

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
FACULTY COUNCIL ON INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY
WEDNESDAY, June 4, 2008, 3:30-5:00 p.m.
36 Gerberding

Chair Mary Pat Wenderoth called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approval of minutes
 2. Report from ad-hoc committee on Academic Rigor
 3. Review of letter of support for Photo class lists project to be sent to the Administration
 4. Report on Summer school tuition rates
 5. General Education requirement
 6. Solicitation of topics to address in 08-09
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1. Approval of minutes

A motion was called to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.

2. Report from ad-hoc committee on Academic Rigor

Council member Don Janssen gave an update on the ad-hoc Committee on Academic Rigor, a joint committee between FCIQ and FCAS. He reported that they had surveyed department chairs on independent studies and special topics courses offered. They were looking for any policies or limitations on the number of credits taken and the number of the courses taken at one time. Janssen said that the initial response rate was low from some departments, and that he has asked departmental chairs to fill out the form by next Friday. He noted that independent studies courses present a potential for abuse because grading is optional.

Janssen also reported on the progress of Nana Lowell's work group on revising the Challenge and Engagement Index (CEI). The CEI is designed to measure the perception of how academically challenging students find a course and how engaged they were in it. He handed out a graph illustrating the mean CEI by college units based on the scores of the four items that comprise it. Janssen explained the problems with the current system in scoring the evaluation and the changes made to the measurement scale. He noted that they want more absolute numbers so that it is easier to track. A question was raised whether the CEI is really asking the right questions to measure academic challenge. Janssen asked what other evaluators might be combined with the CEI, like students' grade expectations. Invited guest Jennie Dorman suggested that the current CEI does not tell whether students put in a lot of work because the course had the right challenges or because the class was chaotic and they couldn't follow it. The CEI could ask students about the number of useful hours rather than just the number of hours spent in the classroom. Janssen noted that for their purposes they are looking to identify outliers,

such as “easy A” courses or ones in which they have valid questions. They are trying to determine whether a course is challenging and not that the course has the right number of credits.

Dorman raised the issue of how CEI scores will be interpreted by department chairs in light of the statistical issues involved versus real world issues. A discussion followed about the form and use of the CEI. Janssen noted that they are looking at the summary information of the CEI which includes the mean and standard deviation of scores, like the one sent out to department chairs each year. He added that they are also looking at the number of independent study courses taken by students each quarter, and to see how many credits are applied toward the degree. Chair Wenderoth asked Janssen about the committee’s timeline and whether it will continue. Janssen reported that the bulk of the data will be available by early autumn quarter, and that the analysis and report should be ready by winter quarter.

3. Review of letter of support for Photo class lists project to be sent to the Administration

Chair Wenderoth gave an overview of the issues related to the letter of support for the use of photo class lists. She noted that she had spoken to the Ana Mari Cauce, the Dean of the Arts and Sciences, Ed Taylor, the Dean and Vice Provost to Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the ASUW, and Todd Mildon, the Registrar. Wenderoth said in her conversation with Mildon he noted that the use of class photo lists would be on the university’s “to do” list. It would be a matter of getting two databases to talk to each other. The ASUW raised the issue of offering an “opt-in/opt-out” clause. Wenderoth noted that other Pac10 universities have no opt-in/opt-out features and that all private, highly confidential material is cut out. Invited guest Cara Lane said that Catalyst recommends the use of student photos for class lists only, and that if there is any other use then students would have an opt-out right. A lengthy discussion began about the benefits and potential abuses of student photos on class lists

Summary of some of the benefits to class photo lists:

- Helpful in building community in the classroom
- Many faculty already bring cameras into the classroom; the system is already in place and there is a large overhead to do it by yourself
- Several colleges already use them: Law School, Evans School, Medical School
- There is no FERPA problem (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
- Instructors should have the right to verify that a student taking a test is him/herself
- Only the teacher has access to the pictures

Summary of some of the potential problems in using class photo lists:

- Potential misuse of the photos (domestic violence issues)
- Potential bias problem (racial, ethnic). By even opting out, a student would stand out
- Students should have a choice
- Pictures are not taken every year and students change

- Students want to remain anonymous

President's designee Ed Taylor spoke about social-psychological issues related to classroom climate. He discussed where students would go if they perceived a problem in the classroom. Taylor suggested that the topic is a conversation to pursue. He gave his support to the letter promoting the use of class photo lists and suggested that it should be framed as a pedagogical issue concerning community building and safety in the classroom, and not as a tool for surveillance. He urged that they stay true to the purpose of using the class photos.

Council members worked on the composition of the letter, offering suggestions to Wenderoth. She noted that the letter will be sent to Sara Gomez, Interim vice Provost for the Office of Information Management, Provost Phyllis Wise, Registrar Todd Mildon, and the Information Technology Advisory Committee as something that FCIQ would like to see done. She added that they could follow up the letter with a Class C resolution next fall. With no quorum today, Wenderoth said she would seek opinions from the voting faculty through email.

4. Report on Summer school tuition rates

Council member Haideh Salehi-Esfahani gave an update on summer school tuition rates. She showed in a handout with information from a UW website that summer school rates are about the same as the regular year, except that students do not pay a \$40 technology fee. A question was raised about summer school rates for graduate students. Salehi-Esfahani said that she would investigate and send an email to the council with the response. Council members discussed summer teaching pay differential and funding for extension courses.

5. General Education requirement

Chair Wenderoth inquired of Ed Taylor if FCIQ could help in the process of looking into reforming general education requirements. Taylor suggested that it should be revisited given that they are at the half way point in the 10 year review process. He felt that the charge for updating general education should come to the office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. Taylor emphasized the need to focus on the quality of experiences for students. They need to be asking about learning goals, whether faculty know what they are, whether students know them and *how* do we know them. Taylor said he felt that FCIQ had a role to play in this process and that with members who have been around a while, they could form a committee for a fall agenda item.

6. Solicitation of topics to address in 08-09

Chair Wenderoth asked council members to email her with ideas for special topics for the next academic year.

Janssen asked about the relationship between instructional quality, course size, and concentration on instructional ability in teaching large courses in the hiring process. He noted that large courses are more common and there seems to be little consideration of experience in teaching them when hiring instructors at UW.

Taylor noted the need to address the size of the campus at UW and its connection to teaching quality.

Lane noted that Catalyst will be releasing both Common View and online grade books in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Minutes by Melissa Kane, Faculty Senate, mmkane@u.washington.edu

Present: **Faculty:** Allen, Janssen, Salehi-Esfahani, Wenderoth (Chair)
President's Designee: Taylor
Ex Officio Reps: Zarelli
Regularly Invited Guests: Cara Lane (for Tom Lewis), Jennie Dorman
(for Wayne Jacobsen)

Absent: **Faculty:** Baldasty, Edgar, Underwood, Ward
Ex Officio Reps: Holmes, Hahn
Regularly Invited Guests: Lowell