

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
University Committee on Undergraduate Education
DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, April 27, 2017

10:15 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

Board Room, 4th Floor Administration Building

Attending: Rich Bellon, Marcos Caballero, Sekhar Chivukula, Andrew Corner, Jan Eberle, Carolyn Loeb, Sheng-Mei Ma, Matt Pontifex, Fred Rodammer, Mary Kay Smith, Jordan Stomps, Emily Tabuteau, Janette Vani (new 17-18), Elizabeth Webster (new 17-18)

Absent: Eva Almenar, Biles Brereton, Kathy Forrest, Nicole Geske, Richard Miksicek, Laura Nelson, Jessica Sender, Jacob Snyder, Colleen Tremonte

The agenda was approved as amended to change, “Comments from the Chairperson” to “Comments from the Vice Chairperson.”

The minutes were approved for April 13, 2017.

Comments from the Vice Chairperson

Vice Chairperson Pontifex stated he is filling in for Chairperson Miksicek since he is out of town.

Comments from the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

Associate Provost Chivukula had no comments.

Election of 2017 – 18 Officers

UCUE Chairperson: Richard Miksicek, second year, Approved.

UCUE Vice Chair: Matt Pontifex, second year, Approved.

UCUE faculty liaison to Athletic Council: Andrew Corner, first year, Approved.

UCUE liaison to Military Education Advisory Committee: Emily Tabuteau, second year, Approved.

Discussion of Student Evaluation of Teaching

Vice Chairperson Pontifex encouraged UCUE members to review the 2014 article that Chairperson Miksicek referenced in a recent email that was co-authored by Philip B. Stark and Richard Freishtat titled “An Evaluation of Course Evaluations” which appeared in *ScienceOpen*.

A discussion took place about the overall thought that teaching evaluations do not evaluate teaching, they evaluate the student’s perceptions of the instructor. Members reported that students take easy classes and rate instructors as excellent because the course was easy, but not because the course helped them. Discussion continued regarding one recommendation that MSU should be using observations of teaching and other forms of evidence based practice.

Associate Provost Chivukula stated that University policy states that teaching does need to be evaluated and the responsibility falls on the individual units. However, there is no requirement that units use the standard SIRS evaluation forms. Discussion took place on the fact that student evaluations can be taken into account for tenure and promotion of faculty. The evaluation of teaching is different than the evaluation of learning but more difficult to measure. More modern techniques focus on students’ self reporting and of their learning.

Associate Provost Chivukula stated that MSU has an opportunity over the next twelve months to change the platform on which we do teaching evaluations. Currently, the standard Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) is done using a bubble sheet then sent to MSU's scoring office which is a 40-50 year old technology. Many vendors would like to sell MSU a more modern platform. Discussion continued on the possibility of using Qualtrix for which MSU currently has a campus wide license. The benefits of using a mid semester evaluation system was discussed. Members agreed that ASMSU, COGS, and other faculty committees would need to be involved in the decision and development of a mid semester evaluation.

Vice Chairperson Pontifex stated that when departments went from using paper SIRS to electronic SIRS, participation dropped dramatically and suggested a future subcommittee could try to determine how to increase the response rate. It was noted that students should be advised that mid term evaluations can have an effect on how a professor instructs the remainder of a semester. Members discussed their experiences in the classroom with administering SIRS. Members stated a mid semester evaluation could be codesigned with student groups so their ideas and questions are reflected. It was noted that considerations for a committee on mid semester evaluations could be best practices and the limitations of student evaluations of teaching. It was stated that many students are confused about the difference in SIRS and the Students' Opinion of Courses and Teaching (SOCT). SIRS is not publicly available however, SOCT results are.

It was stated that a priority for UCUE for next year would be to designate a subcommittee to consider and propose recommendations for continuing or revising as appropriate, methods used for student evaluation of instruction for undergraduate courses offered by Michigan State University.

Roundtable

Emily Tabuteau reported that she attended the Spring Military Education Advisory Committee (MEAC) meeting on April 21 and updates were given from Aerospace Studies and Military Science. Fred Rodammer and Mary Kay Smith thanked the committee for the opportunity to serve on UCUE. Elizabeth Webster, representing MSU Libraries, introduced herself and stated she looks forward to serving on UCUE for the 2017-18 academic year.

Respectfully submitted by Lynne Frechen.