

**Faculty Affairs Committee**  
**Minutes of 13 November Meeting, 10 a.m., 1270 FAB**

Present: W. Crossland, D. DeGracia (Policy Committee liaison), L. Keashly, K. Padmanabhan, A. Popadic, L. Romano (Administration liaison).

Absent with notice: M. Hamre, P. Kernsmith G. Kuhn, B. Markman, R. Parnell E. Puscheck, M. Sengstock.

Absent: G. DeBlase, R. McIntyre (AAUP/AFT liaison).

Guest: Tom Wilhelm, Director of Testing and Research Services.

Note: information contained in {} was communicated after the meeting.

**Agenda**

1. *Approval of minutes of FAC meeting of 17 October 2007.*  
Approved.
  
2. *Electronic submission of Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) data*
  - a. *To what extent are SET forms submitted electronically at present?*  
[Wilhelm] 50 of the {3,000} sections use the electronic format, the rest, the paper Scantron format.
  - b. *How can submission compliance be assured or encouraged?*  
[Wilhelm] Compliance is lower for the electronic submission, ~30%, than for paper submission, ~60%. Graduate courses have higher submission rates than undergraduate courses. However, there is a higher quality data from those who do submit using online format.  
[Padmanabhan] Lower level undergraduate courses have large numbers of students, meaning that electronic submission would be a great benefit. Because the students would not be compelled to fill out SET forms in the classroom, how can they be motivated to submit SET outside the classroom electronically?  
[Wilhelm] You can send reminders but individuals cannot be targeted because their SET submission is confidential.  
[Romano] Could return of SET by student be put into Blackboard? Instructor could post grades of students who returned SET, not those who did not.  
[Wilhelm] Yes, in principle.  
[Keashly] Some courses are not in Blackboard and withholding posting of grades seems punitive. Have we asked why students do or do not complete the SET forms? Instructors need to keep reminding students that the SET process is useful to the instructors for modifying the course as well as for their professional advancement and salary.  
[Romano] Posting of grades is a courtesy because the students get the grade eventually anyway. Once word gets out that SET compliance is necessary to get one's grade posted, compliance will increase.  
[Wilhelm] We need to check with C&IT to see if they would be able to upload the SET compliance data into Blackboard. We could open the SET online site a week earlier in order to have the data available for grade posting decisions.  
Withholding grade postings could be a problem in practical terms because the data would go to the Testing Office in electronic form, then have to be analyzed and sent to the faculty member for modifying their grade posting. The ensuing time delay may be upsetting to the students. The problem could be handled electronically

through Blackboard but there would have to be a linkage in real-time between the Testing Office analysis and archiving of the data and Blackboard to reveal the posted grade once SET had been submitted. {Note that the Testing Office is only budgeted for one full time doctoral level person, one student assistant and one loaned GTA from Testing and Evaluation on staff. The expertise and infrastructure to develop such a system might be better handled by C&IT.}

[Popadic & Padmanabhan] Do we know how the faculty in general feels about an electronic version of SET? In our limited sampling, few are enthusiastic. Especially in lower level large classes, is it better to sample everyone or is it better to sample the more interested students who attend class and are attentive? What are we trying to measure? By giving the SET paper forms out before the very end of the term, you can catch the attentive students and get a more reasonable assessment of the course. The electronic version would be hard to offer selectively.

[Romano] Can comments be made available online?

[Wilhelm] Yes, there are scrolling textboxes for free comments that are then sent back to instructors as a file but are not archived. Feedback is given electronically. The quality of feedback is higher for electronic SET submissions perhaps because the students feel that there is no possibility of their handwriting being recognized.

At McGill University the SET is handled electronically. The faculty run the SET system and use the BANNER system as a conduit. Instructors encourage the students to comply with the SET process. {Compliance at McGill is 44% for 3,128 courses evaluated.} There are also commercial systems available {(On-line Course Evaluations.com, ~\$60,000/yr; eSIR-II from Educational Testing Service, \$1.50/form; Scantron ~\$40,000; Digital Measures ~\$4,500). The On-line Course Evaluation.Com system uses a lottery system with prizes, entering the students who have complied with the SET process.}

c. *For distance learning courses, how can SET forms be written to distinguish between rating the instructor's performance and the technical problems beyond their control?*

[Wilhelm] New courses on line must preserve the summative items (items 1, 2, 24). The diagnostic questions are only for faculty use and can be modified. The School of Medicine modified the questionnaire with the approval of the 2N committee that oversees SET. Nursing has modified some of the diagnostic questions and provides supplemental instructions to the students to answer them. The number of questions must remain the same to run the analysis program.

