

## UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Faculty Council on Academic Standards met on Friday, **January 23, 2004** at 1:30 p.m. Chair Carolyn Plumb presided.

### **Synopsis**

1. Approval of the minutes of the January 9, 2004 FCAS meeting.
2. SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs).
3. Discussion of repeating courses issue.
4. Transfer admission mission / values.
5. Department enrollments and capacities.

### **Approval of the minutes of the January 9, 2004 FCAS meeting**

The minutes of the January 9, 2004 FCAS meeting were approved as amended.

### **SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs – Nancy Kenney**

Plumb informed the council that the Daily has an article on the ASUW's legislation on the need for American Indian Studies at the University of Washington. Mattson, ASUW representative on the council and a member of the ASUW Senate, said he worked on this legislative bill and that it successfully went through the ASUW Senate. "The department is now working with the students," he said. Corbett asked if the ASUW Senate wanted an option or a major, since a major would require approval by the state.

### **Discussion of repeating courses issue**

Plumb referenced Washburn's memorandum on "Repeating Courses: Policy and Practices [January 9, 2004], and said, "We do have a policy, but it is not enforced, and departments may not even be aware." She read from the following paragraph: "The current registration system could be modified to check for prior course enrollment to block repeating a course more than once. Also, departments wanting to assign a low registration priority to students repeating a course could be permitted to specify that repeated-course-registrations would be possible only on a space-available basis in Period III (the first week of the quarter). Registering for a course more than twice would be permitted only with the approval of the department offering the course, and third and subsequent grades would not be recorded, as is the current policy."

Plumb said, "We should look at the data presented by George Bridges [Dean of Undergraduate Education and an FCAS ex officio member]." She referred to the data on math on the fourth page of the handout. "We should look at the reasons. 168 students repeated and received a better grade. Others (95) repeated after withdrawing. In the final column, they had a null grade: an X or an incomplete."

Plumb said, "It could be that students got a poorer grade." Buck said, "Students who took the course the previous year aren't in this data." Washburn noted, "If they drop within the drop period without a grade, then they aren't in the data base." Plumb said, "George Bridges brought this to us because these [course repetitions] cause problems with access." Washburn said, "My guess is that we are stricter than others since there is little incentive to repeat a course."

Kenney said, "My concern is that we should either enforce the policy as it stands, or eliminate it. And now we can track this." Navin expressed her concern "about how this will affect minority students who have problems adjusting academically." Mattson suggested that "grandfathering is necessary because we don't have time to adjust." Labossiere said, "But this is the current policy of the institution." Washburn added: "The current code doesn't address whether students can repeat [a course] more than once."

Mattson was asked how the policy should be communicated to students. Mattson said, "Going through the Daily would be helpful. And you would want to make sure that advisors and faculty know the policy, and explain it. Transfer students need to be told through their advisors at the community colleges." Asked how students drop courses, Plumb replied: "They do it online." Fan asked, "What's the incentive if further repetitions aren't recorded?" Kenney said, "If they do better, the department may look at it if a certain GPA is required in a certain course." Fan asked, "Then why limit the registration? If the system blocks any further repeats, are we going to allow them to

register to get a grade?" Wiegand noted that "it's prevented in Biology." Washburn, however, said, "No; it's open, and it is controlled by entry code." Wiegand added: "This is being looked at in terms of access to classes; if you have a block, you have to talk to an instructor or an advisor." Washburn said, "We could notify a student about to drop a repeated course that re-registration would not be permitted."

Janssen said, "This breaks down into three issues: 1) students repeating for better grades; 2) students repeating a dropped course; and 3) students repeating after withdrawing from the University." Kenney asked, "How long does a student have to stay in a class to have taken it?" Buck said, "There's a fourth point: Students are supposed to get permission from the instructor." Janssen said, "We have to be careful not to open the policy, but we could say that a course could be repeated on a space-available basis." Washburn said, "Currently, a mid-quarter drop is not counted as a registration when determining if a course is being repeated." Navin pointed out that "there is a student perspective, but there is also the fact that they [the students] took up the seat." Kenney said, "If they use their one drop a year, then it doesn't seem too bad to allow them to register again." Washburn cautioned that "it doesn't address the issue of students dropping all courses."

