

**THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS  
Wednesday, April 12, 2017  
McKenna Hall Auditorium**

**ATTENDANCE**

Deans: *Dean:* John McGreevy; *Associate Deans:* James Brockmole, JoAnn DellaNeve, Margaret Meserve;  
*Assistant Deans:* Collin Meisner, Ava Preacher, Nicholas Russo, Joseph Stanfiel, Vicki Toumayan

Chairpersons and Directors: Thomas Anderson, Matthew Ashley, Lee Anna Clark, Patrick Griffin, Margot Fassler, Mary Celeste Kearney, Brian Krostenko, Jesse Lander, Sarah Mustillo, Dianne Pinderhughes, Peter Smith, Jeffrey Speaks, Thomas Stapleford, Thomas Tweed

Elected Faculty: Ann Astell, Carolina Arroyo, David Betson, Liang Cai, Jessica Collett, Noreen Dean-Moran, Mary Flannery, David Gibson, Dan Groody, Tara MacLeod, Marisel Moreno, Jessica Payne, Siiri Scott, Lynette Spillman, Juan Vitulli, David Watson, Hannelore Weber

Graduate Student Representative: Heather Roberts Stanfiel

Regularly Invited Guests, Observers, and Resource People: Matthew Capdevielle (University Writing Center), Kate Garry (Dean's Office), Mark Gunty (Concurrent Assistant Professor Department of Sociology; Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Undergraduate Analytics Program Director), Essaka Joshua (College Seminar Program), Michael Kackman (Film, Television, and Theatre), Geraldine Meehan (Global Gateways at NDI), Kathleen Opel (Office of International Studies), Jeanne Romero-Severson (Biological Sciences), Matt Zyniewicz (Dean's Office)

Excused: Michael Brownstein, Ann-Marie Conrado, Anne Garcia Romero, Dan Graff, Tom Gresik, Thomas Merluzzi, Darcia Narvaez, Rahul Oka, Erika Summers-Effler, Lira Yoon

Dean John McGreevy convened the meeting at 3:30 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the March 20, 2017 College Council meeting were approved.

## **Interim Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching**

Associate Dean James Brockmole, a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching, introduced the interim report, summarized its contents and underscored some of the conclusions. Michael Kackman, Sarah Mustillo, and Jeanne Romero-Severson—all were members of the Ad Hoc Committee as well—joined J. Brockmole for the presentation.

After the presentation, J. McGreevy invited questions and comments.

Hannah Lore Weber (Department of German and Russian Languages and Literatures) wondered if the committee considered making the student comments on the CIFs available to a wider range of people for more comprehensive teaching evaluations. S. Mustillo mentioned that the committee did consider making the comments available but received considerable pushback on that suggestion. J. Brockmole recalled that the concern was that one negative comment could dictate perceptions of teaching effectiveness, and similarly one bad score could do the same. J. McGreevy mentioned that in his experience CIF comments only serve to help. S. Mustillo noted that one idea was to link comments with particular scores. This might help contextualize why a student may have given a particular score.

Matt Ashley (Chairperson, Department of Theology) recalled that the College Council had a conversation about the use of the CIF comments about seven years ago. In his experience access to student CIF comments has always helped him understand various promotion or tenure cases.

Tom Anderson (Chairperson, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures) appreciated the notion of continuous observation that was mentioned in the report. To his mind, both tenured and non-tenured faculty should be observed more frequently. J. Brockmole agreed.

Tom Tweed (Chairperson, Department of American Studies) provided two comments. First, he thought that student CIF comments are mostly helpful to contextualize the various scores. Only once in his experience were such comments used unfairly. In that instance the author who wrote the teaching report in question only focused on a negative comment offered by a student. After that experience, T. Tweed began to show colleagues how best to use student comments, ensuring that nobody used the comments unfairly. The College could develop student-comment-usage guidelines for promotion and tenure cases. When the scores on CIFs seem to raise questions about a faculty member's teaching, the student comments may help committees understand what might be at stake.

Second, T. Tweed wondered in terms of the CIF score standards, who would set the target score? Would the target scores be the same across the University? Are comparison standards not working? What are the grounds to set a single standard? Often decile ratings create the impression of poor performance when there is no poor performance. Mark Gunty mentioned that the committee originally left a specific target out the report, but the Deans Council asked what the committee thought would be a reasonable target score. In the process of reviewing CIF data 4.0 was the standard that S. Mustillo used when she ran her analysis. A single standard University-wide should not be a line in the sand. The idea was more to give a general guideline that would need to be reflected on properly at the department level together with deans so that problematic promotion and tenure cases could be identified. There is not a magic number to the standards. Some standards might be better in certain contexts. S. Mustillo put 4.0 as a goal for what we value statistically, but understood there might be some flexibility, given some contexts of the courses. Mark Gunty affirmed that no single standard number should tell us an entire story of a case.

