

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS
FRIDAY March 30, 2007
224 Mary Gates Hall

Chair George Dillon called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Chair's Report
 2. Approval of the March 2, 2007 FCAS minutes.
 3. Subcommittee Business:
 - SCAP—Values and Society! Etc.—Stephen Keith
 - Admissions and Graduation—Reviewing special admits—Don Janssen
 4. New Business: Jurisdiction for review of Graduate Certificates
 5. Adjourn
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1. Chair's Report

Chair Dillon explained the significance of council members getting “excused” absences. Voting by quorum requires one more than half of all voting members, and when faculty members are noted as “excused” it helps the council achieve quorum status.

Dillon also welcomed back ASUW representative Erin Shields after a long absence. He noted her expressive approval of the “two credit capstone” course in the revised proposal for a minor in Values in Society.

2. Approval of the March 2, 2007 FCAS minutes

The council approved with no comment the FCAS meeting minutes for March 2, 2007.

3. Subcommittee Business:

SCAP --Program Review (Stephen Keith)

Council member Keith briefly reported on several SCAP business items. He described the first three items under program changes as “routine.” These included a change in the number of credits for DANCE 250, the revision in admission requirements for the Major in Spanish, and the revision in program requirements for Slavic Languages and Literature. The Chair called for a motion to approve the first three SCAP items. Keith made the motion, which was seconded by council member Janssen. With no opposition, the three program changes were approved.

Items 4 and 5 on the SCAP report included a new BA degree with a major in Early Childhood and Family Studies, and a new minor in Education, Learning, and Society. Both of these programs, Keith noted, were told by the SCAP committee that their proposals were incomplete and needed more revision. He remarked that the revised programs would be reviewed by SCAP again in the future.

Item 6 on the SCAP report was a revision to admission and program requirements for Computer Science and Engineering. Keith described it as a “good idea” and recommended its approval. The proposal is requesting a third “accelerated” admissions option that would allow freshman students to apply for admission to the CE and CSE majors at the end of their first year. Keith made the motion to approve the program change, which Janssen seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no opposition.

SCAP --Values in Society (Stephen Keith)

Council member Keith noted that revisions for the proposed minor in Values and Society had been discussed electronically over the last two weeks. Council member Corbett described the proposal as “beautifully done” because the Philosophy department answered all of the SCAP committee’s questions completely and made the necessary revisions to their proposal. Council member Janssen inquired whether students would be able to take cross-listed courses from outside their major to satisfy their requirements for the program. It was pointed out that the Degree Audit Reporting System looks at all cross-listed courses taken. It was also noted that there are more interdisciplinary programs with cross-listed courses. At this point a motion to pass the proposal on to the Tri-Campus Review passed unanimously, with the condition to attach the SCAP committee’s remarks and Janssen’s question to the report.

Council member Johnson inquired whether or not the MEDEX issue addressed in the previous SCAP report had gone on to the Tri-Campus Review. Council member Mildon replied that it was in the Registrar’s office and he would check on it.

Admissions and Graduation—Reviewing Special Admits (Don Janssen)

Council member Don Janssen updated the council on the study of special admit students. He noted the pattern in which large numbers of these students are taking “easy” courses that don’t lead to a degree. Janssen explained that Pat Dobel, Faculty Athletic representative, told him that athletes are selecting courses based on peer influence rather than thinking on their own. Janssen said that he sees this as a “shortfall in our system” and would like to see some policing method in place to stop athletes from flocking to a particular course. Council member Mildon responded by saying that we shouldn’t be offering courses that aren’t “real.” Chair Dillon inquired whether the data for the study was based upon self-report. Janssen replied that it was self-report. Council member Shields noted that data from a student survey showed that students were spending about one hour a night doing homework. Shields suggested that this raises the question of who should be policed. Janssen stated that he sees a consistent pattern of easy courses taken by many special admit students, and because there is no method in place to stop it, the solution is to police the courses rather than the students. Shields replied that the standard should be required of all students, not just athletes.

Janssen said that Dobel also wanted to differentiate between easy courses chosen by the student-athletes and courses which are enabling. In some cases the instructor could be

creating an environment that is more appealing to student athletes. This may not necessarily be bad, if it enables the student athlete to learn the course material better.

An additional problem noted by Dobel was student-athletes taking special topics/independent study courses with specific instructors. While these courses by themselves may not be bad, a pattern of many students taking these courses with the same instructor(s) could be a problem. Dobel, he noted, was stopping athletes from taking independent courses with the same instructor. Council member Johnson inquire whether this was a departmental matter. Council member Ballinger asked what one does when it seems like the biggest abuser might the department Chair.

Janssen reviewed the recent changes the NCAA put in place to strengthen academic standards for athletes. Council member Sahr pointed out that athletes tend to complete far fewer majors than they declare. He explained two views of policing: the way in which committees like FCAS helps set academic standards for courses, and the NCAA with a student-centered policing view.

Council member Newell identified the problem as a faculty issue because they are the ones teaching these courses. Council member Navin cautioned that the information was incomplete and could create the perception that the programs themselves were "weak." Chair Dillon reiterated that this was only a preliminary report. Janssen said that he would send his completed report to Dobel.

At this point council member Newell called for an ad hoc committee to look at this issue. She stated, "we've been talking about it for three years." The FCAS committee is thus tasked to create a task force to investigate the general issue of quality of courses at UW, to include among other factors, course grade distribution, work level and rigor of courses, and the legitimacy of course credits obtained. This committee would have at least one member from the Faculty Council on Academic Standards. It was stated that this was an issue for Faculty Council on Instructional Quality. Council member Shields suggested that they make it a joint venture with FCIQ.

3b. (off agenda) Old Business

Chair Dillon distributed council member Wiegand's handout on the general education transfer agreement from the Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO). According to Dillon, Wiegand's interpretation of the memo would not prevent UW from requiring English Composition when the student had satisfied his home institution's requirements by AP examination. The UW currently requires that all students meet general education requirements by taking courses, not through exams. Dillon noted that the issue will be tabled until the next meeting at which time Wiegand will be asked to explain the ICAO memo.

4. New Business

Chair Dillon briefed council members on a continuing conversation he has had with David Canfield Budde in the Graduate School concerning Pharmacy certification. At issue is to whom does the jurisdiction belong? Dillon warned that more was to come.

Dillon also introduced the upcoming legislation from the Tri-Campus Policy Council concerning cross-campus enrollment. He noted that this council will be asked to read and comment on it, and then rule on it.

5. Adjourn

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

Minutes by Melissa Kane, Faculty Senate, mmkane@u.washington.edu, or 206.543.2884

Present:

Professors: Dillon, Janssen, Johnson, Keith, Newell

Ex-Officio: Sahr (standing in for Taylor), Navin, Rickerson, Shields,

Regularly Invited Guests: Ballinger, Corbett, Mildon, Wiegand

Absent:

Professors: Brixey (excused), Cunningham (excused), Keil (excused)

Ex-Officio: Nobles

Regularly Invited Guests: Winslow