

Educational Policies Committee Minutes

November 7, 2011

Ballantine Hall 004, 10:00AM - 11:30AM

- I. Online Course Evaluations
 - A. EPC members noted that the questions seem focused more on the course than on the instructor. Sometimes the instructor is only the unspoken agent behind a passive-voice verb (questions 1+2); other times the instructor is entirely absent. This is surprising given the stated purpose of assisting in the evaluation of candidates for P+T.
 - B. A related problem is that some questions do not fit well in all courses. For example, question 1 implies that the instructor has created learning objectives (and the syllabus that communicates them for the first time to students); in large multi-section courses in the sciences this might not be the case. The EPC recognizes that department-level questions could be used to achieve greater precision, but wonders how responses to such questions (based perhaps on students' false assumptions about the instructor's role) would be interpreted.
 - C. The repeated use of the term "effectively" suggests that mere efficiency is the goal of teaching at IU. This would be a low bar to clear, if so. Could a higher standard (of excellence) be conveyed?
 - D. A related issue: at the Provost's teaching retreat last year the point was repeatedly made that we and the students should expect coursework to be challenging and engaging. We would hope that the language of the course evaluations could convey this expectation in some way.
 - E. Finally, we wonder whether an end-of-semester questionnaire might also allow us to ask students to reflect on what they have accomplished (e.g. "Have you learned something?")
- II. Educational Environment Committee Status
 - A. A decision was made to pull back the original resolution (B21-2012)
 - B. Form a subcommittee of the EPC with the FAC, BAC and SAC for investigating the restructuring of student services and career counseling.
 - C. Form a subcommittee to deal with FLAGS
- III. Extended-X Policy
 - A. A decision was made to bring forward to the BFC a resolution eliminating the deadline for application to apply for Extended-X.