Regarding the separation of technical problems from instructors' areas of expertise, there does not seem to be a strong correlation between the summative items (e.g., "How do you rate the instructor overall?") and technical diagnostic items, therefore this should not be a problem. If there is a technical problem, it will probably be a theme in the written comments. This may be a special problem with the distance learning courses where students may have been prevented from completing assignments because of technical problems beyond the instructors' control. One possible solution to this is to put a "prompt" into the instructions to ask the students to differentiate between the instructor's efforts and any technical problems that arose in the electronic delivery. Instructor generated questions could also be written to address problems with technology specifically.

d. *Should the electronic submission of SET data be used more widely at WSU?*

[Crossland] Are the facilities in Testing adequate to handle a campus-wide usage of electronic SET?

[Wilhelm] Basically yes. Instructors would have to submit course information electronically.

Resources in Testing are adequate to handle electronic submission of SET because it takes less time than the paper format. The problem would be with a response rate decline with the electronic format. This might be a problem but could probably be dealt with using the current staff. Perhaps it would be best to try this with a "small" semester first, such as Spring or Summer semesters.

[Romano] What is the procedure for using online SET submission in courses?

[Wilhelm] If the instructor wants to use the online version of SET he/she must elect to do so (if the option is available to them). The instructors need to submit a list of students which they can download from Pipeline. Some instructors, however, do not have the computer skills to do this, requiring Testing to do it for them from class data downloaded from STARS. Basically, the format of the online SET is the same as the paper version unless the course is taught online or one of the computer science courses for which different versions of the SET questions have been developed. If other courses need to modify the SET questions, approval would have to be given by the 2N committee that oversees SET.

e. *How would results from data submitted electronically be returned to faculty?*

[Wilhelm] Results are returned electronically, including files of comments. The data from 2001 forward is archived and available to faculty, if needed. {This is summative, diagnostic data but not comments.}

(Tom Wilhelm left the meeting at this point)

f. *What is the downside of electronic submission for the faculty?*

As outlined above, the problems are 1) the anticipated decline in response rate, 2) the need by some faculty for help from Testing in providing class list information, 3) any modifications of the SET form would require 2N committee approval. A major unknown factor is how many instructors at present would like to use the online version of SET. A faculty poll could be created to gauge the sentiment for online SET submission.

g. *Electronic SET submission in Med Curriculum courses (not grad courses).*

{[Crossland] Although not discussed, electronic submission of SET data in the Medical Curriculum is well received by the medical school faculty because there is good compliance by students, results are available within a few days of data submission by the students and archives of each faculty member's data are accessible by email logon/password online.}

h. *Other questions*

None at this time.

3. *Retirement forum*

a. *Motion from the committee*

The committee moved that we proceed with a forum on retirement slated for the Winter Term 2008. Motion passed.

b. *Suggestions for panelists (these will formally be invited by the home Departments)*

Steps for retiring - HR - Brett Green

Medical costs/insurance - Brett Green?

AAUP - ?

Tony Hough (Biology - retired in May)

Gerry Dunifer (Physics - 1 ½ year)

Bert Stein (Physics - couple of years, good speaker)  
Henry Bohm - (Physics)

- c. *Time & Place: What dates between late January and early March should be avoided? Snow date?*

Drs. Keashly and Padmanabhan will look into the date and venue.

[Romano] For new retirement benefit agreement, the sooner we have the forum the better to help spread the word on this. Brett Green from HR might be good to do this.

- d. *Estimate interest with announcement + RSVP*

To be sent after arriving at preliminary date/venue.

- e. *Catchy titles, graphics?*

Discuss further at next meeting.

4. *Old business*

- a. *Senate approves Faculty Tab upgrade by FAC*

Approved by Senate at 11/7/2007 meeting. C&IT have been given notice that they can replace the old Faculty Tab with the new version.

- b. *Dean of Students Respect Initiative*

We have delayed the invitation to the Dean or his designee to present their vision of the Respect Initiative at meeting once the SET issue is worked out.

- c. *Library access for retirees*

Drs. Popadic and Crossland explored this after the last meeting. There is still conflicting opinion as to whether or not all retiree faculty members have access to all electronic library resources of WSU.

[Popadic] Retired faculty can have access to some databases but not all because the library must give publishers an estimate of faculty who will use them. The library can only supply number of active faculty.

[Crossland] We will look into this further, perhaps by contacting Dean Sandra Yee.

- d. *Faculty security*

Will be discussed at a later meeting.

5. *New business*

None officially, however...

After adjourning a question arose regarding faculty who want to opt out of paying their "fair share" contribution in lieu of union dues and instead put the money into a scholarship fund.

How do they do this and when can they do it?

{[Crossland] After contacting the AAUP/AFT office and speaking with Michelle Fecteau, I learned that changes can be made anytime (at present) by calling the AAUP/AFT office (577-1750) and Michelle or someone else in the office will help you make the changes necessary.}

6. *Adjourn*

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am