AAC Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2010

In Attendance –
Robert Martin – Agriculture
Jim Thompson – FSCC
Brad Dell – LAS
Suzanne Hendrich – Chair
April Katz – Design
Sanjeev Agarwal – Business
Greg Luecke – ME
Luke Roling – GSB
Jordan Smellie – GSB

I. Meeting called to order by Hendrich.

II. Review of Minutes will be delayed until the next meeting to allow for examination.

III. FSCC Report
A. Minimal report, meeting today at 1:00 will focus on Library 160. Student visitors support maintaining course.
B. Suzanne met with Dave Holger and staff from the Registrar’s office to discuss a paperless catalog.

IV. ASAC Report: None, Jeff wasn’t present

V. Course Evaluation Discussion
A. GSB wants to use Course Evaluations in a more public manner. The associate provost met with GSB to explain the current policies. The provost’s office will educate students about evaluations more completely in the future. Students sense that they fill out the evaluations and it disappears into a black hole. What impact do the evaluations have?
B. Question regarding the publishing of anonymous, unsubstantiated comments. Legally this is a problem.
C. Evaluations are not consistent between departments and colleges. Might consider standardizing part of the evaluations. Discipline-specific questions could vary.
D. One student goal is to rate teachers. We discussed the criteria…might be good teaching, might be high grades.
E. The PEW Foundation states they should not be used to determine salary, promotion or tenure.
F. A more meaningful tool might be a survey of alumni to determine which courses were most helpful to them now that they are working in the field.
G. Students want to know about their teachers before the class begins and want to know that teachers will be held accountable for their performance.
H. Students suggested that a three-year average for each question be made public, rather than for one specific semester.
I. There was a belief that in choosing ISU students should trust the existing system of faculty oversight.
J. Students feel that when there’s been a long history of problem teachers it points to the lack of impact their comments make.

K. Response: currently students can go to the professor, followed by the chair and then the dean to file a grievance. Students claimed they never heard back about a complaint made.

L. There was agreement that students need to be able to take action and hear what’s happened, to know the results.

M. Agreement that students need to know how evaluations are used.

N. A grievance strategy is needed and must be understood.

O. Student advisory groups in colleges and departments might be more valuable than posted evaluation results.

P. In general, evaluations are not reliable. Results vary widely even within one class.

Q. We will meet with the students again. We aren’t really clear about what they want and for what purpose.

R. Council members should determine from our colleagues how student evaluations are being used.

S. There is ample evidence in literature that there are inherent biases in student evaluation results. Race, gender and age issues impact results.

T. The students could research evaluation effectiveness.

U. Final Question:
   a. Students want to know what happens with the data they produce.
   b. Faculty effectiveness varies for a number of reasons
   c. What does effective teaching mean and how do you improve that?
   d. Student input is important for determining teaching effectiveness.
   e. How to elicit, assemble and utilize student feedback.
   f. Student feedback is only 1 source of evaluation.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 9:05.

Minutes Submitted by
April Katz