REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON IDEA TO THE SENATE

March 12, 2012

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Main findings and recommendations

1. Continue using the IDEA instrument to provide data for teaching portfolios. The IDEA data should contribute no more than 30% of the teaching portfolio.
2. Increase knowledge of how to interpret IDEA statistics by increasing participation by faculty and administrators in IFD workshops.
3. Review the IDEA instrument again in five years.

Additional information and data

1. There was a broad consensus that the IDEA Instructor and Course Rating Form is basically a useful instrument. We have been using it for five years and it is a huge improvement over the old SET form. Of course, it is not perfect.

2. By far the most important problem identified and discussed is the lack of knowledge and understanding of IDEA data by those who use the form to evaluate faculty (PRC, FRC, Deans, Provost). Although the IFD has run workshops to educate this population, uptake of the workshops is very low. This group recommends that this population is either strongly encouraged or mandated to attend this workshop. A DVD is available for training and we wondered if it might be made available by online streaming.

3. It is also the case that faculty are still not aware of best practices when it comes to administering the form. Again more education all round seems to be key.

4. A concern was raised about the window for giving the assessment. For classes that meet once a week (e.g. graduate classes) this seemed too short. A second concern regarding timing was that IDEA summary results are not returned to faculty in a timely manner to allow them to contextualise the results for their file. In one case a faculty member received the IDEA summary stats on the day their file closed.

5. Concerns were raised over how well students interpret and critically think about the questions. It is not clear how we can tackle this real problem.

6. An online survey was designed and administered. The results of this survey were presented to the senate and are appended to this report.

7. It must be stressed that the IDEA instrument is an instructor and course rating system. It may be used as part (no more than 30%) of an overall teaching evaluation. Perhaps more work and workshops are required on the other 70%.

8. One committee member suggested that all IDEA scores should be made public.

9. There is a concern that the form is too long and students suffer from "question fatigue" which results in no comments at the end.