Motion: To approve the Academic Policy Committee’s Recommended Teaching Evaluation Procedures.

Recommendations Regarding Teaching Evaluation Procedures

At the February 8, 1995 meeting of the Academic Policy Committee, the Committee reviewed the Proposed Teaching Evaluation Procedures forwarded by the Vice Chancellor’s office. The Committee approved the following procedures which include some revision of and addition to the originally proposed procedures:

1. Beginning in the fall, 1995-96 semester, all instructors will conduct end-of-the-semester student evaluations in every section of every undergraduate course, including summer session courses.

2. The instructional unit will determine the format of its course evaluations. However, all unit evaluation forms will include items which evaluate the course and the teacher separately. Specifically, all unit evaluation forms will include at least two objective queries, one which solicits students’ evaluation of the quality of the course in general and one which solicits evaluation of the quality of the instructor, both ranked on a five-point scale.

3. Each instructional unit will make available in the departmental office summaries of the responses to at least the two queries described above for all sections of departmental courses.

4. Each unit will ensure that faculty are not present when evaluations are administered and that evaluations are not available for faculty review until after grades have been turned in.

5. End of the semester student evaluations will be anonymous.

Academic Policy Committee

Sally Derrwaldt
Alice Gillam
Robert Greenstreet
Robert Hall
Magda Kandil
Karen Kapke

Jon Lenichek
Robert Magill, Chair
Winston Ring
Mary Wierenga
Lynn Worsham
Keith Zielinski
December 5, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Magill, Chair
    Academic Policy Committee

FROM: Kenneth Watters
       Provost and Vice Chancellor

RE: Proposed Teaching Evaluation Procedures

This past spring, I asked Professor Alice Gillam to work with other members of the instructional subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience to recommend steps the campus could take to enhance the process of student and peer evaluation of teaching. Specifically, I asked the subcommittee to recommend how the campus could best implement the Blue Ribbon Committee recommendation that student evaluations of courses "be consistently conducted and the results made available to students" as well as its recommendation that faculty and other teaching staff "be encouraged to engage in peer and self-evaluation of teaching." In addition, one of the mandates of the Accountability for Achievement initiative of the UW System is that campuses will make "summary information from student course evaluations for each course/instructor accessible to students."

The instructional subcommittee's attached recommendations provide, I believe, reasonable and effective steps for the campus to follow to enhance current practices and improve the utilization and communication of teaching evaluation information.

Following consultation with the University Committee, I am asking the Academic Policy Committee to review these recommendations and advise appropriate action to the University Committee. I am sure that the subcommittee members would be happy to provide additional input to the APC, as would I.

Attachment

cc: John Schroeder, Chancellor
    George Baker, Chair, University Committee
    Instructional Subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Committee
    Anthony Ciccone
    Alice Gillam
    Leslie Schulz
    Richard Sorbello
    Ruth Williams
MEMORANDUM

TO: Kenneth L. Watters
    Provost and Vice Chancellor

FROM: Alice Gillam
       Associate Professor
       Chair, Instructional Subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience

RE: Course Evaluations

In response to your request, the Instructional Subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience met recently to formulate recommendations for implementing the mandates of the Blue Ribbon Committee and Accountability for Achievement. Specifically, the Blue Ribbon Committee recommended that student evaluation of courses "be consistently conducted and the results made available to students" and that faculty and other teaching staff "be encouraged to engage in peer and self-evaluation of teaching." Further, Accountability for Achievement mandates all UW campuses to pilot initiatives which make "summary information from student course evaluations for each course/instructor accessible to students."

Our recommendations are summarized in our attached report. Also attached are a summary of our departmental survey and the invitations sent to selected departments to pilot our recommendations with the fall, 1994 course evaluation process.

We are submitting these recommendations to you with the expectation that, should you find them a reasonable place to start the campus-wide discussion, you will forward them to the appropriate faculty governance group. Although our charge was to address the undergraduate experience only, we suggest that these recommendations be shared with the appropriate graduate faculty committees as well. They can then decide whether or not these evaluation policies should also apply to graduate course evaluations.

We, of course, will be happy to provide further information to you or to anyone else regarding our recommendations.

