UAF Faculty Development, Assessment, and Improvement (FDAI) Committee

Year End Report 2014-2015

Committee members: Franz Meyer (CNSM, Chair), Bill Barnes (CTC), Diana DiStefano (CLA), Cindy Fabbri (SoEd), David Fazzino (CLA), Andrea Ferrante (CNSM), Brian Himelbloom (SFOS), Kelly Houlton (CRCD/Dev Ed), Duff Johnston (CLA), Trina Mamoon (CLA), Channon Price (CNSM), Leslie Shallcross (Cooperate Extension Services), Amy Vinlove (SoEd)

Ex officio members: Joy Morrison (Office of Faculty Development), Mark Herrmann (Dean, SoM), Chris Lott (eLearning)

1. Summary of the 2014-2015 period

During the academic year 2014-2015, UAF's FDAI committee was able to make a number of important contributions to key issues of faculty development, assessment, and improvement. As one of its major tasks, the committee led and contributed to a first pilot implementation of UAF's new electronic course evaluation system "eXplorance Blue". To meet the strict deadlines associated with this issue and to fully resolve all associated complexities, a new sub-committee to the FDAI was formed and entrusted with conducting all course evaluation system-related work

software. To successfully address these issues, the ECAI committee was formed to include members of FDAI, representatives of the Provost's office, members of OIT, experts in questionnaire design, and UAF faculty representing a range of teaching styles (in class; field; lab; online; ...). Details on the work of this sub-committee can be found in the sub-committee report in Attachment 1 of this document.

Since committee formation, additional future tasks for ECAI have emerged. These include (1) the continued monitoring of response rates of future course evaluation runs; (2) the education of faculty on how to maximize the performance of the course evaluation system; (3) the analysis of response rates for systemic issues and the addressing of identified issues. Hence, a continuation of ECAI beyond fall 2015 was proposed to and accepted by the UAF administrative committee.

d. Development of a Mission Statement for the FDAI Committee

In order to better organize committee assignments and committee work, the Senate Administrative Committee asked all Faculty Senate committees to revise or approve their committee mission statements or develop such a statement should it not be available. As only little information was available in the Faculty Senate Bylaws about the FDAI's mission, the FDAI committee spent time to develop a comprehensive and concise mission statement as well as comprehensive committee bylaws. After several rounds of adjustments and revisions, the FDAI mission statement and committee bylaws were put forward to the Faculty Senate for consideration during its meeting in May 2015. The FDAI bylaws were embedded in a larger motion that was aimed at a general overhaul of the Faculty Senate bylaw structure. After some discussions on more general bylaw issues, the motion was tabled and will be discussed again early in AY15/16.

3. Outlook into academic year 2014-2015

The committee plans to continue work in all the areas above, supporting the design of a new approach to faculty development, and further exploring other relevant issues involving the development, assessment, and improvement of our UAF faculty. We are working on strengthening a culture of faculty development at UAF, and we thank the members of the FDAI Committee for their dynamic input.

Electronic Course Assessment Implementation (ECAI) Committee
Year-end report 2014-2015

Committee members:

on coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders to ensure successful execution of the pilot as scheduled.

The committee has been meeting on a weekly basis at 304c Eielson. The ECAI committee has reported to the FDAI committee during its monthly meetings.

Development of the new questionnaire

The ECAI committee was charged with the task of developing a new questionnaire to poll students' evaluation of teaching. This task was required since the questions contained in UAF's legacy forms (provided by IASystems) are copyrighted and cannot be reused in the new questionnaire verbatim. The committee thought that building a new survey would allow for designing a set of questions better tailored to the needs and expectations of students and instructors as compared to those included in the legacy forms. To achieve this goal, the committee reviewed the available literature concerning course evaluation tools. Following critical discussion of the literature, guidelines were established for the formulation of the new questions:

1. The questionnaire should contain questions that support:
    a. The assessment of teaching,
    b. Evaluation of faculty performance for tenure and promotion purposes,
    c. The collection of information for program/institutional accreditation
    d. The assessment of student learning outcomes.
2. The questionnaire ought to assess both teaching and the course in its entirety.
3. Questions ought to assess aspects of teaching and of the course for which students have the competence to respond.
4. Evaluation of the course ought to address the following dimensions:
    a. Learning/value
    b. Organization
    c. Breadth of coverage
    d. Examinations/grading
    e. Assignments/readings
    f. Workload/difficulty.
5. Evaluation of teaching ought to address the following features:
    a. Clarity
    b. Expression
    c. Interaction
    d. Organization
    e. Pacing
    f. Enthusiasm
    g. Speech
    h. Rapport
    i. Teaching Aids.
6. The survey tool ought to include questions shared across courses ("core questions") and add-on questions tailored to the course by the instructor or department chair.
7. Question wording should reach an optimal length/clarity ratio.
8. Space for open-ended questions and comments should be included.
9. The number of questions should be kept as low as possible while fulfilling the requirements 1-6.

In January the committee members reached an agreement on a first draft of the new questionnaire. This initial survey underwent a round of review by ASUAF students at the end of their January 18th meeting. Based on their comments, which were for the most part related to wording and the clarity of the questions, the committee edited the questionnaire. The revised survey underwent a round of peer-reviews. All the UAF instructors potentially evaluated by the new tool were invited to provide their feedback through an *ad hoc* Google document. About 10% of the instructors responded. The committee took in consideration all the comments and revised the survey by modifying questions or integrating suggestions where possible. As of February 20th a questionnaire containing nine core questions, four student-specific questions, and four open-ended questions was finalized (see Appendix 1). This is the questionnaire being adopted in

d. SOM
5. Library
6. Delivery: electronic format out of class, or in class depending on instructor.
In order to identify courses that would fit the above criteria, we contacted Mr. Ian Olson (PAIR office), who was instrumental in the definition of the cohort targeted by the pilot.

