

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**  
**FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

The Faculty Council on Academic Standards met on Friday, **June 4, 2004** at 1:30 p.m. Chair Carolyn Plumb presided.

**Synopsis**

1. Approval of the minutes of the May 28, 2004 FCAS meeting.
2. SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs).
3. Tri-campus curriculum review process recommended by FCTCP, and what happens next.
4. Distance Learning Special Topics Course.
5. Transfer student honors and issues with deferred students. Guests: Sue Ellen White and Ashton Rezayat, students.

**Approval of the minutes of the May 28, 2004 FCAS meeting**

The minutes of the May 14, 2004 FCAS meeting were approved as written.

**SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs)**

The following proposals were deemed “routine” by SCAP prior to the June 4, 2004 FCAS meeting:

1. College of Arts and Sciences – Psychology (PSYCH-050404). Revised Program Requirements for the Major in Psychology within the Bachelor of Science. “We plan to set up two categories for the three required 300-level core courses. There are seven core courses. Currently students may take any three. With this change students will be required to take one of the three cores from 300, 333, 355, and one of the three cores from 303, 305, 306, and 345. The third core class may be from either set of core classes. They will still take three cores. We used a rather similar system prior to our most recent curriculum change – the prior system worked well.

“Setting up categories within the required majors’ core courses will improve students’ background in psychology by promoting diversity in the courses they select. It will also improve our ability to assign faculty to teach the core courses.”

2. College of Arts and Sciences – Psychology (PSYCH-050404). Revised Program Requirements for the Major in Psychology within the Bachelor of Arts. “We plan to set up two categories for the three required 300-level core courses. There are seven core courses. Currently students may take any three. With this change students will be required to take one of the three cores from 300, 333, 355, and one of the three cores from 303, 305, 306, and 345. The third core class may be from either set of core classes. They will still take three cores. We used a rather similar system prior to our most recent curriculum change – the prior system worked well.

“Setting up categories within the required majors’ core courses will improve students’ background in psychology by promoting diversity in the courses they select. It will also improve our ability to assign faculty to teach the core courses.”

3. Information School – Informatics (INFOR-051904). New or Revised Continuation Policy for the Bachelor of Science in Informatics. “While the University has regulations governing scholastic eligibility for continuance, the Information School seeks additional requirements in order to make the best use of the limited facilities and resources available and to provide reasonable assurance for academic success. The Continuation Policy for the Informatics Major outlines general expectations of satisfactory progress for

students in our program, conditions warranting recommendation to alter a student's standing, and the student appeals procedure.

“The intention of this policy is to enable departmental intervention such that students who appear to be struggling or are failing to meet expectations of satisfactory progress may receive timely guidance and assistance to help them to succeed and graduate.”

### **Tri-campus curriculum review process recommended by FCTCP and next steps**

Plumb said, with respect to the “Three Campus Undergraduate Curriculum Review Procedures: 06/02/04”, “All changes are included in this version of June 2<sup>nd</sup>. FCTCP did decide to include the tables. Our comments and suggestions have been incorporated into this revised version. The Procedures must go through SEC in Autumn Quarter 2004. FCAS will take this up again, and see if it still holds as is.”

Plumb pointed out that SCAP, according to the current version of the Procedures, would receive any comments posted on a “non-routine” UW, Seattle proposal for a new major or minor, or program with a substantive change. Washburn said, “SCAP needs to get involved early in the process.” Kenney said, “What SCAP calls ‘non-routine’ and what this document says is ‘non-routine’ aren’t necessarily the same thing.”

Asked if each campus will decide [individually] if a particular proposal is to be posted for comments, Plumb said, “Yes, each campus will decide separately.” Plumb said, “It’s so complex because different campuses don’t have colleges; there are different structures. But the spirit of the process hopefully will be one in which all three campuses will want to see each other’s new [and significantly revised] programs before they’re finalized..” Wiegand said, “We have an outline, but we need more details over the summer.” Plumb said, “It will be easier when we see what President Emmert wants.” It was agreed that a flowchart would be helpful and that a revised description should be developed over the summer for review before the proposal goes to the Senate Executive Committee.

### **Distance Learning Special Topics Course**

Washburn said the Faculty Council on Extension and Outreach made recommendations on the issue of special topics courses in Distance Learning. The recommendations were authored by [FCAS member] Steve Buck.

Buck, who could not attend today’s council meeting, e-mailed the following comments for inclusion in today’s discussion: “As Tim Washburn has pointed out, the recent DL legislation was written intentionally to require review of the specific content and delivery of DL courses, which would preclude a generic special topics course. While I can envision that we may be comfortable going that way at some point, I think it wise to feel our way along carefully on this.

“That said, there may be some clues as to how special topics might be handled successfully in DL format in the present applications. I would be happy to look at them but, failing an unexpected revelation from that look, I don’t think we should open the DL special topics door yet.”

Washburn said the Faculty Council on Extension and Outreach “always thought of Distance Learning as specific courses. It never thought of special topics being offered through Distance Learning. Their philosophy does not include the special topics concept.” Washburn observed that it would be easier to do a special topics course in a traditional, on-campus classroom setting. And he stressed that if DL special topics courses were allowed, “this would give a license to offer anything under this rubric without review.”

Regarding graduate level Distance Learning courses, Washburn said there is “some unease about them too. Some of them are special topics courses.” He noted that “special topics courses are often an incubator for new courses: Is this appropriate? Should they not be studied further?” [The council, to a person, thought they should be studied further.] Washburn told the council that “courses offered under a special topics designation may not necessarily be individually reviewed by the department’s faculty; and all Distance Learning courses *should* be approved by the offering department.”

