

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Faculty Council on Academic Standards met on **November 8, 2002** at 1:30 p.m. Chair Carolyn Plumb presided.

Synopsis

1. Approval of the minutes of the November 1, 2002 FCAS meeting.
2. FCAS member needed for Advisory Board on Accountability.
3. Match-Day discussion with Debra Friedman.
4. Distance Learning course review: Report from 11/7 FCEO meeting.
5. Tri-campus program approval process: Report from 11/4 FCTCP meeting.

Approval of the minutes

The minutes of November 1, 2002 were approved as amended.

FCAS member needed for Advisory Board on Accountability

FCAS member Susan Woods is on the Advisory Board on Accountability, though not as a representative of the council. The Advisory Board on Accountability deals with creating performance measures for the University and reporting them to the state. Measures include such items as satisfaction of enrollment demands, number of undergraduates involved in research, and the graduation rate. More information about accountability at the UW can be found at the following Website:

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/factbook/Accountability>

Match-Day discussion with Debra Friedman

Friedman shared with the council some of what she gleaned in her travels throughout the campus, discussing the Match-Day concept with deans, associate deans, and chairs of many schools and colleges, including the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Architecture, the College of Engineering, and other programs at the University.

Friedman said she met with several department chairs and learned how majors in different departments work. She outlined feedback on the three problems that led to the proposed Match-Day. First, on the extended pre-major problem, the campus is generally “not ready to take this on now. But it’s important to realize that these extended pre-majors do not belong to any one department, and the institution must take responsibility for them.” As for the second issue of admitting entering freshmen directly to majors, “it is seen as a good thing to do, but most believe that what is in place at present is adequate.”

Friedman said, “Discussions of a methodology to address the third problem of access to majors for transfer students are moving forward.” She said this is due to “the less systematic way that these students enter the University.” She asked, “How would *you* do this? What are the particularities of this process? Already our colleagues are imagining how advising could work better for transfer students.”

Friedman said different majors have different criteria for accepting students into their programs. “But unit differences are a strength. I’m not interested in uniformity, or anything needlessly streamlined. I want a methodology that will work across the campus, but still allow for unit differences. What is special here is the breadth of opportunity.”

Janssen asked, “What we’re doing in my department (Civil and Environmental Engineering) – admitting in July – would not be affected?” Friedman said, “Whether the timing would be affected I can’t say, but whatever criteria you use would *not* be affected.”

Washburn said, “Transfer students have to come here first to then find out if they can get into their major. This is why we have lots of ‘drifting’ students.” Friedman said, “About one quarter of extended pre-majors are transfer students.”

Plumb said, “I talk to lots of students who get spotty advising at community colleges.” Wiegand added, “Because of that, we now have advisors at some community colleges.” Friedman asked, “Half of our graduates are transfer students: How do we best serve these students? If they’re not here yet, they have more options. If you don’t want them in your department, we’d want to help them have an alternative, to keep them on track. We want a methodology that is flexible for departments, and that helps students keep on track.”

Washburn said, “If departments are used to students who lack one course, and wait, only to find out that the course is not available, then those students are ‘out in the cold’.” Janssen said, “We have to wait until July 3rd to decide on admission because we need the Spring Quarter grades.” Washburn said, “Another benefit is that, once community colleges begin to think of their students entering the UW with a major as a junior, it will be all for the better.”

Buike said, “Many students need to know about their admission status *before* July.” Friedman said, “We have more transfer students than we know what to do with.”

In general, for transfer by majors Friedman said, “there seems to be general enthusiasm. We will form a more specific plan and circulate it, and show it to FCAS. It takes time, though, for this process to be completed.” She noted that UW Bothell, UW Tacoma, and Western Washington University already do this.

Plumb said, “We need to look at the worst-case scenarios: departments who have difficulties with this process.” Plumb asked council members to get input from their departments on provisional admissions and related issues that they could share with the council, and thanked Friedman for revisiting the council. Friedman will check back with the council when further developments unfold.

Distance Learning course review: Report from 11/7 FCEO meeting. Do we need to reactivate a DL subcommittee of FCAS?

Plumb said legislation was passed that put Distance Learning courses in the same review path as classroom courses. This kind of oversight was wanted by everyone who assessed DL course review, Plumb said.

Plumb said the second batch of courses reviewed by the FCEO subcommittee “created some questions.”

The approval forms have been coming through the University Curriculum Review subcommittee. Washburn in turn sent them to the FCEO review committee. The review committee found several issues that FCEO chair Steve Buck brought to Washburn’s attention.

1) Print-based courses. There are not many print-based courses left. These courses had the “C”-designation. The question is: Should they become Distance Learning courses, or remain Correspondence courses?

2) Asynchronous and synchronous DL courses. Are these courses “equal” and “equivalent”?

3) Mixed-mode courses (partly Web-based, or video-based, and E-mail based, with face-to-face meetings included). Should these be considered Distance Learning or classroom courses? When does something

become Distance Learning, because it *does* appear on the transcript as such (the HEC Board stipulates that if 51% of the delivery modes of a course are DL-related, the course is to be considered Distance Learning, and not a classroom course)? As has been noted in previous discussions, Distance Learning courses do not count towards the 45-credit residency requirement, though they do count towards the GPA.

