

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning

January 7th, 2015

10:30am - noon

Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to order
2. Review of the minutes from December 3, 2015
3. MOOCs at UW
4. Draft report on Summer Quarter under ABB / discussion
5. Good of the order
6. Adjourn

1) Call to order

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

2) Review of the minutes from December 3, 2015

The minutes from December 3rd, 2015 were approved as amended.

3) MOOCs at UW

Rovy Branon (Vice Provost, Educational Outreach) and Dan Grossman (Professor, Computer Science) were present to continue council discussion on MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and the credentialing of MOOCs at the University of Washington.

Branon explained at a basic level, he would like MOOCs to be treated the same as the UW's other non-credit offerings, and to be managed by PCE (Professional and Continuing Education). He explained the University of Washington currently partners with third-party platform developer Coursera to administer MOOCs, though, unlike many other U.S. universities engaged in similar partnerships (many with Coursera), the UW currently does not allow "credentialing" of its MOOCs. Credentialing manifests in one way as a purple "UW" insignia placed on MOOC certificates of completion. Currently, the area on certificates where the insignia would be placed is blank space, Branon explained.

Branon noted that the UW is one of a hand-full of MOOC-offering universities in the country that does not allow its institutional insignia to be placed on MOOC certificates of completion. He explained the university is missing out on an opportunity to co-brand with Coursera, who is receiving singular recognition for hosting these courses in this way. He clarified that this conversation only applies to non-credit offerings.

Branon explained it is his hope the council will endorse UW MOOC credentialing. He noted he has worked as part of the FCTL Subcommittee on Online Learning on this subject, and spoken with Faculty

Senate chair Norm Beauchamp. If the endorsement is given, he explained, next steps will be defined by faculty senate leadership to progress the initiative.

Grossman introduced himself and explained he is an instructor of MOOCs at the UW. He described MOOCs to be important digital forums that encourage public engagement with the university, and which have had a global impact since their inception.

Grossman clarified that - of the total number of MOOC participants - 80% of these are taking the course from outside of the United States. He explained these students enjoy having “something they can put on their fridge” after they have finished the course, and currently the university’s MOOC credentialing policy does not allow the UW symbol to be placed on those certificates. Grossman noted he and his colleagues are proud of the UW, and of the MOOCs offered by the university.

Branon explained one comment from students has been that if the UW is not proud enough to have their logo on the certificate, they should not be administering the course. Branon explained any decisions about transferability of course credit are made on the department level, and MOOCs cannot be transferred for credit due to a change in UW endorsement policy.

After question, Branon explained there are roughly 20 MOOCs operational during the course of a given year at the UW.

A council member asked if there is a financial cost to adding credentials to certificates. Branon explained the university would be reimbursed for the credentialing cost. Branon explained he does not believe the UW will “become rich” off of MOOCs, he noted most of these need to be self-supporting which the credentialing change will support in a monetary sense. He explained MOOCs cannot be publicly subsidized because they do not service US citizens or Washington State citizens predominantly.

Branon explained demonstrating and improving quality of all MOOC programs is one goal of PCE currently, and they do several things to ensure quality:

- Students typically leave MOOCs if they are not satisfied with their experience more quickly than a student might leave another course or program
- Reviews on behalf MOOC students at the end of each course
- Instructor reviews
- Syllabi reviews

Branon explained there are a hard set of metrics used to ensure quality of MOOCs. Wilkes requested that if these metrics are ever revised, he would encourage the FCTL be included in that discussion. There was question of how evenly these metrics are applied across all UW MOOCs.

Grossman explained teaching MOOCs is the most professionally satisfying venture he has undertaken due to the gratification of the students and accessibility of the courses. He noted the material of one of his own MOOCs is not introductory level by any means, as it is a 300-level computer Science course (Programming Languages). He explained he has received a great deal of positive feedback on this course. Grossman noted he also is aware of a colleague using his MOOC material at another university, which is one example of a professional impact MOOCs have had on another university, and in a for-credit course.

