Faculty Evaluation Task Force Minutes for Sept. 9, 2016
Meeting at Meramec Campus, BA 219L, 2:00 pm

Attendance: Emily Neal, David Shields, Becky Helbling, Doug Hurst, Dennis White, Rita Pernik, Scott Gevaert, Layla Goushey, Deborah Char, Dustin Sweet, Syed Chowdhury, Ame Mead-Roach, Bob Thumith, Andrew Langrehr (co-chair), Jeff Papier (co-chair)

1. Approval of Agenda
   The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes
   The minutes for the August 4, 2016 meeting were approved.

3. Distributing Minutes
   The task force previously agreed that it would make its approved meeting minutes publicly available. After some discussion on how best to do this, Becky proposed the idea of creating a LibGuide to which minutes can be posted. (A LibGuide is a user-friendly, web-based resource ideal for sharing information.) She volunteered to create the guide, and send out the link to the group. The link can be shared with anyone interested in reviewing the approved minutes.

4. Survey Results – Review and Analysis
   a. Themes - Jeff
      The task force survey was made available to all full-time faculty, via a link in an email message, from Aug. 18 to Aug. 25, 2016. All 234 respondents answered the closed-ended questions; between 173 and 175 replied to the open-ended questions. Dustin, David and Jeff each posted to our Blackboard shell analyses of the themes which emerged from the open-ended queries. Members reviewed the survey results, along with these analyses, prior to today’s meeting. We also discussed the data in small groups during today’s gathering.

   b. Implications for Faculty Evaluation System
      There followed a very rich conversation, informed by the data, about the purpose and components of a faculty evaluation system. A consensus is emerging among the group that the purpose of such a system should be to advance and provide opportunities for professional growth. A formative style system will be of benefit to students, to faculty, and to the College.

      Many ideas and concerns were discussed along the way to this consensus. David noted that it’s difficult for the same data sources to be used for both summative and formative purposes.
A number of task force members observed that faculty indeed want the opportunity to grow, to receive meaningful feedback, as well as recognition for their accomplishments. Others observed that it should be acceptable for faculty to take risks and make mistakes in their development process, and to use these mistakes as a learning experience. The current evaluation system lacks a truly reflective component; a new system should include one, and it is there that risks and failure could serve as rich material for reflection. Doug reminded the group that the current system has at times been used punitively. The usefulness of the quantitative portion of the current system was called into question.

Andrew raised the question of why we would need an evaluation system at all, with administrative input, if its focus is solely on growth. He also wondered about faculty who don’t meet their professional development goals. Ame noted that the role of the administrator would be to provide feedback on faculty’s growth, and to help identify ways to continue that process. She also observed that faculty who show no progress towards their development goals could be placed on a professional improvement plan. The criteria for moving on and off the plan, as well as the plan itself, would need to be clearly defined. Becky raised the question of whether a name other than “faculty evaluation system” could be used to better reflect the intent of a formative system. Bob remarked that instances of egregiously unprofessional behavior could be handled in a “one-off” manner, outside of an evaluation system.

Scott raised concerns about the current “one size fits all” approach to evaluation. He pointed out that it is essential for CTE faculty to keep very current in their areas of expertise, and that the work involved in doing so isn’t acknowledged in the current system.

Rita reported on behalf of some colleagues that a new system should center on defining and gauging teaching effectiveness. Her colleagues were also concerned that adding a rating above “satisfactory” would cause the system to become competitive.

Further observations included the fact that the new system needs to be simple and streamlined, as well as non-repetitive. In addition, while most faculty value being observed, both the administrative and student evaluation components need to be improved.
c. **Focus Groups or Other Data-Gathering Activities**

The task force agreed that faculty would value a breakout session held during the Oct. 18, 2016 All College Day. During that session, task force members could bring faculty up-to-date on the group’s progress; faculty could in turn ask questions and provide input. Deborah is on the committee planning the day, and will look into scheduling a session for us.

5. **NEA Concerns - Doug**

Doug brought forward two items from the August 19, 2016 NEA Executive Council meeting. At that meeting, there was strong consensus that the Council be part of the approval process for the new faculty evaluation system. Any such system would need that body’s approval in order to move forward. In addition, there was strong consensus that a 360-degree administrator evaluation system be developed concurrently with revision of the existing faculty system.

