

**Meeting of the Villanova University  
Academic Policy Committee**

Wednesday, April 3, 2019  
11:00 - 12:30 PM  
Fedigan Room (SAC 400)

Present: Matt Clarkin, Scott Dressler, Marylu Hill, Zuyi (Jacky) Huang, Stephanie Katz, Christopher Kilby (chair), Rory Kramer, Adele Lindenmeyr, Eric Lomazoff, Wen Mao, Stephen Napier, Christine Kelleher Palu, Elizabeth Petit de Mange, Michael Posner, Lesley Perry, Javad Siah, Andrea Welker, Craig Wheeland, Tianxia (Tina) Yang

Absent: Melissa Bradley (NIA), Sarah-Vaughan Brakman (NIA), Sherry Burrell (NIA), Kathy Byrnes (NIA), Stacey Havlik (NIA), Amanda Rappa (alternate), Ani Ural (NIA)

Administrative Items

- 1) Rory Kramer volunteered to take notes.
- 2) Minutes from 3/19/2019 approved unanimously except for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> sentences in item 6, which were deemed unclear. Christopher Kilby will rewrite the sentences for clarity and have APC vote on these electronically before finalizing the minutes.

New Business

- 3) Role of APC in Working Group on University Shop Proposal  
Scott Dressler and Stephanie Katz will serve as faculty representatives for the Working Group on the University Shop proposal to incorporate the cost of textbooks in tuition (a proposal made by Follett). Craig Wheeland and Matt Kerbel (Interim Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning) are also members of the working group. This group has not yet met but from the materials distributed it does appear that the proposal could have important instructional implications (e.g., impacting the choice between electronic and printed texts). Christopher will contact the head of the working group (Tony Alfano, Associate Vice President of Auxiliary Services) to request a briefing for APC in the fall, ideally in early October so that APC can weigh-in early enough to have an impact. Eric Lomazoff noted that information about other universities that had adopted Follett's proposal is informative but it might be even more instructive to learn about universities that declined to find out their objections. A number of people supported the idea of a faculty and student survey or other opportunity to get broader feedback beyond the student and faculty representatives on the working group; this might be a suggestion to the working group in the fall.
- 3) APC and D&I CATS questions discussion  
APC engaged in a lively discussion of the Wall Street Journal opinion piece penned by Colleen Sheehan and James Wilson. Christopher suggested that a public response would likely be counterproductive and instead proposed that APC follow-up on two important statements in the President and Provost's emails:

“the questions referenced from Villanova’s Course and Teacher Survey [regarding Diversity and Inclusion] are not used for evaluating faculty” (President Fr. Donohue OSA, “A Message from the President: Wall Street Journal Op-Ed,” April 1, 2019)

“Even after the addition of these [Diversity and Inclusion questions] to the evaluation form, we continue to solicit faculty and student feedback on these questions, and also examine the patterns evident in students’ responses to them.” (Provost Maggitti, “Wall Street Journal Op-Ed,” April 1)

Adele Lindenmeyr noted that currently only the printed versions of the CATS reports (seen by chairs and the faculty member themselves) include Diversity and Inclusion questions. The current reports seen by others (Deans, R&T committees, etc.) do not. Following Adele’s comments, Craig stated that the deans and the Provost (or designee) can view only the results for questions 7 to 29 in NOVASIS—not the written comments or the Diversity and Inclusion question responses. He indicated that with changes to the software used, OPIR will need to determine how to continue to report data on questions 7 to 29 while also providing a separate report on the three D&I questions only for the faculty member to review. A number of different opinions were offered about the role of these questions in providing feedback to faculty about their classroom environment.

#### Sub-Committee Reports & Discussion

##### 4) CATS

As part of the CATS subcommittee report, Kenneth Tsang (with assistance from Trina Das, both from OPIR) presented the results of their analysis of Fall 2018 CATS data. Highlights included:

- After falling with the introduction of online CATS, the response rate rebounded somewhat. For undergraduate courses, the figure rose from 72% in Spring 2018 to 79% in Fall 2018 (compare with 83% in Spring 2016). Christopher noted that the 83% pre-online response rate was likely downward bias by including students who WX in the denominator; the new online system correctly only counts students still enrolled at the time of the CATS. Rory pointed out that WX statistics suggest the gap between paper and online CATS response rates is 2 to 3 percentage points larger than the numbers above suggest. Nonetheless, there is a clear improvement over Spring 2018.

The presentation included a detailed analysis of the Diversity and Inclusion question responses. Kenneth indicated that this analysis was carried out before the Wall Street Journal article was published.

- For the two Likert scale (1 to 5) Diversity and Inclusion questions, the vast majority of student responses are 4s or 5s, with less than one percent of responses a 1 and less than one percent of responses a 2 (the potentially problematic end of the scale). Responses to the two questions were highly correlated.
- Most students answer all CATS questions, including the Diversity and Inclusion questions.
- For their analysis of the numerical responses to the Diversity and Inclusion questions, OPIR limited their sample to cases where students had not given the

same rating for all answers on the CATS to avoid potentially insincere responses. These were most often all 5s.

- Responses to Diversity and Inclusion questions correlate sensibly with responses to other questions (e.g., “treats students with respect”) but with substantial independent variation (correlation coefficients not exceeding 50%). Factor analysis finds four groupings: grading, interaction, engagement, and course delivery. OPIR’s factor analysis did not place the Diversity and Inclusion questions into any of these groupings.
- OPIR analysis uncovered no biasing effect—positive or negative—of responses to the Diversity and Inclusion questions on responses to the other questions.
- Comments are more likely and longer with lower ratings. This holds for Diversity and Inclusion questions, too.
- Analysis of a 10% random sample of written responses found most were positive (with non-specific praise more common). Critical comments are rare, but almost always provide specifics. No flags of Title IX issues were evident. This analysis is based on one person’s review the comments and so should be considered exploratory rather than definitive.

Separately, Michael Posner (CATS subcommittee chair) provided a more in depth analysis of faculty survey done in Spring 2018 about their experience with CATS. Interesting findings include:

- In response to a question about whether the instructor’s identity impacts CATS scores, many faculty indicated identity does matter but often in positive way (suggesting faculty are self-aware enough to realize that they benefit from such evaluation bias).
- A surprising number (30%) indicated they did not understand how CATS are used in faculty evaluation; this was highest among adjuncts (60%) but nontrivial for tenured/tenure-track faculty (16%).

The report, an addendum, and the survey questions are attached.

Special thanks to Rory Kramer for excellent notes!