

## Minutes of Academics committee meeting 7/25/02

Present: Jason Cohen, Ying Gong, Ileana Carpen, Lauren Webb, Marissa Mock, Chip Sumner

### Faculty Board Committees

Jason said that we need to get students on academically related faculty board committees and showed a list of the committees (below). We connected online to offoffac/committees to look at the list of committees. Jason said that we should have a student on tenure committees, Lauren agreed, Ileana wondered if that would anger faculty. Jason said we should chose somebody established and graduating to serve on that committee.

### List of Faculty Board Committees

Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee –Jason says we should have

Academic Policies Committee—should have

Adhoc Childcare Committee—quality of life committee

Adhoc Library Task Force –we have someone—or it doesn't exist

Athletics & Physical Education

Convocations Committee—do we need?

Core Curriculum Steering Committee

Curriculum Committee

Educational Outreach Committee –we look at names of Faculty serving on the committee, decided to work with US committee to get somebody

Chip—if somebody wants to do it, there's nothing wrong with trying to put them on Faculty Board—already have Mike F.

Foreign Students & Scholars Committee—should have

Freshman Admissions Committee

Graduate Study Committee –Chip and Mike

Health Committee

Institute Programs Committee

Library Committee --Lauren

Matriculation Committee

Membership & Bylaws Committee

Nominating Committee

Patents & Relations with Industry Committee

Scholarships & Financial Aid Committee –not relevant

Steering Committee

Student Housing Committee

Undergraduate Academic Standards & Honors Committee

Upperclass Admissions Committee

Chip wondered where were the bylaws concerning placing students on faculty committees, and asked how many votes we got. He thought maybe we should check the Bylaws of the Faculty Board. Jason said that we could probably rely on others' previous work, because faculty committees have been handled this way for a long time.

Jason asked if anyone not on a committee already wanted to serve. Ying volunteered to serve on the Foreign Students and Scholars Committee, and Marissa volunteered to serve on the Educational Outreach Committee. Jason asked if there were any objections, and there were none. Jason asked if the others wished to volunteer to take another committee. Ileana was interested in the Academic Freedom and Tenure committee, and thought that we should maybe have a GSC officer on this particular committee. Chip said we should talk to other members of Acad. committee to find more volunteers who didn't already have a committee. Ileana said she might want to pass on her service on the CAC committee, which is adjourned for the summer. Jason said he would open it to rest of the Academics Committee by email and would bring the names to Board for the next meeting. Chip asked Jason to email him, so that he could add this to the agenda for the next BoD meeting.

#### ITS Account

Jason gave an update. We have an ITS account, everybody present has been receiving email. Jason is using procmail to ensure that email sent by a committee member goes to everyone on the committee, while email sent from someone else goes only to Jason. Jason promised to give a copy of the procmail code to Chip and Marissa. Jason said that there's an Academics Committee website, with the SURF survey online. Jason asked for a second person to help out with site—interested in Web authoring, with a knowledge of UNIX. Lauren said she was not sophisticated, but willing to help. Jason asked Chip if it were still true that ITS allows only two people to know an account password. Chip said that it was.

#### Committee Recruitment

Jason said that some are more active than others, and he has met people on the outside who are interested, and he wondered if we should for people outside. Jason said that he would feel comfortable doing consensus facilitation for up to 15 to 20 people, but no more. Lauren noted that some options are underrepresented, like GPS and Bio. Jason volunteered to talk to GPS people who are EAS associated. Marissa said that we should have committee reports and recruitment in the next GSC Newsletter in order to be open to all students. Jason said he would also talk to friends from Bio. Marissa suggested that we should try recruiting the NSO volunteers, since they will be people willing to volunteer.

