

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS  
FRIDAY, February 27, 2009, 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
224 Mary Gates Hall

Chair John Schaufelberger called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**Meeting Synopsis:**

1. Chair's Report
  2. Approval of the minutes of January 30, 2009
  3. Admission and Graduation Subcommittee Report (Susanna Cunningham)
  4. Special Subcommittee on Program-Based Grade Requirements Report (Brad Holt)
  5. SCAP Report (Jay Johnson)
  6. Adjourn
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Attending today's council meeting was Kevin Mihata, Assistant Dean for Educational Programs, College of Arts and Sciences. Also in attendance was Rachel Soloman, reporter from The Daily.

**1. Chair's Report**

Chair Schaufelberger reported on a recent meeting with a representative from the Provost's office centered on a discussion about dual degrees and whether to change the current rule that requires an additional year of 45 extra credits for a second degree. He was not certain where the issue will go, but noted that Doug Wadden will send a charge to the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs to come up with a proposal. Schaufelberger explained that the concern grew out of a move of some programs from the College of Arts and Sciences to the College of the Environment, and whether or not students can get two degrees. He feels that students should be able to get a dual major; one from one field and one from another field, if they meet those requirements. There is no action required now on the part of FCAS. Schaufelberger noted that if there is a move to change the handbook, they will need to agree in the council before making the change. He noted that the handbook explicitly states that students must earn a minimum of 180 credits for one degree, and 225 credits for a second degree, a standard for most universities. Schaufelberger questioned if the university awards one degree for 180 credits, and a second degree for only 10 more credits, what is the value of a degree. It's about getting people through the university and not handicapping students because their program was moved from Arts and Sciences into the College of the Environment.

Schaufelberger also reported on a recent meeting of the special working group on English Language Proficiency and the Provost. He briefly described the proposed changes of the work group that would require incoming students without the necessary scores on English language proficiency to take a test. If the student scores too low, they would be required to take a diagnostic test and some additional English language courses. Schaufelberger explained that in a conversation with the Provost he found out that she fully supports the idea of waiving the test for A.A. transfer students. She told him that they must now find a means to adopt a policy to exempt transfer two- year degree students from all testing.

Schaufelberger explained that they are now free to move forward and must work with Susanna Cunningham's subcommittee to craft language for a proposal that can be brought to FCAS for approval. He noted that if the subcommittee, with the Provost's approval, decides they want to require use of the DELNA test it will require a change to the handbook. Schaufelberger explained that the issue about the transfer degree waiver could be an FCAS policy that could be placed on the council website, and changed at the council's discretion in the future. Schaufelberger clarified that only students with a two-year degree (A.A., A.S.) are eligible for the English Language Proficiency waiver.

## **2. Approval of the minutes of January 30, 2009**

The Chair called for any changes to the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

## **3. Admission and Graduation Subcommittee Report (Susanna Cunningham)**

Susanna Cunningham explained that her subcommittee is working on tidying up the language in the handbook on how transfer credits are reported. Schaufelberger noted that there is probably not time this academic year to get this through the Faculty Senate. He recommended that the subcommittee identify all the needed changes and bring them to the council by spring, so that they can be brought to the Senate as a first item of business in the fall.

Schaufelberger updated the council on the issue of inviting guest speakers other than UW faculty to participate in a class. He is currently working to clean up the language in the handbook so that faculty will not be in violation of the code.

## **4. Special Subcommittee on Program-Based Grade Requirements Report (Brad Holt)**

Brad Holt reported on the Special Subcommittee on Program-Based Grade Requirements that formed out of a concern that departments have been asking more frequently for special grade graduation requirements. He explained that he received feedback from faculty on educational policy committees which he took back to the subcommittee, which drafted a list of recommendations presented today for FCAS review. Holt asked members for their feedback on the wording and logic of the guidelines. Holt summarized the subcommittee's four proposed guidelines on grade requirements for graduation:

- A. Cumulative grade graduation requirements: (UW 2.0 in all courses)
  - 1. Programs are permitted to have 2.0 cumulative GPA for courses in the major.
  - 2. Programs may request cumulative GPA requirements in the range of 2.0-2.5 for courses in the major and/or all UW classes. The programs must document and provide justification for the request. In general, except with very strong academic justification, FCAS will not approve these requests.
  - 3. Programs requesting cumulative GPA requirements greater than 2.5 must provide strong documented justification for the request. In general, except with very strong academic justification, FCAS will not approve these requests.
  
