

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS
FRIDAY, May 8, 2009, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
301 Gerberding

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

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Administration's Perspective on English Language Screening (Provost Wise)
 2. Chair's Report
 3. Approval of the minutes of April 24, 2009
 4. SCAP Report (Jay Johnson)
 5. Proposal of the English Language Proficiency Working Group (Sandra Silberstein)
 6. Adjourn
-

Chair Schaufelberger welcomed everyone and invited participants to introduce themselves.

1. Administration's Perspective on English Language Screening (Provost Wise)

Provost Phyllis Wise thanked Sandra Silberstein and the Working Group on English Language Proficiency for all of their commendable work. She outlined the task of the Working Group to find an alternative to the current policy which tests students based on citizenship and requires those students in need of English language instruction to take from 1 to 5 courses that are not credit-bearing and cannot be paid for with scholarships. She explained that the Working Group was asked to find an alternative that was fair, legal, and good for students with inadequate English language proficiency.

Wise underscored the quality of the Working Group's July 2008 report that laid out key recommendations that would enable any student facing difficulties in English language proficiency to succeed at the university. She noted that with the budget situation worsening, however, the university can support only what it can pay for. Wise said that she supported the idea of testing all incoming freshmen, but that transfer students should be exempt from taking the DELNA screening exam. She explained that it was not a good idea to test transfer students in particular because that would *likely* lead to significant discussions between the UW and the regional community college presidents. Wise offered a compromise position. She proposed that community college transfer students for whom measures other than the DELNA (e.g., other test scores or GPA) indicate they are vulnerable to not doing well at the University should get intensive advising, including recommendations for appropriate English language courses. However, they would not be required to take the DELNA exam.

Sandra Silberstein summarized the two issues remaining after the previous FCAS meeting: the issue of the DELNA and community college students, and whether the policy change will become part of a university admission or graduation requirement or something else. She noted that the Working Group

accepts the Provost's compromise exempting from DELNA screening students who present Washington State AA, AAS, or AS degrees. Screening with the DELNA will begin with freshmen, and we'll see if it has predictive value for students' overall performance. The Working Group has also been invited by the Provost to revisit the issue of student support in two years time. Silberstein noted that they will track the community college students, who will be exempt from taking the DELNA and any Academic English Language Program (AEP) courses, and see how they do.

Phil Ballinger explained that the Working Group agreed upon a solution in which the English Language Proficiency policy would be a "registration continuation." He noted that there is still some language to be worked out for the continuation specifics, and inquired if the council would be comfortable with having the Registrar and Advising offices and the English Department undertake the task, and then report back to the group later. The council concurred with the plan. Chair Schaufelberger asked for questions.

Rick Keil inquired about the nature of the political consequences with the community college presidents. Provost Wise explained that a typical community college student takes on average only one quarter more than other students to finish, and because they don't enter as freshmen, the perception is that they don't need to be tested. Keil noted that the FCAS Subcommittee on Admissions and Graduation established early on that English composition was not equivalent to English language proficiency. Wise accepted that distinction and noted that the nuance was lost in the political argument. She explained that the articulation agreement with the community colleges has made it easier for transfer students than for freshmen to enter the University and that the advising component is very important for that reason. Keil expressed his concern that the policy should apply to all students and that exempting community college transfer students will not help improve the uneasy relationship between the University and the community colleges. Doug Wadden stated that the exemption reflects a middle ground and that the real crisis regarding student proficiency is in mathematics.

A point was clarified that transfer students exempted from testing and AEP courses would be only those students who have completed a Washington State AA, AS, or AAS degree. A discussion began about the origin of the problem that led to the policy change in English language proficiency (bad publicity around citizenship and course costs), and how the new policy does not really address the language problems of those transfer students who need help with English proficiency. There were no other questions for the Provost.

2. Chair's Report

Schaufelberger reported that the Honors Subcommittee met to select the finalists for medals for graduation. The finalists are writing their essays now, and the recipients will be selected on Monday.

Schaufelberger also noted that last year the Senate Executive Committee appointed a joint FCAS-FCIQ Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Quality and Rigor. Don Janssen is the chair of the committee and will present a report to FCAS in two weeks.

3. Approval of the minutes of April 24, 2009

The minutes from April 24, 2009 were approved with no comment.

