

2021-22 Annual Report to the Faculty Senate from the Academic Quality Committee

Members:

J.R. "Jones" Estes, Chair, OI
 Evguenia Davidova, CUPA
 Cassio de Oliveira, CLAS-AL
 Michael Dimond, SB
 Sahan T.M. Dissanayake, Economics, CUPA
 Karla Fant, MCECS
 Maria Kapantzoglou, CLAS-SS
 Jesse Locker, Art History, COTA
 Kathleen Merrow, Honors College, OI
 Ex officio: Kathi Ketcheson, OIRP

Charge:

1. Research, identify, and recommend practices that promote and sustain academic quality for faculty and students at Portland State University.
2. Conduct and review biennial surveys of faculty and students.
3. Report on issues, concerns, and potential for actionable ideas.
4. Conduct research on implementation of best practices and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate.
5. Maintain a "dashboard" that evaluates progress on implementation of academic quality initiatives.
6. Report to the Faculty Senate at least once each year.

Action Items:

Picking up the agenda set in spring 2022, the Committee began fall term by examining whether the AQC Faculty Senate Charge remains relevant to the role and resources of the committee. Specifically, whether or not the AQC should continue collecting data for "dashboards" to evaluate "progress on implementation of academic quality initiatives" (Committee Charge).

Through discussion and consultation with Kathi Ketcheson, OIRP, the Committee determined that its Charge remains appropriate. However, rather than concentrating on the no-longer-funded mandate of conducting, analyzing, and posting its own surveys; the AQC will continue to work collaboratively with campus partners to contribute questions on existing surveys.

Regarding dashboards, it was suggested that AQC coordinate the surveys of OAA, IAC, and OAI regarding student success initiatives related to academic quality. The AQC will explore this option in the 2022-23 academic year.

In further fulfillment of its Charge, the Committee:

1. Reviewed the work of the four Ad Hoc Committees formed as a response to the AQC recommendations to the Faculty Senate in 2016 to follow up on the progress of those recommendations. Both the Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research and the Undergraduate Research Ad Hoc Committees filed reports with the Faculty Senate

(respectively, [Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research 2020-21](#) and [Undergraduate Research Committee website and report](#)). The remaining ad hoc committees were on writing and the graduate student experience. We were unable to locate their reports or connect with their committee members this academic year. From initial efforts, it appears that the recommendations for each have been absorbed into the work of the University Writing Council and the Graduate School. We will continue this work in 2022-23.

2. Continued collaborations with the Institutional Assessment Council (IAC). The AQC Chair attended meetings as a liaison and contributed to the IAC's work in planning PSU's first annual assessment celebration in the fall of 2021. Committee member Maria Kapantzoglou began attending IAC meetings as an additional liaison in 2022.
3. Followed up on the AQC's concerns and memo on Attend Anywhere. The AQC Chair met with Cindy Baccar, Registrar, and Michelle Giovannozzi, OAI, in January for an update on the assessment plan for Attend Anywhere. Michelle said OAI will continue to survey faculty and students through the 2022-23 academic year and issue a report of the findings. A report of DWF rates from courses (all delivery modes) will be available late spring 2022. Cindy reported that it became clear during the move back from remote-only instruction that students did not understand course delivery labels. Consequently, they would work with a focus group to propose new labels.
4. Made some progress on developing a HIP course designation. Specifically, the AQC Chair participated in the study formation for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Civic Engagement Assessment through the Office of Academic Innovation (OAI). Using the AAC&U Values Rubric, this work will result in an assessment report from AAC&U evaluating the level of civic engagement present in sampled student work. The report is scheduled to be available by fall 2022.
5. Expanded our collaboration with other Faculty Senate Committees and campus initiatives that impact academic quality, including:
 - a. adding an AQC liaison to the Student Success Evidence Committee (Sahan Dissanayake and Kathleen Merrow) and
 - b. establishing a partnership with the Academic Computing Infrastructure Committee (ACIC) to address shared, ongoing concerns regarding a lack of data on the remote/online student experience.
6. Had discussions throughout the year regarding APRCA processes and informed the APRCA Committee regarding impacts on academic quality.
7. Explored what data gathering options and partnerships are useful to the campus community. The AQC Chair joined the Student Success Student Experience workgroup. This collaboration led to a merging with the Digital Evaluation Committee (DEC) and allowed the Student Experience workgroup to utilize the substantial work already completed by the DEC.
8. Revisited the OIRP analysis of the HIPs survey and Senior Exit Survey from spring 2020, and requested OIRP administer the same survey spring 2022. The Committee will use this as we continue to develop criteria and process for HIPs course designation in the course schedule.

Emergent Issues:

The Committee had discussions throughout the year regarding how students were faring with the return to campus in fall, the return to increased Covid-19 cases in winter, and the burnout of spring term. With one exception, AQC members noted student inability to work in groups, both in-person and online, including when students reported the desire to engage and collaborate with classmates. Similarly, members noted a significant decline in class discussion as well as cases of incivility, particularly in online courses, ranging from rude to aggressive.

Faculty discussed the strains of supplying two, sometimes more, curricula for students who stopped attending in-person. Faculty noted a significant decrease in the knowledge of majors in upper-division courses and general education.

Carryover items for the Committee to consider in academic year 2022-23:

There was one area of carryover from the 2021-22 academic year that the AQC did not attend to:

1. Consider options for expanding Committee communication with campus, e.g., creation of a webpage and/or dashboard. We will pick up this topic in 2022-23.

2022-23 Committee Priorities:

The AQC will continue its work outlined above with the understanding that it is possible new developments in the Academic Program Reduction Process and the lingering effects of the pandemic may redirect our focus. Regardless, we will revisit the Attend Anywhere memo the AQC sent to the Provost in spring 2022 to evaluate the program's impact on academic quality. This will include related issues such as examining how new course delivery titles and descriptions are utilized by departments and student demand for "attend anywhere" accommodations regardless of the course delivery method.