

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Faculty Council on Academic Standards met on Friday, **December 3, 2004** at 1:30 p.m. Chair Don Janssen presided.

Synopsis

1. Approval of the minutes of the November 19, 2004 FCAS meeting (see attachment).
2. Old Business.
 - Continued discussion of upper-division credits.
 - Transfer Credit Legislation passed by the Faculty Senate: Dec. 2, 2004 Senate Meeting.
 - Tri-Campus Website listing all degree programs at all three campuses.
3. Reports.
 - Update on HEC Board issues – Robert Corbett.
 - Undergraduate Advisory Committee Meeting – Steve Buck.
 - Task Force on Academic Progress – Janssen, Wiegand and Washburn.

Approval of the minutes of the November 5, 2004 FCAS meeting

The minutes of the November 19, 2004 FCAS meeting were approved as amended.

Upper-Division Credits (continued discussion)

Janssen said that, instead of focusing on what the averages are – in percentage of upper-division credits taken in particular departments and units – the focus should be on the “low end” percentages, which are “closer to what the departments’ minimum requirements are.” He said it would be good if SCAP were to have this focus in developing recommendations for upper-division requirements.

Washburn said a good question to ask is: What makes a course an upper-division course? What makes a 300-level course different from a 200-level course? What percentage of enrollment in such courses should be juniors and seniors? We *do* send some courses back [to their department] if they seem introductory rather than upper-division.” He said the UW Curriculum Committee [of which he is a member, along with Debbie Wiegand, Ken Etkorn (Director, Curriculum Planning and Special Programs in Undergraduate Education), Graduate School representatives, and representatives from UW Tacoma and UW Bothell’s chancellor’s offices] could address this issue further. And SCAP, he said, should discuss the underlying principles of course-level credits if it is going to make recommendations to departments.

It was noted that the distribution of 100-level courses should be better understood. It was also observed that students are sometimes intimidated by the presence of older students in 100-level courses. Navin said a student’s ability to move effectively through his or her academic program is important. Wiegand said she would “like to look at some of these transcripts,” not to show them to the whole council, but to look at particular circumstances. Navin volunteered to help Wiegand review the transcripts.

Janssen said another issue to look at involves students who are meeting requirements for two degrees, but who, in some instances, have to pay tuition for an entire extra year. “If a student can meet the requirements for two different degrees with the same amount of credits, there’s something odd in that,” said Janssen. “Two degrees should require a greater number of credits.” Washburn observed: “We want more people with degrees, not more degrees with the same amount of people.” Washburn said the University is thinking of requiring students to get permission to go beyond 225 credits. “We need, before all else, to accommodate students who are getting their first degree.”

The council was given a chart showing average credits taken by course level among 2003-04 Bachelors Degree recipients. The chart is arranged according to departments in which students have taken the fewest upper-division credits. (Interdisciplinary Visual Arts shows only eight credits, for instance; and American Ethnic Studies and Anthropology, only 25. And Chemistry shows a surprisingly low number of 36, and Biochemistry, only 37.)

Janssen asked: What should be done? He said SCAP should develop guidelines for programs, and perhaps require departments to justify their minimum upper-division credit requirements, if necessary. Washburn said SCAP should look at actual degree requirements, starting with the departments on the first page of the chart. Janssen said if a department has a new degree program in which upper division requirements are under the college average, the department should explain why in detail.

Buck suggested proceeding on the basis of what the actual degree requirements are. But he added: "Some of these minimums are unusual cases in which certain requirements have been waived. That happens at the department level." Janssen said it is good practice to push departments to write their requirements. Washburn added: "Or ask the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee to consider this issue and then report back to FCAS."

FCAS-Proposed Class "B" Transfer Credit Legislation Passed by Faculty Senate: December 2, 2004

Janssen said that, at the December 2nd Faculty Senate Meeting, in which the Class "B" FCAS-proposed Transfer Credit Legislation passed easily, "many people seemed surprised that there are departments that have fewer than 30 upper-division requirements. Washburn said, "This is a legitimate concern. We don't want students doing three years at a community college and coming here and doing only one year." Janssen said SCAP will look at this issue and develop some recommendations for departments. Washburn and Wiegand will check with advisers in departments with low numbers of upper-division credit requirements. "We want norms for colleges too," Washburn noted. Janssen added: "And guidelines for upper-division courses." Washburn stressed that "upper-division courses without prerequisites are considered suspect."

Tri-Campus Website listing all degree programs at all three campuses

Janssen said he would like to have two or three council members look into the issue of the tri-campus Website that would list all degree programs available at all three campuses of the University. Washburn, Corbett and Wiegand volunteered to do so.

Update on HEC Board issues – Robert Corbett

Corbett said, "The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (or HEC Board) is a ten-member citizen board that administers the state's student financial aid programs and provides planning, coordination, monitoring and policy analysis for higher education in Washington." The Board is charged by state law with representing the "broad public interest above the interests of the individual colleges and universities."

Created by the Legislature in 1985, the Board was formally established in January 1986 as the successor to the Council of Postsecondary Education. Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, board members serve four-year terms. The exceptions are the Board chairman, who serves at the pleasure of the Governor, and the student member, who serves a one-year term. The agency's executive director serves at the pleasure of the Board.

