

## **IFS Report to WOU Faculty Senate (Part 1 of 2)**

February 12, 2019

IFS met on January 25-26, 2019 at Portland State University. We focused our discussion on two areas: student evaluations and the current legislative session. I will describe the discussion about student evaluations; Dr. Tad Shannon will give a report on the legislative issues.

Before the meeting, we compiled data on how each of the seven universities handled student evaluations of teaching (SETs). We compared methods, response rates, and attitudes. During the meeting, we heard from Bill Harbaugh (Economics at UO) about UO's departure from traditional SETs. They have replaced them with peer evaluation, self-reflection, and "student satisfaction surveys." More information is available here:

<https://dos.uoregon.edu/search/node/student%20evaluations>

We also heard from Alison Burke (Criminology at SOU) who has been conducting research on the effects of SETs on the mental health of the professor.

Following these reports, we discussed the effectiveness of SETs and compared our own experiences to national trends. We largely agreed that traditional SETs are dangerous due to their racism and sexism, and are likely counterproductive to increasing teaching effectiveness because they discourage professors from using innovative pedagogy. We did acknowledge some benefits, such as gauging student satisfaction with their courses, but recognized that this is a separate issue from whether a professor is effectively teaching. We discussed the possibility of passing a resolution against SET use on our campuses, but declined to do so because of the data gap that it creates. We will continue the conversation at future meetings.

[Report prepared by Leanne Merrill.]