TO: Members of the Senate
FROM: Secretary of the Senate
SUBJECT: Senate Meeting on February 5, 2015
DATE: January 29, 2015

The February meeting of the University Senate will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2015, at 4:05 p.m. in Room 113, Education.

AGENDA

1) Announcements

2) Minutes of the previous meeting and business arising from the minutes

3) Question period

CONSENT CALENDAR:

4) Annual Report of the Senate Academic Policies and Admissions Committee, Matthew Cavalli, Chair, Senate Academic Policies and Admissions Committee (attachment #1)

BUSINESS CALENDAR:

5) Curriculum Committee Report, Leslie Martin, Chair, Senate Curriculum Committee (handout at meeting)

6) Proposal for a Faculty Senate, Ad-Hoc Committee on Shared Governance (attached to January 15 Senate agenda)

7) Honorary Degrees Committee nominations, Kim Kenville, Chair, Senate Honorary Degrees Committee

8) Report by the Ad-Hoc USAT Committee, Joan Hawthorne, Chair, Senate Ad-Hoc Student Evaluation of Teaching Committee (attachment #2) Note: The executive summary is included here; The full report is available on the University Senate web page at: http://und.edu/university-senate/

9) Faculty Travel and Research Funding
To: Lori Hofland, Administrative Assistant, Office of the Registrar  
From: Matt Cavalli, Chair, Academic Policies and Admissions Committee, 2014-2015  
Re: APAC Annual Report, 2013-2014  
Date: January 22, 2014

The following issues were discussed and voted upon during the 2013-2014 academic year:

Distance courses were categorized into one of four types for the purposes of assigning credit hours. The adopted policy read:

*Academic units are expressed in terms of semester credit hours at the University of North Dakota. For face-to-face courses, one semester credit hours represents one 50-minute class period (lecture or structured student/faculty interaction) or 2-3 hours of laboratory session for each week of the semester. For online or distance courses, UND academic units are assigned according to the classification of the distance course:

- **Type 1**: Distance course sections taught synchronously with face-to-face sections with equivalent student learning objectives and expectations for student effort — The distance section is assigned the same credit hours as the face-to-face section.

- **Type 2**: Distance course sections taught asynchronously with face-to-face sections with equivalent student learning objectives and expectations for student effort — The distance section is assigned the same credit hours as the face-to-face section.

- **Type 3**: Distance courses not classified as Type 1 or 2 that share equivalent student learning objectives and expectations for student effort as face-to-face sections of the course at UND — The distance section is assigned the same credit hours as the face-to-face section.

- **Type 4**: Distance courses not classified as Type 1 or 2 that do not have corresponding face-to-face sections at UND for comparison — The department or unit providing the course must document the expected level of student effort, expected student/faculty interactions, course assessment plan, and student learning objectives for the course. This information will be reviewed by the appropriate Department, College/School, and University curriculum committees for assignment of appropriate credit hours.
The charge of the APAC was changed as follows:

To perform a thorough review of Committee policies in even-numbered years and this review is to be submitted to the Senate Executive Committee.

In addition, number (5) under Functions and Responsibilities should read as follows:

**Correspondence and extension courses** distance/online, transfer of credits

Several discussions were held with Sol Jensen regarding a tuition confirmation deposit and priority application deadline. Ultimately, the tuition deposit proposal presented by Sol was approved by APAC under the condition that a deferral process be included. The priority application deadline proposal was also approved under the condition that the intent of the deadline be clearly communicated to students and that the admissions webpage post whether or not applications were still being accepted after the deadline due to available seats.

