

University Faculty Affairs Committee Minutes: 28 March 2007

The Faculty Affairs Committee met at 1:30 pm in SLC 253.

Members present: , Butchart (chair); Budzburg, Lewis, Maltese, Merkle, Munneke, and St. Pierre. Also attending: Diane Samdahl and Jayne Smith.

I. The committee continued its discussion, begun at its 28 February meeting, of the report of the sub-committee charged to respond to two recommendations from the Task Force on General Education and Student Learning (sub-committee report attached). The sub-committee report implicitly accepted both recommendations and offered a model assessment tool in response to the first recommendation, and ideas that would realize the second recommendation.

After extensive discussion, the committee decided not to deal directly with the work of the sub-committee, but rather to deal with the substance of the Task Force recommendations. It decided by consensus that it was unwilling to endorse either recommendation. Regarding the first recommendation's call for a university-wide, on-line evaluation of teaching, a number of objections were raised. Most saliently, committee members argued that local-level units, whether colleges, schools, or departments, were the appropriate levels to determine the best means to evaluate pedagogy appropriate to the units; there was broad consensus among the members that a one-size-fits-all evaluation was inappropriate. At the same time, there was broad agreement that the university should facilitate the development by units of high quality assessment tools through such means as creating a web-site featuring all current or proposed course-teacher assessment instruments, or all such instruments as units would care to share, and identifying faculty members on campus with expertise in assessment who would advise units seeking to improve their means of assessment.

Regarding the second Task Force recommendation on evaluating course rigor, the committee felt that the recommendation was so intertwined with the first as to make discussion of it as a separate issue difficult. The committee felt, however, that the only suggestion offered that was not already being practiced across campus—mandating course portfolios for every course, or teaching portfolios—would create a bureaucratic nightmare, add significantly to workload, and would be unlikely to be evaluated in a way commensurate with the work required to prepare them.

Overall, then, there was consensus that the committee rejected both recommendations from the Task Force, independent of the work of its dedicated sub-committee. However, the members in attendance did not feel that there were enough members in attendance to vote on an issue of this magnitude. It decided to consider itself a sub-committee that would decide upon the text of a resolution, circulate the resolution to the entire committee by e-mail, and then either take an e-mail vote, or decide by consensus to table the resolution to the next regular meeting of the committee on 25 April 2007.

II. The chair announced that the Executive Committee had referred to the Faculty Affairs Committee the issue of the current e-mail spam filter, which reportedly occasionally destroys or otherwise loses some messages rather than directing them to either the recipient's in-box or junk

mail folder. No specific charge was relayed with the referral. [The chair subsequently consulted the minutes of the Executive Committee's meeting of 8 March 2007. The minutes merely indicate that a member of the committee has raised the issue, another had moved that it be referred to FAC, and the motion passed]. The committee decided to invite one or more individuals from EITS to attend its next meeting to discuss the problem.

The committee adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Ron Butchart, Chair.

(Sub-committee report attached)

13 October 2006, updated 22 January 2007 Revised 23 Feb 2007

To: UGA Faculty Affairs Committee
From: sub-committee for teaching evaluation (Capomacchia, Merkle, Norman)
Re: sub-committee report

David Shipley, former Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, asked us to meet and propose recommendations for fulfilling two of the recommendations, II.2.4, and II.2.5, proposed by the Task Force for General Education. The first of these, II.2.4, recommended creating a University-wide online course evaluation system; the second, II.2.5, recommended evaluating academic rigor in UGA classes by using different means of assessment (see the appendix for the exact text of the recommendations made by the Task Force).

I. CONCERNING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION II.2.4

The sub-committee studied the issue of online evaluations of instruction and, with the help of Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), came up with a five-point program:

- A. A uniform set of statements to serve as a core set for all UGA undergraduate courses that would evaluate course management and the professionalism of the instructor.
- B. A uniform set of statements to assess the academic rigor of each class. In crafting these statements, the sub-committee used the Bloom/Anderson taxonomy of educational objectives to determine the perceived level at which each course operates (see the appendix for the Bloom / Anderson taxonomy). As an alternative to the specific Bloom / Anderson taxonomy, the issue of course rigor could be addressed by substituting statements that include the following words/terms: challenging, demanding, meeting my expectation, etc., as in statements 4, 6, and 7 of the during-course online assessment form. Are these sufficient to be a measure of academic rigor, or does the Bloom Anderson scale seem to work better?
- C. Additional questions / statements to be constructed by each individual unit according to specific discipline requirements or classroom environments, which may include instructor-specific statements / questions.
- D. Some opportunities to allow students to comment on points A – C.
- E. A during-course evaluation that is intended to benefit the instructor.