- B. Minimum grade graduation requirements in courses: (UW 0.7 in each course)

1. Programs may request that students achieve a grade in each course for the major in the range of 0.8-2.0. The programs must document and provide justification for the request. Provided adequate academic justification is provided, FCAS will approve such requests.
  2. Programs requesting students achieve a grade in each course for the major exceeding 2.0 must provide strong documented justification for the request. In general, except with very strong academic justification, FCAS will not approve these requests.
- C. Minimum grade graduation requirements in individual courses: (UW 0.7 in course)
1. FCAS will not approve graduation requirements for minimum grades in specific courses higher than the programs requirements for all courses. However, FCAS will consider such requirements for minimum grades in specific courses as admission requirements.
- D. Existing program graduation requirements
1. All existing program graduation requirements are grandfathered in. Should a department with graduation grade requirements exceeding these policies want to change their requirements, the new proposal will be considered under these guidelines.

Holt was asked to provide an example of a “strong justification.” He suggested that a strong justification would go beyond a department’s claim that their students were good, and would need to be very convincing. Suggestions were made to reword the guidelines that support A. 3:

- Distinguish it from A. 2, in matter of degree, by adding the word “exceptional.”
- Clarify the language to indicate that programs could request cumulative GPA requirements for either courses in the major or all UW courses.

Susanna Cunningham suggested that they create a list of all the existing programs with different requirements that would be grandfathered in (D.1.) to avoid confusion later on. Schaufelberger noted that programs will need to submit a 1503 to describe and justify the change, and the list would be unnecessary. It was noted that if they can’t get a perfect list, an imperfect list is worse. The Catalogue would be enough documentation to check on the status of programs. Schaufelberger suggested that Holt send out the proposal to councils, and ask for their feedback and a timeframe, and then bring it back to FCAS for final review and adoption.

## **5. SCAP Report (Jay Johnson)**

Jay Johnson, SCAP Chair, noted that there were two SCAP meetings since the last FCAS meeting. He identified 9 routine items, eight from the Art department.

### Routine items:

1. Art-(ART-20081107A) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Drawing.
2. Art-(ART-20081107B) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Visual Arts.

3. Art-(ART-20081107C) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Visual Communication Design.
4. Art-(ART-20081107D) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Painting and Drawing.
5. Art-(ART-20081107E) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Design Studies.
6. Art-(ART-20081107F) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Photography.
7. Art-(ART-20081107G) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Design.
8. Art History-(ARTH-20081107) Change program requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Drawing.
9. Diversity –(DIVERS-20081103) Change program requirements for the minor in Diversity.

**Action:** A motion was made to approve the 9 routine proposed changes. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.

Johnson briefly explained that two new routine Women Studies requests (WOMEN -20081210A, WOMEN -20081210B) were put on hold because of minor problems with the requests for changes to the program requirements for the minor and Bachelor of Art in Women Studies.

Non-routine items:

Johnson noted that SCAP also placed on hold two non-routine items from Economics (ECON-20090108A, ECON -20090108B) in order to discuss application restrictions on the requests to change admission requirements for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Economics.

A new non-routine item from the Human Centered Design and Engineering department (formerly Technical Communication) – (HCDE-20090127) was requesting a change in name for the degree, a change in the options in Human-Computer Interaction and Technical Communication, and a change in program requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Human Centered Design and Engineering.

**Action:** A motion was made to approve the three requests from the Human Centered Design and Engineering department. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.

Johnson next explained the MEDEX Northwest (MEDIX-20090123) request for a new Bachelor of Paramedicine degree. He noted that SCAP has met a few times with representatives of MEDEX, who are requesting to develop the existing certificate program into a degree program. Students could come into the program and earn a certificate, and with a couple more credits, get a degree. SCAP made it clear to MEDEX that their students must go through the UW admissions process. Johnson noted that there appears to be a real need for people training in this area. He pointed out that a degree would enhance the value of the MEDEX education for students seeking to enter professional agencies, and the national professional organizations that oversee these groups. Johnson noted that the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) must also approve the MEDEX request. A discussion began about the size of the MEDEX degree program cohort, the location of MEDEX faculty, and the location of the

department in the university. It was decided that MEDEX Northwest is part of the Medical Education and Biomedical Informatics department in the School of Medicine. The faculty all work at Harborview Medical Center.