The following major declaration policy was presented to the APAC and ultimately approved:

In order to progress toward the timely and successful completion of an undergraduate degree, it is in the best interest of students at the University of North Dakota to declare a major early in their academic career. During the semester in which a General Studies: Undeclared student will reach 45 undergraduate credit hours (typically the third semester), a Major Declaration notice will be added to the student’s To Do list in Campus Connection. In addition, the Student Success Center will use multiple means of communication and connect a student to resources to assist in exploring program of study options. This notification will prompt a student to take the necessary steps to move from General Studies: Undeclared, and begin working with an advisor in the program of study the student plans to pursue. Upon reaching 60 credit hours in a General Studies: Undeclared status, a negative service indicator hold will be placed on a student’s account prohibiting registration for the following semester until a program of study other than General Studies: Undeclared is chosen. The Student Success Center will further assist the student through additional communication and contact to prompt major declaration. Once a major is declared, the negative service indicator hold will be removed by the Student Success Center, allowing the student to register for courses based on the intended program of study. A student who has reached 60 or more credit hours would be allowed to retain or move to General Studies: Undeclared status only with permission from the Student Success Center.

Additional discussions were held about whether or not a hard application deadline should be implemented (First day of class? Two weeks before class? Another alternative?) due to the difficulty of putting together a full schedule for incoming students at that point and the likelihood of student success. No formal actions were taken on these issues.
AD HOC USAT COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT

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Senate Ad-Hoc Student Evaluation of Teaching Committee Charge

**Purpose:** To review the content and administration of the student evaluation of teaching forms and their application.

**Membership:** Faculty, at least one of whom has experience teaching online courses, representatives from the Provost’s Office, the Office of Institutional Research, and the ES Committee or the Director of ES. A student representative.

**Terms:** 5/1/2014—12/31/2014

**Selection:** Appointed by the Senate Executive Committee.

**Functions and Responsibilities:**
1. To review the current administration of the student evaluation of teaching forms in all settings and courses – on campus, in hybrid courses, in online courses and in graduate, undergraduate and professional courses; this would include issues related to the possibility of paperless evaluations for all courses, both on campus and online;
2. To review the effectiveness of the current situation relative to evaluation of Essential Studies courses, and, if warranted, to recommend changes to how student evaluation of teaching forms could be constructed and used to assess Essential Studies goal achievement.
3. To review the current application of summary and written results from student evaluation of teaching forms in annual review, promotion and tenure decisions;
4. To review the current research literature on student evaluation of teaching; to review the best practices in the administration of student evaluation of teaching in all settings; to review the best practices in the use of the summary results of student evaluation of teaching in annual review, promotion and tenure decisions; and to develop, if necessary, a new student evaluation of teaching form for use in all settings;
5. To propose procedures for uniform administration of student evaluation of teaching forms in all settings;
6. To propose policies for the use of data obtained from student evaluation of teaching forms in decisions regarding annual review, promotion and tenure;
7. To develop recommendations to the University Senate for policies regarding the application of and use of data obtained from student evaluation of teaching forms.

**Guiding Principles:**
Input from all affected parties including lecturers, non-tenured and tenured faculty;
Use of most recent research on student evaluation of teaching;
Development of valid and reliable student evaluation of teaching questions;
Consistency in use of the student evaluation of teaching forms;
Consistency in the application of student evaluation of teaching results.

**Reporting:** To the University Senate Executive Committee and to the University Senate

**Source of Information:** Bylaws: Committees -- 2. Permanent and ad hoc committees Senate Executive Committee minutes, February 21, 2014 and March 25, 2014.
Key Topics and Questions Related to Student Evaluation of Teaching

Based on completion of the study prescribed by the charge, a list of topics was developed for consideration and discussion when framing recommendations:

- Transparency of evaluation processes and results
- The feasibility of a paperless student evaluation of teaching system
- Appropriateness of the current student evaluation of teaching tool (the USAT)
- Options for adapting the current USAT form vs. adopting/adapting a new tool
- Options for flexibility according to course type
- Use of open vs. closed questions (or a combination)
- Desire/need to quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Consideration of piloting, if a new form were to be recommended
- Guidelines for campus/colleges/departments when using student evaluation of teaching information
- How student evaluations should fit as part of the information mix in personnel processes (e.g., T&P, merit raises)
- Midterm course evaluations
- Communication (with students, faculty, other) around student evaluation of teaching processes and use
- Appropriateness of using “cut scores” for personnel process decisions
- The need for improved student evaluation information related to ES learning outcomes
- Options for presenting findings/recommendations and regarding soliciting campus-wide input prior to a campus decision-making processes

