

CAL CAC Meeting Minutes (Approved)  
Dec. 1, 2022  
3:15–5:00pm

Attendance: Thomas Berding, Ruth Nicole Brown, Heather Douglas, Chris Frilingos, Yore Kedem, Kristen Mapes, Danny Mendez, Bump Halbritter, Bill Hart-Davidson, Ellen Moll, Philip Barry Pellino, William Vincent, Deanna Thomas (toward the end of the meeting)

Guests: Marilyn Amey, Jim Lucas, Karen Moroski-Rigney

Meeting called to order at 3:16pm. Heather Douglas took minutes.

Kristen Mapes motioned to approve minutes with noted suggestion. No objections. Motion passed.

Bump Halbritter motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Kristen Mapes. No objections. Motion passed.

Yore Kedem noted that Chris Long was traveling so Bill Hart-Davidson filled the CAC in on CAL news. Bill Hart-Davidson said that this has been an exceptionally busy pre-award cycle, with lots of folks pursuing funding. He emphasized the importance of grant funding for expanding access to opportunities for collaborators and students. He also noted that there is a CAL team to help people put together competitive proposals, including aiding with budgets and grant processes. The increased numbers of people applying for grants has been noticed as well by the upper administration.

Bill Hart-Davidson also noted that there are increasing numbers of opportunities aligned with CAL interests in DEI, race and democracy, and other interdisciplinary research. He asked, how would these opportunities best reach our faculty?

In the area of graduate education, applications for admissions are beginning to arrive. AAAS will be expanding their program next year.

Last year was the first ever structural deficit for CAL, which has made it difficult to meet funding commitments, despite shrinking graduate student numbers. Because the line of grad student goes up every year due to tuition, health care costs, and stipend increases. As the amount of money provided to CAL was not increasing, this created clear pressure on the budget. We make money on our graduate programs, because graduate students earn a bit more teaching than they cost us. So, we should not be reducing our graduate programs for financial reasons as well as for the health of the departments. Bill Hart-Davidson has proposed an increase in funding from the upper admin and they are providing more funding to CAL to support graduate student lines.

This is a bargaining year with the graduate union this coming spring. Bill Hart-Davidson will provide more details about this process as it proceeds.

Danny Mendez asked what the improved budget situation means for departments. Bill Hart-Davidson noted that this took pressure off of the need to worry about cutting graduate student lines. Recurring lines will be stable going forward (barring other changes, such as the underlying budgetary model).

Bump Halbritter asked if there was a relationship between the grad budget and the WRAC two-year moratorium (which is focused on faculty staffing). Bill Hart-Davidson said there is no relationship. A more detailed discussion of WRAC and the difficulty of staffing the current program, and whether there can be hires or alterations of programs to fit the staff available.

Next, Marilyn Amey (MA) and Jim Lucas discussed proposed changes to the SIRS system. It has not been revised thoroughly since 1979. Explorance Blue has been selected as a vendor for the new SIRS system. IT is the current focus; developing the questions is something that will be next semester. The link provides details about the history of the process, new governance language, and a mechanism for feedback on the proposed changes.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1RZAEBJNmGLsJWkQ3Vd8XT5QUrCFpV2C?usp=sharing>

The main changes being proposed are:

- 1) A proposal to rename the policy and the survey instrument (Student Perceptions of Learning Survey) SPLS. This new name signals a change to assessing not actual learning, but students' perception of it.
- 2) A policy change for who has access to the data the survey produces, for use by the instructor, and not for other purposes for which the survey is not apt (e.g. accreditation, college comparisons). Who has access is better defined.
- 3) The design and questions, including a cap on the number of questions (e.g. 20). Some questions would be for all classes, and some would be more college or program specific. 7-8 MSU wide, 12-13 at CAL or program level. Questions will also need to be vetted for reliability (validity) and equity. There would be an official MSU question bank on which the programs could draw to construct the survey.
- 4) MSU would still allow alternative survey instruments, but the policies for the SPLS would need to be met in terms of process for vetting and data use & access. Under some proposals, students would still receive the general MSU level questions. The policy states currently that students must be surveyed. Whether and to what extent there should be commonalities is part of the current discussion (e.g. some core questions).

SLPS would also be only one part of instructional evaluation. Teaching portfolios and peer evaluations would still be a central part of instruction evaluation.

Explorance Blue provides better data analytics from surveys. How to use this information is part of the discussion. The focus remains on end of course surveys, and not mid-course surveys. Thomas Berding asked whether the confidentiality of the data precludes using this data as part of annual performance reviews. Jim Lucas says that instructors will only receive data on their own classes, and they will not be disaggregated by student characteristics to protect student's

confidentiality. Department chairs would be able to see all the data for courses taught in their department.