**Action:** A motion was made to approve the MEDEX Northwest request to create a formal degree, Bachelor of Paramedicine. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.

The last non-routine item was a request from the College of Arts and Sciences (CA&S-20090120) to change its foreign language proficiency requirement for graduation. Special guest Kevin Mihata, Assistant Dean for Educational Programs, College of Arts and Sciences, spoke to council members about revisions made to the original request. Johnson noted that CA & S is requesting a revision that would allow UW students with three or more years of high school foreign language to waive the foreign language proficiency requirement. The provision for students to have at least a 3.0 in their third year of foreign language was dropped. Schaufelberger gave an overview of the motivation for the revision, noting that UW graduation requires three years of foreign language and the CA & S revision allows some alternate ways to satisfy the requirement. Mihata explained that the requirements are not changing but students are being offered another option, the successful completion of a third year of high school foreign language. Students may also opt to take a competency test.

Phil Ballinger raised the broader issue of why they require any admission or graduation requirements of students on foreign language. The assumption is that students have three years of high school foreign language and that the third year is equivalent to the 103 placement course. Ballinger noted that he was not in opposition to the proposed change, but that he saw no clear rationale for the original foreign language requirement. Mihata responded by explaining some national research that compared years of high school with performance on written, verbal, and reading comprehension at the college level. There was not a quantitative estimate of equivalency made but it showed a distribution of years of high school in the three areas, compared with someone taking a third quarter of college foreign language. Mihata acknowledged the variance in how foreign languages are taught at institutions, and that the UW placement test reflects how it is taught here. He provided some history to the original foreign language requirement in 1969. A long discussion began about the UW foreign language requirement, the lack of clear rationale for it, whether or not it was based upon proficiency, and similarities between the proposed policy and UW math requirements. It was noted that the proposed change is somewhat unusual in that it is connecting something students do in high school with a UW graduation requirement. Johnson reiterated SCAP's rationale for approving the change.

Ballinger pointed to a potential positive effect of the proposed change. He felt the policy might encourage the remaining 20% of UW students who come here with no third year in foreign language to take the third year at their high school. Ballinger noted that the foreign language requirement will be a hallmark of the CA & S, and asked that they begin to connect the rationale with the requirement. Cunningham asked from a scientific perspective where was the data that says learning a foreign language makes a difference. Mihata noted that the requirements have been around a long time and the rationale in existence then is not the same as now. He pointed to the inconsistencies in rationale provided, and how the use of the term proficiency contributed to the inconsistency. Mihata noted his support for an inquiry into the core requirements of a liberal arts degree, saying that it could be applied across courses taught in

the College of Arts and Sciences. A brief discussion began about other unique graduation requirements at UW. Ballinger described as “fine-tuning” the potential challenge with community college students who will not likely have taken three years of the same foreign language. John Sahr noted that community colleges require some push back when they question the UW admissions requirements for math. He sees the standards in the math requirement as not unreasonable, which is a useful stance when negotiating with community colleges and one that could be applied to foreign language requirements. Phuong Nguyen inquired about the effect of the proposed changes to the UW writing requirement and transfer of AP exam credit.

**Action:** A motion was made to approve the 1503 on the change in foreign language requirement for graduation in the College of Arts and Sciences. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

*Minutes by Melissa Kane, Faculty Senate, mmkane@u.washington.edu*

**Present:** **Faculty:** Cunningham, Fitzpatrick, Holt, Johnson, Schaufelberger (Chair), Taggart  
**President’s Designee:** Mildon  
**Ex Officio Reps:** Nguyen, Haag Day  
**Regularly Invited Guests:** Ballinger, Corbett, Sahr

**Absent:** **Faculty:** Almgren, Keil, Stroup  
**Ex Officio Reps:** Fugate, Jespersen, Meske  
**Regularly Invited Guests:** Sayrs, Winslow