

**University of Washington
Faculty Council on Academic Standards**

January 12th, 2018

1:30pm – 3:00pm

Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to order
 2. Review of the minutes from December 15th, 2017
 3. Chair's report
 4. Update on Medical Notes / Discussion – guest
 5. SCAP report
 6. AoK language discussion / task force
 7. Good of the order
 8. Adjourn
-

1) Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

2) Review of the minutes from December 15th, 2017

The minutes from December 15th, 2017 were approved as amended.

3) Chair's report

CSE admissions model proposal

Stroup explained there was a question whether the Computer Science & Engineering proposal to implement direct-to-major admissions needed to be forwarded to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) to be reviewed and approved by that body. It was noted the proposal does not require review by the NWCCU. Stroup noted it is likely FCAS will review the proposal in February, 2018.

College of Arts and Sciences direct-to-division admissions model proposal

Stroup explained she met with members of the College of Arts and Sciences to help facilitate development of the proposal to implement direct-to-division admissions for the College. She noted she and other FCAS members are working to ensure the adjoining 1503 form is formatted properly for review by SCAP and FCAS. There will be 39 departmental 1503s to review, as well.

Undergraduate Enrollment Management Taskforce

Stroup reported on the ongoing work of the Undergraduate Enrollment Management Taskforce. She explained the Taskforce is currently addressing the increase in “direct” admissions models at the UW with an emphasis on evaluating impacts of that on UW’s transfer applicants.

Syllabus policy

Stroup explained a question has been asked of if FCAS has a policy stating that instructors must distribute syllabi to students on the first day/session of a course, and that that syllabus must include a grading scale and grading rubric. It was noted no such policy exists at this time. Stroup explained she would develop an initial framework for the draft policy and return to the council for discussion in a later meeting.

SCAP

Stroup asked members of SCAP to review each page of the CSE direct-to-major 1503 proposal and attach any comments to the related page in the document, which are a planned to be collated and reviewed in the next SCAP meeting. She explained when SCAP is able to get through the 1503, it will be posted online for FCAS members to make comments electronically (in advance of the document being discussed in an FCAS meeting).

4) Update on Medical Notes / Discussion - guest

Stroup explained she has asked a UW Professor to join the meeting as a guest to comment on some of the difficulties relating to handling student absences in mid-sized and large courses. She noted the item is especially relevant as members of FCAS and the Faculty Council on Student Affairs (FCSA) are currently involved in developing a policy on the future use of medical excuse notes at the UW. It was noted possibly the greatest challenge to the success of that policy will be communicating it widely to UW faculty and students, once developed.

The guest explained the larger classes she teaches (40-65 students) are the most difficult in relation to handling student absences. She explained she uses medical notes in order to determine student absences have been vetted (no details of the student’s ailment are given), and currently, use of medical notes is the only method she has for distinguishing students with a legitimate need. The guest noted there can be a lot of work and time involved in responding to students’ needs for accommodations in larger courses. She explained the policy, if meant to ban the use of medical excuse notes, will have an ill effect on her and many other instructors who teach larger courses.

It was noted writing-based exams are especially difficult to duplicate for students who miss an exam. A member explained the issue is worse in big lectures, where the format makes it even more impersonal for students to give instructors a generic excuse as to why they missed a class. Stroup explained the guest’s perspective is an important one to hear while developing the policy.

A member pointed out the UW Hall Health Center has already stated that they do not deny student requests for medical excuse note, and as such, the notes have little meaning.

Members noted it is clear the policy needs to be developed very carefully. There was some discussion of employing an “honor code” in the absence of excuse notes, wherein students must sign or read a written statement declaring that falsification of medical difficulties is a form of cheating. Another method mentioned included weighting grades differently based on absences (e.g. allow a test score to be dropped, weight a final exam higher if a midterm exam is missed, etc.).

Student members were asked of their perspectives on the issue. A student member explained he may be able to educate students about the policy (if approved) through the ASUW, but doing so would also alert students that instructors may no longer require documentation as proof of the reason for their absences, which could increase the amount of false claims.

A member noted if the Hall Health Center will no longer be a resource to students seeking notes/justification for absences in the future (a position the Center has considered but not finalized), there will be another issue in that students will have greatly reduced access to documentation. Members recalled that recent data shows nearly 10% of all annual student visits to the Hall Health Center are for the intention of getting an excuse note. Another member pointed out there are varying degrees of access to medical care (and excuse notes) based on a student’s financial position.

A member concluded there is currently no university policy on the matter, which is an issue in itself.

The guest was thanked for joining the meeting and sharing her perspective.

5) SCAP report

Non-Routine Business

#1 – Microbiology

The request is for revised program and admission requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology.

Shores explained GPA requirements were increased to 2.5 based on evidence that the previous requirement (2.25) brought in students at too low an academic threshold to be successful in the program.

The request was approved by majority vote of members.

#2 – Music

The request is for revised program requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Orchestral Percussion.

The request was approved by majority vote of members.

6) AoK language discussion / task force

Stroup noted there is currently no approved language defining UW's required Areas of Knowledge. A guest explained definitions have been developed for the purpose of posting online descriptions, but have not been vetted.

Stroup asked for volunteers to work on development of an initial draft of definitions for UW's Areas of Knowledge. DeCosmo volunteered, and the Office of the Registrar also offered to assist with development.

7) Good of the order

Stroup explained after a question that review and vote on the FCAS Class B legislation on Interdisciplinary Concentration was postponed indefinitely by the Faculty Senate due to the absence of its presenter in the meeting where it was to be addressed. Stroup explained ultimately, the main proponent of the legislation asked to have it dropped in lieu of implementing its basic concepts through other mechanisms available in the existing university framework (e.g. interdisciplinary minors, etc.).

8) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst

Present: **Faculty:** Phil Brock (Arts & Sciences), Dan Ratner (Engineering), D. Shores (Business), Sarah Stroup (Arts & Sciences) (chair), John Sahr (Engineering), Ann Huppert (Built Environments)
Ex-officio reps: Jennifer Payne, Louie Tan Vital, Navid Azodi, Robin Neal, Meera Roy
President's designee: Philip Ballinger
Guests: Janice DeCosmo, Robert Corbett, Emily Leggio, Tina Miller, Scott Fallgren

Absent: **Faculty:** Daniel Enquobahrie (Public Health), Champak Chatterjee (Arts & Sciences), Lynn Dietrich (Education), Zhi Lin (Arts & Sciences), Radhika Govindrajan (Arts & Sciences), Mike Lockwood (Naval ROTC)
Ex-officio reps: Conor Casey

Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs (SCAP) Report

1:30-3:00 p.m.

January 5, 2018, Gerberding 026

Non-Routine Business:

Microbiology ([MICRO-20170307](#)) Revised program and admission requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology.

Background: The Department is proposing revised program and admission requirements.

Action taken 01/05/2018: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.

Music ([MUSIC-20171017](#)) Revised program requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Orchestral Percussion.

Background: The Department is proposing revising the program requirements.

Action taken 01/05/2018: Approved and forwarded to FCAS.
