

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Academic Standards
December 6, 2013, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm
Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to Order
 2. Review of the Minutes from November 22, 2013
 3. Chair's Report
 - a. Additional Change to Student Regulations
 - b. DXARTS Admissions Suspensions
 4. ISS Online Degree Completion Degree
 5. Adjourn
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1) Call to Order

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

2) Review of Minutes from November 22, 2013

The minutes from November 22, 2013 were approved as amended.

3) Chair's Report

Additional Change to Student Regulations

After further discussions with the Registrar's office Kramer decided to propose additional changes to Student Regulations – Chapter 102 (Registration):

Chapter 102 (Registration) - #2. Methods of Registration

A. All students, except those in self-sustaining programs, register using the University's online registration system. Students in self-sustaining programs register through the means established by the administrative unit of the self-sustaining program.

The University has a continuous registration system organized into three distinct priority periods that are referred to as periods 1, 2, and 3. Undergraduates cannot enroll in more than 19 credits prior to the beginning of the quarter so that all students will have a chance to develop basic programs. Credits beyond 19 can be added, subject to college restrictions, after the quarter begins.

Kramer explained that the changes would simply clarify language to reflect what is currently happening. The goal is to maintain a separate approach to registration so there is a different method for students in self-sustaining programs. A question was raised asking if self-sustaining is related to Class B legislation reclassifying "program specific" students. The wording is not necessarily the same because this regulation also deals with graduate programs.

ACTION: Kramer moved to approve this change to the Student Regulations. The motion received unanimous approval.

DXARTS Admissions Suspensions

DXARTS (Digital Arts and Experimental Media) decided to suspend admissions to its program again without notifying the council. Kramer emailed the director of DXARTS explaining that since the suspension of admissions is a change in admissions policy it will require a 1503. Kramer clarified that this would be the second year in suspending admission which is now in the realm of a "limited RCEP". Kramer also mentioned that this is referring to their undergraduate program as FCAS does not cover graduate admissions. It was originally thought that admissions would be suspended last academic year with the intent to reopen in Fall Quarter 2013 in order to reevaluate and revamp the program. Kramer has not received a response from the new director and might follow up with the Dean if there are still outstanding issues to be addressed.

4) ISS Online Degree Completion Degree

Matt Sparke and Judy Howard were invited to discuss the proposed ISS (Integrate Social Sciences) online degree. The ISS online degree is unique in that the integration piece includes multiple disciplines which alter the way traditional programs are structured and functions.

A question was raised about how the ISS online degree was developed. Early in his career at UW President Young announced that UW would offer this type degree. However, this announcement was made without the consultation with faculty or the units. After the announcement, department chairs were approached and the team began to identify themes across disciplines to find similarities and differences amongst programs. The online degree was an attractive proposal because it allowed for new types of pedagogical ideas. The implementation committee, which included faculty advisors and chairs, first convened to discuss this proposal in Fall Quarter 2012 and met regularly last academic year. Howard explained that the chairs participated in the development of the 7 thematic areas and endorsed the proposal. A question was raised asking which chairs endorsed the proposal. The previously-requested endorsements were not included in the 1503 and will be forwarded to the council at a later time.

Concern was raised that the distribution of part-time and full-time lecturers teaching the courses would create complications. The number does not pencil out for tenure-track faculty 5 years from now. Discussion ensued. A specific question was "whether the distribution of tenure-track faculty, full-time lecturers and part-time lecturers would be the same for the online program as it currently is for regular undergraduate offerings. Howard assured the committee that the distribution would be the same. Within the first year there will be 35 courses (already established or in current development) which will be developed by permanent, not adjunct, lecturers. Concern was still raised that UW will be offering these courses 5 years from now and it is important to ensure the courses remain vibrant. A comment was raised that part-time lecturers do not have as strong an incentive, compared to full-time faculty, in keeping courses vibrant. Howard explained that the ISS degree would create a community of faculty members who feel invested in this new teaching project because they will be experimenting with new, effective pedagogical methods for virtual classrooms.