These topics were subdivided and organized. Subcommittees formed for further study and development of possible recommendations for consideration by the full committee. Subcommittees organized the larger committee’s research/findings around the following questions and concerns:

1. Should UND adopt a different “student evaluation of teaching (SET)” form? If yes, what should the new SET form be, an established form in use elsewhere or create/adopt to a new form?
2. If a new SET form is adopted, how many quantitative (closed, Likert style) vs. qualitative (open-ended, written) questions should be included? How should the qualitative data be used?
3. If a new SET form is adopted, what options can be provided to offer more flexibility for course type?
4. If a new SET form is adopted, how will it be pilot-tested and ultimately “rolled out” for use in all UND courses?
5. What SET methods could generate more useful (and trustworthy) information from students?
6. Student perception that feedback they provide on the USAT doesn’t make a difference have been documented, and those perceptions likely contribute to the very low response rates that are currently seen in cases where a SET form is not administered during class time (typically in paper form). Can we address those perceptions (a) to improve response rates in online and hybrid courses and (b) to make it plausible to consider a paperless SET process?
7. There seems to be little clarity (and virtually no cross-campus consistency) regarding the meaning, value, and use of student evaluation information. How can that be addressed?
8. A review of the literature suggests that best practices and cautions regarding the use of SET information are not fully reflected in UND’s current use of the results. How can UND personnel practices be brought more in line with best practices?
Ad Hoc USAT Committee List of Recommendations

1. UND should adopt a new set of quantitative (closed, Likert style) questions for a portion of the UND student evaluation of teaching (SET) form. These questions should be derived from an existing, publicly available SET form such as the Students’ Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ). The current open-ended questions used in UND’s USAT should be retained on any new form.

2. Instructors and departments that complete SETs online should be provided the opportunity to include unique questions (drawn from a question bank or written by a department) in the online form. Questions should be used consistently by departments over time. If a paper-and-pencil SET form is used, the evaluation packet should include a “supplemental questions” section, such that departments could include a separate leaflet of questions for students to complete.

3. UND should adopt a small set (5-6 questions) of quantitative (closed, Likert style) questions for students to use to inform other students of their perceptions of the course. The responses to these questions should then be made publicly available.

4. UND should implement a paperless version of its new SET form, available to all UND faculty, conducted using an online survey. The overall aim is to begin a gradual transition to online student evaluations.

5. UND is strongly encouraged to pilot a new SET form (if use of a new form is approved).
   a. A pilot of a new instrument should involve testing the form in a variety of disciplines and course types, as well as on-campus and online. Instructors should be asked to volunteer to use the new form in their courses, and it might be wise to involve only tenured faculty in an initial pilot. One strategy that could be used in large classes is to give the new form to one half of the class and the current (USAT) form to the other half.
   b. Data analysis should follow the steps utilized in the USAT Data Analysis Report.

6. Response rates typically drop with a paperless evaluation process, which appears to be related to expecting completion of the SET to occur outside of class. Intentional and systematic communication with students about the importance of and use of the student evaluation process is essential. Such communication should be rooted in careful strategizing, potentially including incentives, to ensure maximum response rates.
   a. Whenever possible, student evaluations of teaching should be completed during the class period to maximize return rates.
   b. Departments and colleges should be encouraged to adopt policies governing any possible use of bonus point incentives for maximizing student participation.

7. UND should establish a website that provides transparency about student evaluations. The site should include scores from the subset of questions written to allow students to provide information for use by other students (see recommendation #2, above). This section of the website should be interactive, allowing students to search by course and instructor. But it should also include information about how SET information is used by the university, individual colleges/departments, and faculty themselves (via links where appropriate).

8. Use of midterm student evaluations should be strongly recommended but optional. UND should support use of formative midterm evaluations by providing a subset of student evaluation questions for use as a midterm evaluation and/or by publicizing other methods of completing such an evaluation. Information from such evaluations would (if implemented) be collected and analyzed by the instructor for use in improving teaching rather than for use in personnel actions.
9. Specific questions on the SET that are most appropriate for use in personnel processes, such as tenure and promotion, should be identified for departmental and college consideration for use.

