Academic Affairs Committee of the IUPUI Faculty Council
Review of Common Questions for Online Course Questionnaires
April 2015

The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) discussed employing a set of core questions on online course questionnaires (OCQs) for all instructors at IUPUI at 4 successive meetings. We also invited Dr. Melissa Lavitt (Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, IUPUI) to the March 23rd meeting to participate in our discussions.

The AAC strongly recommends that IFC should decide on the behalf of the IUPUI faculty whether or not to adopt a set of campuswide questions on OCQs. If the decision is to adopt a set of core questions, the IFC should create a policy mandating the use of campuswide questions and defining the use to which the resulting data can be used. In the event that IUPUI adopts a set of campuswide questions, it is imperative to retain the ability for schools and instructors to include any and all questions of their choice.

After considerable deliberation, the AAC is not yet able to endorse the creation of a set of core questions for OCQs for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, there has been insufficient time for this concept to be discussed and evaluated broadly across campus. We suggest that during the next academic year the AAC, IFC Executive Committee, IFC and the office Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs engage the IUPUI faculty in all schools in open discussions of this topic. The AAC believes that it is important to determine whether widespread support for the core question concept exists. It is essential that the discussions include how the results from the OCQs will be used, keeping in mind a previous IFC policy that notes that the "primary use of student evaluations is for faculty development" (see attached document). If sufficient support exists, then the ACC would submit a draft policy to the Executive Committee for review.

The following two related issues should also be included in the campuswide conversations.
- One complication for creating a set of common questions for IUPUI OCQs is likely to arise with core schools, which is the decision by a core school's administration to use the IUB common questions for courses offered here. The AAC's evaluation of the IUB question set was not entirely favorable, and so we favor IUPUI being able to use questions of our own design. This aspect of the issue also needs more time for discussion.
- We note that the OCQs in use at IUB include a set of "student return questions." The aggregate results from these questions are available to IUB students through the web. These questions were proposed by two different Vice Provost offices and approved by the IUB Faculty Council. The AAC suggests that this worthwhile concept be included in our discussions.

The AAC suggests the following general outline for creating the set of common questions. First, a Common Question Taskforce should be formed with the goal of generating and piloting questionnaire items. It seems reasonable that the Taskforce should begin by acquiring all current course questionnaires used here at IUPUI to analyze. It is essential to evaluate the efficacy of proposed items through pilot studies in a variety of courses. Once the Taskforce has selected a set of questions, they should be presented to the AAC and Executive Committee for discussion and adoption.