

POLS Dept Meeting – September 21, 2018
Minutes

TOTAL PRESENT: (16 faculty, 5 students)

12:30 pm Noelani called the meeting to order

Sharing: Noenoe shared about her current research project, which is a book about Hawaiian language newspapers.

ITEMS CARRIED FORWARD

1. New course evaluation system. Decision-making today on the following questions:

a. Do we want to add to the six common questions?

DISCUSSION:

- Noelani provided some context about why there are so few questions (so that students will complete the survey) and put up the suggested items to add.
- Krishna was in favor of adding almost all suggested items but thinks the question about “considering dynamics of power within the context of Hawai‘i” would skew the results for his classes.
- Noelani responded that the goal of the questions is to better map which courses in the curriculum help students meet learning outcomes, so it won’t be used to evaluate the effectiveness of faculty. Also reiterated that when a faculty member applies for promotion or tenure, she doesn’t have to include the raw data, but can pick and choose which items to include.
- Discussion of whether there is the option to add in “if/not applicable.”
- Jon pointed out that one of the issues is making sure junior faculty can show they’ve improved over the years. Consistency over the years is important to show growth.
- Ehito considered the 6 questions are problematic because they ask more about the teacher and not the course.
- Carolyn explained how these questions came about: from the Lassner letter with the following goals: to help faculty evaluate their courses, to help in evaluation of courses, and to help with program planning (there was lots of pushback on this one because this is about cutting programs). The questions went to an administration committee and then the Faculty Senate. The primary goal was to keep the number of questions low so that students would complete the survey.
- Nicole asked if we can we look at which questions students might politicize because they don’t like the assigned readings, etc.
- Noelani reiterated the need to communicate the dept’s decision by Oct. 1.
- Jairus wondered if slightly rephrasing the questions to add a qualifier about agreeing with the instructor could be helpful.

- Ehito mentioned that the third open-ended question seems redundant.
- Stephen said he expects that instructors will have a point of view, but they also have the responsibility to present other points of view in class. There should be a question about encouraging consideration of competing viewpoints.
- Jairus responded that this is a big debate in pedagogy.
- Stephen called for a vote on adding a question about competing viewpoints. **2 in favor; several (?) in opposition; several abstained.**
- Some discussion and then clarification that the first 6 questions are set in stone, the next 10 can be accepted or rejected, and the last 2 are optional in that the department must take them or leave them.
- Some discussion of UH's decision to give students a week to take the survey.

MOTION: Noelani moved for a vote on the open-ended questions.

DECISION: Approved. **18 in favor; none opposed; 3 abstained.**

- Continued discussion on whether faculty can only add questions, and not subtract.
- Carolyn clarified that the difference is between the categories of questions. Campus-wide, then department-specific, and also individual questions. Nobody can change the department questions.
- Noelani clarified that the results don't go to anywhere in the administration, they only go to the chair or just stay with the faculty member.
- Noelani asked if everybody could vote on all the questions first, and then move on to the individual questions.
- Manfred proposed voting on Jairus' suggestions to eliminate questions #5 and 9.
- Krishna motioned to eliminate questions #5, 8, 9, and 10.
- Ehito doesn't want to take out question #5.

MOTION: Noelani moved for a vote on questions #1-7.

DECISION: Approved. **13 in favor; 1 opposed; 6 abstained.**

MOTION: Noelani moved for a vote on questions #8-10.

DECISION: Not approved. **7 in favor; 9 opposed; 4 abstained.**

- Nicole asked if the second open-ended question can be rephrased.

MOTION: Nicole made a motion to replace #3 with #2.

DECISION: Approved. 16 in favor; none opposed.

b. With whom will reporting results be shared?

- 1) All results will be shared with the chair. (*Consistent with our current department policy*).
- 2) Only non-tenured faculty results will be shared with the chair.
- 3) No results will be shared with the chair.

DISCUSSION:

- Krishna suggested staying with current department policy.
- Jon said this will help the chair mentor other faculty.
- Noelani agreed that it should be more about mentoring and not punishing.

MOTION: Noelani made a motion for a vote on the 3 options.

DECISION: 17 voted in favor of option #1 (all results will be shared with the chair). and 1 voted in favor of option #3 (no results will be shared with the chair).

NEW ITEMS

2. New undergrad student mentoring system (Ehito/Kathy)

DISCUSSION:

- Ehito explained what the faculty should expect if the department decides to undertake this kind of program. This would require faculty to reach out with their availability and be more proactive.
- Boyd brought up the issue of quality vs. quantity.
- Krishna said he has all PoliSci majors in his class, and gets the feeling that they all want more mentoring. But out of 20, if 5 or 6 cultivate a relationship, that would be a pleasant surprise.
- Noelani suggested coming up with a different word than “mentor.”
- Heoli said there’s also value in assigning students to people in their academic interest, but also someone outside their interest.
- Ari suggested meeting with groups of students.
- Jairus suggested using the undergrad orientation meeting to connect with students. And should communicate that this is a lot of work for the faculty to the Dean on the labor accountability form.
- Ehito said the next question is: do we start it now or next academic year?
- Everybody agreed its early enough in the semester to start it now.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Colloquium at 2:30pm, Manfred Henningsen
2. Reminder of next meeting: October 12 @ 12:30pm
3. Future meetings this semester

Adjourn @ 2:01 pm