10. In no case should SET scores serve as the sole meaningful measure of teaching quality. This principle is applicable regardless of the specific form used or the specific subset of questions considered. Numerical teaching scores should be triangulated with other indicators of teaching practices and quality. Examples of other indicators may include works related to scholarship of teaching and learning, presentations on classroom teaching methods, documentation of successful advising, materials supporting use of innovative teaching methods, midterm student evaluation of teaching reports (excluding SGIDs), substantive peer evaluations constructed according to departmental standards, teaching portfolios scored using a rubric, teaching proposals, etc.

   a. When student evaluation-of-teaching scores are included in personnel processes, it makes sense that standards for scores may vary depending on college, department, and type of class.

   b. The use of “cut scores” for delineation of merit categories is not optimal. When scores are incorporated into departmental or college personnel processes, conclusions should be supported through additional documentation of successful teaching practices.

   c. Good practice with data includes triangulation of findings so that no particular measure dominates the definition.

11. Guidelines for documentation of teaching evaluation materials associated with personnel processes should be developed institutionally and used as the basis for policies or guidelines developed by individual colleges and departments.

   a. Summaries of teaching merit are written by deans, chairs, and faculty committees as part of personnel processes. Guidelines for writing those summaries should be provided so that portfolio reviewers forward information in ways that can reasonably be evaluated at the institution level.

   b. Guidelines for writing the faculty-generated portions of teaching effectiveness documentation that are prepared for use in personnel actions should be provided; this will enable faculty to appropriately contextualize SET results for consideration by reviewers.

12. The institutionally-generated SET results are officially public documents at UND given the state’s laws. Although the Faculty Handbook discourages the use of students’ written comments in personnel actions or for other administrative purposes, those documents can legally be used at the discretion of the appropriate supervisor or administrator. Faculty should be made aware of this since state law means that those documents will continue to remain available. On the other hand, faculty have a genuine need to solicit student input for formative use (i.e., use in improving their teaching and the course). Given the importance of student perspectives in determining course design, curriculum, and pedagogy, faculty should be encouraged to explore other means of soliciting informal student feedback. The regular use of Classroom Assessment Techniques (which can be done anonymously and thus can function in ways similar to the written section of the current USAT form) is one such strategy. However, there may be other means of encouraging systematic input from students as well, and soliciting such input should be strongly encouraged. (In fact, faculty commitment to collecting and benefiting from student perspectives may be one meaningful indicator of teaching quality.)
Summary of Key Research Findings and Sources

Recommendations listed on the previous pages were derived from review of a number of studies and documents. Examples include policies for use of USAT information in various departments/colleges at UND, a factor analysis of the USAT, a best practices report compiled by the Educational Advisory Board, practices for use of SET information on other campuses, examples of SET forms in use at other institutions where SET practices are considered exemplary, and various research articles and studies. Subcommittee reports found on the following pages identify the issues each group was studying, materials subcommittee members considered in drafting recommendations for whole-group discussion, and summaries of the findings that informed their reports to the ad hoc committee. All three subcommittee reports are included in their entirety.

For more information and background regarding individual recommendations, please refer to Subcommittee Reports as listed below.

Recommendation 1: See Subcommittee One Report
Recommendations 2: See Subcommittee One Report
Recommendation 3: See Subcommittee Two Report; (see Subcommittee One Report for information on closed Likert questions)
Recommendation 4: See Subcommittee Two Report
Recommendation 5: See Subcommittee One Report
Recommendation 6: See Subcommittee Two Report
Recommendation 7: See Subcommittee Two Report
Recommendation 8: See Subcommittee Two and Three Reports
Recommendation 9: See Subcommittee Three Report
Recommendation 10: See Subcommittee Three Report
Recommendation 11: See Subcommittee Three Report
Recommendation 12: See Subcommittee Three Report