Attachments

cc: Members of the Instructional Subcommittee
    Anthony Ciccone
    Leslie Schulz
    Richard Sorbello
    Ruth Williams
    Mary Wierenga, Associate Dean, Graduate School
REPORT OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

The Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience, appointed by the Chancellor in 1992, reviewed the quality of undergraduate instruction and support services and, in its final report submitted in February, 1994, recommended steps the campus should take to improve instruction, advising, orientation, and assessment of student satisfaction. In addition to its contribution to the Blue Ribbon Committee Report, the Instructional Subcommittee was asked by the Vice Chancellor to give additional advice regarding the implementation of its recommendations that "student evaluations of teaching be consistently conducted and the results made available to students" and that "faculty and other teaching staff be encouraged to engage in peer and self-evaluation of teaching as part of their ongoing professional development," as well as the Accountability for Achievement directive that "campuses pilot initiative for making summary information from student course evaluations for each course/instructor accessible to students." The subcommittee recommends the following.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Beginning in the fall, 1995-96 semester, all instructors will conduct student evaluations in every section of every undergraduate course.

2. The instructional unit will determine the format of its course evaluations. However, all unit evaluation forms will include at least two objective queries, one which solicits students' evaluation of the quality of the course in general and one which solicits evaluation of the quality of the instructor, both ranked on a five-point scale.

3. Each instructional unit will make available in the departmental office summaries of responses to at least the two queries described above for all sections of departmental courses.

4. Select departments will pilot these procedures in the fall, 1994 semester.

5. Departments are encouraged to incorporate peer reviews and self-reviews as part of their faculty's ongoing professional development. Such evaluation activities, along with student evaluations of teaching, serve both formative and summative purposes. Effective peer review models involve reciprocal evaluation between participating faculty members who identify specific areas for evaluation and improvement and who specify a reasonable time frame during which they will conduct their evaluations of one another. The attached format, which was developed and implemented by the Department of Health Sciences, exemplifies this model.
RATIONALE

Collection and utilization of student and peer evaluation information allows departments as well as individual faculty members to assess the effectiveness and quality of teaching. Such information contributes to improvement in teaching (formative evaluation) and to assessment of performance (summative evaluation). A fall 1993 survey of UWM departments demonstrated that student evaluations of courses are used extensively, though not uniformly, by instructors and departments for both formative and summative purposes. The formats for department evaluations typically call for students to provide both objective and narrative responses. The narrative information is considered by many faculty to be particularly valuable formative information. Few departments utilize peer evaluation, but many indicate willingness to do so along with uncertainty as to how to do it effectively. Most of the evaluation formats currently in use ask students to rank both the quality of the course in general and the quality of the instructor.

There is no current requirement that student evaluations be conducted in every course every semester. Nor is there a standard mechanism by which information from evaluations is made available to students. The subcommittee's recommendation that student evaluations of teaching be consistently conducted and the results made available to students was endorsed by the Blue Ribbon Committee. Given that endorsement along with fact that student evaluations of teaching are already utilized widely across the campus, the subcommittee recommends that the faculty adopt a policy directing that all instructors conduct student evaluations in every section of all undergraduate courses. The subcommittee further recommends that the appropriate graduate committees consider applying this policy to all graduate courses as well.

While there was considerable willingness on the part of those departments who responded to our survey to adopt a campus-wide evaluation format, it was the conclusion of the subcommittee that doing so would not enhance the information currently collected at the departmental level. Instead, the subcommittee recommends that each department share summary information of students' rankings of each course and instructor along with whatever additional information the department wishes to make available to students. Such summary information should be compiled and made available in the department office at the conclusion of each semester.

The subcommittee further notes that these recommendations are intended to facilitate feedback from students to instructors and from departments to students. It is the subcommittee's belief that rankings of the general quality of the course and instructor represent the information most students request. It also should be understood that any request for evaluation information beyond that regularly provided in summary form by the department would be subject to the Wisconsin Public Records law. Should a department
receive a request under the Wisconsin Public Records provision for complete course evaluation information, it must provide whatever student course evaluation materials it has on file. If narrative comments are included in the information on file, the department chair should consult with the campus custodian of public records, Assistant to the Chancellor Kay McGowan, before proceeding.

Finally, while most departments embrace the concept of peer review, many are struggling to design meaningful ways to conduct such reviews. The format developed and piloted by the Department of Health Sciences proved to be effective and is suggested to other interested departments.