Minutes of the Spring 2013 School of Science Special Faculty Assembly
Friday, April 26, 2013
Science Building, Room LD 010

Faculty Present:

Biology: Anderson, Greg; Atkinson, Simon; Bard, Martin; Lees, N. Doug (Associate Dean); Marrs, Kathleen (Associate Dean); Randall, Stephen; Rhodes, Simon (Dean); Skalnik, David (Associate Dean); Watson, John C. (Past-President of the Faculty); Yost, Robert

Chemistry & Chemical Biology: Anliker, Keith; Blacklock, Brenda; McLeish, Michael; Minto, Robert; Richards, Nigel

Computer & Information Science: Durresi, Arjan; Fang, Shiaofen; Liang, Yao; Mukhopadhyay, Snehasis (President of the Faculty); Raje, Rajeev; Tuceryan, Mihran

Earth Sciences: Bird, Broxton; Gilhooly, William; Martin, Pamela; Wang, Lixin

Mathematical Sciences: Misiurewicz, Michal; Morton, Patrick; Sarkar, Jyoti; Tarasov, Vitaly

Physics: Gavrin, Andy; Petrache, Horia; Rhoads, Edward

Psychology: Boehm, Stephen; Devine, Dennis; Goodlett, Charles; McGrew, John; Neal-Beliveau, Bethany (Secretary of the Faculty); Rand, Kevin; Stockdale, Peggy

President Snehasis Mukhopadhyay called the assembly to order at 9:05 AM. He let the group know that the purpose of this special assembly was to continue the discussion of the new School of Science (SOS) survey instrument (School of Science Student Satisfaction and Effective Teaching Behavior Survey – Lecture). The hope is to focus the discussion on the new instrument, not how the survey will be conducted (i.e., paper vs. online). John Watson was invited to present the instrument and lead the discussion. A motion was made and seconded to untable the discussion. Motion approved.

Watson again thanked Jane Williams and Jackie Singh for their help. Singh reported back to Watson that the SOS’s current survey needed to be focused and we need to decide its purpose. President Mukhopadhyay formed a task force to design a new survey instrument focused on teaching professionalism and to a lesser extent, student satisfaction. The result is the School of Science Student Satisfaction and Effective Teaching Behavior Survey – Lecture.

The new survey instrument received endorsement from Singh. The new survey has three parts: (1) Demographic information; (2) Eight questions that address teaching professionalism; and (3) Three questions that address student satisfaction with the course. The two sections will be tabulated separately and published literature states that students can accurately judge teaching professionalism and their level of satisfaction with the course. Stephen Randall asked that additional demographic questions regarding student attendance and their expected grade be included. This information gives the evaluator some information on the students doing the evaluating. Edward Rhoads concurred that expected grade is helpful. Watson reminded the group that demographic information was never used as part of the evaluation, and the task force had not discussed them, however, they do provide prospective. President Mukhopadhyay asked how the information will be used. Watson responded that the data would be used by the instructor; he always pays attention to average hours per week spent on course and hours working. Andy Gavrin also uses the demographic information, especially hours spent on course. The SOS can begin to use this data more readily because it is online. Keith Anliker responded that with the
online survey, demographic data is no longer collected; he frequently would read comments and then look at the demographic data in the past. Michal Misiurewicz believes that putting everyone on equal footing is very disturbing – big differences between departments and even within departments; he will not support the new survey instrument. President Mukhopadhyay responded that most of the questions on the new instrument are already on Math’s current survey. Misiurewicz replied that even though questions concern teaching professionalism, they are actually measuring student satisfaction. Watson stated that the task force looked at the Math survey for guidance; in the past, there was too much emphasis on the SOS survey’s global score when evaluating teaching. Andy Gavrin proposed a friendly amendment to add demographic data to the new survey instrument. Bethany Neal-Beliveau clarified – add a question about attendance. President Mukhopadhyay said yes, % attendance during the course (0-25%, 25-50%, 50-75%, 75-100%). A motion was made and seconded to add old demographic questions and the attendance question to the new survey. Vitaly Tarasov has no problem with the questions on the new survey, but does have concerns about comparing data across departments. He sees no reason to compare across departments. Dean Rhodes asked Charley Goodlett if P&T committees want to see comparisons within the department and unit as dossiers move up through the levels. Goodlett responded that committees want multiple measures of teaching effectiveness; with evaluation scores, they do want comparisons, but are more interested in department comparisons. Nigel Richards added that at University of Florida, candidates would provide their own numbers, as well as department and school averages for awards and P&T. It’s important to at least have department comparisons. Watson stated that each department needs to generate an excellence document with their definition of how to use the scores from the survey. Anliker suggested that normative data is needed for small vs. large courses. Watson reminded the group that the task force suggested that the data be broken down into subsets. Gavrin asked how many semesters of data are needed to determine if new survey ends up the same as the old one. Watson replied that we should be looking at numbers after a year. Patrick Morton asked if the language could be removed from the Likert scales, and Watson responded that anchors for the scale are needed. Peggy Stockdale stated that students will use the midpoint if they think the instructor is average or if they don’t understand the question; a Not Applicable/Don’t Know should be added to the scale. Kevin Rand added that any negatively-worded items should be avoided. Gavrin made a motion to switch to a 6-point Likert scale that includes a Not Applicable/Don’t Know/Can’t Judge option. Rand proposed a friendly amendment to move to a 6-point Likert (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), plus a Not Applicable/Don’t Know/Can’t Judge option. There was a second to the motion and the motion passed. Michael McLeish proposed a friendly amendment to remove “generally” from the first question – amendment passed. Regarding question 6, Watson told the group that the experts recommended including “my” in the sentence because students don’t know if instructors are giving other students correct grades. Morton proposed a friendly amendment to replace question 6 with “My instructor grades my work fairly and impartially.” Amendment was seconded and passed. Discussion ended and Watson told the group that Jane Williams and Matt Rust will be asked to look over the amended survey instrument and make sure there are no problems. President Mukhopadhyay responded that the vote on the new survey instrument will be postponed until we have the experts’ opinions. He called for a vote on the use of an electronic ballot to approve the new survey instrument. All were in favor. There was a motion and second to adjourn. All were in favor and assembly ended at 10:10 A.