Pitre observed that "hardship withdrawals are different than [regular] withdrawals. Also, a professional school would look at hardship withdrawals differently than regular withdrawals." Buck asked, "Is it within our purview to limit University withdrawals?" Washburn replied, "We have holds for the students who repeatedly withdraw in the first week. For students who withdraw after that, there is no limit." Janssen suggested that "it might be best to look at the withdrawal code." Washburn said: "If we did this, we would have to separate hardship withdrawals from the repeat policy." Kenney informed the council that "when we developed the drop policy, we sent a statement to every faculty member on campus."

Wiegand asked, "Could we do this by department, or by course, because I do see a problem for Math if everybody comes to them to repeat a course." Washburn said, "I wrote this proposal so students wouldn't have to go to the department after the first repetition." Woods cautioned: "We may be fixing something they don't want fixed." Washburn suggested, "There are several options we could give departments: 1) Students must get permission to repeat a course; 2) Default – which may take place without permission. "

Janssen informed the council that "the current code says that students *must* go to the department, which is not what we want." Buck said: "So we have to change the code." Janssen responded: "I'd like to fix the drop policy first." Plumb asked Washburn to check the withdrawal policy, and said that she will check affected departments. Washburn said, "And students sometimes and later receive a 3.2 grade."

Janssen asked, "Do we want to do something about the multiple repeaters? And can the system be altered after the second week to send a message?" Richards said, "It seems that departments are building incentives to make this happen. It seems that departments need to be more strict." Washburn asserted that students "really need to talk with someone before they repeat a course." Navin said, "I would tell students to take it more than two times if it meant that they were otherwise unable to graduate." Plumb asked: "Wouldn't it be easier to waive it?" Navin answered: "There are some requirements that the faculty won't waive." Plumb told the council: "Tim [Washburn] and I will work on this, and we'll put it on the agenda for the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting."

### **Transfer admission mission / values**

Washburn circulated a draft of values for transfer admissions to the University. He said there is to be another meeting of the "practitioners" group. He mentioned that there can be different considerations for transfer admission, depending on the circumstances of the student seeking admission. "You can admit students who do not have the highest academic preparation, but have other qualifications." The draft will now go to a faculty committee.

Plumb said, "It will be OK to comment now, though." Washburn said, "Yes," and added: "Since we are required to admit 30% transfers from Washington community colleges, we will admit these as groups to each college." Keith asked, "So the numbers will add up?" Washburn replied: "Yes, the professional schools will set their targets and Arts and Sciences will enroll the rest. The 30% is throughout the year, so we have flexibility." Wiegand said, "There is no problem being *over* the limit." Buck said that "if a student knew they couldn't make it into a high-demand major, they might apply to Arts and Sciences and try a year later."

Washburn said that the Enrollment Management Committee is going to discuss admitting students to Arts and Sciences if they are rejected by Engineering and Business. Wiegand pointed out, "It is a problem for students who may go elsewhere depending upon admission to UW Engineering, which doesn't occur until July." When asked about the possibility of Engineering admitting earlier in the year so that it would be known if transfer students could be admitted somewhere else instead, Janssen observed that "we need spring grades."

Washburn distributed information about the HEC Board's changes to minimum standards for admissions. Recommendations are made to the HEC Board by the state's public baccalaureate institutions. The changes have been approved by Admissions, but they need review by faculty. One goal is to encourage students to take math in their senior year. Washburn went over the proposed admission standards for the University of Washington. By 2006 (or 2008), the SAT / ACT writing test will be required. The WASL has also been included in the new standards.

"Next," said Washburn, "we meet with OSPI to see what the public schools think of these proposals." He noted that the WASL will not be required of out-of-state students, and that home-schooled or privately- schooled students are not required to take it.

Note on: Departmental enrollments and capacities

Janssen reported that he was working on the data about enrollment capacity.

**Next meeting**

The next FCAS meeting is set for Friday, February 6, 2004, at 1:30 p.m., in 142 Gerberding Hall.

Notes by Robert Corbett

Written by Robert Corbett and Brian Taylor

**PRESENT:**     *Professors* Plumb (Chair), Buck, Fan, Janssen, Keith, Kenney, Labossiere and Woods;  
                  *Ex officio members* Mattson, Pitre, Richards, Washburn and Wiegand;  
                  *Regular guest* Robert Corbett, Coordinator of New Programs.

**ABSENT:**     *Professors* Newell, Reusch, Simon and Stygall;  
                  *Ex officio members* Bridges and Erickson-Brown.