

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

Year End Report 2013-2014

Committee members: Franz Meyer (CNSM, Chair), Bill Barnes (CTC), Mike Davis (BBC), Cindy Fabbri (SoEd), David Fazzino (CLA), Andrea Ferrante (CNSM), Kelly Houlton (CRCD/Dev Ed), Trina Mamoon (CLA), Channon Price (CNSM), Leslie Shallcross (Cooperate Extension Services), Amy Vinlove (SoEd)

Ex officio members: Joy Morrison (Office of Faculty Development), Mike Castellini (Dean, SFOS)

Committee affiliates: Eric Madsen (SoEd)

1. Summary of the 2013-2014 period

During the academic year 2013-2014, 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 co-led and contributed to the second round of a study of electronic course evaluation systems. This extensive study was carried out in close collaboration with Dr. Eric Madsen (SoEd), the Provost's office, and faculty senate leadership. Other highlights of the year included the support of the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) in the development of innovative approaches to faculty development and the development of a committee mission statement that was submitted for addition to the Faculty Senate bylaws and is currently pending and waiting for approval.

Meetings of the FDAI committee were held monthly in 222 Bunnell. All meetings were well attended and all FDAI members contributed heavily to the rich range of discussions. All meetings were held with working quorums, indicating the activity of the committee during the period covered by this report. Our committee's recorder was Kelly Houlton (her third year as recorder), who has once again impressed the committee with her thorough and timely processing of the meeting minutes. During our first meeting in September 2013, Franz Meyer was elected to serve as committee chair for this academic year. In November 2013 the FDAI welcomed long-time FDAI member Channon Price back into the committee after his return from his sabbatical. Also, early in 2014, the FDAI bid farewell to committee member David Fazzino, who has accepted a Tenure Track Position at a different university.

Details about the main activities of the FDAI committee during the 2013-2014 academic year are summarized in Section 2 of this report.

2. Highlights of 2013-2014 activities

a. Support of and Communications with the UAF Office of Faculty Development

Joy Morrison of the Office of Faculty Development provided monthly updates on her work during the FDAI committee meetings. As during the previous years, Joy was very active throughout this academic period with supporting UAF faculty in many aspects of their work. Besides her usual activities of

reaching out to established and new faculty, awarding travel awards, and inviting renowned speakers for guest presentations, she has engaged in the following activities:

- Joy has worked with the faculty community of UAF to initiate 6 self-organized faculty learning communities that stayed active throughout the year and focused on topics such as *Flipped Classrooms*, *Blended Learning*, *Communicating Across the Curriculum*, *Enhancing Cross-Cultural Knowledge*, *Communication, and Education in STEM*, *Utilizing Online Resources and Technology in Classes Targeting Rural Students*, and *Teaching Strategies for Early Career Faculty*. Each learning community had a designated facilitator and met throughout the academic year. More information can be found at http://www.uaf.edu/faculty_development/flc_ay13-14/.
- The Office of Faculty Development facilitated trips to a large number of faculty development events in the state and nationwide. Through Joy's support, several faculty members were able to attend events such as the *Teaching Professor Teaching Technology Conference*, Atlanta, GA, the *Lilly West Conference on College and University Teaching and Learning*, Newport Beach, CA, and the *Alaska Society for Technology in Education Conference*, Anchorage, AK
- In order to improve communication between researchers from different departments and campuses of UAF, OFD together with the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) organized a "Faculty Schmooze" event. The event was attended by faculty from diverse scientific backgrounds and from both UAF main campus and satellite campuses. During the activity, faculty were paired in a "speed-dating" scenario and were given 7 minutes to communicate their research ideas to each other. Every 7 minutes, pairs were switched such that by the end of the event, all faculty had communicated with all other participants. Most faculty were excited by the concept and it is likely that it will be repeated in a similar form in the near future.
- Joy organized a large number of faculty learning opportunities throughout this academic year. Organized events addressed problems such as *Stress and Time Management*, *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, *Faculty Mentoring*, *Grant and Scholarly Writing*, *Communication In and Outside of the Classroom*, and several presentations on the use of technology in education. All activities were widely announced also through the OFD website (http://www.uaf.edu/faculty_development/). Many of the organized events featured renowned speakers such as Dr. Bob Lucas, Institute for Scholarly Productivity, UAF Chancellor Brian Rogers, Libby Roderick, UAA, and others.
- Joy submitted and won a proposal to the People's Endowment Board of UAF to order 50 copies of the book "Advice for New Faculty Members" and 30 copies of "How to Write a Lot". Both books will be available to new and established faculty through OFD.