A comment was raised that there are many current courses being delivered through UWEO (UW Educational Outreach) from part-time lecturers. In order to maintain academic quality it is important to

use permanent faculty. A question was raised asking if there are funds built into the online degree to keep courses vibrant, crisp and updated while maintaining the quality of courses as they move forward. Howard explained that the College of Arts and Sciences would not offer the online degree if it was not academically excellent. Howard restated there is no plan to use part-time lecturers. Howard emphasized that these concerns are not unique to online courses. Concern was raised that tenure-track faculty have pressures different from non-tenure track faculty. Discussion ensued. A comment was raised that from personal experience, UWEO always provides the resources required to be effective at teaching online courses.

A question was raised concerning ownership of online course. Discussion ensued. The ISS online degree would offer a number of courses taught by multiple faculty members within the same department. The main concern is who maintains ownership of these collective offerings. UWEO cannot just offer any course it chooses. Rather, the department has to first approve any courses taught in the degree. If UWEO provides the funds towards course development then the course is considered jointly owned by the faculty member and UWEO. For example, if the faculty member went to another institution he/she could continue to teach the course. However, because of the joint ownership UWEO through UW faculty could offer the same course as well. Currently, there is now a steering committee which reviews courses before they are forwarded to UWEO for contracting.

Concern was raised that because this online degree is focused on degree completion it will attract students with a high risk of dropping out. A question was raised asking how the ISS degree will support student success and curriculum development. Wensel answered the question as the new Director of Student Services and Advising for the ISS online degree. The signature touch of the ISS online degree is the strong, in-house advising capabilities to ensure student success. The online degree have ensured there will be an ideal advisor/student ratio in order to be actively engage and provide a very personalize style of advising. Wensel mentioned that the online degree will have greater knowledge of student progress compared to traditional, onsite departments. Advisors will not just be involved in routine advising matters but also play a quasi-instructional role. For example, advisors will not just advise on what courses to take but also ask students why they are taking their classes and how they fit together to justify their degree. There will also be methods to monitor the process and advisors will be able to pinpoint where the difficulties are occurring in order to provide the optimal support for the students. There have been conversations with new academic advisors in the recently-created Early Childhood Family Studies online degree who are having interesting experiences, such as new students not having access to UW ID cards. Wensel explained that the ISS online degree advisors will fight those battles for students since they should be members of the larger UW community. Additionally, the ISS online degree will include a portfolio development process. A question was raised if this is similar to individualized studies because each student degree program will be personalized from beginning to end. The ISS online degree will not be like individualized studies because the degree has a definite curriculum along with required thematic areas.

Kramer mentioned that she received several questions asking how failure is assessed. The ISS online degree is designed to put learning at the center of the degree program, rather than the common “focus on you” mentality that many online institutions offer. Students will actually learn how to be social scientists by thinking analytically and systematically. Students will be challenged and critically assessed based on assignments that cover comparing/contrasting and synthesizing complex ideas. For example, students will not be judged based on their personality or personal development. Rather, students will be assessed if they are developing the required competencies as social scientists. The ISS online degree will

be able to determine if students are meeting these expectations and determine how well they are able to perform these intellectual operations.

Discussion ensued comparing the ISS online degree with the online Western Governors University. The ISS online degree is a competency-based model in which students are assessed on their demonstration of knowledge, a model based on the same ethos as other rigorous courses offered in the traditional classroom. The goal is to provide a rich learning environment that is pedagogically robust which guides students as they move their way through the degree.

Concern was raised that there is no description of the different thematic areas. Howard explained the descriptions can be found in page 12 of the proposal. The advice and feedback that FCAS and SCAP provided in the past have been very helpful in guiding the development of the ISS online degree. A question was raised asking who designated the courses for each particular thematic area. The development group includes Sparke, Howard, Kevin Mihata, and several other individuals closely tied to advising. Concern was raised that the chairs should decide which courses fall under each thematic area. A question was raised asking what happens if a course does not fit into any particular category. If a course is developed but does not fit in any area within the degree it will not be offered. Additionally, if a course does not work well with prerequisites required to complete the degree it will not be offered.

