

## **Annual report of the Instructional Support Committee, 2003-2004**

June 27, 2004

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Members. Voting: Bob Cadmus, Vince Eckhart, David Ellison, Susan Ireland, Ralph Savarese, Martha Voyles. Ex-Officio: Associate Dean Helen Scott, Bill Francis, John Kalkbrenner, Christopher McKee, Chair of the Faculty Mark Montgomery. Secretary: Terri Phipps.

### **Curricular development**

The Committee modified the Curricular-Development Proposal Guidelines (which are distributed to faculty in fall and spring) in four ways.

- ISC deleted the list of check boxes for “core areas” (e.g., Concentrations), a list that appeared in various forms on previous versions of the Guidelines. We did so in order to make it clear that teaching innovation in areas “outside the boxes” are also eligible for support. We also added to the first paragraph the sentence, “Examples of persuasive justification [for a project] might include, but would not be limited to, projects adding diversity to the curriculum, promoting interdisciplinary connections, making contributions to the Concentrations, or using new pedagogy or technology to enhance learning.”
- ISC added to the Guidelines that “total award amounts [including the maximum \$1,600 new course stipend] normally do not exceed a maximum of \$2,000.”
- ISC proposed a new category of workshop. “Reading Workshops” would involve a leader’s stipend and materials for other participants. By the end of the year, we made no Reading Workshop awards. We decided to drop the category and add additional requirements to the guidelines for summer workshop proposals to assure outcomes from participants that relate directly to the curriculum.
- ISC added language to encourage one-time or experimental course-related field trip proposals, while also stating that regularly scheduled field trips within departments should become part of departmental budgets.

The Committee supported 2 faculty-faculty tutorials, 3 course field trips, 7 curricular development awards, 2 teaching and learning groups, 6 discussion lunches for the Committee to Foster Foreign Language Teaching (CFFLS), 1 reading group, 1 faculty weekend seminar, 2 travel/conference awards (one split between CSFS and ISC), and two summer curricular-development workshops.

ISC discussed alternative funding models of curricular and pedagogical development. We decided that our current model has clear advantages over many alternatives, but that several issues deserve consideration, for example: (1) whether stipends should be dropped in favor of expense-based awards; (2) whether the whole faculty or ISC should prioritize particular areas deserving support in particular years (e.g., web development for modern language instruction; geographic information systems); (3) whether awards should allow faculty to purchase books; and (4) what exactly distinguishes “normal” or expected course development from exceptional development deserving of ISC support.

### **Facilities and services**

ISC spent some time reviewing the issue of bookstore location—on campus versus downtown. Members gathered and shared information from their academic divisions, and some of us attended lunch with a consultant from the Kenyon College Bookstore. Opinions (faculty and Committee) were not uniform, but a majority view appears to favor keeping the bookstore where it is, possibly in an expanded form that opens to Park St. as well as to central campus.

The new Technology Discovery Center was the subject of Committee discussion on several occasions, though ISC did not play a role in TDC design. (ISC did, last year, endorse the idea of a future TDC to be located on central campus.) The Committee encouraged the view that the current TDC be considered

experimental. ITS should carefully monitor and evaluate the uses the facility receives and later report on "best practices" to the faculty. The Committee also communicated to ITS concerns from the faculty: (1) that housing Curricular Technology Specialists at the TDC for one day per week would curtail their ability to assist with courses (e.g., in unscheduled troubleshooting of technology); and (2) that attention to new, high-end technologies might come at the expense of attention to widely used, lower-end technologies.

### **Computing and library policies**

The Committee discussed a survey distributed last year about electronic resources provided by the Library, the survey being initiated by David Ellison and undertaken by the Library. No strongly recommended changes to current policies emerged from this discussion.

As requested by several faculty and students, and in accord with ISC's charge to review concerns and complaints regarding Academic Computer Use Policy, ISC spent a substantial fraction of its time in 2003-2004 reviewing the 21 July 2003 changes that the ITS Director made to the College's ACUP. These changes were made in response to the use (and perceived abuse) of the virtual community that used "Plans" software. After its review, ISC sent a letter to the Dean of the College and Vice President for Academic Affairs, a letter that recommended the deletion of one newly inserted section of the revised ACUP and asked for a re-consideration of ISC's role in overseeing computing issues that do not, in our view, concern instruction. We sent a second letter to the Faculty Organization Committee, endorsing the idea of evaluating the merits of having a faculty body besides ISC oversee computer issues that deserve faculty oversight but do not directly concern instruction.

ISC considered but did not collect data or issue judgments regarding one more issue in this category. Faculty, academic staff, and students are increasingly being required to use web-delivered rather than paper procedures for budget accounting, advising, credit cards, etc. An issue to consider next year is whether these changes' presumed savings in administrative time incur an unacceptably high price in academic time.