

Aloha Senators,

As we head into the last days of Academic Year 2014-2105, I would like you all to take a minute to consider an issue that UHPA has been discussing at length in the past week.

If you recall, Chairperson Joel Peralto had sent out an email on April 20, just a few weeks ago. The memo was from VPAA Dickson regarding the revision of the current eCafe student survey system in use at all UH and UHCC campuses. I realize that many of you may not have had the time to look over the attachments, but the memo immediately raised a number of red flags.

Here are the main points of concern from the memo from VPAA Dickson:

- 1 “Course Evaluation System ad hoc committee, a systemwide, multi—disciplinary group”
 - a It is not entirely clear who comprises this committee, nor if any UH or CC faculty are being given representation on this ad hoc committee or in the review and revision process.
- 2 This ad hoc committee was asked “to explore and evaluate current issues in this area, and to propose a path forward to create a more useful and effective course evaluation system”.
 - a It is not clear at all what this process is, or how it was arrived at.
- 3 The memo states that “[o]ver the years, students and other constituent groups have expressed concerns regarding the lack of transparency around evaluation results.”
 - a What evidence is being provided to show that “students and other constituent groups” have expressed concern about a “lack of transparency around the evaluation process results”, and what precisely does “lack of transparency around evaluation results” mean? Do “students and other constituent groups” feel that they should have access to evaluation results?
- 4 The memo states: “[T]here is an increasing demand for institutions to demonstrate clear accountability for student success and

achievement of student learning outcomes, which has clear implications for program accreditation.”

- a If there is such a demand for institutions to “demonstrate clear accountability”, should this not also include “all segments of the learning community” as all segments “must be engaged and allowed to influence the process and outcomes”? What is being done with the evaluation of administration on all campuses, as stated in the first paragraph of this memo? Where is the clear demonstration of accountability and transparency around the evaluation process and results?
- 5 The memo further states that “accountability for student success and achievement of student learning outcomes, which has clear implications for accreditation.”
 - a Is it certain that the “new and revised” version of eCafe will be able to clearly demonstrate “accountability for student success and achievement of student learning outcomes”, and can we be sure that the results can or will be used in helping with program accreditation? How will the results show what implications need to be addressed?
 - 6 The memo finally states the following: “It has been reviewed by the VPAA and has been sent to UHPA for consultation. The committee is now seeking additional feedback from other relevant constituent groups.”
 - a To my knowledge, confirmed by some UHPA BOD members, the proposed concept paper with appendixes has only been sent to UHPA but has not been “consulted” at all.

There has been some discussion about the need for Faculty Senates across the system, both UH and UHCC, to respond to this memo.

That the ad hoc committee has waited until the last few weeks of the academic year, when obviously none of us are busy or have anything better to do than to rubber stamp approval on a memo that implies things already near completion, does not seem to indicate a sincere wish for active participation or commentary from faculty and faculty senates, in spite of the following statements in the memo:

“The committee is now seeking additional feedback from other relevant constituent groups. Please send questions and feedback to course-eval2@lists.hawaii.edu by May 15, 2015.”

This is a matter that concerns all faculty and faculty senates, and I believe that we need to make a stand against letting things get past us at times when we are too busy teaching to act on academic matters.

I would like to make a motion in today’s meeting for the Faculty Senate to ask the Executive Committee to respond to the office of VPAA Dickson that further development of the Proposed Course Evaluation Committee Concept Paper should be put on hold until the fall.

Humbly,

David Tsugawa