#### SURF survey

Jason asked us to take a look at the online SURF survey. Marissa commented that it was too busy and suggested putting more white space between questions so that it will be easier to associate the words with the appropriate buttons. She also suggested changing the opening sentence about summing SURF and MURF experiences to "If you are supervising more than one student, please rate your overall experience." Ileana wondered how we were going to work up the data and said that we should be careful to delimit the input results so that we could import it into Excel. Marissa mentioned that the TA training committee had developed a Visual Basic program to automatically import the

data, and offered to see if we could use it. Marissa suggested dividing the different SURF survey topics more clearly, perhaps with a larger font or a horizontal rule.

### Teaching

Chip mentioned that he had talked to Gary Lorden about what one can do with TAs that just don't care. The response was that it was a big problem, and he talked of a teaching center. He said that the idea had some high-level support. Lorden thought that we could get money from provost for a Center. Jason said we could also get money from state. It is rumored that Dean Hoffman doesn't support teaching center; he doesn't think it's necessary since we're a research institute and people will find out things on their own. Chip said that the TA training committee and this committee should talk to him on this issue.

Jason mentioned that he had worked at a teaching center at Berkeley and offered to email people from Berkeley's teaching center about state grants. Ileana said that she had experience working in a teaching center as well. Jason asked her to speculate on how a teaching center would fit in at Caltech. Ileana suggested a center focused on international students. Jason wondered if it would be class-based, or if the information would be presented in some other way. Ileana thought it would be good if it offered classes for credit. Chip agreed that it would help if it were on transcripts. Jason suggested a center that focused on teaching study skills to undergrads, first, to get it started, with classes taught by grad students or faculty. Marissa/Lauren said that it should have outside experts to teach. Ileana wondered who a center would be targeting, would it be grad students first? Marissa thought that ideally it would target everybody. Jason said that ideally everybody should be required to take one course on teaching before they were allowed to teach. Chip thought that it would be better to have a carrot to tempt people to go to the center, e.g., higher salaries for people with training. Ileana commented that most students would never see that type of carrot, since it would be taken by research advisors.

Marissa/Ileana agreed that there's a lot of unfairness in TA salaries, and wondered if some overall policy could be made to address this. Chip said that the Deans generally don't like to make policy, and want to address problems on a case-by-case basis.

Jason suggested that a center would bring people in for one-time TA training. Chip/Lauren said that perhaps we should not be repeating TA training committee's work, but building off of it. Jason said that some of these issues, like the salary issue, are larger, policy issues over the head of the TA training committee. Ileana thought that maybe the salary issue is for the Quality of Life Committee. Jason disagreed and said that it's somewhat an academic issue.

### Course Evaluations

Jason wondered how we should handle the course evaluations? Marissa produced some options' evaluations collected by the TA training committee. Jason suggested that we try to collect more. Chip suggested basing our form on that already produced by the GSC, that he had discovered in the archives. Jason said that at our next meeting we'll spend

the bulk of our time trying to come up with an evaluation form. Chip said that we should definitely scan each submission from students before it's put online to make sure it's not obscene. Jason suggested that we should try collecting forms from our undergraduate universities as well.

Ileana brought up some other business: this is the time for the ELS committee to begin picking its speakers; we should talk to Ramesh. Also, we should begin thinking about the Teaching Awards. Perhaps we should make them year-long, allowing students to submit nominations at the end of each term and then choose the winners at the end of the year. Jason suggested giving an award to 1 prof and 1 student each term. Ileana also wanted to prevent the same person winning for different prizes. Jason asked for a volunteer to debrief Theo and Thanos for info on the teaching awards. We can then set up the organizational structure at our next meeting. Jason volunteered to talk to Thanos, and we agreed that whoever sees Theo first will debrief him. We agreed that it will be better if not just one person will be choosing the awards, but the whole committee. Jason suggested that we develop some guidelines for the awards.

#### Next Meeting Time

General feeling is that we should meet once a month. Our next meeting will be Aug. 15 at 12:30 at Avery. Jason suggested that people invite others who may be interested. Evaluation questions will be brainstormed beforehand by email; Marissa will scan and send out evaluations that we have collected.