All the 213 e-learning courses have been included in the pilot. A total of 254 non e-learning courses (as identified by their CRN) were initially selected. Instructors from those courses were given the possibility of opting out from the pilot.

Implementation
Starting from February, the committee has worked closely with eXplorance for the implementation of Blue. The collaboration started with a kick-off meeting, in which eXplorance representatives (Mr. Krimo Bouaou, Mr. Robert Wood and Mr. Muthana Kubba) indicated the requirements and the timing for successful execution of the pilot. Two "requirements gathering documents" provided by eXplorance have been completed by the committee and by OIT (Mr. Phil Jacobs), reporting the information needed for building the survey, importing student, instructor and course information into the system, interfacing Blue with UAF BlackBoard, defining access privileges and delivering the survey to users.

      Following the kick-off meeting, eXplorance scheduled a demo to show committee members how Blue operates, its features and settings, and to address any concerns with respect to the survey tool.

      During the months of March and April, weekly conference calls between Dr. Alexandra Fitts, Ms. Sally Skrip, Dr. Andrea Ferrante and Mr. Robert Wood (eXplorance) were held to ascertain the status of the implementation, troubleshoot any arising technical issues, and to exchange information or address concerns, as the project was moving forward.

      After successful construction of the survey tool, uploading of the required information and interfacing with Blackboard (Mr. Jo Knox), Blue was tested by the committee members. Committee's comments were reported to eXplorance, and a finalized version of the survey was ready by Friday, April 17th. The pilot survey was released to students on April 20th and available until May 4th, as scheduled.

      Results of the survey will be made available to instructors on May 18th, after grades have been released.

Outlook into 2015-2016 academic year
Full implementation of Blue in the Fall of 2015 will require additional efforts by the committee in several directions:
1. Finalize the survey tool, include the question bank, and ensure user-friendliness of Blue for creation of customized questions.
2. Cooperate with the Provost's office for training of instructors and to address issues relative to Blue use and function.
3. On the basis of the pilot response rates, and in collaboration with eXplorance, identify strategies to increase students' participation.

Appendix 1 to ECAI Report   Pilot phase questionnaire

Core questions
Answers: inverted Likert scale

1.   The instructor's presentation of the subject matter was clear.

2.   The instructor's teaching approach was engaging.

3.   The instructor provided useful feedback on students' work.

4.   The instructor's methods of evaluating student work were fair.

5.   The course materials and activities helped me learn the subject matter.

6.   I have a better understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.

7.   I found the course intellectually stimulating.

8.   Overall, this course reflected the expectations conveyed by the syllabus and the instructor.

9.   Overall, I would recommend this course to a fellow student.

Summary score of 1 through 9

Student-specific questions
10.   In regard to your academic program, is this course best described as:
A core requirement   A requirement in your major   In your major   In your minor   An elective Other

11.   Based on your experience, the difficulty level of this class was
very easy   easy   average   difficult   very 1c02.59 Tm[-)]TJETBT

Appendix 2 to ECAI Report   Add-on questions
The questions in italic will be included in Blue

Physical Environment
The physical environment of the class was conducive to learning.
Noise levels in the classroom were distracting.
The arrangement of student desks or tables in the classroom helped me engage in class activities.
Noise levels outside the classroom were distracting.
Lighting in the classroom was appropriate.
The classroom temperature was appropriate.

Technology
The instructor uses technology in ways that helped my learning of concepts and principles
The integration of Blackboard and other web sites and applications was clear and understandable.
The multimedia (audio, video, and animation) used in the course helped me learn course content.
E-mail discussions were a valuable part of this course
Technology used in this course provides high quality instruction
Video materials were a valuable part of this course
Audio materials were a valuable part of this course
Electronic presentations were a valuable part of this course
Instruction technology is well coordinated with other course materials
Classroom blackboards and/or whiteboards effectively used in classroom activities
Technical support was useful.
The instructor's use of new technology increases my overall learning in this course
Use of the internet was intelligently guided

Pedagogy
Small group activities in class helped me learn course content
Peer-review activities helped me improve my work
Course projects were clearly connected to course content
The instructor provided helpful feedback during course project work
Course projects required a reasonable amount of time and effort to complete
The instructor provided helpful guidance during peer-review activities
Course project guidelines were clearly presented
Course projects helped me learn course content
Course projects were fairly graded
Pair activities in class helped me learn course content
Peer-review activity guidelines were clearly presented

Discussion/Seminar
This course encourages students to learn from each other

The organization of course was clearly presented at the beginning of the semester.
Course content was clearly introduced at the beginning of the semester.
Course content was clearly summarized at the end of the semester.

Instructor
The instructor was well-prepared for class.
The instructor encouraged student participation.
The instructor was able to explain things in different ways when necessary.
The instructor encouraged critical thinking about the course content.
The instructor showed interest in student learning.
The instructor used examples effectively in teaching the subject matter.
The instructor was accessible outside of class.
The instructor related course material to real life situations.
The instructor inspired student interest in the subject matter.

General
The use of time in class was appropriate (specific for class type, possible add-on question)
Students felt welcome in seeking help.
The course provided a valuable learning experience.
Assessments covered the course content.
The assignments fit in well with the class topics.