

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Faculty Council on Academic Standards met on Friday, **October 22, 2004** at 1:30 p.m. Chair Don Janssen presided.

Synopsis

1. Approval of the minutes of the October 8, 2004 FCAS meeting (see attachment).
2. Subcommittee Business.
 - SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs).
3. Other New Business.
 - Transfer Credits (see attachment).
 - Other?
4. Topics for this Year. (Establish Working Groups.)
 - Ghost Majors – Departmental Admission Requirements.
 - Access to Student Learning Objectives and other Course Information.
 - Capacities in Majors.
 - Upper Division Credits.
 - SCAP “Authority”.
 - Presidential Tri-Campus Task Force Retreat.
 - Academic Progress Report.

Approval of the minutes of the October 8, 2004 FCAS meeting

The minutes of the October 8, 2004 FCAS meeting were approved as written.

Subcommittee Business

SCAP (Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs)

The following proposal was approved by the Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs (SCAP) at its meeting on October 15, 2004:

1. College of Arts and Sciences – Sociology (SOC-042604). Revised Admission Requirements for the Major in Sociology within the Bachelor of Arts: Revised Program Requirements for the Major in Sociology within the Bachelor of Arts. “1. Proposed revisions to admission requirements: Remove SOC 220 as an admission requirement for the major, leaving other entry requirements in place. SOC 220 will remain a graduation requirement. Proposed. 2. Proposed revisions to program requirements: Remove the degree option (pathways) requirement (20 upper division credits I selected Degree Option). Replace with a 20-credit upper division requirement. All new students will now enter the same path.” **THIS PROPOSAL WAS DEEMED “ROUTINE” BY SCAP.**

Transfer Credits

Council members were given a copy of the revision of the University of Washington Handbook language on “Acceptance of Transfer Credit” (Volume 4, Part III, Chapter 1: Admissions, Section 6, “Acceptance of Transfer Credit”).

Janssen said he asked both UW Tacoma and UW Bothell to send him any suggestions they might have regarding the language of the revised Handbook section on acceptance of transfer credit. He received nothing from either campus. The only change in the final revision, as a result of the council’s discussion at its October 8, 2004 meeting, was the excision of the words “180 credits”. All other language was retained from the previous draft.

Steve Buck made a MOTION to approve the revised language of the University Handbook. The motion was seconded.

THE FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE REVISED LANGUAGE ON “ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT” IN VOLUME 4, PART III, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 6 OF THE UNIVERSITY HANDBOOK.

Janssen will send the revised language to Secretary of the Faculty Lea Vaughn, who in turn will ask the “Code Cops” to scrutinize the language for any suggestions they may have. After that process has been completed, Janssen will take the proposed Class B Legislation to the Senate Executive Committee, which will consider the proposed legislation for the following Faculty Senate Meeting. Buck said it is important to get the best possible presentation to the Senate Executive Committee.

FCAS Topics for the 2004-05 Academic Year

Janssen noted that the council will concern itself with the work of its major subcommittees (SCAP, Awards, and Admissions), but otherwise is free to decide which issues it wants to take up for the 2004-05 academic year. The council discussed ongoing and potential issues, and appropriate working groups.

Ghost Majors

Janssen mentioned the issue of “ghost majors”. These are students who meet departmental requirements for a major, but who have not been admitted into the major, and want the major on their degree. Navin expressed uncertainty about the extent of the problem among academic units, and suggested that the council would need to decide whether “ghost majors” represents a problem worth spending time on, depending on the incidence of the problem. She noted that there are students who take all the required courses for a major and use this as an argument for seeking admission to the major in order to graduate with that degree. But departments, perhaps, may not know how many “ghost majors are out there”. Navin said, “We’re trying to control this in Informatics by having a policy that limits the student to three upper-division INFO core courses as a non-major. That way, a student cannot take a large amount of major coursework towards satisfying degree requirement and use that as an argument for admission to the major (especially if the program is competitive).”

When the department of Psychology was mentioned as a department involved with this issue, Navin said she did not know if Psychology was “a difficult major to get into”. Buck, a professor in Psychology, said the department admits each academic quarter, and has competitive admission. Psychology is lowering the number of majors it is letting in. He said there is a “lore in Psychology” that the department will not be successful if it denies access to students who have all the requirements to be admitted to a major. He said he would be interested in hearing more on the University’s position. He said it is “a huge issue.” There are six to ten “ghost majors” in Psychology every quarter trying to get in, he noted. Buck suggested the Undergraduate Advisory Council – of which he is co-chair, along with George Bridges – could take up this issue.

Washburn said he is aware that this problem exists. But he believes it to be rare, for the most part. “In my cases, the department chair supported the student’s petition.” He said registration could be limited in upper division courses when students are not majors. Buck said Psychology tries to keep upper division courses for majors, but sometimes students must be brought in from outside the department. Stygall said it would be helpful if a breakdown of admissions to each major was made available. Bridges said a recommendation resulting from a recent study is that any student interested in a double major must apply before that student fulfills the requirements for the second major. Bridges wondered if such a change would have to go through the Faculty Senate process. Janssen said he would need to check with the Faculty Senate. He also said faculty members do not always know that they cannot let a student into a particular course; if they have space, they will tend to let the student in.

