

**The University of Washington
Faculty Council on Instructional Quality**

The Faculty Council on Instructional Quality met Wednesday, **October 11, 2000** in 36 Gerberding. Chair Linda Chalker-Scott presided.

PRESENT: *Professors* Carline, Chalker-Scott, Coutu, Webster, Wells and Wiegand. *Ex Officio* Conquest, Cook, Gilmore, Stromberg and Wulff. *Special Guest* Mary Coney.

ABSENT: *Professors* Bierne, Hoffer, Mulligan and Wheeler. *Ex Officio* Bridges, Evans, *Kyes, McCracken, Pitre.

Minutes from May 17, 2000 approved with corrections.

Introductions

FCIQ members introduced themselves by name and department and Chair Linda Chalker-Scott thanked all for serving on FCIQ and welcomed new members to the council. Faculty Senate Chair Mary Coney also thanked FCIQ for its hard work on the Distinguished Teaching Award (DTA) and other issues and offered to assist the council in any way she could throughout the coming year. She also noted that FCIQ should proceed with DTA legislation with all due haste so that it will have a chance to make it through the Senate this year. If the legislation is ready to present by January 2001, there should be enough time for the Senate to give the bill its two required readings.

Discussion of Class C Legislation Regarding Distinguished Teaching Award (DTA)

Last year, FCIQ drafted a proposal whereby the DTA would be converted from a one-time award to a permanent salary increase. This year, the council has agreed to draft Class C legislation that would insert language into the *Faculty Code*, converting the DTA to a permanent salary increase. Carline briefed FCIQ on the Subcommittee on DTA Legislation's discussion by noting that the subcommittee had considered several options including adding the title "Distinguished Teacher" to the permanent salary increase. The Subcommittee also considered endowing a Chair for excellence in teaching and improving publicity for excellent teaching. Carline wondered whether affixing a permanent title to the DTA would require Senate approval. Conquest replied that it most likely would. Carline said the Subcommittee wanted to meet with Debrah Friedman, Steven Olswang and Lea Vaughn to draft a report for the Faculty Senate as the Subcommittee thought this would be a good way to generate conversation about the DTA.

Carline observed that the Administration, of course, would have to enable the funding of a permanent DTA salary increase. He also agreed to draft the legislation and to forward it to Secretary of the Faculty Lea Vaughn for review before bringing it to the next FCIQ meeting.

Coney mentioned that FCIQ might want to place the DTA on the first Senate meeting's agenda as a discussion item. The Chair mentioned Vice Chair Bradley Holt's suggestion to tie the DTA to a "Distinguished Research" award and added that she did not think this was within the purview of FCIQ. Others on the council agreed that this was a decision FCR would need to make. Webster pointed out that DTA is not always perceived as an award for teaching as much as it is a kind of "lottery" or "popularity contest." Conquest advised that the Teaching Academy was currently addressing how best to award excellent teaching at the University; the DTA is only one way and there are certainly others such as increasing the number of teaching assistants and improving classroom support.

Conquest and Coney also discussed the idea of contributing to the local economy vs. the national economy: teaching is an example of improving local economy because it has a direct benefit for UW students; research and scholarly publication affect the national economy because they have a broader reach. Both Conquest and Coney agreed that more emphasis needed to be placed on local economy.

Coney argued that classroom experiences are more influential than writing journal articles since many articles are only read by a few, highly-specialized readers. Conquest agreed and noted that it is difficult to document a teacher's success based on the continuing success of his or her students. Carline suggested that student success, along with a faculty member's mentoring experience, should be included in the tenure review process. Coney informed the council that she had been trying to influence the Provost concerning what constitutes "excellence" (i.e., teaching) and to earmark more money for faculty retention. The phenomenon of outside offers has created a huge disparity in salaries across the University since there are many faculty members who are unable to go elsewhere--the administration knows this. There needs to be more focus on rewarding excellence at the local, departmental, level.

Coney also pointed out that recent changes to Chapter 24 of the *Faculty Code* have given faculty in a unit the right to review any outside offers extended to their colleagues. Most units, however, have chosen to delegate this right of review to the Chair. Coney said she and Brad Holt would be happy to attend departmental meetings to discuss recent changes to the *Code* and to help department Chairs implement the changes. Webster remarked that the English department had decided to let its Chair review any outside offers to faculty and did so in the interest of collegiality, so as not to "take the lid off a [potential] snake pit" of animosity. He also noted that English salaries were some of the lowest on campus. Others on the council clearly understood the potential problems this review process might engender.

Teaching Web Page

The Chair stated that she would need George Bridges to comment on the progress of the Teaching Web Page since he oversaw it this summer while the council was not in session.

