will Lehman suggested addressing the upcoming semester as well by adding Spring 2021 to the resolution.*

*Enrique Gómez shared that the Student Perception of Learning should be deployed by then.*

*Sean Mulholland shared that this is not an accurate timeline. 2021 needs to be included. We would not deploy something in the middle of an AY.*

*Mariana Fisher shared that the faculty she has spoken to are asking that we use the SAI or have an option to use it if they want to. We do not want the student to see these as pointless. Student feedback is important, and we should be cautious on how we move forward. The feedback for HHS is to at least have the option. If possible, I would be supportive of this resolution if it had language to highlight that.*

*Enrique Gómez responded that SAIs should be collected. And Enrique would like to strike item L altogether.*

*Elizabeth Wark shared again that many faculty in HHS want to use the data and want it optional. Looking at the wording Kadence suggested, the last sentence may still capture it being optional.*

*Cheryl Waters-Tormey presented a friendly amendment to Item E that reads as follows:*

**“WHEREAS in April of 2019, the WCU Faculty Senate received a Report from the Task Force on Student Assessment of Instruction recommending redesign of student evaluations of teaching instruments at WCU, which are currently in progress by the Faculty Affairs Council of the Faculty Senate, and to adopt criteria for the incorporation of the survey results in faculty evaluation materials for review, and”**

*[[the TF didn’t provide a road map but a list of recommendations, so that’s why the FAC is taking the time to figure that out and design an instrument]]*

*Indi Bose shared that SAIs have nothing to do with student learning. They do not show student learning. A high number with no relevance still has no relevance. If you are using an SAI number which is high, you think that supports teaching, it doesn’t. The class could be easy and fun, the instructor may be friendly, the class was organized, etc., but it is not reflective of student learning.*

*Kadence Otto asked about whether the senate should issue guidance, a statement, or a resolution. A quick show of hands shows favor of a resolution.*

*Laura Wright shared that if we allow faculty the option - the implication and perception for those that choose not to use them is that they are negative.*

*Mariana Fisher that there will always be certain implications either way. She is speaking on behalf of the HHS faculty that she heard from. We had 58 respondents and 75% voted in this way.*

*Todd Collins shared that we can include parts in our self-assessment. He will not support the option of letting some put numbers in and some not. The point is to use them in the narrative but not put them in the files per se.*

*Enrique Gómez asked what is the need to strike Item I and K.  
Vicki Szabo shared that in Item I, the case is already made above. Item K- we wouldn’t include a whole text of the resolution as much as the outcome.*

*Cheryl Waters-Tormey suggested Item J & K combine and read as follows:*

**(J) BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty should not include Student Assessment of Instruction data for Spring and Fall of 2020, and Spring of 2021, in their faculty activity reporting documents NOR should Departments Heads nor Collegial Review Committees expect to have this data NOR count its absence as a negative element in their review determinations.**

*Carrie Rogers suggested Item J & K combine to read as follows:*

**Or this one: (J) Whereas, SAIs for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 should be used by the faculty for formative feedback and the construction of teaching narratives only and will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations (AFE) or tenure and promotion (TPR).**

*Carrie Rogers suggested combining hers and Cheryl’s suggestions to read as follows:*

**BE IT RESOLVED SAIs for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 should be used by the faculty for formative feedback and the construction of teaching narratives only and will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations (AFE) or tenure and promotion (TPR) NOR should Departments Heads nor Collegial Review Committees expect to have this data NOR count its absence as a negative element in their review determinations.**

*Further discussion proceeded.*

Friendly amendments were made and the revised resolution reads as follows:

**Resolution For The Suspension of Use of Student Assessment of Instruction Data For Spring and Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 on Faculty Evaluation Materials Pending The Adoption Of A New Student Perception of Learning Instrument**

(A) WHEREAS the Student Assessment of Instruction is a widely-used instrument listed in departmental collegial review documents to assess the quality of instruction of faculty alongside formal methods of peer review and is in use by collegial review committees and department heads to make decisions on Faculty reappointment, tenure and promotion, and

(B) WHEREAS similar instrument surveys for students to evaluate their instructors nation-wide have been found to demonstrate biases around the perceived gender of the instructor (Rivera and Gilcsik 2018, MacNell, Driscoll and Hunt 2014, Boring 2017), and

(C) WHEREAS a review of academic studies has shown that the perception of an instructor’s ethnicity also modifies the student perceptions of instructional quality in such instruments irrespective of content or pedagogy (Williams 2007), and

(D) WHEREAS studies have shown a lack of correlation between student evaluation of instruction results and demonstrated learning gains ((Uttl, White, and Gonzalez 2017) as well as selection biases on students who choose to complete assessments (Goos and Salomons 2017), and

(E) WHEREAS in April of 2019, the WCU Faculty Senate received a Report from the Task Force on Student Assessment of Instruction recommending redesign of student evaluations of teaching instruments at WCU, which are currently in progress by the Faculty Affairs Council of the Faculty Senate, and to adopt criteria for the incorporation of the survey results in faculty evaluation materials for review, and

(F) WHEREAS most courses taught at Western Carolina University in the Spring and Fall of 2020, and upcoming in Spring 2021, were conducted in extraordinary hybrid or online modalities, which were not the choice of students nor faculty when they were made available for registration, and which were a consequence of a mandate by the Governor of the State of North Carolina and to comply with UNC Board of Governors request for instructional delivery because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

(G) WHEREAS the hybrid and online courses did not by and large receive the benefit of design based on the scholarship of teaching and learning for each subject and discipline, and were delivered on an outdated learning management system platform as found by the Learning Management System Steering Committee for which the Faculty Senate endorsed a proposal for its replacement at its August 2020 meeting,

(H) THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that SAIs for Spring of 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 may be used by the Faculty for formative feedback and the construction of teaching narratives only and will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations (AFE) or tenure and promotion (TPR). Department Heads or equivalent supervisors will have access as administrative supervisors. Department Heads, equivalent supervisors, and Collegial Review Committees will not use this data nor count its absence as a negative element in their review determinations.

(I) AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that faculty should include the following statement in their faculty review documents to add clarification to review committees and supervisors in their evaluation determination:

*Due to the continuation of the pandemic, course modalities for Spring 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 have been modified to varying degrees and are not operating in the traditional face-to-face format. Therefore, while SAIs will be collected for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, they will not hold any negative consequence to annual faculty evaluations (AFE) or tenure and promotion (TPR).*

Enrique Gómez made a motion to close the discussion and Cheryl Waters-Tormey seconded.

A voice vote was made and none opposed.

The friendly amendments introduced above were made, Laura Wright seconded:

* + Michael Boatright - YES
  + Indi Bose - YES
  + Todd Collins - YES
  + David De Jong - YES
  + Heather Mae Erickson - YES
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - YES
  + Garrett Fisher - YES
  + Mariana Fisher - YES
  + Enrique Gómez - YES
  + Yancey Gulley - YES
  + Ian Jeffress - YES
  + Bora Karayaka - YES
  + Marco Lam - YES
  + Will Lehman - YES
  + Niall Michelsen - YES
  + Sean Mulholland - YES
  + Leigh Odom - YES
  + Carrie Rogers - YES
  + Roya Scales - YES
  + Vicki Szabo - YES
  + Elizabeth Tait - YES
  + Martin Tanaka - YES
  + Drew Virtue - YES
  + Elizabeth Wark - YES
  + Laura Wright - YES
  + Jessica Zellers - YES

Motion passed unanimously, 26 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstentions.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Carrie Rogers motioned to adjourn. Mariana Fisher seconded.

None opposed.

**Meeting Adjourned.**