b. Support of Stage 2 of UAF's Study on Electronic Course Evaluation Systems

In late summer 2012, Provost Henrichs asked Eric Madsen to facilitate a campus-wide discussion about electronic course evaluation systems. Madsen contacted then-Faculty Senate President Jenifer Reynolds and President-elect David Valentine. The President and President-elect asked the FDAI Committee, chaired by Franz Meyer, to handle the Faculty Senate portion of the discussion and to regularly report to Faculty Senate. In response to this request, the FDAI supported an analysis of electronic course evaluation systems through participation in a series of 12 vendor demonstrations during AY 12/13. At the end of AY 12/13, FDAI summarized its findings in a report that was submitted to the Faculty Senate in May 2013 Faculty Senate meeting. One of the key findings mentioned in this report was to continue

the electronic course evaluation study in AY 13/14 by assessing 4 of the 12 e-course evaluation systems more closely.

Starting in September 2013, the electronic course evaluation workgroup, which included several FDAI members, invited 4 vendors to provide somewhat longer and more detailed demonstrations of their system capabilities. The four second-round demonstrations included:

- Evaluation Kit: Online Course Evaluation and Survey System (9/20/13)
- eXplorance: Blue / Evaluations (10/11/13)
- Gap Technologies: Smart Evals (11/1/13)
- University of Washington: IAS Online (11/22/13)
- Debrief and Discussion (12/6/13)

Based on the review of these four course evaluation systems and based on all the information gathered throughout the two stages of the course evaluation study, the study group formulated the following three part recommendation that was submitted by the FDAI to the Faculty Senate for approval:

- **Part 1: The Electronic Course Evaluation Workgroup recommends that UAF should move to an electronic course evaluation system:** Paper-based course evaluation systems are costly to deploy, retrieve, and store; they demand large amounts of personnel time; data-analysis is inefficient; refining questions to make them more meaningful is difficult; and security is problematic. In viewing the system demonstrations and questioning the presenters, the workgroup was mindful that electronic course evaluation systems present their own versions of some of these same challenges and introduce others. Throughout the process, we considered as separate questions: Should UAF move to an electronic course evaluation system? Is there an electronic course evaluation system that adequately addresses concerns and offers enough advantages to make a transition worthwhile? After analyzing the capabilities of state-of-the-art electronic course evaluation technology and assessing the pros and cons of electronic means of course evaluation, the workgroup recommends that UAF should move to an electronic course evaluation system.
- **Part 2: The Electronic-Course Evaluation Workgroup recommends eXplorance/Blue Course Evaluations:** Based on an initial analysis of 12 e-course evaluation systems and a consecutive more detailed assessment of 4 finalist systems, the workgroup determined that the eXplorance/Blue system met all of the electronic course evaluation features important to UAF and addressed more of those considerations or addressed them more adequately than the other systems considered.
- **Part 3: A workgroup should be formed by the Provost and Faculty Senate Leadership to help design, oversee, and evaluate a pilot of eXplorance/Blue that is appropriate for UAF:** To capture all relevant input, this workgroup shall include representation from faculty, staff (incl. OIT), and administration. The faculty senate shall be represented through at least one representative of the FDAI committee. To preserve the expertise collected throughout the course of this study, the membership of this new workgroup should show some overlap with the membership of the outgoing Electronic Course Evaluation team.

In its meeting on April 7, 2014, the Faculty Senate formally approved these recommendations.

c. 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 during AY 13/14 to develop a comprehensive and concise mission statement. This mission statement was submitted to the Administrative Committee for review and is currently pending approval.

d. Connecting with UAF's eLearning and Distance Education Department

Early in 2014, the FDAI committee invited Madara Mason, eLearning and Distance Education, to meet with FDAI and inform the committee about faculty development activities at her department. The goal was to improve interactions between FDAI and eLearning and offer support for the department's efforts to connect with faculty. Madara provided the committee with a wealth of information on a range of development offerings of the eLearning and Distance Education Department including the programs iTeach and iTeachU as well as their available instructional course design support. Both the eLearning and Distance Education Department and the FDAI committee expressed strong interest in continuing this communication and have communicated on several faculty development issues since.

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.