Department of Physical Science Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2024

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Faculty | Present | Absent | Excused |
| Luminita Coman | X |  |  |
| Yadab Paudel | X |  |  |
| Marius Coman | X |  |  |
| Kimberly Hilton | X |  |  |
| Soumya Bhattacharya | X |  |  |
| Serhiy Pasishnyk | X |  |  |
| Valentin Zalessov | X |  |  |
| Christina Lydon | X |  |  |
| Eric Commendatore | X |  |  |
| Di Xue | X |  |  |
| Qin Liu | X |  |  |
| Gabriel Gaidos | X |  |  |
| Michael Sauer | X |  |  |
| Tina Churchill | X |  |  |
| Joseph Van Gaalen | X |  |  |

**Summary**

**Improving Assessment Data for Course Improvements**

Joseph emphasized the importance of using assessment data not just for collecting information, but also for improving courses and student outcomes. He pointed out that in many cases, assessment data is not being used effectively to inform changes in course structure, faculty time allocation, or online course offerings. Joseph proposed starting with a reassessment of existing assessment tools, considering alternative data sources such as student and instructor surveys, and using the resulting insights to guide improvements. He suggested that this approach could help ensure that assessment data is not being wasted, but instead is being used to drive meaningful and impactful changes.

**Addressing Stagnation and Improving Assessment Process**

Joseph clarified that stagnation occurs when assessment results are not used to set new goals, leading to no progress. He advised that pre and post assessments should be run for a few semesters depending on the course structure and the variables involved. A suggestion was made to differentiate online and ground class results due to differences in interaction and responses. Joseph emphasized the importance of clear communication and documentation to avoid any misinterpretations by accrediting bodies.

**Dynamic Assessments and Instruction Improvement**

Joseph provided two examples of how to dynamically adjust assessments and instruction based on data, and emphasized the importance of continuous improvement in the teaching process. Qin shared his perspective on assessment and common final exam. The team also discussed the importance of narrative in documenting changes for future reference, and how to effectively communicate changes to students. Eric raised a question about the balance between individual assessments and broader departmental changes. Joseph advised that any significant changes, whether at the individual or departmental level, should be narrated to ensure clarity.

**Reviewing Course Assessment Report Strategy**

Luminita asked Joseph to review the course assessment report, particularly focusing on the questions considered. Joseph explained how to interpret the data, including the item difficulty, item discrimination index, and point by serial index. He emphasized the importance of identifying questions that were too easy or too difficult, as well as those with low item discrimination index, which may be off-topic. Joseph advised focusing on the questions that all students answered correctly as they were considered too easy and those listed as weak discriminators first. He stressed that the discussion should be instructor-led and not focus on individual performance to avoid bias.

**Curriculum Changes and Syllabus Submission**

Qin talked about changes to the curriculum, including the removal of Gen Ed courses such as physical science, historical geology, and foundation of interdisciplinary studies. The department also planned to address the math requirements in other courses. Qin advised the team to send their simple syllabus to him, if they hadn't done so already. Qin also reminded the team about the final grade deadline, which is May 2nd for spring 2024. Serhiy reported an issue with accessing the fall course simple syllabus, to which Qin suggested waiting a little longer.