

**Provost's Advisory Council
Summary of February 28, 2008 meeting**

Attending:

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| Pat Byrne | Kay Lemon | Anthony Annunziato |
| Kaitlin Foley | Paul Davidovits | Kay Schlozman |
| Pat DeLeeuw | Larry Ludlow | Dick Cobb-Stevens |
| Bert Garza | Ferna Phillips | Barbara Hazard |
| Emily Reeves | Gilda Morelli | Alberto Godenzi |
| John Williamson | Adam Baker | Anita Tien |
| Ray Madoff | Don Hafner | Callista Roy |
| Pat Maney | Mary Crane | Kevin Bedell |
| Mary Cronin | Rosanna DeMarco | |

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1. The summary of the November 29, 2007 meeting will be circulated. Members are asked to submit any comments and/or changes to the Provost's Office by Tuesday, March 12. If no comments are received, the summary will be considered to have been approved and will be forwarded to the President's Office.
 2. Gilda Morelli presented research that examines the role of a person's gender on course evaluation ratings. Most of the studies reviewed used summary evaluation scores as their dependent measure and were non-experimental in nature. She noted that a reasonable conclusion based on the research was that a person's gender in and of itself was not statistically related to ratings in a significant way when other factors were taken into account. These included: characteristics of the course (e.g., lower or upper level; required or elective; subject matter that was racially or politically charged), characteristics of the student (e.g., gender; interest in course) and non-gendered characteristics of the instructor (e.g., ethnicity, native English speaker, teaching style).

The ensuing discussion focused on whether selected information from the University electronic course evaluations should be made public. Among the questions and comments that were raised:

- Is the information from course evaluations imprecise (i.e., either exaggerating or understating a finding), or is inaccurate (i.e., conveying an incorrect finding) as well?
- Should a preface be added to the online form to advise students about who will see which responses?
- What about the effects of public release upon grade inflation and workload?
- Would public release to students undercut what may be better ways in which students already assess courses?
- A key question would be how the evaluations were to be used. Could this be discussed or presented in a way that demonstrated how the information would help to improve the course?
- It would be helpful to publish trends, not only one data point.