A. Recommendation I concerning uniform online course assessment:

The sub-committee proposes a two-part process (developed with the help of Center for Teaching and Learning [CTL]).

1. A during-course online assessment that will be used by instructors to help evaluate how the course is going and what areas, if any, need improvement or modification. We recommend that units and departments be given sufficient flexibility to decide when / how often in the term the assessment should occur in order to accommodate different classroom environments and structures (e.g., team-taught courses, modular courses etc.) This

assessment would consist of a core set of statements that students University-wide would assess and could also include course-specific statements added by the unit or professor. (See below for the University-wide form.)

2. An end-of course online assessment that will be used to measure course management and professionalism and to assess rigor of the course. This instrument would consist of a University-wide set of statements that students would evaluate and could also include course-specific statements / questions added by the unit or professor that could address, *inter alia*, differences in classroom environments, course level, etc. (See below for the University-wide form.)

1. The During-course online assessment form:

Part A. University-wide assessment

(please evaluate all statements; y = yes; s = sometimes; n = no)

1. The instructor is giving a clear presentation of the material.	Y	S	N
2. The instructor treats all students with respect.	Y	S	N
3. Overall the instructor is an effective teacher.	Y	S	N
4. The course is keeping me engaged in learning.	Y	S	N
5. The instructor uses examples relevant to the subject matter.	Y	S	N
6. The workload is appropriate.	Y	S	N
7. Compared to other courses, this course is challenging	Y	S	N
7. My performance is being fairly evaluated.	Y	S	N

(units / instructors may add items to the bottom of this list)

Part B. Comment(s):

2. The End-of-course online assessment form:

Part A. Course management and professionalism

(please evaluate all statements; y = yes; s = sometimes; n = no)

1. The course was managed professionally.	Y	S	N
2. A syllabus was followed.	Y	S	N
3. Course objectives were stated.	Y	S	N
4. The class met regularly as scheduled.	Y	S	N
5. Lectures/notes followed course objectives.	Y	S	N
6. Assignments reinforced course objectives.	Y	S	N
7. Help was available out of class.	Y	S	N

(units / instructors may add items to the bottom of this list)

Part B. Course Rigor

(Please respond to the following statements concerning your opinion of the academic rigor level of the course; y = yes, m = maybe, n = no).

1. **Knowledge of course material:** You are confident that you can recall information from lectures, notes, homework, problems etc. from this course.

Y M N

2. **Understanding course material:** You are confident that you can explain ideas and concepts presented in this course to others.

Y M N

3. **Applying course material to other situations:** You are confident that you can apply the new knowledge from this course, and/or with knowledge from previous courses to solve problems in this area of study.

Y M N

4. **Analyzing ideas/concepts:** You are confident that you can analyze, compare or differentiate ideas or concepts from this course or previous courses in this area of study.

Y M N

5. **Evaluating a problem/finding a solution:** You are confident that you can evaluate problem or justify a decision/course of action from the information presented in this course or previous courses in this area of study.

Y M N

6. **Creating something new:** You are confident that you can generate new products, ideas, or ways of viewing/interpreting things from the information presented in this course and/or in conjunction with information learned in previous courses in this area of study.

Y M N

Part C. Comment(s):

II. CONCERNING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION II.2.5

The sub-committee also studied recommendation II.2.5 of the Task Force that concerned developing a more complete teaching evaluation process where both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of an instructor's teaching. We slightly re-focused the recommendation from teaching evaluation to teaching and learning assessment on the grounds that assessment of rigor needs to involve both the students and the faculty. The items above in Part B of the End-of-course evaluation ask students to assess rigor; in addition to that evaluation, we propose a two-point program:

- A. A course portfolio as a qualitative assessment of course planning and instructor commitment to teaching. A course portfolio, as opposed to a teaching portfolio, concerns only the course at hand and could include documents concerning course planning, materials, teaching philosophy, and methods (e.g., a syllabus, reading list, list of course objectives, etc.).
- B. Pre- and post-tests that would offer a semi-quantitative assessment of both teaching and student learning.