Major functions of the Board include:

- Developing a strategic master plan for higher education and monitoring progress in meeting of the plan's goals and strategies;

- Developing and recommending policies to enhance the availability, quality, efficiency and accountability of public higher education in Washington;
- Serving as an advocate for students and the overall higher education system;
- Creating a seamless system of public education;
- Administering student financial aid programs;
- Helping families save for college.

A newly created Advisory Council, which includes K-12 education and higher education leaders, advises the Board on carrying out its statutory duties.

Corbett emphasized, “The Coordinating Board is not a governing board. They do the homework that the legislature creates. They coordinate the process.” As Washburn noted, “Sometimes the legislature gives the HEC Board an authority they don’t ordinarily have.” Corbett said that the preponderance of the Board’s work is to administer the state’s student financial aid programs (work study, needs grants, etc.). A small proportion of the Board’s budget is set aside for the creation of, and maintenance of, a “think tank”. The Board reviews the University’s new academic programs and puts together its budgets and brings them to the legislature.

Board members are unpaid; they volunteer to serve. Corbett noted that the way the Board tries to influence higher education in Washington State (and, by extension, the UW) is through its Strategic Master Plan. The goals of the current plan (which still needs to be approved by the Legislature) is for more access for baccalaureate degrees and for a greater response to the state’s economic needs. One of their projects, assigned and funded by the Legislature, is to create a “needs assessment” process for higher education in general. They will be replying on various stakeholders, including the public baccalaureates, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training Education Coordinating Board, and other government agencies such as OFM. As part of the Strategic Master Plan, the HEC Board is also talking about revising accountability and financing,” Corbett said. “These issues have been folded into Performance Contract discussions.” Asked about the Board’s relationship to curriculum issues, Corbett said, “Curriculum is the faculty’s responsibility; the HEC Board concentrates on the ‘big picture’.”

Janssen mentioned the state transfer credit system: “What would *this* system look like?” Corbett said, “Yes; that’s part of the ‘transfer’ package.”

Undergraduate Advisory Committee Meeting – Steve Buck

Buck said the Undergraduate Advisory Committee is composed of at-large faculty members and faculty council chairs or representatives (from Educational Outreach, Instructional Quality, Academic Standards, and Educational Technology). The main goal of the Committee is to advise the Dean of Undergraduate Education, and to facilitate conversation among the Office of Undergraduate Education, the faculty councils, and the Enrollment Policy and Academic Progress task forces.

Buck said there are two new projects the UAC is looking at: establishing four 100-200 level five-credit courses, each containing an option: enrollment in a five-credit auxiliary course. These courses would start out with an enrollment of 150 and would eventually reach an enrollment of 400-500 students. Oceanography and Germanics are just two examples of majors that would be involved. Buck said the “unifying principle is getting students more involved in a more intimate learning experience. The courses would serve as examples of ‘best practices’.” The courses, including the option, would be ten-credit courses.

Buck said that one purpose of the “best practice” courses is to have “clearly stated, early student learning goals, and to integrate the development of student learning goals into our system here.” Other aspects that came out of the strategic discussion included making Cathy Beyer, Research Scientist in the Office of Educational Assessment, “Campus Coach on Learning Goals”. Beyer would be advising faculty and departments on learning goals. And Paul LePore, Assistant Dean, Arts and Sciences, wants to develop a manual on learning goals. Buck suggested the council may wish to invite Beyer and/or LePore to an FCAS meeting to discuss these projects, depending on what the council itself wants to do. Woods said, “It would be nice if the majors had learning goals.” And Buck added: “It would be desirable to have learning goals at every level of the University.”

Task Force on Academic Progress – Janssen, Wiegand and Washburn

Council members were given the draft of a letter to “Newly Admitted Undergraduates” dated December 1, 2004. The paragraph that applies to FCAS reads as follows:

“Although you are not required to complete your degree program within a minimum number of quarters or years, there is a limit on the number of credits you can complete as an undergraduate. **All undergraduates are expected to complete their bachelor’s degrees within 225 credits, or 45 credits beyond the 180-credit minimum required for most degrees.** (Degrees required more than 180 credits must be completed within 125% of the minimum.) Students not graduating within 225 credits may continue only with special permission and may be assessed a tuition surcharge for credits taken beyond 225. The credit enrollment maximum includes all accumulated credit, including transfer credit, Running Start credit, College in the High School credit and Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) credit.”

Wiegand said the Task Force on Academic Progress met this week and discussed the creation of a “credit bank” that students could put credits into on entering the University, and withdraw credits from later on if the credits would help towards graduation in their major. Wiegand said implementation was discussed, as was the possibility that the credit bank may influence financial aid. The only credits coming into the University that will be dealt with will be AP and IB (high school courses for which students may receive university credit). And only credits that can be counted towards graduation will be acknowledged.

Washburn said degrees requiring more than 180 credits having to be completed within 125% of the minimum “does allow a bit more room”. And he said the Faculty Code would need to be amended, as it now states a 210 credit limit. And Wiegand said it is time for the University “to move on the surcharge consideration, and determine what to do about it. Also, it’s important to realize that this doesn’t solve all problems, such as many Running Start students (Running Start doesn’t anticipate college credit so much as meet High School and Associate Art requirements).”

Next meeting

The next FCAS meeting is set for Friday, December 17, 2004, at 1:30 p.m., in 142 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor, Recorder

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