Report of the Course and Teaching Evaluation Committee (AY 2015-16) to the Faculty Senate

Membership:

Faculty committee members are appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Staff members are appointed by the Provost.

SFF COMMITTEE

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Charge:

The Course and Teaching Evaluation (CATE-SFF) Committee is a joint faculty and staff committee charged with advising the President and Provost about matters related to the evaluation of teaching at the University, particularly regarding Student Feedback Forms (SFFs) and the implementation of the university's policy on course and teaching evaluations: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=02.78.14. The Committee formulates studies and evaluates data on the evaluation of teaching and makes recommendations regarding the methods, approaches, assessment documents and logistics related to course and teaching evaluations.

Meetings:

The committee met twice in the Fall and twice in the Spring semester. In addition SFF materials were reviewed and discussed via email where possible.

Issuers Addressed and Decisions/Actions taken:

1. Committee membership – size, turnover, representativeness. Faculty Senate Committees normally have tenure of 3 years. Most faculty representatives of CATE-SFF Committee have been serving for far longer than three years. The value of long service on the committee was recognized.

2. Membership – it was agreed the Chair would continue the practice of inviting members at the beginning of each academic year to indicate if they wished to continue or end their service. The committee agreed to add at least 1 undergraduate and 1 graduate student, and additional faculty members could join the committee beginning next academic year

3. Chairmanship - It was agreed that the CATE-SFF Committee would hold a formal election for Chair from within the committee at the end of each academic year.

4. SFF response rates - the 61% response rate for SFFs during Fall 2015 and 58% for Spring 2016 were seen as evidence that response rates for online SFFs were healthy.

5. Faculty ability to respond to comments on SFFs - changes to the faculty SFF form were being made to include a text field allowing an instructor to indicate at the time of completion any relevant events, experiences or situations that they felt were pertinent context to overall assessment of SFF results in the class for which feedback was being sought. It was agreed that direct response to comments in SFFs was impractical given the significant task of collating and processing instructor responses, and of reviewing, verifying, editing etc. It was agreed that instructors who wished to respond directly to comments made in SFFs should do so as part of their submission of results, rather than as part of the formal SFF process.

6. SFF processes for 7-week or alternate scheduled courses (not full semester) - Sally Frazee noted that IR was developing ways in which part of term, late start and early completion courses could all be included in the general eSFF process.

7. Impact of electronic administration on qualitative responses - Joseph Ducette and James Degnan summarized the national research on student responses to open text questions within eSFF protocols. In general, the research shows that with online administration the number of responses is lower than achieved in paper based administrations, but the quality and substance of the responses is generally improved. It was agreed by all faculty present that this was their personal experience at Temple.

8. Need for more multi modal teaching evaluation - TLC and SFF committee are developing guidelines for peer review based on best practices. The use of peer review in addition to SFFs was noted by the SFF Committee in its White Paper of 2011. When the "best practices" committee review is complete the SFF committee will recommend to the provost a review and update of current policy on Course and Teaching Evaluations (02.78.14) to include peer review.

9. The committee implemented changes to content and access of SFF forms. Changes involved:

   a. Instructor SFF form reduced to just two questions.

   b. Continued development of SFF online site that provides students with limited access to SFF results on 4 questions (selected by the CATE committee) for the last 8 semesters/summer sessions. Data are available during the first semester for all incoming first year students and transfers. Continued access is available only to students who complete SFFs for all their courses in the preceding semester.

   c. The committee agreed that a Dean's designee from each school/college should be given online access to the same (4 questions) SFF data that is made available to eligible students. Upon request these same data would be provided in a format suitable for analytic purposes.

   d. Amended policy that restricted SFFs process from being available to students in courses with 8 or fewer registered students to courses with 5 or fewer students.

   e. Made recommendations on procedures for handling cross listed courses. During paper administration of SFFs it was not possible to associate any specific response with any specific course in a cross list. As a result the total response set was grouped and counted for each of the separate courses in the cross list (including cross lists of undergraduate and graduate courses). Electronic administration enables each individual response to be assigned to the appropriate course in the cross list. This allows for the grouped results to be reported only once and not for each course in the cross list.

f. Recommended that text responses to each open ended SFF question be grouped for reporting purposes to instructor into one section rather than current practice of reporting as separate, individual forms.

g. Recommended that a Dean's designee from each school/college should be given access to the same selected (4 questions) SFF data that is made available to eligible students. Upon request these same data would be provided in a format suitable for analytic purposes.