Doug, Emily and Jeff put forward a number of reasons in support of these two items. Regarding approval, thumbs-up from the NEA Council was required during the 1981 development of the system now in place, as well as during the draft system created in 2011. The NEA represents over 80% of the faculty, and is a governing body just as much as the local and district-wide academic councils. Indeed, it is the only governing body composed entirely of faculty members. Since a new evaluation system will strongly impact faculty, the Council’s vetting process and approval is still essential. Council approval will also go a long way towards ensuring faculty buy-in. In addition, if we wish a new faculty evaluation system to help move the College culture towards one that is more supportive of faculty growth, the Council’s seal of approval will help that move by increasing faculty trust in what the task force creates. The fact that HLC will be looking at the College’s commitment to shared governance is yet another reason to include the Council in the approval process.

In support of a 360-degree administrator evaluation system, Doug noted that the long-time position of the NEA has been that a new faculty system would be developed only when a new administrator system was developed as well. He pointed out that a number of people in the survey commented on the need for administrators to be evaluated in a 360-degree fashion and/or with faculty input. Emily remarked that administrator evaluation would be part of a culture of continuous improvement, which would be beneficial to the College, and for our HLC visit.

In response, Andrew remarked that he and Jeff had discussed at length whether the two NEA items should have been placed on the task force agenda at all. He was not in agreement with including them, but ultimately acquiesced. He noted that the NEA is an outside group, and wondered what the response might have been had the Dean’s Council, for instance, wished to include their own
agenda items. Andrew also commented that he has tried hard to implement a faculty-led, faculty friendly process, and that there are only three administrators on the task force. He has contributed to discussions, but has also attempted to let faculty guide the direction of the group.

He pointed out that the Joint Resolution nowhere states that NEA Council has a right to approval. Andrew stated that the Joint Resolution provided the NEA the right to be notified and consulted prior to a new evaluation system being implemented. As a result, he does not have the authority to give the Council that right. While the Council can endorse the new system, its approval cannot be made a requirement.

He noted that the College is not opposed to the idea of 360-degree feedback for administrators, but that consideration of such a system is not part of our group’s charge. He also noted that creation of that system would take longer than creation of a new faculty system. Andrew observed that administrators already have an evaluation system, which he previously shared with us. However, he knows that faculty don’t have input into the system, and that such input may have some merit. Andrew wondered if the idea of a 360-degree system could be pursued at FERC (Faculty Employee Relations Council).

Bob asked whether the NEA Council was proposing a summative system for administrators, given the move towards a formative system for faculty. Layla noted that if the entire institution employed growth-oriented evaluations as part of an institution-wide commitment to growth, students would benefit, and administrative turnover might diminish. There seemed to be agreement on this point.

Dennis noted that the task force is on a timeline, due to the upcoming HLC visit. His concern was that if we hold off on our work, we might not meet the HLC deadline.

No resolution of the two NEA issues was achieved. The issues remain, so the conversations regarding them will of necessity continue.

6. **Frequency of Meetings / Subcommittees - Jeff**

Once the task force agrees upon the major components of the new evaluation system, Jeff would like the group to consider dividing up into corresponding subcommittees. He believes this will facilitate the development of those components. He also suggested that the task force meet more frequently than once a month. (The next meeting was scheduled for 9/22, less than two weeks from 9/9.) The idea of subcommittees will be discussed further at future meetings.
7. **Communication of Task Force Progress and Survey Results**

Deborah will look into scheduling a breakout session for the group during All College Day. Jeff will be speaking about the group’s progress and taking questions at the Oct. 10, 2016 College Academic Council meeting. He will present at CAC in the future, as requested or deemed appropriate. The group agreed that task force representatives from the campuses should present at their local academic councils, again as requested or deemed appropriate.

8. **Topics for Next Meeting**

a. Achieving consensus on the purpose and components of the new faculty evaluation system. Per Dennis’s suggestion, task force members should come prepared to share their ideas on these and other relevant matters.

b. Timeline for completion and implementation of the new system.

9. **Schedule Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be held on Thurs. Sept. 22 on the Forest Park Campus in Café West, from 3 -5 pm.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

--Submitted by J. Papier