

February 29, 2012

To: Faculty Assembly, School of Liberal Arts

From: Teaching & Advising Committee (TAC): Dennis Bingham (English) (chair), Carrie Foote (Sociology), Sumana Jogi (Communication Studies), Kevin Robbins (History), David Weiden (Political Science); Linda Haas (Sociology) (Agenda Council representative); Gina Sanchez Gibau (Associate Dean for Student Affairs); Bill Stuckey, (Tech Services), consultant.

New Student End-of-Course Evaluation Instrument--Progress Report

As one of its charges, per Faculty Assembly, 4/15/11, the TAC is exploring strategies to create a new student evaluation instrument, to replace the current form, which the School has used since circa 1990. Below is a short summary of our progress:

Student Input. The Committee sent two representatives to a meeting of the SLA Student Council and the topic of student evaluations ended up becoming the agenda. Students had much to say, the predominating attitude being that faculty members do not take evaluation seriously, do it because they are required to, and don't listen to what the students say on the form. The students indicated that they respond with fuller comments when they think that the instructor will take future action based upon their comments, but that much of the time the evaluation seems like a waste of class time. Disturbing stories, such as reports of instructors who stayed in the classroom while the students fill out their evaluations, while not uncommon, were not unheard of either. They very much appreciate the opportunity to participate in our efforts and as a result we have added a student member to our committee and will seek feedback on our work from the SLA Student Council

"Taking Stock" Workshop. The committee completed a four-hour workshop titled "Taking Stock of What the School of Liberal Arts Course Evaluation Measures," presented in late-November by the team of Jacqueline Singh of Center for Teaching & Learning, Ingrid Ritchie of SPEA and Randi Stocker of University Library. Using proven assessment methods that they have researched, the presenters guided us through our current evaluation instrument in terms of the key questions, "What is the purpose?" of the measurement and "What are we measuring?"

Evaluation Models and "Item Banks." The workshop also directed us to best student evaluation end-of-course practices and recommended several exemplary evaluation procedures and question "item banks" from a few universities around the country that are looked to as models. We are currently reviewing these item banks as well as numerous forms from other units at IUPUI.

Evaluation of Online Courses. With the permission of Agenda Council, the committee chair invited Brian McDonald (English) to serve as a consultant for the student evaluation of online courses. At this time, the committee rules out using online evaluations for face-to-face classes. Schools at IUPUI that have adopted them, such as Herron and Engineering-Technology report response rates under 20 percent. Our committee does not see a viable alternative to in-class, paper forms. Online courses, of course, conduct online evaluations and we are seeking expert advice in this regard.

Our committee welcomes feedback on these issues. (Please email the committee chair dbingham@iupui.edu)

At the April 20 Faculty Assembly the Committee hopes to be ready to present a draft of a new evaluation instrument, based on solid principles of assessment and definite measurements of how our classes are being received, and with a purpose of having elicited student input.