Minutes of the University Council on Teaching Monday, November 20, 2006 9:3011:00 a.m., Bourneuf House Present: Chris Hepburn (Chair), Sue Barrett, James Gips, Mary Joe Hughes, Bill Petri, Eve Spangler, Danny Willis, Fred Yen Guest: University Provost Bert Garza
Electronic course evaluations
The UCT discussed four agenda items as suggested by Chris Hepburn:
1. Approve the plan to withhold grades for students not completing the evaluations until the end of the exam period for this fall semester.
The UCT approved the plan but stresses that student input should be sought as plans for
the evaluations go forward.
2. Discuss what other versions of the evaluation are needed or desired.
The group discussed whether or not all current versions of the university evaluation need
to available in the electronic form. A possible alternative to multiple versions is the addition of batch customizable questions; for example, courses with multiple sections, such as Cornerstone or Religious Quest, might have a common set of questions they would like to include in addition to the common questions. Bill Petri agreed to bring this suggestion to the eevaluation committee.
3. Investigate the instrument itself. Are the questions asked the correct ones?
It has been many years since the current questions were developed and it seems to the UCT like a good idea to see if they still elicit relevant and useful feedback. The committee hesitates to take on this task, however, before a clear process for
implementing any revisions has been established. Would our suggestions have to be approved by various committees on campus, for example?
4. Continue our discussion of the question of making the results of the standard portion of the evaluations available to students and other faculty in addition to
the administrators who can see them now.
The UCT agrees that theyac

ked about his
idea of bringing together groups of faculty to talk about what sort of feedback would be useful to
the

students, and to provide information for deans and chairs. The ideal evaluation instrument would fulfill all three functions, although the primary function of evaluations is to help
faculty improve their teaching.
He would like the UCT to take on the project of potentially revising the current evaluation questions. He suggests that we first organize and run some small, informal but
representative focus groups of faculty to find out what they would like the instrument to do. Next, we should decide if the current instrument is meeting those needs, possibly bringing in experts from the Lynch School as con