

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NEWARK, DELAWARE
19711

UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
303 HULLIHEN HALL
PHONE: 302-738-2829

February 24, 1975

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Faculty Members

FROM: E. Paul Catts, Vice President *EPC dpe*
University Faculty Senate

SUBJECT: Regular Senate Meeting, March 3, 1975

In accordance with Section IV, paragraph 6 of the Constitution, the regular meeting of the University Faculty Senate will be held on Monday, March 3, 1975, at 4 PM in Room 110, Memorial Hall.

AGENDA

- I. Adoption of the Agenda.
- II. Approval of Minutes of February 3, 1975.
- III. Announcements
- IV. Old Business (None)
- V. New Business
 - A. Nominees recommended for Senate approval from the Committee on Committees for replacement of members J. Acunha and J. C. Wriston to the Nominating Committee by:

Harry D. Hutchinson
Lucia M. Palmer

The new Chairperson to replace J. C. Wriston will be named at this time.
 - B. Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Effectiveness (Attachment 1).
 - C. Resolution concerning energy use in the University community from the Executive Committee (Attachment 2).
 - D. Report on the present status and activities of COPE (Senate Bill 105) by Chairman E. E. Schweizer.
 - E. Such items as may come before the Senate. (No motion introduced at this time may be acted upon until the next meeting of the Senate.)

Attachments are in the hands of your Senators. Distribution also includes one copy for each ten faculty members of each department.

EPC/dpe

Attachments (2)

November 21, 1974

EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS
IN THE PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCESS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

On May 6, 1974, the Faculty Senate Committee on Promotion and Tenure recommended that a study be made of methods presently used at the University of Delaware for evaluating teaching effectiveness. The Committee on Promotion and Tenure felt that it would be helpful to share more widely the experiences of the different departments in the University which have been attempting to evaluate teaching effectiveness and to identify those procedures which have been most useful. This report addresses itself to the recommendation of the Committee on Promotion and Tenure.

While it is not the purpose of this report to identify all possible methods of evaluating teaching effectiveness but rather to indicate the methods of evaluating teaching effectiveness actually in use on this campus, it may, nevertheless, be useful to begin the discussion by identifying a number of recognized ways of evaluating teaching effectiveness and then to compare present practices with these possibilities. In this way perhaps a conclusion regarding the degree of diversity or creativity being exercised currently in attempting to evaluate teaching effectiveness may be reached.

Dr. Cashin, Coordinator of Testing and Evaluation, has studied and reported on possible means of evaluating teaching effectiveness. He suggests that there are nine major ways to be considered in evaluating teaching effectiveness. These are, in order of Dr. Cashin's assessment of their relative desirability, from highest to lowest:

1. Criterion-referenced measurement
2. Student course evaluation
3. Classroom evaluation
4. Course portfolio
5. Performance in later sequential courses
6. Standardized test scores
7. Self-evaluation
8. Long-term followup of students
9. Opinions of chairmen, peers, and administrators

On September 12, and September 19, the Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Effectiveness met with representatives of each of the University's college-level and division-level promotion and tenure committees and discussed their perceptions regarding the role of teaching in the promotion and tenure process and especially the evidence which might be used to evaluate teaching effectiveness. On the basis of these discussions, consideration of last year's decisions of the Committee on Promotions and Tenure, and additional reading of promotion and tenure documents of individual departments, colleges and divisions by members of the Committee on Teaching Effectiveness, the following conclusions with respect to current practices in evaluating teaching effectiveness were reached:

1. Criterion-referenced measurement is occasionally utilized only in the College of Education and nowhere else in the University even though this has been judged by some to be the most preferred method of evaluating teaching effectiveness.
2. Student course evaluations are used widely. Many departments have designed their own instruments, feeling that a more comprehensive student course evaluation form would not sufficiently recognize the uniqueness of their individual departments or courses. Because student course evaluations are utilized for different purposes, it is not unexpected that there is considerable diversity among units in the format of these evaluations. For the purpose of providing information about courses which may be useful when students are selecting courses and instructors, a single, comprehensive but brief form is most desirable. For the purpose of providing the instructor with useful comments which he can utilize in improving his courses and teaching techniques, highly individualized forms may be most desirable especially if they contain student comments. For the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching as part of the promotion and tenure process, a high level of commonality is desired. A department's need to evaluate the effectiveness of its courses independent of the specific instructor may best be met by an individualized form. At this time it does not appear that many units explicitly recognize these four goals to the same degree with respect to the design and use of student course evaluations.

