

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Instructional Quality
May 10, 2004

Present: Carline, Coe, Cooper, Devasia, Greenwald, McGovern, Wenderoth, Bridges, Bowen, Jacobson, Lewis, Lowell, Trudeau

Absent: Copland, Kemp, Conquest, Croft, Holmes, Pitre, Brooks

Guests: Carolyn Plumb, Gerry Gillmore, Deb McGhee

Synopsis:

1. Update on SLO - Gerry Gillmore
2. Proposed legislation re SLO - Carolyn Plumb, chair FCAS
3. Academic challenge index, Tony Greenwald
4. Update on Sakai - Tom Lewis

Chair Jan Carline called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as written.

Update on Student Learning Objectives - Gerry Gillmore

The proposed Integrated Information System that FCIQ has been working on is moving through the approval process. Computing and Communications has developed new procedures to prioritize their work, so a more formal proposal is being developed to meet new approval criteria. The College of Arts and Sciences has changed its focus somewhat, so they are working on learning goals for A&S foundation courses. Some good work is being done in this area.

Proposed legislation re SLO - Carolyn Plumb, FCAS chair

Plumb advised FCIQ members that the Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS) has developed a resolution on Student Learning Objectives. She presented the draft resolution and asked that FCIQ consider supporting it as a joint Class C resolution to be presented to the Faculty Senate in Fall Quarter 2004. Plumb feels it is important that faculty make a statement of support for faculty-developed learning goals, such as the ones FCIQ is developing.

In discussion, FCIQ members proposed some amendments to the document, and discussed how best to introduce it to the campus community. There was a consensus that faculty-developed learning goals be widely published on campus.

Class C resolutions are published to all faculty members for approval, so it is important that faculty know what the goals are before the resolution is published, and how they were developed. Carline suggested that the Office of Educational Assessment publish the goals on the Web, so they are apparent to students and parents as well. Trudeau believes faculty should be encouraged to include the learning goals in their syllabi, as a way of getting the information out to students.

Further discussion focused on the best ways to encourage widespread support for the learning goals. This might require a multi-pronged approach: A letter from the faculty to the Provost, a Class C resolution passed by the Faculty Senate, and an article in University Week or other publication, if all done simultaneously, might inform and persuade many constituencies. It would also be a good idea to do presentations at Chair's meetings. It is extremely important to distinguish the new learning goals from the old SLOs, and to emphasize that the new goals were developed from the bottom up, by those who are actually doing the teaching..

Because several amendments were suggested to the draft document, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to generally support the recommendations, subject to review of the final draft. When the final draft is ready, the two councils can talk further about how to proceed in Fall Quarter.

NOTE: The final draft of the joint resolution for submission to the Faculty Senate is as follows:

Learning Goals Joint Statement from FCAS/FCIQ

FCAS and FCIQ endorse the value of departmentally-created learning goals, primarily as a means for improving student learning and developing curriculum. Faculty-developed goals and objectives can form the basis on which departments assess the outcomes of their instructional efforts. This assessment can guide future educational efforts as well as satisfy the requirements of our accrediting bodies. FCAS and FCIQ support the recent efforts of the Office of Undergraduate Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and many professional schools and colleges to work with departments and faculty to develop meaningful learning goals for their students and to develop Web-based technology appropriate for sharing these goals with the UW community. Both councils commend these efforts because they will foster:

- *Learning goals that are departmentally developed and embraced by faculty in those departments*
- *Learning goals that can be linked to those of individual courses, to those of departments and colleges, and finally, to those of the University in undergraduate education.*
- *Assessment processes for measuring progress on learning goals that can yield information that is both meaningful and useful for the improvement of teaching and learning at all levels.*

FCAS and FCIQ applaud this approach, which is discipline-specific, involves faculty input, and has, as its primary focus, the advancement of student learning.

Summary of Academic Challenge Index, Tony Greenwald

1. Reasons for trying to develop a challenge index
 - a. A challenge index might play a role reversing pressures toward grade inflation
 - b. A challenge index can provide data to assess Regent Gates' concerns that UW doesn't pose sufficient challenge to students. (There is some supporting evidence: Reported work is well below the presumed norm of 2 hrs outside class for each credit hour.)
 - c. A challenge index might redress a possible unfairness of the present summary evaluative index provided (average of Items 1–4 on IAS forms). Instructors who are more ready to give low grades (presumably to motivate students to do all of the assigned work) receive lower ratings on Items 1–4.
 - d. A challenge index will (i) give faculty feedback that they can use to appraise the success of efforts to challenge students and (ii) recognize and reward the efforts of faculty to make courses challenging.
2. Candidate items for a challenge index (24-29)
[Items 24–27 have a response scale ranging from 1 (= much lower than average) to 7 (= much higher than average)]

Relative to other college courses you have taken:

24. The intellectual challenge of the course was:

25. The amount of effort you put into this course was:

26. The amount of effort to succeed in this course was:

27. Your involvement in this course (doing assignments, attending classes, etc.) was:

[Items 28 and 29 each have 12 response options, ranging from “under 2” to “22 or more” hours]

28. On average, how many hours per week spent on this course, including attending classes, doing readings, reviewing notes, writing papers, and any other course related work?

29. From the total average hours above, how many do you consider were valuable in advancing your education?

3. Initial analyses indicate that these items fall (mostly) on a single factor that is distinct from the evaluation factor.
4. UW's distinguished teachers score higher on Items 24-29 than other UW faculty.
5. Greenwald suggested that FCIQ adopt a resolution that
 - a. OEA be authorized to construct (and be provided with the additional resources necessary to do so), during the 2004-5 academic year, an index of challenge using Items 24-29 (with OEA encouraged to consult with university statisticians to deal with psychometric problems that need to be resolved in constructing the index)
 - b. OEA invite the Graduate School and Office of Undergraduate Education to consult on the construction of the challenge index
 - c. starting in Fall 2005, the challenge index be reported on feedback forms to instructors, with prominence comparable to the present adjusted global evaluation index
 - d. starting in Fall 2005, both the new challenge index and the existing adjusted global evaluation index be reported to department chairs and deans in suitable aggregate forms (e.g., by course level within departments, departments as a whole, subcolleges as a whole)

After discussion of Greenwald's recommendations, it was recognized that items 5c and 5d are contingent upon the favorable outcome of 5a, and that 5c and 5d carry political concerns. It was therefore moved, seconded and passed to authorize the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) to proceed with recommendations 5a and 5b (above), and to report to FCIQ by January 2005 the results and potential for implementation of the entire recommendation.