Academic Standards Committee (ASC) - Minutes and Outcome November 4, 2022

Extension of Good Teaching Practices

Present were: Dawna Cerney (Chair), Joanathan Farris, Julie Felix, Jennifer Pintar, Jorden Pintar, Gregg Sturrus.

Brief reacquaintance of the Best Practices in Teaching proposal was communicated.

Faculty input was requested at the 2022 October senate meeting. From that collective faculty input the committee assessed and documented the areas of concern where faculty were collectivity in alignment and noted novel observations or concerns made by faculty.

It was agreed by the committee that content of the proposal needed alignment with the CBA and that Senate cannot address Articles covered by the CBA.

Pintar (Jennifer) remined the group that a December 1st deadline is on the table and that prudent evaluation and recommendations should be taken in satisfaction of that deadline.

Cerney noted that the observations and outcomes of the ASC committee would be shared with the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) and the TLC committee outcomes shared with ASC. Cerney and Wecht (Chair of TLC) would draft a joint response for the December Senate meeting. That response would be shared to both TLC and ASC before the December Senate meeting.

Discussion of the proposed Extension of Good Teaching Practices was centered around the following and informed the ASC response:

- Aspects of the proposal that were agreed with, and which could be retained in a potential future "Best Practices" document.
- The overarching alignments of concerns expressed by faculty from their responses to the proposed "Good Teaching Practices" document.

It was agreed that:

- Posting syllabus on an LMS is to be maintained in a "Best Practices" document
- A "significant" grade must be in a CBA

The following collective faculty alignments of concerns were raised on suggestions that seemed punitive towards faculty or were in contrast/contradiction to best practices of teaching.

- Language should not infringe upon the CBA (such as: will/must/required)
- Directive language contradicts (will/must/require etc.) best practices as diversity of disciplines and courses are driven by the distinctive and intrinsic nature of (the) subject(s).
- Except for legal dates such as last day to withdraw from courses, mandating timing grades/information restricts best practices of specific disciplines and courses. Overwhelmingly, faculty response clearly demonstrated the diversity in deadlines which aimed to achieve the highest quality of student success in their courses.
- Mandating amount or percentage of a grade/feedback restricts best practices of specific disciplines and courses. Overwhelmingly, faculty response clearly demonstrated the diversity in grade distribution (for instance as associated with attendance or final grades and papers) which aimed to achieve the highest quality of student success in their courses and nature of the discipline.
- Requiring final syllabus prior to 72 hours – infringes on teaching best practices and academic freedom, where for instance specific deadlines cannot be provided based on considerations such as course subject matter (i.e., current events driven course work) or success of student learning (i.e., where classes may collectively require more time to learn material)
- Best practices associated with faculty and student resources such as technology and equipment should not be driven by decisions made by IT or contracts with external agencies (i.e., Barns and Nobel). Language such as optimal do not figure into best practice of teaching when needed resources are selected in absence of faculty consultation.

ASC outcome of findings and analysis of faculty input:

- Syllabus should be posted on a LMS
- Key elements of the Common Syllabus should be included in all syllabi
- Course description, assignments, and point distribution should be made available to students before the start of classes. [The mechanism for this was not really settled--Blackboard is not currently available to students before the first day]. Exceptions must be made for special situations (sudden reassignments and replacements, etc.).
- Students should receive regular feedback on their progress. The mechanisms for and details of this will be relegated to schools and/or departments. I am unsure whether timely response falls under this category... we didn't get much into that topic.
- Mechanism which may "in part" support best teaching practices while providing academic freedom and provide structure and guidelines includes
    - Establishment of College level consultation through a Board that includes faculty and student representation. Student representation should not be made up of student government, allowing for broader representation.
        - The Board outlines guiding principles which align with best teaching practices associated with the disciplines within the college
    - Draft syllabi are submitted to Department Chairs to confirm alignment College and YSU agreed upon content. Final syllabi are completed in time for the semester start date.