

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

Friday, September 14, 2018  
2:00 – 3:00 PM  
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present: Melissa Bradley, Sarah-Vaughan Brakman, Sherry Burrell, Kathy Byrnes, Matt Clarkin, Scott Dressler, Stacey Havlik, Marylu Hill, Jacky Huang, Stephanie Katz, Christopher Kilby (chair), Rory Kramer, Adele Lindenmeyr, Eric Lomazoff, Wen Mao, Stephen Napier, Christine Palus, Elizabeth Petit de Mange, Michael Posner, Marguerite Schlag (representing Lesley Perry), Javad Siah, Ani Ural, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland

Absent: Tina Yang (NIA)

Administrative Items

- 1) Kathy Byrnes volunteered to take notes.
- 2) Minutes from 4/23/2018 approved 8-0-16 (with people not present at the 4/23/2018 meeting abstaining).
- 3) After soliciting other candidates (to no avail), Christopher Kilby was re-elected as chair APC for the 2018-2020 term, 23-0-1 (with the candidate abstaining).

New Business

- 4) Review of Spring 2018 CATS results  
Kenneth Tsang (OPIR) presented results from the Spring 2018 CATS with some comparison with other recent semesters. With the introduction of online CATS, there was an initial dip in the response rate of 7 percentage points. The downward trend has continued, with the overall response rate at 71% in Spring 2018. Response rates vary across type of faculty but have followed a similar downward trend across these groups. There are many factors that may impact responses rates (including what days of the week the 14 day CATS window opens and closes; what year the students are); it is possible the recent drops have to do with this. OPIR will continue to monitor response rates and consider what practices or timing of communication can counteract the apparent trend (taking into account day-of-the-week and year-of-the-student effects). In response to a question about more detailed analysis of response rate trends before the transition to online CATS (e.g., was there a downward trend even before the switch), OPIR staff indicated there are data limitations and data quality concerns for the paper CATS.

Ten percent of survey responses were via mobile devices (e.g., phones rather than “PCs”); 6% of students used a phone for all their CATS; 13% used phones for some, PCs for others. Comparing responses by device, averages on each of the five key questions for R&T were nearly identical. Twenty percent of surveys completed on PCs and 16% of surveys completed on phones gave “modal responses” (no variation in numeric responses, e.g., all 1s or all 3s or all 5s). Sixty percent of PC-completed CATS included written comments; 48% of phone-completed CATS did so. The word count for PC-completed CATS with comments was 56 (4 minutes, 37 seconds to complete on average); for phones, the figures are 42 words and 3 minutes, 30 seconds. Ken pointed out that shorter, quicker comments are not necessarily lower quality, less informative or different in tone.

Trina Das (OPIR) provided an update on future developments with the CATS. OPIR has been working with the vendor to improve (e.g., speed up) the delivery of CATS results to faculty and department chairs and to develop a customized reporting tool. Unfortunately the vendor has pushed back their delivery date for improvements to Spring 2019. In response to a question about developing the capability to pilot new questions as a “second page” of the CATS (thereby protecting the validity of the standard CATS question responses on the “first page”), Trina indicated that analysis of the diversity and inclusion questions pilot did not reveal any impact of pilot questions on other answers. She also stated that having to go to a second page might reduce the response rate and so OPIR did not plan to make such a feature available.

5) Summary of survey on faculty CATS experience

Michael Posner (chair, CATS subcommittee) presented a summary of the Spring 2018 survey of faculty about their experiences with and opinions about CATS, especially comparing paper and online. Results should be considered very preliminary. The response rate was high at 40%. 95% of respondents indicated they gave time in-class to complete paper CATS; only 75% indicated the same for online CATS. Somewhat fewer indicated that time was at the beginning of class (per university policy); most but not all faculty indicated that they left the room during CATS. Faculty believe students take online CATS less seriously, are more likely to give lower scores, and provide fewer comments. One third of faculty respondents did not know whether or not they were included in the pilot of diversity and inclusion questions. Some indicated they believe their identity (race, gender, etc.) impacts their CATS scores, independent of their performance in the class.

Craig Wheeland suggested that those interested look at the Provost’s web site for a report on a large and detailed CATS study done several years ago. That study drew on 5 years of CATS data and data about students, classes, and faculty from other sources.

6) Report on Academic Integrity Violation Cases, AY2017-18

Craig Wheeland (Vice Provost for Academics) reported that between Summer 2017 and Spring 2018 there were 61 academic integrity violation cases filed. Of these, 28 were “Class I” (more serious) and 33 “Class II” (less serious). In seven cases the student appealed rather than accepting fault; the resolution of three of these is

still pending. No cases resulted in student dismissal; in one case, the Dean opted to suspend the student. Christopher Kilby requested a breakdown of the 61 cases by college be sent to APC members.

7) Report on Academic Policy Issues

Craig Wheeland reported on two issues before the Board of Assistant and Associate Deans (colloquially referred to as the BAAD Committee). BAAD is considering the question of posthumously awarding degrees and whether students may earn (or be granted) additional majors/minors after they have officially graduated. Craig also summarized some issues recently decided by the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee (FRRC), including the export control policy, the faculty personal relationships policy, academic integrity policy and code, intellectual property policy, and new faculty awards. FRRC is also discussing a new student misconduct and recording of faculty policy for inclusion in the Faculty Handbook. Other new policy changes include those on academic integrity violations (completed by APC in Spring 2018). APC also discussed changes to software platforms used for teaching and administration but concluded these were not policy issues.

Christopher Kilby ended the meeting with a request that APC members email him with suggestions for APC's agenda in the coming year. Suggestions should draw on experience as an instructor, student, administrator or staff member and identify areas where academic policy needs to be developed or refined. Per APC's mandate, these must be policies that impact more than one college in the university.

Special thanks to Kathy Byrnes for very complete notes!