

## Minutes Academics Committee Meeting 8/15/02

### Finalizing the SURF survey

Jason handed out copies of the most recent SURF draft. We made comments.

Marissa thought that the marker “favorable” should be changed to “good.”

Heather suggested changing the second question to a quality question: “What was the quality of the information you got from the SURF office?”

Heather wondered if the time questions should be answered in numbers or words. The consensus is that it should be in time.

Heather wondered if there is an “official” assignment of a SURF, or if we should reword it to be, “How many SURFs did your advisor assign to you?” Chip thought that the question was unnecessary. Jason agreed, and we decided cut that question.

Heather was concerned with wording of students “depended on your help.”

Heather: “For how many SURF projects was your assistance critical?”

Chip wondered if we still plan to talk to the SURF office beforehand. Consensus was that we should. Jason agreed to show them a copy and ask if they have comments before we release the survey.

Heather wondered about the question “Was your advisor sufficiently available to meet with your SURF?” Should the word “sufficient” be changed to “optimal,” or even dropped altogether? Should we also ask, “How much guidance did your advisor give your SURF?” Jason pointed out that the student doesn’t directly know how much time the advisor spent with the student, or if the student even asked to meet . . . it’s secondhand information. We agreed to drop “sufficiently.”

Chip thought that we should drop “lab,” and ask if the student came into work.

Heather thought we should nix sufficient in the advisor/grad student question, and Jason agreed.

Heather said that she’d heard that some grad students did too much work themselves on the reports. She suggested added a question “How much work were the reports for you?” We agreed to do so, with this wording: “How much did you contribute to the preparation of your SURFs report?” and a seven-point scale.

Lauren suggested moving the “Did your advisor consult with you” to the first question of its section.

Chip suggested going to a check-box format on the “report” question. For instance, “edited,” “heavily edited content,” “wrote portions,” “gave old PowerPoint slides,” “heavily edited grammar/language,” “wrote it all.”

Chip wondered if some other questions would be best answered with checkboxes, like the “sufficiently available to meet” question. Heather and Jason disagreed, and we decided to leave it on the seven-point scale.

Chip thought we should have a drop-down menu for Options, rather than letting people type it in, since it’s sometimes difficult to identify what people mean. Heather worried that doing it by Option would allow us to identify people. Jason noted that we’ll be asking them to volunteer their email address for a prize; and since we will be promising to remove it, so we could also promise to remove the Option if fewer than 5 people answer. Heather was concerned that some people would not respond to the survey out a fear for invasion of their privacy. Jason felt that losing some people was worth

having more detailed info available. Heather worried that the statistics would not be valid for most small options. Jason pointed out that some options don't really have a Division. It was noted that in EAS things are really controlled by department chairs, while in chemistry it's Division. Chip suggested asking for the Division, and then adding another line for Option that's noted to be optional. Heather suggested moving the Division info down below the directions.

Jason asked if we wanted to put in an optional email line for prizes. The BoD approved up to \$30. Chip thought that it depended on how good the prizes were. Heather and Lauren said that the prize wouldn't influence them filling out the form. Ying pointed out that while it might not help, it wouldn't hurt. We agreed that one thirty-dollar prize is better than three \$10 prizes. We decided that the second season "Simpson's" DVD would be a good prize. Chip suggested making the prize page pop up after the survey is submitted, and refer to the Honor Code to prevent multiple submissions.

Lauren was assigned to make the changes and send us all an email when it's done. Jason agreed to go talk to the SURF office about the survey.

### Conovocations Committee

The undergrad presidents didn't make it. Jason asked if anybody had any interest in the committee. Nobody responded. Jason agreed to send out an email to the BoD.

### Teaching Awards

We're having trouble contacting Theo. We thought that we should solicit nominations every term. Chip thought that we should only give out 1 prize a year, but Jason thinks that one per term would work. Heather and Chip disagreed. Consensus was that we should only hand out awards once per year, but collect the data after each term.

We decided that the course evaluations should be developed by the end of fall term. Chip mentioned that we should put a lot of work into the design of these high-profile evaluations.

Jason wondered if there was something we could do to improve attendance at these meetings.