

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning

November 8, 2018
10:30am – 12:00pm
HUB 238

Meeting Synopsis

1. Call to Order
 2. Review of the minutes from October 11, 2018
 3. Report: Faculty Council Chair luncheon (Halverson & Johnson)
 4. Discussion: Religious accommodations and medical notes (Halverson & Laws)
 5. Finalize the FCTL charge letter
 6. Subcommittee reports
 - a. *Goals and Principles of Learning Analytics at the UW*
 - b. *Diversity and Equity Informed Pedagogies*
 - c. *Evaluation of Instruction for Improvement of Teaching: Course Evaluations*
 - d. *Educational Policies/Procedures around Teaching and Learning*
 7. Good of the order
 8. Adjourn
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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m.

2. Review of the minutes from October 11, 2018

The minutes from October 11, 2018 were approved as written.

3. Report: Faculty Council Chair luncheon (Halverson & Johnson)

Halverson, the chair, updated the council on the Faculty Council Chair luncheon. Jason Johnson, Associate Vice Provost of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, also attended the luncheon and was asked by the Faculty Senate Chair to discuss student course evaluations (how they are used and how they might change). Several councils expressed interests in the subject. The Senate Chair requested councils participate, by sending representatives, in a task force focused on addressing some of the issues related to course evaluations. The chair asked the council if anyone was interested in joining.

A member asked how this task force would differ from the current FCTL subcommittee, *Evaluation of Instruction for Improvement of Teaching: Course Evaluations*. The chair expects that this task force will examine the issue at a ten thousand foot view. Chris Laws, Faculty Council on Student Affairs Chair, provided additional context about the complexity of the issue – promotion tenure and student feedback.

Sri Devi Duvvuri, David Goldstein, Ellen McGough, and Timea Tihanyi volunteered to serve on the taskforce. Depending on the charge and schedule of the task force, these members will likely attend on a rotation as needed.

4. Discussion: Religious accommodations and medical notes (Halverson & Laws)

Laws presented an executive summary of the Faculty Council on Student Affairs' (FCSA) draft medical excuse note policy (Exhibit 1). This policy would expressly prohibit faculty members from requiring medical excuse notes from students for short term illnesses.

A member asked if there would be new guidelines or best practices for syllabi. Laws responded that the Faculty Council on Academic Standards is working on guidelines for this and will propose Class C legislation.

A member asked if there was a definition of short and long term medical leave. Laws said that there is a definition for long term (more than one week). This policy would likely define short term as one to two days.

A member recommended including instructors and other non-faculty members in the policy. The member also recommended adding a statement of what will happen this policy is not adopted (e.g. Hall Health will likely stop providing medical notes).

The chair suggested that the policy include examples/best practices of accommodations in an effort to support faculty members. Laws agreed that the policy language should support faculty members. They need a curricular strategy for accommodating student absences. He also noted that the University should not accept faculty members who insist that there are no make-ups.

The chair asked Penny Yee, ACE Fellow from Hamilton College, to provide insight to Hamilton College. They strongly discourage notes and the student health center will not provide notes. The faculty generally act in good faith. There are far fewer students, but they are facing challenges around accommodating student needs, particularly around students with disabilities. Laws noted that there are services on campus already that may be willing to expand their services to align better to support faculty and students. Laws also expressed willingness to work with the FCTL subcommittee on educational policies/procedures around teaching and learning.

The chair noted that the reason for absence should not matter (medical, religious, military, sports, etc.). The question for the council to consider is how to support faculty members make these accommodations. Furthering this conversation, members discussed whether a policy around religious accommodations should be presented as recommendations and how detailed these recommendations would be. The state does not mandate observing certain religious holiday, and so it is unclear if the University could do that.

Educational Policies/ procedures around Teaching and learning (subcommittee) will focus on drafting best practices for reasonable accommodations.

5. Finalize the FCTL charge letter

The chair offered two new bullets to add to the FCTL charge letter which were amended in the meeting (Exhibit 2).