Newell said, “Our [Anthropology] 469 special topics course can be taught by anyone, but it only can be taken twice.” Plumb asked, “Can you imagine a DL special topics course being offered appropriately?” Kenney and Woods both said candidly: “No.” Woods said, “Anyone could teach anything.”

**IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT:**

**THE FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS DIRECTS THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE TO NOT APPROVE AS DISTANCE LEARNING, UNDERGRADUATE COURSES THAT HAVE A GENERAL TITLE THAT DOES NOT SUGGEST SPECIFIED COURSE CONTENT AND/OR COURSES THAT DO NOT HAVE SPECIFIED COURSE CONTENT IN THE COURSE DESCRIPTION (E.G., SPECIAL TOPICS, INDEPENDENT STUDY).**

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Transfer student honors; deferred students - Guests: Sue Ellen White, Ashton Rezayat (students)**

Plumb told the council that the issue of “graduation with honors” is complicated by the deferral of transfer students. She introduced students Sue Ellen White and Ashton Rezayat, both of whom have been affected by issues of deferral.

A statement distributed by White includes the following:

“Currently the University of Washington issues two classes of degree to those who complete its requirements.

“The inferior degree does not acknowledge academic achievement nor does it confer honors. This is in contrast to the superior degree that grants honors.

“This equity issue exists because the university grants baccalaureate degrees to those who have completed 45 residential credits, but does not grant honors at graduation unless 90 residential credits have been completed.

“Thus, those who may have performed at the highest academic levels and are granted a degree with the required credits for graduations have no acknowledgement and receive an inferior degree.

“This policy creates two separate, but unequal, classes of graduates from this institution.

“It is unjust and inequitable — to those qualifying students and to the ideals of scholarship and of equality in education that the University of Washington embraces. It has been exacerbated by several factors: pressure to leave the University once the necessary credits for a degree have been attained, precluding a student’s staying longer to obtain 90 residential credits; disqualification of honors recognition to students who wish to return to school to finish their degree and who have more than two years of college; deferral of admission because of space to students who were

accepted from community colleges, meaning that many such students will enter the University with 105 credits, making them ineligible for honors at graduation; inequitable and variable standards, allowing for 45 residential credits to obtain a degree, 70 residential credits for honors at the [branch] campuses, and 90 residential credits for honors at the Seattle campus; the fact that this policy was enacted in 1966, and that society and the process of education have changed dramatically in that time.”

“Though the affected students are not a protected class and creating two classes of graduates is not illegal, it certainly feels like an injustice to those who have qualifying academic records, but are treated as second-class students.

“As remedies, the University of Washington chapter of Tau Sigma requests that the policy be changed so that the number of required residential credits equal the number of credits required for honors at graduation. This change would redress the inequity:

- We request that the Faculty Council on Academic Standards conduct a review and study of this problem and pass such a policy to be considered for adoption by the university.
- We believe that this would result in encouragement for students to achieve the highest scholarship and academic achievement each is capable of, that it would equitably reward such scholarship, and that it would be consistent with the goals and ideals of the University of Washington.
- We would welcome any opportunity to discuss our concerns and perspectives with the council and will be pursuing this issue during the upcoming academic year.”

White said, “So transfer students without 90 residential credits will not be able to get honors. But other UW campuses grant honors with 70 residential credits.” Washburn partially demurred: “Faculty honors, not University honors, are offered at UW, Tacoma and UW, Bothell.” White said, “The policy is not illegal, but unjust, and does not represent the best motives of the University. We request a thorough review.”

Washburn said, “Students’ grades in the last two years are higher than in the first two years. Students who start here at UW have all their grades included in their GPA. For honors, we don’t count the grades earned in transferred courses. We recognize the credits, but not the grades.” White said, “You’re issuing two classes of degree.” Janssen recommended to White, “You might want to take the ‘inferior’ vs. ‘superior’ *out* of your argument.” Washburn said, “In this case, it’s an ‘honor’ that’s assigned to you; it’s *not* a different degree.” Wiegand asked Rezayat, “How will you be involved?” Rezayat replied: “We’re gauging how other students at Tau Sigma feel about this issue. And we’re approaching the administration.” He said that, when he has the responses of students and administrators, he will be able to come back to the council with a broader base of opinion, and perhaps a consensus.

Washburn said, “We need to review the honors policy in light of the recommendation FCAS made last week to allow, with college approval, more than 90 lower division credits from community colleges.”

#### **Thanks to all FCAS members for their contributions in the 2003-2004 academic year**

Plumb thanked all FCAS members for their hard work and excellent contributions during the 2003-2004 academic year. The council in turn warmly commended the superb leadership and stewardship of Chair Carolyn Plumb during the past two academic years.

**Next meeting**

This was the final FCAS meeting for the 2003-2004 academic year. The next FCAS meeting will take place in October of Autumn Quarter 2004.

Brian Taylor  
Recorder

**PRESENT:** *Professors* Plumb (Chair), Janssen, Keith, Kenney, Newell and Woods;  
*Ex officio members* Richards, Washburn and Wiegand;  
*Regular guest* Robert Corbett, Coordinator of New Programs;  
*Guests* Ashton Rezayat, student; and Sue Ellen White, student.

**ABSENT:** *Professors* Buck, Fan, Labossiere, Reusch, Simon and Stygall;  
*Ex officio members* Bridges, Castic, Erickson-Brown, Navin, Nyquist and Pitre.