Margot Fassler (Director, Sacred Music Program) asked to what degree have conversations been concerned with types of courses, studio, graduate, undergraduate, etc. M. Kackman noted that types of courses were definitely something the committee looked at and were aspects of the context of the evaluation of teaching issues. Course characteristics have been a concern but such concerns are difficult to adjust for statistically. The committee encouraged chairpersons and CAP members to reflect on those issues.

M. Fassler also wondered if there should be a different instrument for graduate teaching. J. Brockmole indicated that the committee did ponder what the University should expect of all teaching. Yet, the committee was sensitive to questions that do not apply in certain situations. Some departments will have different teaching questions, such as faculty who teach art, music, etc. The spirit of the report was guided by the question: How do we faculty better evaluate our teaching. S. Mustillo indicated that indeed her analysis was focused on undergraduate courses and teaching.

T. Anderson noted that grade distribution has been a concern when he evaluates teaching. He wondered if the committee considered grade distribution in their discussions about the evaluation of teaching. J. Brockmole admitted that faculty should have a conversation about the manner in which faculty distribute grades. T. Anderson underscored that grades do affect student evaluations. J. McGreevy recalled that department chairpersons have the ability to instantly review grade distribution but opined that it can be shocking to see that all students in a class receive an "A" grade. Further, J. McGreevy mentioned that he was heartened to see that there was a strong correlation with strong composite scores and high intellectual challenge. Students at Notre Dame have had a positive reaction to being intellectually challenged.

P. Holland reflected that when he has read teaching reports for tenure and promotion cases it appeared that every classroom observation described class visits as fantastic. He welcomed the idea of the creation of evaluation templates for teaching reports and classroom visits. J. Brockmole stated that departments will play a role in the creation of such templates. J. Brockmole also wondered if teaching peer review should be done by faculty outside of the particular faculty member's department. T. Anderson observed that an outside evaluator might complicate matters for foreign language courses. J. McGreevy observed that over nine years of reading tenure and promotion cases, only about five teaching reports indicated that a course was not taught well. . The University and the College need to do a better job at describing and evaluating disastrous CIFs.

Dianne Pinderhughes (Chairperson, Department of Africana Studies) questioned whether or not those who write teaching reports can address issues of bias in the comments and scores of the CIFs? M. Kackman noted that the committee did talk through issues about how to deal with bias in the CIF scores and comments. S. Mustillo mentioned that she struggled the most with this issue. The committee was charged to examine evidence of bias in students' reflections, and there is clear evidence of differences in student evaluations. Faculty race was the biggest influence of students' expressed evaluations. S. Mustillo was not clear on what to do about that. The University administration should certainly educate chairpersons and PAC members about these biases. Such findings remain a reminder that the CIF scores alone should not be the end-all of the evaluation for teaching. Mary Celeste Kearney mentioned that we now have clear evidence that certain people receive a bias numerically in the teaching evaluations, and she wondered if providing access to student comments might add to such biases. Mark Gunty responded that when the committee spoke to faculty who have extended

experience with reviewing student comments, and they reported that they could better understand tenure and promotion cases when they had access to the students' comments.

T. Anderson noted that beginning language courses might show students reporting a low intellectual challenge. He was not in favor of dismissing the CIF category but observed that such student reaction can be very typical. J. Brockmole admitted that the committee did not discuss that specific context.

J. McGreevy thanked the committee members for their extensive work.

### **International Internships**

J. McGreevy asked Associate Dean JoAnn DellaNeva to introduce the topic of international internships. J. DellaNeva reviewed the various types of internships. Recognizing that internships have a different academic value than conventional courses, J. DellaNeva recalled that the College voted to limit (to one course) the number of 3-credit major/minor internships taken in the U.S. which may count toward the 122 minimum credits required for the AL degree. With regard to this new policy governing international internships, the question arises: Can a student take (for credit towards the degree) one 3-credit internship in the U.S. and another 3-credit internship as part of study abroad? J. DellaNeva summarized that options for input/vote by the College Council:

Option A. A student should be able to take a 3-credit internship in the U.S. and another 3-credit internship abroad for a total of 6 credits of internship work counting toward degree.

Option B. A student should be able to take a 3-credit internship in the U.S., and another 3-credit internship abroad but only 3 credits of internship work (total) will count toward degree.

J. DellaNeva observed that in either case, students could accumulate as many internship experiences as they wish; the policy merely pertains to whether or not the credits accrued count toward the minimum of 122 credits required by the College.

After a brief discussion, J. McGreevy asked for a vote, with options A and B.

The College Council voted for option B.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

J. McGreevy adjourned the plenary meeting at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew C. Zyniewicz  
Dean's Executive Administrator