

Professional Development Meeting

January 31, 2006, 2:45 - 3:45 P.M.

Principal's Conference Room

Members Present: Kevin Quattrin, Susan Lee, Elizabeth Purcell, Eric Castro (for John Stiegeler), Meredith Galvin, Grace Curcio, Todd Bank (for Hillary McKinney), Kate Kodros, Paul Molinelli

Members Absent: Charlie Dullea, Steve Bluford

1. UPDATES & FOLLOW-UPS FROM DECEMBER MEETING

Cooperative Learning

There seems to be significant interest among faculty to learn more in this area, so we'll look into doing something on site in the near future. O'Dowd is hosting an introductory cooperative learning workshop June 8-9 (through RBT) that may be helpful for beginners. Carol Quattrin is attending a Kagan workshop this summer and will report on its effectiveness.

Sabbatical

There was a review of last month's discussion on the sabbatical, and some of the follow-up input offered by other faculty. Barbara Talavan responded to the minutes with a report about the value of her own sabbatical, especially the rejuvenating qualities, and that a concrete outcome for school shouldn't be the primary reason for granting a sabbatical. Several other faculty shared this same view.

As we explore any revisions to the sabbatical, a central question to consider is whether sabbaticals should have multiple purposes, or whether one purpose alone is sufficient. Also, should one purpose for a sabbatical have priority or be weighted more heavily than another? For instance, should the rejuvenation outcome be worth more than a project-type outcome? These and other questions will be considered again later this year.

Clarification: Applications for a 2006-07 sabbatical are, of course, governed by currently published guidelines, the most accurate of which are posted on the Professional Development website.

Professional Development Dissemination

Paul reviewed some of the ideas raised last month, including the revision of the PD website to share faculty accomplishments and communicate professional development experiences. Also discussed was the shared desire to create time during the school day for more informal gatherings that will allow for the exchange of ideas. Paul mentioned last month's suggestion of a PD newsletter as one that he would like to implement by next year. If anyone has any more ideas about how we might promote broader professional dialogue, please contact Paul.

2. Summer Curriculum Grants

The committee reviewed the current processes and purposes of the summer curriculum grant. Kate suggested that we consider paying by the project rather than by the hour. Grace suggested that we examine whether funds are being distributed equitably, and that we should be careful to fund what should be funded; we shouldn't be afraid to say "no" to an application that doesn't meet the criteria. Elizabeth noted that evaluation of implemented grant programs is still not happening, and that the instrument(s) for evaluation should be built into the

process. We should keep track of grant evaluation results, as it helps teachers assess their own work, and it has the potential to assist the development of excellent grants in the future. We should include the actual evaluation instrument(s) in the grant application. Kevin noted that the evaluation process is muddy because once a grant has been implemented, it's no longer just a Summer Curriculum Grant; it actually becomes part of the regular curriculum. Is the new curriculum working within a course? Paul noted that by continuing to create and evaluate grants, we can learn from the process and try to implement evaluation techniques in other areas. Susan said that we should add into the requirements another bullet explaining how the grant project will be evaluated.

The committee then reviewed last year's process. Grace believed that by having someone else pitch the grant to the committee, we could be letting down the actual grant writer(s), since the author(s) knows the curriculum project best. Eric agreed that a representative might not do as well as the author(s) arguing for and answering questions about a grant. Kate said that she had the opposite feeling, that the process was efficient and good for everyone. Elizabeth asked whether the department chair could be present, since the chair understands the curriculum and represents the department. Then perhaps those grants that are not quite ready could be sent back and refined for the following year. Kevin said that the grant writers know their projects best, and we should know from them how well (or not) they know their project. Meredith also added that we should let the grant writer "pitch his/her sale." We can assign or offer time slots for presentations, and create a simple sign-off sheet for department chair approval. Paul said that perhaps we need more department advocacy for grants. Eric suggested that we give every application 10 minutes and keep to a schedule. Applicants can plan ahead if there's a scheduling conflict. Susan questioned whether the department chair should have to do all that extra work, but Elizabeth said that the grant should have the complete support of the chair. Eric said that the author(s) should be required to present grant ideas to the department; the chair should then communicate approval of the grant to Professional Development via a simple form. Kevin noted that approval could simply be reflected in department minutes.

Todd suggested that we should have a clear rubric for grant proposals. Paul echoed that clearer criteria and a rubric would be helpful to everyone. Kate reiterated that we should pay by project, not by the hour, perhaps funding by project levels or classification (i.e., class a, b, c). Elizabeth asked whether grant recipients were working more than they proposed or billed. Paul said that grant recipients have told him that they definitely work more than they officially claimed. Eric said we should let Professional Development assess which type of project it is. Todd suggested that we use past projects as examples of what fits what category. Paul, Kevin, Grace, and Elizabeth agreed to work on a subcommittee to produce a rubric for next year's grants.

Regarding the February 15th grant follow-up date, Paul said that he would arrange to meet with current 2005 grant recipients for a verbal update of their projects. He would then report back to the committee. Applications for 2006 grants are due March 6, 2006, and the committee will choose recipients by May 1.

3. October In-Service

The committee discussed how we might best use the October in-service date. Elizabeth suggested that it be moved as a kick-off for the new school year. Kate suggested that we consider October within the context of the entire in-service program, and that we should discuss and define a long-range plan that will assist us in making this decision.

Several suggestions were made regarding school-wide in-service topics. Eric suggested the topic of a school-wide writing program. How are writing, research, and citations taught and used across departments? Also, what about "computer literacy" – what does it mean, what are its ultimate goals? On a related note, Elizabeth suggested that, in light of our soon-to-be renovated high-tech classrooms, perhaps we should look at how to make optimal use of their new features? Meredith suggested that more attention to how to research, including what tools and training are currently being provided to students.

Susan suggested a day of cross-curricular issues, such as health/sex education, including presentations on the various cross-curricular issues. Todd said that whatever we do, let's make it interactive, with colleagues engaged in meaningful talk with colleagues. He doesn't want to hear a speaker. Eric decided that Todd should be in charge of coordinating that day and giving a presentation!

4. Title II Deadline

All applications involving the use of NCLB Title IIA funds must be submitted by February 27. Please ask your departments to contact Paul if they anticipate conference-related travel before the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).

Next Meeting: February 28, 2006