4. SCAP Report (Jay Johnson)

Jay Johnson reported that Comparative Literature (CLIT-20090311) requested a revision to the program requirements for the option in Literary Studies within the Bachelor of Arts degree in Comparative Literature. He noted that SCAP saw no problems with the proposed changes and gave it a “routine” approval to be forwarded to FCAS.

Action: A motion was made to approve the proposed change in Comparative Literature. The motion was seconded and approved.

Johnson introduced a non-routine request by Political Science (POLS-20080108) for a new option in International Security within the Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He noted that SCAP saw no problems with the option and that they have a similar one already. SCAP approved the proposal to be forwarded to FCAS as non-routine.

Action: A motion was made to approve the non-routine proposal in Political Science. The motion was seconded, and approved.

5. Proposal of the English Language Proficiency Working Group (Sandra Silberstein)

Schaufelberger indicated that the Working Group had met after the FCAS meeting on April 24 and revised their proposal to be a registration continuation policy rather than a graduation policy. He outlined his concern that the policy and implementing process should be put in the University catalogue to make it transparent, and provided a written draft of proposed policy language. He proposed that FCAS would approve a policy and delegate to the offices of the Registrar, Admissions, and English Department, the task of determining implementation details, including the right screening tool and cut-off scores for incoming students. The catalogue would contain both the FCAS-approved policy and the implementing process.

Schaufelberger asked the council to address the need to terminate the current policy that is a graduation requirement.

Action: Schaufelberger called for a motion to terminate the current policy on English Language Proficiency that is based upon citizenship, and is a graduation requirement. A motion was made and seconded.

A question was raised about the council voting on a policy that doesn't exist in the current University handbook. Schaufelberger explained that the current policy has been in place for about 20 years, but there is no language of any kind about English language proficiency in either the handbook or catalogue.

The new policy will link to registration but will not affect the handbook, because it will not be considered as a graduation requirement. Schaufelberger noted that it is important that FCAS take a stand on it.

The question was called, and the termination of the current policy based on citizenship was approved.

Schaufelberger then asked the council to determine if the draft policy that he provided earlier is acceptable. He explained that making the policy a continuation of registration avoids having to put it in the University handbook and get the approval of the Faculty Senate. He explained that the proposed catalogue language is purposely generic because if future changes are needed to the screening tools, FCAS will not need to be involved. Silberstein noted the need for continuing research on the assessment tools used.

A question was raised about whether the advisors will be responsible for assigning students to the specific level of AEP courses needed and whether the language of the policy will be flexible enough to allow matching of courses taken to students' needs. Silberstein explained that the English Language Programs will be responsible for selecting the best courses for students to take, and that the advisors would not be asked to make that kind of judgment. Brad Holt requested that language be added to say that in the case of any changes to the process, FCAS will be informed. Language to this affect was added to the draft policy.

Holt also raised an issue concerning the proposal to restrict students to 15 credits during quarters in which they are enrolled in any AEP courses. His concern was that a credit restriction seems closer to a handbook issue rather than a catalogue issue. A discussion began about whether a student who pays tuition can be restricted from taking 18 credits. It was pointed out that the restriction is in place primarily for those students with the lowest scores who would not do well in other classes, that this involves relatively few students, and that the English 101 entry-level course (10 credits), for which a restriction is important, cannot be applied toward graduation.

Silberstein responded to a concern raised about the validity of the argument presented about exempting transfer students from testing. She noted that the heart of the issue is to understand that this is not a composition requirement but an English language proficiency requirement, which allows students to do math as much as it allows them to do anything else. She nonetheless agreed with descriptions of the political climate militating against testing community college students: the feeling that transfer students have come up to the level of a being a junior, and that the State expects the community colleges and the University to successfully articulate. Silberstein noted that we don't have a "rising junior" exam, which would be available for everybody. She pointed out that it may be that there are fewer transfer students in the future. She sees the value in stepping away from the DELNA for transfer students now and hopes that when the issue is revisited they will have more information on how transfer students do without course support, and there will be more funding for support overall.

Silberstein was asked why they don't simply drop the screening requirement. Silberstein responded that no other university uses citizenship to screen, nor do they accept the same level of students with low English language proficiency and not provide support for them. Virjean Edwards noted that she liked the continuation registration nature of the policy. Phuong Nguyen inquired about the English 101 course that students could fail repeatedly. Guest Chris Gilman noted that the courses are designed so that repeated

failures are virtually impossible. Guest Lynne Walker pointed out that, rather than a single exit exam determining whether a student has passed an AEP course (the system being replaced), class performance including a portfolio will allow students to move on. As long as students come to class and do the work, they can pass with a 70% grade.