While some individuals expressed a desire to preserve the special characteristics of their own forms and others doubted the prospects for gaining acceptance of University-wide forms, it does appear that many units could make use of data collected on course evaluations that had a high level of commonality across the University. Experience at other institutions and discussions with some faculty members suggest that it may be both worthwhile and possible to design a student course evaluation instrument which fulfills all four purposes of student course evaluations while allowing sufficient flexibility to recognize the individuality of courses, programs, and instructors. The role which student course evaluations are permitted to play in the promotion and tenure process also varies considerably. Among the faculty with whom the committee had discussions regarding student course evaluations, the opinion of their worth ranged from outright and explicit suspicion of any individual whose student course evaluations were high (as possible evidence of pondering to the students) to belief that student course evaluations were very important, reliable, and valid measures of teaching effectiveness. Despite the research which supports the reliability and validity of student course evaluations, there is a significant proportion of the faculty which continues to seriously question the influence of such characteristics as student's ability, student's major, required versus elective course and the like upon the student's rating of any given course.

3. Classroom visitation is not widely practiced at this University, although it is used in some departments as part of the evaluation procedure. In some cases it is completely unannounced: a person involved in the evaluation process will enter the classroom of an individual being evaluated without prior warning. In other cases, classroom visitation takes place at the initiation of the individual faculty member who requests the visitation which may then occur either at a specified time or in the near future at an unannounced time. Whether the classroom visitation is requested by the faculty member or not and whether the visitation is unannounced or not, it is, in all cases, only undertaken with the explicit permission of the instructor. In some cases, a visitation is made by a single individual, while in others it is made by two or more individuals constituting an evaluation team. Students may compose part of such teams.
4. The course portfolio containing samples of all aspects of the course, including student work, but especially including the instructor's input, is not widely utilized in the University but does appear in some areas, particularly in the College of Education and in the College of Agriculture.
5. Performance by students in later sequential courses is not used formally in the University at this time. It seems likely, however, that this kind of input is used informally and indirectly through the opinions of chairmen and peers discussed below. The failure to use sequential course data formally and consistently may be because of a lack of adequate input and a difficulty in obtaining it. In order to use latter sequential course data consistently and accurately, a system must be developed for tracking students from one course to another, while keeping track of the instructors in each prior course and accumulating enough evidence to be able to draw meaningful conclusions. It also requires that the objectives of both courses, and the manner in which they should articulate, be made explicit.
6. Standardized test scores also used only infrequently at the University, probably because standardized tests are not available for most courses and in those courses where they are available, some instructors question their validity for their specific courses.
7. Self-evaluation is also not widely used, at least in any formal way, but is practiced in some departments and accepted in some colleges and divisions as a legitimate means of evaluating teaching effectiveness.
8. Long-term followup of students is currently practiced by a few departments and is regarded as a legitimate means of evaluating teaching effectiveness, but is not used widely nor is it used consistently and continuously.

9. The opinions of chairmen, peers, and administrators are ranked low in order of desirability as a means of evaluating teaching effectiveness because of the extreme variability in the evidence used in forming such opinions, but are nevertheless the most frequently used means of evaluating teaching effectiveness. To some individuals involved in the promotion and tenure process, the opinion of the individual's chairman can carry more weight than any other kind of input, if the individuals involved in the promotion and tenure process have confidence in the chairman's opinion. Hopefully, the chairman's opinion is based upon one or more of the evaluative devices indicated above. This is not necessarily the case, however, and it would seem to be a legitimate reason for concern in those cases where the opinion of the chairman is at variance with the opinion that would be generated by any of the evaluative devices discussed above and where, at any point in the promotion and tenure process, the chairman's opinion was given preference.