6. Subcommittee reports

- a. *Goals and Principles of Learning Analytics at the UW*
 - i. Tom Lewis informed the council about a new tool that the University is using called Ally (integrated into canvas). Tom will share this feature at the next meeting.
 - ii. UW bookstore has a program called Inclusive Access which could potentially provide less expensive course materials to students. Tom will also share this at the next meeting.
 - iii. Lecture capture – Tom will connect Tom
- b. *Diversity and Equity Informed Pedagogies*
 - i. Met with Rickey Hall, Vice President for Minority Affairs & Diversity, and Chad Allen, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement.
- c. *Evaluation of Instruction for Improvement of Teaching: Course Evaluations*
 - i. Due to time constraints nothing was reported during this meeting.
- d. *Educational Policies/Procedures around Teaching and Learning*
 - i. As mentioned earlier will focus on drafting best practices for reasonable accommodations.
 - ii. Kathleen Peterson was also added to this subcommittee.

7. Good of the order

Nothing was stated.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Minutes by Lauren Hatchett, lehatch@uw.edu, council analyst

Present: **Faculty:** Ellen McGough, Thomas Halverson (chair), Mark Zachry, Timea Tihanyi, Kathleen Peterson, David Goldstein, Sri Devi Duvvuri
Ex-officio reps: Judith Howard, Angelia Miranda
President’s designee: LeAnne Jones Wiles
Guests: Tom Lewis, Katie Malcolm, Chris Laws, Penny Yee

Absent: **Faculty:** Fred Bookstein, Amy Howells, David Masuda, Laurianne Mullinax
Ex-officio reps: Amanda Hornby

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – FCSA Medical Excuse Note Policy Executive Summary.pdf

Exhibit 2 – FCT&L Meeting 11 8 18.pptx

Medical Excuse Note Policy Executive Summary, 11/08/18 – Chris Laws, Chair FCSA**1) Brief Statement of the Problem:**

Routinely requiring students to obtain medical excuse notes in order to make up missed classwork due to short-term illnesses provides little or no value and has unintended, adverse consequences:

Hall Health Access and Resources – ~250K/year in expenses; ~1 in 20 student visits;
Financial Burdens and Inequities – students do not have equal access to medical care;
Student Safety – exaggeration of symptoms leads to misdiagnoses and unnecessary treatment;
Institutional/Faculty Risk – medical information collected is subject to FERPA and potentially HIPPA regulations.

2) Peer Models – PAC-12 Responses:

Policy and practice models vary widely:

ASU, Stanford, Utah, UCLA – no direct statement;
U Arizona – medical notes clearly allowed;
Colorado – medical notes encouraged;
UC Berkeley – medical notes allowed, but strongly discouraged;
WSU – medical notes specifically disallowed;
UO, OSU, USC – medical notes allowed, but specifically not provided by student health center.

3) Recommendations from FCAS/FCSA Taskforce:

UW should adopt a binding policy with specific language that explicitly disallows faculty from requesting medical excuse notes from students for short-term absences, similar to that in use at WSU. It should be designed to allow faculty to ask students for some information about the medical need for an excused absence, while specifically preventing a demand for a written excuse from a health care professional.

Of particular concern is the possibility of a model similar to UO, OSU, and USC, which is considered the worst possible outcome.

4) Strategic Concerns:

Communication of policies to students;
Protecting students who are asked to provide notes;
Communication of policies to current and future faculty;
Development of best practices guidelines
Gaming
Disproportionate faculty burden
Additional workload
Faculty rights and authority

(proposed) **Amendments to the FCT&L 18/19 charge letter**

- Continue work from last year investigating what diversity and equity-informed pedagogy is already being practiced at UW campuses, how these efforts support the student learning experience, and how they further the teaching and learning components of the UW Diversity Blueprint.
- Continue the exploration of the use of course evaluations as a formative feedback mechanism of teaching performance and student learning. This work should support the newly formed task force studying course evaluations at the UW.