Buck said that it would be in everyone's interest to make access available to students who are not majors; but students should be flagged who have taken "x" number of credits in a major. "We need a mechanism to flag potential ghost majors," he stressed. Washburn said an added advantage might be that departments would take in more majors. Buck said it depends on how many ghost majors there are. Stygall said students should be flagged and told that they need to do something, such as apply for a double major. Washburn agreed, and said that, perhaps, an E-mail message could be sent to such students.

Janssen suggested that Navin head a subcommittee that will determine which departments have a problem admitting ghost majors. Washburn said it is important to keep in mind that degrees are awarded by colleges and not by departments. It is the college policy that would be the determining factor, and it would, in that sense, be up to faculty. Bridges said this problem depends on how big it is. Janssen suggested that if a quarter of all departments do care, "we would want a solution." Buck said, "We could float this out; and we can bring it to the attention of the Undergraduate Advisory Council. But FCAS would be a good place [to house this issue] because Tim Washburn and Debbie Wiegand are on FCAS." Washburn said that his office could look at the quarter that students graduate, then at the preceding quarter, and so on, and see what results that would show regarding ghost majors.

"Navin will work with Wiegand to check with advisors and others, and Washburn will work from the other side," said Janssen.

Student Learning Objectives

It was pointed out that this was a natural issue for the Undergraduate Advisory Council to address. Buck and Bridges can apprise the council of UAC deliberations on Student Learning Objectives (SLO's).

Capacities in Majors

Janssen said the council studied this issue last year, and that he has compiled five-year data on capacities in majors. He will ask FCAS member Paul Labossiere to assemble data that will allow specific trends in enrollment capacities in majors to be observed. Bridges noted that the Office of Undergraduate Education conducted a survey two years ago asking departments how many people they graduated "last year" and "the year before". He will make that survey available to the council.

Eventually, it is hoped, the Admissions Office will be able to send information to students to let them know about capacities in majors. Washburn noted that Admissions has added a field in its application form: "My intended major". This information will be used for planning and advice, he said. Wiegand said that this information is used presently for second-year students, but students do not update this information enough to make the data as effective as it might be. Navin said this data could be helpful in the recruitment process.

Upper Division Credits

It was pointed out that some degrees require little or no upper division credits. Graduating with few upper division credits, however, only is possible at UW, Seattle; it is not possible at UW, Tacoma and UW, Bothell. Janssen said the council will find out what the minimum number of upper division credits is that departments require for graduation. Bridges suggested that Phillip Hoffman, Director of the Office of Institutional Studies, would be an excellent choice as a council guest on this issue. Janssen said he will ask Hoffman to visit the council.

SCAP “Authority”

It was noted that departments have some confusion about what exactly needs University approval for changes in their programs. Corbett said a major problem is “finding out early enough”. He said the SCAP Web page could mention precisely what kinds of programmatic changes require SCAP “authority”, and thus SCAP review. One certainty is that, if a program change needs to be on DARS, then it needs to go through the SCAP review process. Navin said that, as she reads it, the focus on the SCAP Web page – the Web page containing the 1503 form that departments submitting programmatic changes must complete and send to SCAP – is on admissions and graduation, and that this “creates some confusion” with regard to the necessity of submitting the 1503 for changes that are internal to the major, and does not necessarily effect admissions or graduation. Corbett said SCAP is interested in “how the wording [of a particular change in any degree program] reads for its students.” Navin added that the confusion may also stem from the fact that advisors come from varying backgrounds and have different levels of knowledge about what needs SCAP approval. Corbett said he will make appropriate changes on the SCAP Web page.

Presidential Tri-Campus Task Force Retreat

Janssen will be attending the Presidential Tri-Campus Task Force Retreat at the Salish Lodge at Snoqualmie Falls on October 29 and 30. He emphasized that the purpose of the retreat is not to reach solutions, but to describe different pathways and to air different perspectives on possible directions the University may take with respect to its three campuses.

He asked if the council had FCAS-related issues it wished him to present to the Task Force at the retreat. Streamlining among UW applications was suggested as one possible issue. Which campus, or campuses, are students applying for? Washburn said a student can check which particular campus or campuses he or she wants to be considered for. It is easy now, he said, to apply to, say, Business at UW, Seattle and UW, Bothell both. But the applicant must pay for each application separately. He said Admissions is looking at the possibility of reduced fees for multi-campus applications. Admissions also is looking at a common application for all students applying to the University of Washington.

Comparable programs on different campuses was another issue suggested to Janssen. Are similar offerings on different campuses to be considered “equivalent degrees”? And what about credit for courses that are taken on different campuses? Washburn said UW, Tacoma is pushing to convert concentrations to majors. An accompanying question would be the number of credits involved in such a conversion.

Academic Progress Report

Wiegand said she will present an Academic Progress report at the next council meeting.

Next meeting

The next FCAS meeting is set for Friday, November 5, 2004, at 1:30 p.m., in 142 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor
Recorder

PRESENT: *Professors* Janssen (Chair), Buck, Keith, Stygall and Wiley;
Ex officio members Bridges, Navin, Pitre, Siddiqui (ASUW), Washburn and Wiegand;
Regular guest Robert Corbett, Coordinator of New Programs.
ABSENT: *Professors* Labossiere, Montine, Newell, Reusch, Simon and Woods;
Ex officio members Nyquist and Richards.