One key aspect of this change will be college processes for proposing questions.

It was also clarified that qualitative feedback will also remain part of the survey instrument. Chris Frilingos asked whether students will be consulted, and Jim Lucas said yes, both grad and undergrad. TA perceptions are also being consulted. How to get feedback to TAs is being discussed.

Yore Kedem asked about skill related vs. content related questions. As different questions might be relevant to some courses and not others, this is a crucial aspect of surveys. University level questions should not depend on these differences. This is part of why some questions have to be decided at the level of the program or unit. Yore Kedem noted that there are important divergences within units, that have both skill and content foci in different courses.

Jim Lucas said that the question bank from the University of Toronto will be the starting point for the development of questions.

Bump Halbritter noted that units who want to craft their own approach may be siloed in their efforts. He urged that collaborations across units to develop practices be encouraged.

Marilyn Amey and Jim Lucas are very interested in continuing the conversations about how this work should proceed.

Thomas Berding also asked how our data has been misused. Marilyn Amey noted there are lots of ways in which the data are being interpreted or used that are not apt to the current survey. There is too much variation in interpretations of the data produced and this introduces bias into evaluation structures.

Yore Kedem offered thanks to Marilyn Amey and Jim Lucas for sharing this work with the CAC.

Karen Moroski-Rigney (chair of CUC) joined the meeting to discuss the new CUC bylaws. Originally formed to provide triage support the CCC can't get to. CUC does not have a purview over anything other than college scholarships and is focused on student success.

Bill Hart-Davidson noted that the CGC can handle both curricular and program issues, but the CCC has too full of an agenda with curriculum that it cannot tackle the other undergraduate issues. Thomas Berding asked questions about the proposed functions of the CUC, such as reviewing and evaluating educational policies, which is currently the job of the CCC. Thomas Berding also asked whether the last two points of the new bylaws talk about the selection of the representatives is under the auspices of the CAC, but elsewhere in the document it suggests that CUC membership is to be set by the departmental units. No terms limits seem sensible because undergraduate chairs would be appropriate members and can serve in that role for years.

The “under the auspices of CAC” language is because the CAC and CAL authorization is needed for the CUC. But the current language seems to be misleading.

The chair of the CUC is to be elected, and the members selected by the departmental units.

Bump Halbritter recommended a really careful look at the functions of the CUC, such as vetting things that will go to the CCC for units that don't have departmental review functions. He recommended as well, a careful look at how the CCC and the CUC would work together or how their functions relate to each other would be helpful. What are the unique functions of the CUC?

The vote to vote is to send it out for Qualtrics for CAL wide voting. Some changes are needed. We can still put the CUC bylaws on the agenda on Monday, and then revise carefully in light of discussion, and then vote in the spring. Discussion about options for proceeding ensued.

What should the rest of the All-College Faculty Meeting look like?

The Interim President will be there for 30 minutes. Danny Mendez noted that the date and time are less than ideal because it is during the last week of instruction and many faculty are still teaching.

How are we going to run the meeting as it is a face-to-face meeting? There will be a zoom listening and voting option, but not for discussion purposes.

Bump Halbritter raised concerns about quorum. CAL faculty needs to be able to trust votes taken, which can be done within Zoom, but it is more complicated with hybrid meetings. Yore Kedem noted that a face to face meeting can be focused on discussion with voting via Qualtrics after the meeting.

Danny Mendez argued that having the meeting after classes end would allow people to attend. He also noted that a recording of the meeting will be very important for minute taking, which can be extremely challenging otherwise.

Kristen Mapes encouraged folks to repeat questions and points raised in the room for Zoom attendees and for recording purposes.

Yore Kedem asked for additional agenda items. Ruth Nicole Brown asked for Jonathan Ritz and Jonathon Novello mindfulness and breathwork exercises at the meeting. Ellen Moll asked if there are support staff issues. Deanna Thomas noted that there will be snacks at the meeting. Yore Kedem asked for items from associate deans as well, for example the news from Bill Hart-Davidson presented at today's meeting.

Chris Frilingos noted the value of the faculty senate reports, and suggested we ask if Danielle Nicole DeVoss and other CAL reps would be willing to field questions.

Bump Halbritter suggested that a discussion of how the return to face-to-face classes has not fully returned us to pre-pandemic academic classroom culture.

Ellen Moll suggested that there be community building exercises around teaching experiences, as well as how the CAC has generated questions to the President in the past. Issues to raise can include the status and support of emeritus faculty and a shift to the new advising system.

Yore Kedem will send a rough agenda to the CAC on Friday.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Future meeting dates for 2023: Thursdays from 3:15-5:00 on Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 13