The sub-committee thought periodic peer review should not be used since some units are too small to implement this type of review successfully. Interviews of students by faculty peers were not recommended because of the perceived difficulty in choosing students in an unbiased manner, and because interviews were viewed as a qualitative measure not unlike the forms proposed above and, as such, would be redundant.

The pre-test could be developed and administered with the help of CTL online before class met as a requirement for admission to class; or it could be administered on the first day of class as *per* unit discretion. The post-test could be also be developed and administered with the help of CTL as a removable part of the final and could be comprised of the exact questions contained in the pre-test or similar questions covering the same content, as *per* unit discretion.

Pre-test and post-test results could be compared to provide an overall semi-quantitative assessment of student learning for the course. The results could also be broken down according to the individual taxonomic levels to assess learning at each level; taken together both results could be used to assess the numbers of students reaching the academic standards expected/required for the course. The assessment would indicate not only the academic rigor provided by the course but would be a semi-quantitative evaluation of teaching as well as learning in the course. For example if the pre-test average score was 15%; but the post-test average score was 80% then quality learning and quality teaching probably occurred. This point would allow for assessment of the quality of the instructor's teaching while eliminating personality considerations; that is quality would then be a semi-quantitative measure, not a perception. In addition, course design/teaching adjustments could be made based on the results, as *per* unit discretion to achieve course goals if not already met.

A. Recommendation II concerning assessment of teaching and learning:

Part A. Course Portfolio

Each instructor will collate a portfolio that should include the follow:

Syllabus

- Course design (schedule of topics; how topics relate to unit curriculum)

- Course goals and objectives

- Teaching and learning methods (lecture, lab, discussion, projects, *etc.*)

- Assessment (testing/grading) strategy

- UGA required information, *e.g.* honor code, *etc.*

- Course manual or notes

- Course assignments with rationale

- Brief statement of teaching philosophy and how it will help students learn course material

Part B. Pre-test/post-test

Each course will include both a pre-course test and a post-course test. The post-course test could be the final exam in the course.

Pre-test and post-test questions were conceived as unit/discipline specific. Pre-test questions could be questions from previous final exams. This process could give some semi-quantitative assessment of student learning and the quality of instruction. In addition to addressing course

academic rigor the committee suggests that pre- and post-test questions could be constructed at a taxonomic level selected to reflect the academic rigor the instructor/unit has chosen for the course. The number of pre-test and post-test questions (5 – 20) would be determined and written by each unit. It would seem logical to construct questions based on course learning objectives.

For example if the course level is aimed solely at knowledge/recall then all questions would be constructed at the first level. If the course originators sought to reach the analysis/analyzing level, questions would be generated at the four levels knowledge/recall, comprehension/understanding, application/applying, and analysis/analyzing. The highest level chosen would indicate intended course academic rigor.

Respectfully submitted.

Appendix

Recommendations from the Task Force on General Education:

Recommendation II.2.4: “Establish an online course evaluation system. Formulate a uniform set of questions for all University undergraduate courses. The evaluation should include a question regarding student perceptions of the course’s academic rigor. The evaluation should also include questions developed by colleges, schools, or departments that address concerns appropriate to disciplines and courses. Develop an online mid-semester evaluation form for the benefit of instructors.”

Recommendation II.2.5. “Foster the development of a more complete teaching evaluation process where both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of an instructor’s teaching. Evaluations might include such methods as periodic peer-review, interviews of students by faculty peers, or a teaching portfolio.”

The Bloom/Anderson Taxonomy:

Bloom	Anderson
1. knowledge	1. recall
2. comprehension	2. understanding
3. application	3. applying
4. analysis	4. analyzing
5. synthesis	5. evaluating
6. evaluation	6. creating

References

Anderson, L. & Krathwohl, D. A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. New York: Longman, 2001.

Bloom Benjamin S. and David R. Krathwohl. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, by a committee of college and university examiners. New York, Longmans, Green, 1956.

Bloom, Benjamin S., Taxonomy of educational objectives, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA 1984.

The Course Portfolio, Pat Hutchings, Editor. The Teaching Initiatives, Ch. 4, AAHE, Washington, DC.