
Absent: Lauren Bradford, Pedro Carrillo, Fred Childs, Douglass Covey, Jeremy Diem, Susan Easterbrooks, Valerie Fennell, Dana Fox, Skye Hardesty, Amina Kirk, Gabe Kuperminc, Kathryn McClymond, Ruth Stanford, Kenée Stephens, Leslie Taylor, Upkar Varshney, Marolyn Wells.

Meeting called to order at 10:05AM.

The minutes were approved as read.

The committee took up the subject of the possible question about “diversity” that was to be added to faculty evaluations. Christine Gallant said that committee online responses to the options from the last meeting for possible evaluation questions about diversity ranged widely, and included several who thought there should be no questions at all on faculty evaluations about diversity. So it seemed best to discuss this issue in committee, and several emailed to say they agreed. She said that first the committee would decide whether or not to have any questions on this, and then (if the majority agreed that there should be) could decide whether to use only the one question approved by the Faculty Affairs Committee or whether to include another question with one of four options. The entire meeting was spent in discussion of whether or not to have any question on “diversity” at all.

Those who thought there should be no question on “diversity.”

Julie Ancis indicated that while she supported its intention, a question about diversity should not be included on the faculty evaluation. She thought that it was not a solution to the issue of addressing diversity within the classroom. Students who are resistant to multicultural issues often negatively evaluate professors who attend to such issues, particularly professors of color, so the inclusion of a question would not assess what it is intended to assess. The responses of white students in particular to the 2005 Racial Climate Survey indicated such resistance to diversity. Also, faculty evaluations are often connected with the grades that the students receive, and can be compounded by these matters.

Cora Presley also felt that the question regarding diversity should not be included on faculty evaluations. She commented that adding this topic would be like a “baseball bat” that would only serve to harm multicultural faculty. She added that the topic of diversity should be addressed in each department’s agenda where the curriculum can be adjusted accordingly.

Shif Gurmu agreed that such a question should be better not to be included on the faculty evaluation, because of the real possibility that it could be used against minority faculty by majority students.

Elisabeth Burgess also agreed that there should be no question of diversity on the evaluations. She pointed out that adverse student experiences could always be noted in their written responses.

Those who thought such a question should be included.

Peggy Albers commented that there is a belief that faculty members don’t entertain diversity within the classroom and she feels that it is imperative that a question referencing diversity is included on the
evaluations. She thought that the absence of a question would be visible in its invisibility, and that faculty and students should know that there is an evaluation question on diversity.

Olga Jarrett stated that it is the professor’s responsibility to create a safe environment for all students to experience each unique background of those within the classroom, and an evaluation question should reflect that.

Annette Butler, Director of Affirmative Action, stated that students complain to her office about faculty members not creating an environment that encourages multiculturalism. She thought that it is crucial that diversity is addressed on the faculty evaluations.

Doris Derby suggested that there be a separate addendum to the faculty evaluations referencing issues about diversity. Several on the committee disagreed, thinking that any question on the diversity should be included in the main evaluation form.

Eric Blacknall suggested that the committee think of the generation of new students, with more multicultural experiences, who will sit in Georgia State University classrooms and be more familiar with diversity.

The committee then voted. Five voted for there being an evaluation question about “diversity,” and five voted for there being no questions on “diversity” at all. As chair, Christine broke the tie by voting for there being an evaluation question. Cora pointed out that the committee lacked a quorum and could not vote. Christine said that the discussion and votes would be continued either at the organizational meeting, or next year in the committee’s first meeting in August---but only when the committee had a quorum.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00

Minutes prepared by Attiyya Mujahid