Grossman explained some negative elements of MOOCs. These included:

- Easy to cheat through a MOOC if instructors do not change homework assignments
- Inability to change elements of a specific MOOC without changing the adjoining instructor videos, as they would not apply anymore
- Biggest reason people stop engaging in a course is because they fall behind, but MOOC start and stop dates are too stringent to accommodate on an individual student basis, currently

Wilkes explained MOOCs are useful to get prospective students to self-filter after having been exposed to some of the content of a degree area. Grossman agreed, and noted MOOCs have had a positive outcome on student recruitment, as well. He explained MOOCs require the taker to be self-motivated, given the singular online experience of the course. He noted he understands that some faculty do not ever want to teach a MOOC, but explained it is a benefit nevertheless that the UW has made opportunities available for all faculty to explore them.

After some council discussion, Wilkes made a motion, stating:

FCTL concludes that allowing the UW logo and brand to be associated with MOOCs offered by UW faculty is desirable. The risks are negligible since PCE already offers a wide range of certificate courses, with a long record of appropriate management of standards. We recommend that the use of the UW brand for non-credit UW-generated MOOCs be implemented as soon as practical.

The endorsement was approved by majority vote of council members.

4) Draft report on Summer Quarter under ABB / discussion (Wilkes)

Wilkes explained he took the discussion from the council on Activity-based Budgeting (ABB) and drafted a report summarizing the council's views on the topic. He noted the document is before the council to review, with the intent that it be finalized as soon as possible.

The council undertook wordsmithing of the document to clarify views expressed by members and for grammatical and formative accuracy.

An informal vote was taken to find if the majority of council members held an opinion on the notion of regularizing summer quarter at the UW. The vote revealed a majority of the council did not have a firm opinion, as abstentions outnumbered the number of up or down votes.

After question, Branon explained ABB is going through a five-year review process which began after its inception at the UW. He noted part of this review is looking to see if summer quarter should be normalized to join the budgeting model, and does this idea make sense from a teaching and learning standpoint. He explained the council's endorsement of regularizing summer quarter would provide grounds for looking at next steps, whereas if the FCTL were to say regularizing summer quarter could harm or would harm the UW, its mission, faculty or students, than the costs of going forward on a financial basis would not likely even be modeled. He noted the regularization of summer quarter is one of four total topic areas that are being undertaken as part of this review.

After council editing of the report had culminated, Wilkes explained he would allow for electronic editing to occur for the duration of another week.

A vote was taken for approval of the document, it passed unanimously (Exhibit 2).

After question, the council had no objection to forwarding the document to Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting chair Kate O'Neill, as well as the ABB review committee. Wilkes explained the document will be posted to the council's online google drive, as well.

5) Good of the order

It was noted Catalyst WebQ (a Catalyst survey function) will not be discontinued by UW-IT, as there was some question of this in the last council meeting given some other discontinued Catalyst services.

It was noted the UW-sponsored web-tool Canvas does not have a print function for documents. Tom Lewis (Director, Academic & Collaborative Applications, UW-IT) noted UW-IT can offer guidance to the managing IT company on this issue, as the UW is one of their largest clients. Lewis explained there is now data on which are the more successfully designed Canvas functions. He noted he will have more to report in the spring (2016).

6) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Minutes by Joey Burgess, jmbg@uw.edu, council support analyst,

Present: **Faculty:** Ellen McGough, Jan Spyridakis, Jennifer Taggart, Dan Turner, Jeffrey Wilkes (chair), Kimberlee-Gillis Bridges, Timea Tihanyi, Kathleen Peterson
Ex-officio reps: Terry Ann Jankowski, Eldridge Alcantara, Deci Evans
Guests: Rovy Branon, Tom Lewis, Dan Grossman, Robert Corbett, Beth Kalikoff, Christine Sugatan

Absent: **Faculty:** David Masuda, Jaime Olavarria, Brenda Zierler, Fred Bookstein
Ex-officio reps: N/A
President's designee: Ed Taylor

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 - FCTL_resolution_moocs_winter2016

Exhibit 2 – fctl-ABBdiscussion_report_draft_revised_010716

FCTL concludes that allowing the UW logo and brand to be associated with MOOCs offered by UW faculty is desirable. The risks are negligible since PCE already offers a wide range of certificate courses, with a long record of appropriate management of standards. We recommend that the use of the UW brand for non-credit UW-generated MOOCs be implemented as soon as practical.

