Academy of Distinguished Teachers
Twin Cities Steering Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, September 17, 2009
238 Morrill Hall, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Present: William Durfee, Gary Gray, Jeremy Hernandez, Ruth Lindquist, Judith Martin, Melissa Stone, Mike White

Regrets: James Carey

Opening Business

- As the term of last year’s chair (Jay Hatch) expired, Hernandez opened the meeting.
- All present members introduced themselves
- April 17, 2009 meeting minutes were approved
  - Note: May 2009 meeting was cancelled
- Lindquist was elected to chair the committee for the 2009-2010 year

Announcements

- Just prior to the meeting, Marshall Stern stepped down from the steering committee. As per the steering committee’s guidelines, in the event of a resignation, the individual with the next highest number of votes that was not elected will be asked to fill in the vacancy.
  - ACTION: Hernandez will get in contact with that individual to see if he would be willing to serve in this role.
- Hernandez informed the committee that the Transform newsletter was being discontinued. Newsletter co-sponsors were exploring whether the key messages the newsletter presented were currently being met by other outlets or if a new online publication should be established in the future.

Small Grants competition

- Last year, the competition was suspended given uncertainty in the University budget and the question was asked whether it should be reopened at this time.
  - ACTION: Hernandez will inquire with Vice Provost Carney about the status of funding for this program.

ADT Retreat

- Hernandez reported that the planning for the ADT Retreat October 9-11 was in good shape overall. A handful of sessions were still being finalized in terms of indentifying panelists. The biggest concern was that the Retreat taking place at the same time as Homecoming weekend (which is now on campus) had really hurt Twin Cities registration numbers. As Retreat registration was still open at the time of the meeting, the final tally of registrants was not available.
Faculty Gatherings
- Hernandez reported that the dates for the faculty gatherings for 2009-2010 have been set and were announced in the summer.
  - ACTION: As the first gathering is taking place on the St. Paul campus, Durfee and White volunteered to supply a couple of bottles of wine. Stone volunteered to bring some snacks.
- Committee members were asked about possible guests to join us at gatherings throughout the year. Suggestions included President Bruininks, Provost Sullivan, the Athletic Director, and Bob Crabb (UM Bookstore)
  - ACTION: Hernandez will be in contact with the above mentioned individuals to see if they can join us on any of the Gathering dates.

Interdisciplinary Teaching
- Did we want to continue to pursue issues related to interdisciplinary teaching: YES
- May want to bring in Bob McMaster again to learn more about specific developments that were pending last year
- Disincentive seems to be financial and related to the budget

Oral Preliminary Exams
- During the summer, ADT member Ken Leopold, sent an e-mail to Karen Zentner Bacig inquiring whether the TC Steering committee would want to look into perceived inconsistencies in the expectations of oral preliminary exams of graduate students.
- The committee members did not think creating official guidelines was a viable solution given how different academic units handle the exams differently. One idea that was brought up was possibly trying to establish a list of "best practices" as it relates to conducting oral prelim exams for ADT to possibly promote. It might also be an idea worth discussing as a session at the 2010 Retreat (unfortunately it was too late for the 2009 Retreat unless it happened spontaneously during an open session).
- To begin exploring the matter, may want to get someone from the Graduate School (Vicki Field?) and a few select DGSs from different disciplines to visit with the committee at an upcoming meeting to discuss what different departments are doing currently as it relates to oral prelims and a few other related graduate student matters.


/jjh