**Meeting of the Villanova University
Academic Policy Committee**

Wednesday, February 21, 2018
3:30 - 4:30 PM
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present: Sepideh Cheheltani, Gordon Coonfield, Christopher Kilby (chair), Eric Lomazoff, Peggy Lyons, Wen Mao, Kimberly Marucci, Christine Palus, Michael Posner, Joseph Schick, Marguerite Schlag, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland, Tina Yang

Absent: Sherry Bowen (on leave), Danai Chasaki (NIA), Jennifer Dixon (NIA), Marylu Hill (NIA), Shelly Howton (on leave), Brian King, Adele Lindenmeyr (NIA), Elizabeth Petit de Mange (NIA), Rees Rankin (NIA), Dennis Wykoff (on leave)

Administrative Items

1) Eric Lomazoff volunteered to take minutes.

2) Minutes from 1/24/2018 approved unanimously.

Old Business

3) Online CATS Subcommittee
   The subcommittee is scheduled to meet with OPIR to discuss analysis of results from the introduction of the online CATS in Spring 2017 and D&I pilot questions from Fall 2017.

   A question was posed, on the basis of informal faculty feedback, about whether the *tenor* of student responses to open-ended questions had changed (in a more critical/non-constructive direction) since the introduction of online CATS. Craig Wheeland (Vice Provost for Academics) suggested that the wording of open-ended questions might address this, highlighting two such questions designed by Gabriele Bauer (VITAL) that <u>may have been</u> included in the D&I pilot.

   Michael Posner suggested a survey of faculty about the shift to online CATS; this would inquire about their experiences (including the D&I pilot for those included), suggestions for improvements, etc. Christopher Kilby suggested that APC also survey students about their experience with online CATS, including questions about the mechanics of how they access CATS. There has been at least one instance of comments (and possibly scores) for a professor in one department appearing on the CATS for a professor in another department. Errors such as this could be the result of students opening multiple CATS windows at the same time. Survey findings might point to technical fixes.

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Michael also suggested making online CATS a permanent APC subcommittee and offered an outline of a possible subcommittee charge. This included regularly requesting and reviewing reports from OPIR, collecting feedback from faculty, recommending technical enhancements (text mining, improved data interface for faculty that can generate summary information and link to Activity Insight for reporting, inclusion of additional questions), and periodically reviewing CATS questions (e.g., to eliminate questions that are not used in current evaluations and not deemed useful).

Discussion turned to the validity of the CATS D&I pilot. Most students in courses included in the pilot also had done CATS in courses not included in the pilot (either in the same semester or in previous semesters). Several APC members reported that students assumed D&I questions were added to particular courses because their professor had been flagged as problematic. This led to the suggestion that OPIR conduct another pilot, making sure students knew in advance about random selection and the purpose of the questions. APC discussed the relative merits of an uninformed pilot (where students are not told that it is a pilot) and an informed pilot (where students told and the selection criteria are explained). In both cases, responses may differ systematically from responses when questions are an established part of a repeated survey. Gordon Coonfield pointed out that faculty could have (and in some cases did) let students know about the pilot in advance of the CATS and that this introduction could be worded to minimize distortions in the answers.

OPIR had yet to provide information about methods to evaluate the data from pilot questions, in particular how it will identify "problematic" data (indicating a failed pilot). Michael volunteered to communicate with OPIR on this subject. Christopher suggested that D&I responses could be compared with responses to established CATS questions to verify a minimum level of consistency (e.g., students are not simultaneously giving the instructor high marks for "treats students with respect" and low marks for D&I issues).

4) Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee
Gordon circulated draft recommendations (already shared with Terry Nance) for two Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. The first is workshop for faculty, modeled on the long-standing workshop on Catholic Social Teaching but focused on Diversity and Inclusion issues. The second follows the VITAL model of providing resources (e.g., funds and/or course release) to support development of new curricular offerings relating to Diversity and Inclusion. In response to a question about whether this might also apply to revamping a module within an existing course, Gordon pointed out that the effort involved might be too small to warrant significant funding or course release.

Craig noted that these recommendations are consistent with elements of the upcoming university strategic plan and suggested that APC forward them to the Provost's Office.

5) Academic Integrity Violation (AIV) Subcommittee
   Andrea Welker reported that academic integrity updates continue to form part of the BAAD committee's work. Craig reported that FRRC had approved APC's proposed revisions to the academic integrity violations policy that appears in the Faculty Handbook with minimal revisions; Christopher had signed-off on these revisions. These and other updates will appear on University websites and the Faculty Handbook shortly.

   Andrea and Christopher suggested that the Provost's office annually report on violations to APC during APC's first fall semester meeting. This report should summarize the past year's academic integrity cases by college, including summary statistics about the resolution of such cases. Andrea pointed out this would insure that academic integrity remains a regular item on the BAAD committee agenda. Craig indicated such a report should be feasible.

   This subcommittee appears to have completed its immediate work.

6) Academic Experience Subcommittee
   Christopher reported staffing and scheduling problems and recommended re-assignment of subcommittee members elsewhere.

New Business

7) University Guidelines for Majors & Minors
   Following up on the previous item, Christopher suggested a new subcommittee to focus on developing university-level guidelines for the creation/administration of majors and minors. The goal would be to establish a degree of uniformity for future endeavors without materially eroding current college/departmental autonomy. Such guidelines would also provide a framework in the future if cross-college majors and minors emerge. The general consensus was that this approach was too broad and should be narrowed to focus just on developing guidelines for cross-college majors and minors.

   Christopher will recruit interested APC members to join a new subcommittee with this focus. Members of the Academic Experience and Academic Integrity Violation Subcommittees should either join ongoing subcommittees (Online CATS (especially); Diversity and Inclusion) or the new University Guidelines Majors & Minors Subcommittee. Expect an email from Christopher.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 PM.

Drafted from Eric Lomazoff's excellent notes. Thank you!