Report of the ad hoc SEI Committee  
May 20, 2013

This brief report submitted to the University Senate Steering Committee outlines the activities and recommendations of the ad hoc SEI Committee struck in Autumn 2012.

Committee Charge

The committee was charged with the following:

1. Review current SEI policies and gather comparative data from other USO and benchmark institutions regarding matters related to student evaluation of teaching (e.g., role in promotion and tenure or merit decisions; procedures for gathering data, including means of increasing responses from online evaluation tools)
2. Investigate and identify other, innovative means of collecting data relevant to assessing teaching (in all of its forms, contexts, and modes of delivery at Ohio State) and rewarding exemplary teaching
3. Propose possible revisions to the current instrument, practices and/or rules governing the student evaluation of teaching
4. In the course of its deliberations and investigations, consult with and/or survey faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students across the University to
   a. Identify areas of greatest concern among these constituencies
   b. Collect suggestions regarding possible revisions to the current instrument, practices, policies, or rules
   c. Determine and recommend a course of action for the University with respect to student evaluation of teaching
5. Submit a written report of findings to the Senate Steering Committee on or before March 28, 2013.

Committee Members

Jennifer Schlueter (chair)  Theatre  
Tom Wells  Music  
Long-Sheng Chang  Pediatrics  
Dioni Viscarri  Spanish/Portuguese  
Eric MacGilvray  Political Science  
Zachary Kenitizer  CGS  
Rahaf Hares  USG  
Wayne Carlson  Vice Provost (ex officio)  
Susan Williams  Vice Provost (ex officio)
Committee Activities

The committee met five times over the course of Spring Semester 2013. Our discussions focused on three major areas of concern: first: the distinction between formative and summative assessment of teaching; second: the validity of the SEIs as an instrument for measuring teaching effectiveness in promotion, tenure, and merit decisions; and third: the problem of low student response rates since the advent of electronic SEIs. In addition to reviewing materials from leading scholars on student evaluation of instructions and from the 2011 OSU World Café, the committee met with Dr. Alan Kalish (Director, UCAT) and Vice Provost Susan Williams. Dean and Vice Provost Wayne Carlson also provided invaluable information to the committee.

Committee Recommendations

The members of the committee unanimously endorse the following recommendations:

1. The Ohio State University should continue to use SEIs for both formative and summative purposes in evaluating teaching effectiveness. However, the data reported to faculty from the existing instrument should more clearly group the three “factors” that its first nine questions measure: organization and clarity of content and presentation, instructor rapport and caring, and learning and learning environment.

2. No unit should use SEIs as the sole evaluative instrument in promotion, tenure, and merit decisions. Rather, it is essential that quantitative SEI data be used with caution, and that it be supplemented by and viewed in the context of peer evaluations of teaching and qualitative student feedback. The School of Physical Activity and Educational Services Spring 2006 Peer Review of Teaching Document (provided to this committee by Alan Kalish) serves as a model for how SEI data can be used alongside a variety of other tools for measuring teaching effectiveness.

3. Units are encouraged to regularize the use of midterm SEIs and/or other means of gathering confidential student feedback for formative purposes only. Evidence suggests that midterm evaluations, when addressed and responded to by the instructor, give students a greater sense of investment in the evaluation process and increase participation in end-of-term assessments.

4. The Office of Undergraduate Education should proceed with the development of a mobile app for the administration of midterm and end-of-term SEIs. The opportunity to complete SEIs from mobile devices will, we believe, increase the student response rate so that faculty have more confidence in the validity of the results.

5. A campaign to communicate the purposes and proper use of SEIs for the student body and for faculty should be undertaken by UCAT and the CAA Ad Hoc Subcommittee. At the same time, a campaign should be undertaken to help department chairs, promotion and tenure committees, and award committees (such as the Graduate Associate Teaching Award committee) better understand best practices for putting SEI data to use.

Report submitted by

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Chair, ad hoc SEI Committee
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20 May 2013