**University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning**

Summary of discussion of Summer Quarter under ABB

Faculty Council on Teaching & Learning (FCTL)

Draft 2, 1/7/16, J. Wilkes / J. Burgess (in-meeting edits; order of items changed)

The council discussed issues and other impacts relating to administering UW's summer quarter under Activity-based Budgeting (ABB) as part of its charge from the ABB Review Committee and the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB).

A number of arguments were identified in favor of, and against, changing Summer Quarter from the present self-supporting model under PCE management, to a "regular" quarter equivalent to all others, under the ABB funding model.

Arguments in favor of change:

- ABB increases the efficiency of the UW's summer offerings. Currently, we offer a large number of low-enrollment courses.
- Regularizing summer quarter under ABB might help remedy the current learning spaces problem (not enough medium-size to large classrooms for undergraduate instruction), by spreading classroom requirements through the full calendar year.
- Summer quarter at UW is very popular with students from other universities in the US and around the world, and increased offerings might enhance this attraction (and the UW "brand"). However, recently UW is seeing fewer "special" students and more regularly-enrolled UW students taking advantage of the summer quarter.
- Having two different financial operating models (fee-based and ABB) for different quarters causes tension for some departments. For example, course cancellation and reassignment policies in some departments differ between summer and regular quarters.
- ABB funding returns might provide additional resources for departments, although not all schools and colleges at UW provide direct returns to the departments generating enrollment.

Arguments in favor of no change:

- Currently, the Provost's Office funds summer quarter and takes on the risk of low-enrollment courses. Summer thus allows departments to utilize successful outside lecturers and pilot new courses or subject material; they can experiment without being accountable to Deans for low enrollment, because ABB does not apply during summer quarter.
- Faculty research productivity may decline, and travel to summer conferences would be an issue for some.
- Often, advanced courses are not offered in summer because faculty comfortable teaching them are not available or not willing to teach. Support staff are typically free to take vacation time throughout summer, and might resent being forced to take their vacations in the limited inter-quarter break – which overlaps the start of the K12 school year.

- Under the current “special” status, there are usually no committee or administrative work requirements for faculty during the summer; this is liberating for faculty who teach in summer, allowing them to focus solely on their teaching duties.
- Currently, FTE fractions during summer quarter are lower than regular quarters for teaching faculty, and thus pay is lower for summer quarter. Unless rates would be normalized in summer, tenured faculty will need other incentives to do their teaching in the summer. In either case, costs will increase.
- Summer provides additional salary for faculty who are teaching. Regularizing the quarter might take away that additional income.
- Many students need summer job income (or summer intern/research experience opportunities).
- Summer quarter does not count in the number of consecutive quarters students are allowed for working toward their degree; altering the system to include summer quarter as a “regular” quarter could be detrimental to students’ ability to meet the requirement to graduate within a specified number of quarters.
- If summer term became a regular quarter, students could take other quarters off, but jobs and summer programs might not be available; U-district housing tends to be cheaper in summer also.
- Year-round university operation would be exhausting for faculty and students. Time off in summer provides opportunities for thinking and reflection – what we tell people is the essence of higher education! – and important for students and faculty alike. We will ask our student representatives to help us get student perspectives (perhaps by polls) on this issue.
- In summer, some intermediate classes are staffed with graduate TAs; if the summer were regularized and instructors replaced with regular faculty, grad students might no longer have the opportunity to earn summer salary and gain teaching experience in non-intro courses.
- Making summer a regular quarter may reduce available teaching and learning support services for budgetary reasons. For example, most library hours are shortened in the summer, and the Libraries may have difficulty fully supporting students who need library services. Similarly, offering advanced lab courses would create additional costs as the courses need specialist support staff.
- Labs and other special instructional facilities may need maintenance and upgrades that would be disruptive during the regular academic year, and is now typically done during summer.

In retrospect, the discussion seems to have yielded more negative than positive items for our list. In terms of teaching and learning impacts, a majority of the council would feel no need for a change.

However, one important point was, what is the administration’s driving motivation to once again consider a change? FCTL members (and faculty in general) do not have a clear idea from previous reports on the topic. What specifically is thought to be broken? Then we can reconsider whether repairs might cause more pain than relief.