Summarizing the above, it appears that of the many possible ways of evaluating teaching effectiveness, few are used at all widely on this campus and none are used to the same extent and with equal applicability across the University. This creates the unfortunate situation in which the primary criterion for the evaluation of the teaching effectiveness of any single individual attempting to gain promotion or tenure at the University, is the set of preconceived impressions regarding various methods of evaluating teaching effectiveness held by the individuals who have influence at any point in the promotion and tenure process. Often these preconceived impressions are based upon personal experience, without references to the scholarly research on teaching evaluation available. Because of this the nature of the evaluation itself may change as the individuals involved in the evaluation process change. One can only pity the faculty member who proudly forwards an outstanding student course evaluation to a committee chaired by an individual who is suspicious of any person with such outstanding course evaluations. Thus, to the individual faculty member contemplating possible promotion and who must rely to some extent upon his teaching, the optimal procedure may be to determine, before forwarding any evidence, the kinds of evidence most acceptable by the individuals who will be influential in the promotion and tenure process during the particular year or years in which this individual is attempting to be promoted. Such a recourse would hardly speak well for the objectivity and accuracy of the University's evaluation of teaching.

Prepared by:

Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Effectiveness

J. Burmeister
W. E. Cashin
B. J. Haslett
W. Latham, Chairperson
C. Marler

RESOLUTION CONCERNING ENERGY USE

WHEREAS the cost of fuel and electricity to the University of Delaware has increased significantly, and,

WHEREAS the import tax on crude oil will result in significant additional costs and,

WHEREAS the City of Newark is contemplating a significant increase in the electric rate charged to the University of Delaware and,

WHEREAS these increased costs will substantially affect the academic quality of the University,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the University Faculty Senate request all members of the University community to be vigilant in the conservation of electric and fuel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the faculty of the University of Delaware are urged to communicate to the Senate Executive Committee their suggestions concerning the savings of energy at the University for transmission to the University President's Commission on Energy Use, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the faculty of the University of Delaware request the City of Newark to make every possible effort to minimize any increase in the electric rates charged the University of Delaware so that the University may continue to provide the people of the State of Delaware with a University of excellence without putting the cost of education beyond the reach of the citizens of the State.

Submitted by:

Executive Committee of the
University Faculty Senate

L. Mosberg, President
E. P. Catts, Vice President
S. A. McMahon, Secretary

2/24/75

ADDENDUM

THE ROLE OF TEACHING IN PROMOTION AND TENURE DECISIONS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

There is considerable diversity among college-level and division-level promotion and tenure committees with respect to the weight given to teaching in deciding whether or not an individual ought to be granted promotion and tenure. This stems, in part, from differences in beliefs of the members of promotion and tenure committees: in part, from differences in the emphasis given to each of these activities by the individual departments recommending individuals for promotion and tenure; and, in part, from the perception of both the college-level committee members and the departmental-level committee members of the role of teaching in the eyes of both the University-level promotion and tenure committee and the Provost. While there are some individuals who believe that teaching does count significantly toward promotion and tenure, and while there have been a few isolated instances in which individuals have been promoted primarily on the basis of teaching, in general, it is not believed that teaching is given even equal weight with research and scholarship in the promotion and tenure decision-making process, especially above the college level. The cases of individuals being promoted predominantly on the basis of teaching are extremely rare. The Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation was only able to identify one such case, and in this particular instance, the individual had a contract which clearly specified that his duties were teaching and service with no research. In order for the University to continue to maintain that teaching is an important function and to encourage individuals to give considerable attention to their teaching, individuals are occasionally promoted primarily, but not exclusively, on the basis of teaching. The Provost has indicated in writing that for an individual with only minimally acceptable scholarship activities to be promoted, he must be among the top five percent of all teachers.

Because it appears to be so difficult to be promoted on the basis of teaching at the University of Delaware, some individuals believe that additional effort should not be expended in attempting to evaluate teaching effectiveness. So long as the measures being used, no matter how gross they may be, permit the consistent identification of outstanding teaching either positive or negative, then the evaluation of teaching effectiveness is adequate. It appears to some that additional data regarding teaching effectiveness will be used negatively in many cases. If the evidence on teaching effectiveness is relatively positive, then a decision regarding promotion and tenure can be made on the basis of the individual's research contribution. If, however, the individual's teaching performance is even somewhat below average (and definitely not demonstrably inferior) then the individual must have an outstanding scholarship record to overcome this deficit.

Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Effectiveness

dpe

11/21/74

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