UAF Faculty Development, Assessment and Improvement Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 31, 2012

I. Franz Meyer called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

II. Roll call:

Present: Mike Castellini, Izetta Chambers, Diane Erickson, Cindy Fabbri, David Fazzino, Andrea Ferrante, Kelly Houlton, Eric Madsen, Trina Mamoon, Franz Meyer, Joy Morrison, Amy Vinlove
Excused: Stephen Brown

III. Report from Joy

Joy recently attended the Association of Colleges & Universities conference and then the POD conference and brought back several articles relating to online evaluations. She also brought back ideas on creative financing for increasing the OFD budget. Among other informational items Joy brought back with her is a paper on Mentor and Protégé Relations and the latest POD journal "To Improve the Academy." She informed us that a teaching group meets every Thursday from 3 – 4 pm to watch short videos on teaching from The Great Courses followed by interesting discussions. She also reports that she has a four-pack set on Student Engagement from Magna 20-Minute Mentor and a web link for free access to it on the OFD website.

Joy is also working on a joint research project looking at all the evaluations of the Lilly Conference for the last ten years.

Joy reports that the tailor-made presentations for October (CNSM) went very well. November will be the College of Engineering and Mines.

IV. Revisiting the discussion on electronic student evaluations

The Faculty Senate has taken on electronic student evaluations once again and forwarded it to our committee. Eric Madsen joined us for our discussion as the Provost asked him to facilitate discussions regarding the topic. The issue is being raised again due to security and costs of UAF's current paper-and-pencil evaluations. Kelly filled the committee in on our history of examining the issue two years ago. Ultimately the FDAI committee strongly recommended not switching to electronic evaluations due to their abysmally low response rates. Franz remarked that UAA is using an online evaluation system but they are not happy with their response rates. We discussed how we should approach the issue this time, such as what criteria should we use to guide our research? Some suggestions included not examining cost, looking for ideas to improve response rates, independent research on electronic evaluations, and gathering information from peer institutions already using the electronic format to learn how it's working for them and how they are

increasing their response rates. We also decided to find out what happens to the electronic data – where is it stored and how is it used?

Eric informed us that he has found about a dozen systems so far and would like to set up some demonstrations from the vendors. He noted that their respective websites are mostly advertisements.

Amy wondered if there was a Smart phone application for students to simply fill out the evaluation in class using their cell phones, noting that we could supplement this with other options for students not having a cell phone that supports such an app (or no cell phone at all). Andrea wondered how the open questions would work on a cell phone app (i.e. the "yellow sheets"). While these are not quantifiable data, they do represent the most useful aspect of the evaluation for faculty members. Diane opined that she liked the IDEA system used at UAA because she could add her own questions to the quantifiable part of the evaluation. While we can do that now with the current evaluation system at UAF, we wondered if that is available with all electronic systems and how easy is it to use?

We discussed coming up with a list of vendors we might find acceptable as well as a list of definite rejects and decided to begin an online discussion via email to set up a working list of criteria items and to begin setting up demos. Franz, Andrea and Eric (who will continue to work with our committee regarding this issue) volunteered to research electronic evaluations and choose vendors to present demonstrations. Kelly volunteered to attend all demonstrations. Eric pointed out that we are looking for an evaluation system that works as well as possible for UAF – whatever that system is electronic or paper-and-pencil. Franz wondered if there was a way to find out how many institutions are using electronic evaluations and from which vendor. Joy volunteered to ask the POD folks who they're using.

V. Discussion on the potential inclusion of postdocs into FDAI activities

Mike informed us that John Eichelberger is very keen on this subject, and Joy noted that she has already sent out a six-question survey to all postdocs and received an impressive 31 responses out of 48.

VI. Other business

Andrea explained the difficulty in finding samples of successful NSF grant proposals to utilize as templates. Whereas NIH posts successful grant proposals on its website, he notes that the NSF does not. He wondered if UAF should have a repository of successful grants by UAF faculty. He will continue to look into this.

VIII. Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 28, 1 – 2 pm.

IX. Adjourned at 2:05 pm.
Respectfully submitted by Kelly Houlton.