

Instructional Support Committee Annual Report, 2008-09.

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Shuchi Kapila, Chair

OVERVIEW

The ISC spent a fair bit of time this year in thinking about streamlining the process for applying for curricular development funding. It was felt that resources were scattered in different places making it a confusing process to address the appropriate funding source for particular proposals, especially interdisciplinary initiatives. The Associate Deans' office worked on compiling an inventory of internal sources of support for activities that are also funded by ISC. The goal was to make the information easily accessible for all faculty. It also discussed criteria for assessment of curricular development proposals, summer workshops, and EKI proposals. In other business, ISC responded to the library Self-Study with comments and suggestions and received an overview of the process from Richard Fyffe. An ISC task force made recommendations regarding the use of Open Office software following lengthy discussions last year about making alternatives to Microsoft Office available to the campus community. ISC participated in the search for a one year CTS position. It also participated in discussions with SBRA about classroom needs and future campus planning.

LIBRARY

ISC discussed a variety of the issues facing the Libraries, including the importance of being part of a consortial network for sharing collections and other resources; rapid turn-around of interlibrary lending and borrowing requests; the challenge of building specialized research collections; and the role of print and electronic formats in future collection development. The Libraries prepared a self study leading up to an external review in spring 2009. They shared an early draft of the report with Executive Council, Instructional Support Committee, and the Library SEPC. This draft covers 8 broad topics, with specific recommendations under each heading: Organizational structure, staffing levels, and leadership; Information literacy: the Libraries' teaching program, including for-credit courses, reference services, one-on-one instruction, workshops, etc.; Collection development and collection management, including choice of print vs. electronic resources; Discovery and access, including catalogs, federated searching tools, article linking, interlibrary services, and dissemination services; Special collections and archives; Digital initiatives, including digitization of local collections and digital repositories for scholarly and creative works of faculty, students, and staff; Outreach to and engagement with faculty and students; Partnership and collaboration with other departments and organizations, on and off campus.

Richard Fyffe and the Library also launched an assessment of the Listening Room capabilities. ISC constituted a focus group for this purpose. Shuchi Kapila and Roger Vetter participated in the discussions about enhancing and updating the Listening Room to meet instructional and recent media technology needs.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

ISC members also participated in discussions with SBRA representatives about making classrooms spaces more convenient for different kinds of instruction.

ISC also revisited a long standing discussion about open office software. Bill Francis distributed a draft expanded recommendation regarding the use of ".doc" formats. This recommendation was made by a task force appointed by ISC, including Bill Francis, Ian Athanasakis, Richard Fyffe, and David Romano. The task force was charged with addressing compatibility issues among word processor applications as the campus made the transition to Office 2007/2008, specifically considering the use of open document formats. There are varying degrees of fidelity issues when saving in different formats. The task force recommends the following options when considering software choices, though users must keep in mind that ITS will continue to give full support to Microsoft Office products.

PC users: MS Office 03 or 07; Open Office v2.4.1 or higher; MS Works v9 or higher

MAC users: MS Office 04 or 08; NeoOffice v2.2.4 or higher; Apple iWork 08

Linux/SPARC: Open Office v2.4.1 or higher

ISC commended the task force members for working to meet the computing needs of so many users. Task force members also met with Academic Support Assistants and faculty at the division level to discuss needs further.

CTS ONE-YEAR REPLACEMENT SEARCH

ISC members Bill Francis, David Romano and Shuchi Kapila participated in interviews for filling a one year position in CTS which would support AV needs in the ARH/Carnegie cluster. Additional AV support in classrooms is needed, particularly in the ARH/Carnegie cluster. The Associate Dean reported that the CTS position to be housed in the sciences has not been filled. In addition, one of the academic support assistant positions will not be filled at this time due to the current budget environment. This one-year experimental AV support position, with technical skills mid-range between academic support and CTS, will help fill the need for classroom support. This person will be housed in the Carnegie academic support office, and will be available during teaching hours. The two CTSs are and will continue to reach out to faculty, especially those in the sciences and social studies to make sure that needs for curricular development projects are met.

BUDGET CUTS

Given the economic downturn this year, ISC was also charged with thinking about making cuts to inessential expenses while keeping intact funding for instructional needs. Some of the suggestions made were discontinuing support for individual faculty stipends for independent course development and regular lunch meetings. Eventually funding for lunches for teaching and discussion groups was suspended some funds were made available for planning throughout the year. Individual summer stipends related to EKI were also discontinued.

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Associate Dean in consultation with the Centers and other sources continued compiling an inventory of funding sources with a view to eventually revising guidelines for applications for curricular development support. Her goals were to make the website more user-friendly and streamlined so as to help faculty navigate more efficiently through the multiple sources of funding. Some of the questions that came up for discussion were whether a curricular development award is per faculty or per project in a team-driven project, whether projects are defined by total time invested in them or by year, and whether faculty should be allowed more time to develop new interdisciplinary courses, in other words, whether the condition that the course be taught in the year following the award was unrealistic in some cases.

Other the instructional support issues that came up were:

- Field trips for language departments came up for discussion a few times. In light of the fact, that many of these departments have a very small budget, ISC has in the past funded such trips related to language learning. It was felt, however, that trips that are related to regularly taught courses should become part of departmental budgets.
- Guidelines for multi-tiered proposals. For instance, if a faculty member is attending a meeting for research, but while there has an opportunity to do pedagogical work.
- Guidelines for faculty-faculty tutorials
- Should ISC, in consideration of heavy demands on faculty time, limit the number of concurrent projects they will fund for individual faculty?

ISC considered proposals for summer workshops and discussed the criteria for assessing the merit of workshop proposals. ISC members were asked to come up with criteria for assessment. Some of the suggestions for assessment that were made included asking what types of projects would be most useful, how participation in faculty workshops would enhance teaching and how a workshop would change the pedagogical or intellectual outlook of participating faculty. ISC members agreed that workshops should have a minimum of eight regular teaching faculty participating in order for a workshop to be held. The Associate Dean will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis. The Committee also discussed limiting the number of workshops part-term and term faculty could participate in each summer.