

UMR Retention Committee Meeting

MINUTES

DEC. 15, 2005 8:15 AM

MEETING CALLED BY	Harvest Collier
ATTENDEES	Carl Burns, Harvest Collier, Stephanie Fitch, Amy Gillman, Matt Goodwin, Marcus Huggans, Mary Ellen Kirgan, Gearoid MacSithigh, F. Scott Miller, Tammy Pratt, Laura Stoll, Bob Whites
MEMBERS NOT PRESENT	Dana Barnard, Ron Bieniek, Meg Brady, Gregory Gelles, Jay Goff, Emily Petersen, Stephen Raper, Kristi Schulte, Lynn Stichnote, Steve Watkins
GUESTS	Mark Fitch, Jonathan Helm, Marcie Thomas

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the 11-17-05 meeting with 2 minor modifications.

Agenda Topics

II. "Teaching Engineering" Course, Dr. Mark Fitch

Mark Fitch joined the Retention Committee to discuss his "Teaching Engineering" course. He explained the course is aimed at graduate students interested in teaching engineering. There is a relatively small class size. The course begins with educational psychology, moves towards methodology and finished with academic job search issues.

- * On the impact of the course- some students discover they are not interested in teaching; one student has moved on to teach at the AF-Institute-Technology.
- * On using the course as a potential resource for new faculty-Some of the course content is included in new faculty orientation. Elements of the course could be delivered to new faculty if they were receptive to the information. The course is not appropriate for experienced faculty.
- * It's a summer class- held 1 hr/day- 5 days a week.
- * The course is part lecture, part discussion, and includes a few guest lectures.
- * Average enrollment ranges from 1-12 students in the last 6 or 7 years.
- * As part of the course-students prepare a lesson and receive feedback.
- * Most students are GTAs that have not had to teach.
- * Those who have taught will volunteer examples and ask questions related to specific incidents.

Marcie Thomas suggested it may be a great introduction and a tremendous asset for all GTAs to have a similar experience before they teach courses at UMR.

Stephanie Fitch indicated that it may not be practical in all cases to introduce GTAs to the course before they teach, but it could be offered concurrent with GTA appointments. If it were required- What would the departments and advisor's reaction be? Would they think this is a good thing?

Mary Ellen Kirgan explained:

- * Previously the Math Dept. met with Math GTAs once a week for 1 hour to discuss classroom issues. She said it worked well for the first 4-6 weeks then it became difficult

to engage the students (as they got busier).

- * These meetings created an information network for the students to discuss common issues.
- * Concerns were related to “time”. Students need time in the summer for research.
- * Regardless of the teaching courses available, a student’s personality plays a big role. We tend to teach the way we were taught, therefore, we are most influenced by our favorite and least favorite instructors.
- * Incorporating knowledge of the environment from which our students are learning from may be more advantageous than establishing a teaching course.

Mark Fitch stated that what opens the eyes of the students taking the course is exposure to educational psychology and preferred learning styles, etc.

Marcie Thomas indicated we need data to demonstrate which GTAs are teaching students at UMR and identify if there is a problem. We need to look at teaching evaluations and ask UMR GTAs how they feel about their teaching skills and needs. Marcie indicated that she has received feedback from the Council of Graduate Students and they are interested in receiving some teaching assistance.

Harvest Collier indicated he would speak with Larry Gragg and ask where the teaching evaluation committee is with the issue. He may ask Larry Gragg to visit with the Retention Committee and bring the relative information.

Tammy Pratt asked: Do we want to prepare GTAs to graduate from UMR better instructors or are we primarily concerned with improving the quality of what UMR students experience in the classroom?

- * Harvest Collier answered that we are primarily concerned with the UMR classroom experience.
- * Mary Ellen Kirgan stated it would be important to include feedback on the first year experience.
- * Marcus Huggans stated it would be important to incorporate “student ownership of learning” into the course.

Marcie Thomas asked if the Retention Committee would consider forming a subcommittee to take this project on. Harvest Collier indicated- yes.

Harvest Collier asked: Are preparing GTAs and preparing faculty two separate issues

III. PS Data Report- Number of GTAs teaching undergraduate courses at UMR

- Marcie Thomas has requested a report identifying the GTAs that are currently teaching undergraduate student courses at UMR. A report has not yet been prepared. Emily Petersen indicated that she would try to have a report prepared by the next meeting.

IV. FE10 Advising Survey

- F. Scott Miller distributed copies of the FE10 Advising Survey results.
- The survey was conducted near the end of the Fall 2005 semester.
 - 629 students responded to the survey

Survey results are summarized below:

FE10 Advising Survey
Fall 2005

1. Please rate the **AVAILABILITY** of your advisor. (Available during office hours? Responds to email?)
2. Please rate your advisor's **KNOWLEDGE** of courses and procedures.
3. Please rate your advisors **WILLINGNESS** to help.
4. Please rate the **OVERALL QUALITY** of advising provided by your advisor.
5. Finally, please rate your satisfaction with the service and assistance provided by the directors and staff in the FEP office (125 McNutt).

Total number of students responding: **629**

OVERALL AVERAGES (includes all 31 advisors)

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
3.2	2.9	3.4	3.1	3.3

(INDIVIDUAL RESULTS SHOWN ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

SCALE: 0=Poor, 1=Below Average, 2=Average, 3=Above Average, 4=Excellent, NA=Not Applicable

V. Preliminary Report- 6 Week Pilot Program for Academic Success

- Harvest Collier offered a preliminary report of the Fall 2005 Academic Pilot Program results. A full presentation will be made at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING JAN. 12, 2006, 8:15 AM