

Academics Committee Meeting, 12/16/2003

Attendance: Jeff Berghorson, Julie Fry, Julie Liu, Allen, Heather Cox, {Kathryn Hsu (undergraduate)}, Amir Sadjapour

Discussion of course evaluations at other universities

Problem: lots of data collected, publication neglected

On DONUT website: lots of extremely negative, nonconstructive comments

If students thought their voice would be heard they might moderate, write more useful comments

Ideal: teaching evaluations uniform across divisions

Scott Fraser (chair of core curriculum committee) is looking into web forms for all courses, focusing on undergrads. Is doing a cost analysis

“Q committee”: council on undergraduate education: includes academic policies chair, curriculum chair, student

See if we can go to the next meeting of this committee

Web form: huge advantages in terms of administrative work

Idea: have paper form you have to fill out in class and an online form for written in comments

Teaching assistants *are* evaluated, need to emphasize this with individual divisions (chemistry & chem. E are doing this now: Anne Penney (division secretary))

Undergrads would probably like a web form administrated from the registrar

We'd like the new registrar to administer this

GPS already has a good system in place for course eval, they also ask questions about field trips, etc. They will have to adjust their own forms to eliminate redundancy. It would be OK for divisions who want to have their own evals in addition to institute-wide.

Registrar could do contests to encourage comments initially.

What specific questions to ask?

Julie Fry will bring GPS forms & booklet on results.

We should come up with the form, process diagram, need to get divisional chairs to vote on it. Take this to provost & division chairs. Talk to Scott Fraser about getting it to faculty board.

Has been brought up with Provost & Margo Marshak. They like it but aren't ready to move on it until we have something to show.

Kathryn and Jeff will go to Scott Fraser about this idea.

Priorities:

1. feedback for students choosing courses
2. feedback for TAs
3. feedback for faculty

After this has been proposed, talk to David Levy (interim registrar)

We'll get budget ideas from Scott Fraser

Registrar should collect TA names and addresses from option secretaries at the beginning of the term.

Someone from CPET should also go to divisional chairs

Undergrads will be grateful to have TA feedback

Will go to division chairs individually

TEACHING AWARDS

Have received ~9 forms by now. Most already from undergraduates.

Can send an email to all undergraduates. Easy to get approved by directory.

Advertising has been noticed. Response rate is better than previous years.

Suggestion: contact Caltech postdoc association about mentoring award nominees.

Next time Julie Liu meets with provost, will bring up the idea of making TA award institute-wide, more recognition/prestige.

Maybe even ask provost for funding for this student-based award.

Increase visibility. Maybe get funding and have a reception for winner

Amir will look at whether or not Feynman prize and student faculty award are always given to the same person

Should we have the institute start running the TA prize?

We might be able to run the selection process better than the administration.

There should at least be graduate student (academics committee) representation on the board for Feynman.

Everhardt Lecture Series WINNERS:

Houman Humati (brain tumors in children)

Mindy Kellogg (theoretical physics : BEC)

Shane Ross (space exploration)

First one should be Jan 21! Jeff & Julie will schedule. Houman will go first. Or first week in Feb. Lees-Kubota. Public events will webcast free of charge.

We have to do an advertising blitz as soon as we get back.

Use Leonardo da Vinci background.

Jeff will make fliers.

Plaque in the Ath?

Allen is making a website about the ELS – past winners, topics, etc.

Teaching awards already have a website of past winners

Library issues

Lauren is on library committee. We'll ask her to take this up with committee: seems like a policy issue.

Library has other issues