Senate Report, 10/9/2014

Stakeholder Feedback on 2.20 Peer Observation of Teaching

We want to thank the HOP committee members and others for their hard work in developing this proposal. There was a considerable amount of feedback. All comments are included in a separate document. Most comments fall into four broad categories:

- Impact on workload (e.g., differential impact on departments based on the ratio of tenured/untenured faculty)
- Impact on evaluations/reviews (formative vs. summative)
- Influence on current practices in some departments (e.g., History, Music)
- Differences in expectations between faculty by rank and tenure track status

A question about the use of the word “should” emerged. Is it prescriptive or suggestive? For example, IX.A.2.b. states: “Specific Department Guidelines should be established within the general guidelines provided in this policy.” In general, Department Guidelines must be established under the guidelines of an approved HOP policy.

Following discussion, the Senate may:

1. Recommend approval
2. Recommend changes
3. Recommend rejection

Two recommendations emerged from a meeting of the COPP Faculty Council on 10/3/2014 (passed with separate votes of 22 in favor and 0 opposed):

- Part IX.B.1.b. Modify to read “Assistant professors should be reviewed once prior to the Third Year Review and once prior to a Tenure and Promotion Review, unless the faculty member requests additional observations.”

- Part IX.D.3. Modify to delete parts f and g.

The two proposals seem to address many of the expressed concerns without undermining the intent of the policy. The first addresses a substantial workload issue for a number of departments. The second and more “radical” idea (deleting parts f and g in IX.D.3.) retains all of the “formative” aspects of the policy and provides a report to document completion of the activity. At the same time, deleting f and g eliminates most of the “summative” aspects and still leaves discretion at the department level on the use of the peer observation reports.

We request a Senate vote on these recommendations.