Inclusion of "Service" Classes in Undergraduate Curriculum

The Chair proposed having FCIQ recommend that UW students be given the option to take "service" courses that would fulfill what she sees as an obligation public universities have to give back to the community. She asked council members for comments on this idea. Wulff said he agreed with the idea but wondered what structural apparatus would be required to put it into place. Would a vote by the Faculty Senate be sufficient? Conquest replied that it would most certainly need to go through the Senate but would likely require administrative review and approval as well. She suggested using courses designated as "W" courses as a model for this proposal.

The Chair remarked that these would need to be voluntary courses to prevent having to sacrifice something else in order to implement them. Conquest also suggested using the requirements for obtaining a "minor" in a subject as a prototype. Webster observed that the council would need to determine how useful this "S" ("Service") designation would be. The Chair offered to exchange emails with Deborah Wiegand to flesh out this idea.

Web-Based Teaching Evaluations

The Chair advised that she has had discussions with Brad Holt about the current web-based teaching evaluations at the UW. The student evaluations are on the web for all to see and she and other faculty members wonder about the efficacy of this form of evaluation. Webster agreed that

he and his colleagues in English found the "Every Rating" feature of the website to be restricting. At its best, this site serves as a developmental tool to help faculty become better teachers, since the assessments are ostensibly more honest and open; but, at its worst, the site becomes a tool whereby students screen courses for ease of grading. Professors are also hesitant to allow certain of their courses to be assessed for fear that negative reviews will appear on the web site.

Gilmore remarked that ratings are open to public disclosure and that the web-based evaluations were a joint venture between ASUW, FCIQ, OEA and C&C. He wondered if FCIQ could get student representatives to agree to changes to this web site while at the same time implementing something that his office (OEA) could realistically implement--he balked at any notion of abandoning the site altogether. These assessments are used for tenure evaluations as well as teaching portfolios. Cook asked what the usage level was for the site. Gilmore replied that it was in the thousands and tended to increase noticeably around registration time. Conquest noted that ease of use seemed to be the dominating factor in the site's popularity. OEA used to maintain notebooks of course assessments but they were little used and have since been abandoned.

Wulff asked about the variety of courses and instructors an undergraduate might see when viewing this site; it seemed to him that there was not a lot of variety there. Conquest asked if the number of course evaluations was limited and Gillmore responded, "Yes, limits are set because of budget constraints." Conquest wondered if OEA could add qualifying information about each course such as "First Time Instructor" or "Experimental Course." Cook added that, in her experience, most students weigh the courses they take by how easily they are graded. Gilmore suggested that the FCIQ plan what it wants to exclude from the site and decide under what circumstances items should be excluded. FCIQ then has to "sell" it to the students and OEA has to implement the changes.

The Chair noted that Faculty Senate Vice Chair Brad Holt had suggested removing the evaluation site altogether and letting the students run a site of their own. Several council members disagreed with this suggestion because it would place all the control of the site in students' hands. The Chair asked if there was a way to standardize the site's content and wondered how faculty could get students to realize that course evaluations are more than just assigning numerical valuations. Stromberg asked if any survey had been done to find out what students looked for in a course evaluation form. It does not appear that there has been such a survey.

Gillmore reported that there are now norms on the web that encourage faculty to use the evaluation site by entering his or her survey number, listing norms for the course and choosing from a list of peer classes: faculty members can compare their courses to those they think are most similar. Gillmore encouraged council members to try this feature, to recommend it to colleagues, and to provide feedback to OEA.

The council discussed FCIQ's responsibility to overview student course assessments and noted that the model for a short "Form S" was taken from the assessment web site. This form saves time but sacrifices a lot of information in the process. Council members also noted that the motivation for these types of short forms is to reduce the amount of class time it takes to do the evaluations. Cook remarked that it would be nice to have instructions on how to administer the evaluations. Wells agreed that students get bombarded with surveys toward the end of the quarter. Coutu added that she thought assessment forms were essential and that she values the feedback she gets from them; she would hate to see a "watered-down" version implemented. Gillmore observed that the argument was: "something is better than nothing" versus "more is better than less."

Conquest submitted that she would email Vince Galluci, who is on the faculty subcommittee looking into class evaluations, to see if he could provide some information to FCIQ. Cook commented that she and other instructors felt they were giving up a lot of class time to do evaluations. Coutu remarked that she occasionally gets some harsh feedback on these evaluations but still finds most of the information useful. Wulff suggested phrasing the questions in a more open-ended way, e.g., "What is helping you learn in this class?" This lets students define the parameters instead of having the questionnaire try to predict the most common responses.

Several members commented that most faculty probably are not aware of all the different types of evaluation forms they can use and wondered how FCIQ might find out how useful the different forms are. Wiegand remarked that in her department faculty are only asked if they want evaluation forms; they are given no option for what kind of forms they may use.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Minutes by Todd Reid, Recorder.