4) Course requirements. Do they apply to the graduate level as well?

Plumb said that what came out of the November 7th FCEO meeting was that the Curriculum subcommittee (which was praised for setting a “rigorous benchmark for courses”) was glad that the questions arose [concerning the DL application forms]. It was decided that the applications must tell how the mode of delivery meets the learning objective and how a different learning mode [from face-to-face instruction] meets the same learning objectives as are met by a classroom course.

Washburn said, “A question raised by this discussion is: What does Distance Learning mean? Students who cannot get to campus? It is still an unanswered question. And Distance Learning legislation did not distinguish between the graduate and undergraduate levels.”

Plumb said a major question concerns the approval process: Is it needed for all courses? Washburn said, “*Every* course used to go through a full Faculty Senate review. Then the review went to the University Curriculum Committee, composed of one member from each college. Then, still later, the Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee was created to look at new courses. And, in principle, that is what has persisted. It’s good to have a University-level overview. We sometimes have to send course applications back, because of course encroachment, for example.”

Plumb said there also is the issue of the graduate vs. the undergraduate course approval process. She said the graduate admission committees “might appreciate that information [Distance Learning designation, where appropriate].” Plumb asked, “What’s the general feeling about this?” Council responses suggested that graduate courses do *not* need a DL designation. Woods said, “We don’t *do* graduate level reviews in SCAP.”

Plumb said that Don Janssen reminded her that FCAS had a Distance Learning Subcommittee in the 2001-2002 academic year. “Should we still be involved in that way?” she asked the council. Woods said, “[FCEO chair] Steve Buck said he was going to inform us if our input was needed.” Washburn said, “We could use more faculty voices in the conversation at the next ‘batch meeting’ of DL proposals.” He said the difficult question is: “Which courses meet the criteria that the review process stipulates, to have ‘equivalency’ between Distance Learning and face-to-face courses?” Plumb said, “This designation will eventually go away.”

Kenney said, “It is tough to judge whether a computerized presentation is really *less* valid than a lecture in person.” Plumb said it was suggested in FCEO [both by David Szatmary, Vice Provost, UW Educational Outreach, and by Paul LePore, Director, Undergraduate Program Development] that some students learn better in the classroom, while other students learn better working alone. It was also noted that the design of online course construction and development is still a work-in-progress.

Kenney asked, “How long do you get to *do* the DL course? The time frame is the only real deciding factor. It’s unfair to allow some people to have much longer to complete a course. That’s important. It should be noted if a classroom course takes longer [than it normally would]. If you’re going to teach a course in Distance Learning, it would be best by far to make it a synchronous course: to have student interaction.” Plumb, however, reiterated that “90% of Distance Learning courses are asynchronous,” and that those courses, for the most part, “have a different audience, comprised of professional and working

people already situated in their careers.” Plumb will talk to Steve Buck and see that FCAS is kept in the loop.

Tri-campus approval process: Report from 11/4 FCTCP meeting

Plumb said the tri-campus approval process proposal of the Faculty Council on Tri-Campus Policy (FCTCP), which is still being developed, includes information on new programs at an early stage, but does not bring UW Bothell and UW Tacoma programs through FCAS. She said there is “concern in the Faculty Senate, and much work to do on the approval process.”

She said UW Bothell and UW Tacoma have been approving their own programs. Hazard Adams said, “It would be a good thing if UW Bothell and UW Tacoma eventually were responsible for their own programs. If you *are* going to tell them what to do, they should at least be represented on the council.” Kenney said, “We need a *significant* representative from UW Bothell and UW Tacoma on this council.” Washburn observed that “there never has been a member on this council from UW Bothell and UW Tacoma.”

Plumb said, “There is no consensus: many think that all programs – from all three campuses – should go through FCAS. Others think UW Bothell and UW Tacoma should do their own program approval, as they have been doing for the past few years. I suggested that we could, for now, share more information among the three campuses on programs in the ‘idea’ phase. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma say that, by the time SCAP and FCAS see new programs, it’s late in the process.” Kenney said, “It’s good to catch it at the ‘idea’ phase; that would be a reasonable way to do it: having information early on.”

Plumb said this will be “an ongoing issue.”

Next meeting

The next FCAS meeting is set for Friday, November 22, 2002, at 1:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall. (NOTE: The meeting has been changed from 142 Gerberding Hall to 36 Gerberding Hall because of extensive water damage and repairs to room 142.)

Brian Taylor, Recorder

PRESENT: *Professors* Plumb (Chair), Buike, Fan, Janssen, Kenney, Labossiere and Woods;
Ex officio members Adams, Bridges, Croft, Morales, Wiegand and Washburn;
Regular guest Robert Corbett, Coordinator of New Programs.

ABSENT: *Professors* Eastin, Gianola, Newell, Simon and Stygall;
Ex officio members Gerhart, Liston and Ver Steeg.