Phil Ballinger asked for clarification on the definition of “transfer degree” to make certain that it will include those high school students enrolled in Running Start through the community colleges and leave high school with an Associate degree. He also asked whether Running Start students would be exempt from taking the DELNA, as long as they came to the UW with one of the accepted two-year degrees. It was determined that high school students in Running Start would be treated like other Washington transfer students with degrees.

Schaufelberger noted that linking English language proficiency to registration makes it possible for students to get the help they need early in their academic careers. A concern was raised that in taking the series of low-level English language courses students would see an increasing number of credits that would not count towards their degree. Gilman noted that most students will take only two courses, offered in sequence, and acknowledged the difficulty in dealing with assessment issues in a support model program. Silberstein stressed the importance of the writing center for student support all along the way and why it is in need of more funding.

A discussion began about whether they should include in the screening exemption students who come through a Major Ready Program (MRP) or some other kind of pathway. It was noted that MRPs are not degrees and that students can always appeal. Ballinger recommended that they stick with the two-year degrees listed in the proposed catalogue language for now and revisit it in two years. It was recommended that they revise the language to say Washington State AA, AS, or AAS degree rather than “transfer degree.”

Silberstein suggested that they add the language “To identify *and support* students” to the opening paragraph, to document the shift from a deficit to a support model. (suggestion taken) Gilman noted that he would prefer that students enrolled in the English 101 course not register for more than 18 credits, and clarified that only students enrolled in the 101 course (10 credits) would be held to the credit limit. He also explained that the AEP courses are fee-based, and, in the case of English 101, constitute a tuition break for students who take them. There was more discussion on the exact number of credits students should be limited to. Schaufelberger reviewed the agreed-upon changes to the opening paragraph, noting that the catalogue will contain two entries: an approval by FCAS, and the process that students will follow.

Action: A call was made for a motion to approve the Proposed Catalogue Language (attached). The motion was made and seconded. The motion carried, with one member voting against the motion.

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

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

Present: Faculty: Almgren, Cunningham, Fitzpatrick, Holt, Johnson, Keil, Schaufelberger
(Chair), Taggart

President's Designee: Edwards (for Mildon)

Ex Officio Reps: Nguyen, Jespersen

Regularly Invited Guests: Ballinger, Corbett, Sahr, Wiegand, Winslow, Says

Absent: Faculty: Stroup

Ex Officio Reps: Fugate, Meske

Special Guests: Phyllis Wise, Provost
Doug Wadden, Executive Vice-Provost
Sandra Silberstein, English Professor, and Chair, Provost's Working Group on
English Language Proficiency
Chris Gilman, Director, English Language Programs
Lynne Walker, Academic English Programs Coordinator
Nana Lowell, Director, Office of Educational Assessment, Invited Consultant
Virjean Edwards, Associate Registrar

English Language Proficiency Screening

1. To identify and support students who need help with English language, all undergraduate students who do not possess an approved transfer Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or Associates of Arts and Science degree from a Washington state community college will be screened for English language proficiency at the time they enter the University of Washington. Screening methods and criteria will be determined by the Office of Admissions, the Registrar, and the Department of English. All revisions to screening requirements will be presented to the Faculty Council on Academic Standards for information. Students required to be screened must do so before they may register for classes.
2. Students who do not meet screening criteria will be required either (a) to participate in mandatory advising or (b) to participate in English diagnostic placement, as described below:
 - a. Students who enter the University with four years of (non-ESL) English credit from English-medium high schools stipulated by the Office of Admissions and who do not meet screening criteria will participate in mandatory advising. Such advising must be completed before the students may register for classes.
 - b. Students who do not enter the University with four years of (non-ESL) English credit from English medium high schools stipulated by the Office of Admissions and who do not meet screening criteria will be required to participate in English diagnostic placement and may be required to enroll in specified English courses to improve their English skills. Students who are required to undergo diagnostic placement must do so before they will be able to register for classes. Students whose diagnostic results indicate that they need to improve their English proficiency will be required to enroll in specified English classes. Enrollment in these classes must begin during the student's initial quarter of registration and must be continued in each succeeding quarter until the sequence of courses is completed. During any quarter in which students are enrolled in English 101, they will not be allowed to register for more than 18 credits.

Approved by the Faculty Council on Academic Standards on May 8, 2009.