A hypothetical question was raised asking how a potential student would explain the degree to his/her significant other and what they can learn to help them beyond simply having a degree. For example, what skills will be developed in order to be attractive to a potential employer? Several examples can be found in the appendix of the proposal which offer good ways to answer this question. Similar to the Open University in the UK, the ISS online degree works to develop learning objectives that teaches students to make effective arguments, develop expertise in social theory, and develop digital literacy. Additionally, students will be able to get a degree without quitting their full-time job. With high tuition rates this is very important to students with partially-completed degrees because they do not want to give up their jobs.

A comment was raised that the ISS online degree puts faculty on a new path in thinking about what students need to know and how students get access to education. As long as the world is moving towards online learning, faculty development is important. However, it is important to do it right. From the perspective of faculty the ISS online degree is good for development and creating new student learning opportunities.

McNerney stated that current UW students may also want to participate in a similar online degree offering. Many students are double majors and having access to these courses online may be attractive. Discussion ensued. There is a real desire for students to have an interdisciplinary education with quantitative learning, especially the business and political side of things. It would be interesting to see how this could be used for students in Engineering-track degrees who do not have the space to take outside credits. While the current proposal is for degree completion, it would be interesting to see how this model can be leveraged for current UW students. Howard explained that one thing being worked on is creating opportunities for students in current programs the space to take courses. The status is uncertain at this time, but there have been many efforts in developing new course material using this method. Students are obviously busy, but the primary constraints are credit hours and the time of day in which classes are offered.

As Kramer understands it, faculty members who develop the online course, and teach it for fee-based students, can also use it for tuition-based students. The initial goal of the Class B legislation regarding “program specific” students is that ISS online degree students do not have access to traditional courses. However, it may be appropriate to have an asymmetrical relationship for on-campus students to benefit from ISS course materials. It is not uncommon for faculty members to teach the same course in both the day and evening degree program within the same quarter. It is possible that within the ISS degree a faculty member could offer the online class as well as a tuition-based class. Howard mentioned that this has not been addressed, but it should likely be the decision of the chair to determine if that would work for their department.

The goal is to ensure that students are not rushing through the program and missing the integration aspect of the degree. However, the degree must also allow for flexibility. For example, students with incoming credits from community colleges or other universities may be looking for the quickest way to graduate. In order to address that concern there will be preadmission counseling with opportunities to ensure students are not taking the “quick and dirty” route to graduation.

Concern was raised about opening admissions to day students. From personal experience in the ISchool, students from the traditional program did not succeed well taking the online offering because they were not accustomed to the online environment. As students continue through the ISS online degree they will receive ongoing support such as the ongoing student portfolio. Discussion ensued.

The implementation committee is feeling good about where they are. This is a work in progress and there will be a review process to reevaluate course content. A question was raised asking how the ISS online degree proposal compares with WSU’s online Social Studies program. For example, the WSU online degree allows students to choose concentrations. Howard explained that the ISS online degree is distinct from other programs because it offers thematic areas. In comparison, the WSU online degree has not integration program and is simply an online iteration of an existing program, not built from the ground up. A question was raised asking if UW can sell this new online degree to students. Online education is a new phenomenon and students are craving for this type of possibility.

5) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Kramer at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes by Grayson Court, Faculty Council Support Analyst, gcourt@uw.edu

Present: **Faculty:** Kramer (Chair), Brock, Harrison, Hoff, Janssen, Melin, Pengra, Salehi-Esfahani
President’s Designee: Ballinger
Ex-Officio Reps: Kollet, Chin Roemer, McNerney, Wensel
Guests: Robert Corbett, Virjean Edwards, Emily Leggio, Matt Sparke, Judy Howard

Absent: **Faculty:** Taggart, Keil (sabbatical), Cunningham
Ex-Officio Reps: