

Faculty Affairs

Minutes March 7, 2019

Present: renée c. hoogland, Ewa Golebiowska, Daniel Golodner, Marisa Henderson, Kypros Markou, Patricia McCormick, Karin Tarpenning, Annmarie Cano, Hussein Bazzi (name correct?)

Absent with notice: Jocelyn Ang, Poonam Arya, Linda Beale, Ellen Tisdale, Jinping Xu,

Absent: Ekrem Murat

Guests: Darin Ellis, Stuart Baum, Bilal Hammoud

1. The meeting was called to order at 12-noon

2. Academic Analytics

DE explains that APS stands for Academic Performance Solutions (enrollment, etcetera) and AA for Academic Analytics (an interactive platform and repository of scholarly/scientific work). The Council of Deans did not want AA to be rolled out to Department Chairs; the Provost held off. [But said at the AS meeting that Chairs would have access—rch].

rch asks if Chairs will be trained to use this program. DE admits that the bottleneck of the whole undertaking is the substantial risk of misinterpretation. Deans were asked to do a Webinar, Chairs will have to as well.

rch points to the unreliability of the records: she found her own to be incomplete. Reliance on such “data” resembles the use of (notoriously biased) SET scores as sole use for evaluation.

PMcC submits that everybody within this system becomes a metric.

DE pledges that he approaches the AA process as a starting point.

PMcC asks who initiated the adoption of AA.

EG assumes that it was a some sales person. Any legitimate decision at WSU should take place in a process that involves Faculty Governance. Any use of these data should take place in the context of this full process to protect faculty. For instance, in T&P processes, it has become clear that Scopus provides faulty info.

rch objects again to the increasing reliance on data and metrics, which are based on an algorithm; plus, machines lack complexity in processes of evaluation. Worst of all, faculty are completely unaware and left in the dark about the introduction of this surveillance system.

DE points out that all the info about the system is on the AA website.

KM responds, in support of PMcC, with the question why this process was started in the first place. He explains that, in the past 25 years, there has been a shift in emphasis from creative activity to research in his field—there is no peer review process in place for the former. Faculty are pushed to do more research because it is quantifiable. What exactly are the questions that this system is supposed to be able to answer?

PMcC maintains that the “disconnect” between qualifiable and quantifiable activities pertains to almost all of the performing arts.

AC remarks that perhaps the reason this system came into existence was for Deans to gain better insight across departments.

DE offers a positive use example: retention of excellent faculty, or granting awards. Says he hopes that the info AA would not be used as the sole basis for faculty evaluation.

rch says that it is much more likely that the system will serve budget decisions.

PMcC points out that DE has no control over the use of data and attempts to draw an analogy with railway workers moving people during the Holocaust.

DE leaves the meeting.

[rch follows DE out of the room to express her regret at the turn of events].

PMcC explains the analogy and apologizes to the committee.

rch says she understands the relevance of the analogy but also feels that the committee needs to treat its guests in such a way that they feel comfortable coming to our meetings to discuss things.

3. Open Educations Resources

The student senators explain the OER as an online, peer-reviewed, high quality resource, to which Open Stacks is largely complementary. The First Day initiative is a counter-attack on the part of publishers. First Day is an opt-out program, promoted by the bookstore at the behest of publishers afraid of losing their market share. Opting out is a complex and cumbersome process, and the risk that students fail to do so successfully is real. Both OER and First Day were presented as possible solutions to the the rising costs of textbooks.

AC points out that the library has sent out invitations to faculty to develop and use OER.

Faculty can refuse to work with First Day.

rch comments that students should be protected by both faculty and administrators; the latter should not wait till students have been sucked into something that is ultimately not even cheaper than searching for and buying books online elsewhere. It might be a good and timely idea to bring this issue to the Policy committee of the Academic Senate, and to the senate itself.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

renée c. hoogland, Chair .