

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

The Faculty Council on Instructional Quality met Tuesday, February 5, 2002, at 12:30 p.m. in 36 Gerberding Hall. Chair Jan Carline presided.

PRESENT: *Professors* Carline, Coutu, Devasia, McGovern, Reinhall, Simpson
 Ex officio Conquest, Lowell, McCracken

ABSENT: *Professors* Bierne, Hoffer, Kyes, Mulligan, Wells
 Ex officio Bridges, Evans, Lewis, McCracken, Pitre, Stromberg

Jan Carline called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m.

Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Minutes

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

UW faculty members are evaluated in several ways, including student evaluations. Students rate faculty in various categories; the resulting numeric ratings are posted on the Web to aid students in making course selections. At the Council's January 8 meeting, Nana Lowell was asked to look into the issue of student ratings being carried out to two decimal places - Council members felt there was no substantive difference between ratings of, for example, 3.43 and 3.46, but faculty members are being ranked for merit on the basis of the second decimal.

Lowell reported that she and analyst Debbie McGhee from the Office of Educational Assessment looked at six years of data and found that it does indeed make sense to report only one decimal place for the ratings. The standard error measurement is large enough, said Carline, that the second decimal place is within the same set of boundaries. Lowell said that where these ratings overlap, one would not want to say that one instructor is better than another.

McGhee drafted a paper on the subject, entitled Drawing Inferences about Instructors: Constructing Confidence Intervals for Student Ratings of Instruction, and presented the draft paper to the Council. The final version of McGhee's paper will be added to the OEA Website, with suggestions for its use and additional interpretive information for Deans and Chairs. A hard copy of the paper is also incorporated into the hard copy minutes of the Council.

Lowell said OEA is trying to find ways to make the evaluation data more useful. For example, they might generate a report that gives one rating for an instructor over time, so Deans and Chairs could see one rating rather trying to evaluate many separate ratings.

Carline invited the Council to recommend that OEA implement the reporting changes based on their findings, and commended Lowell and McGhee for their prompt response to the Council's concerns. In discussion of the subsequent motion, Lowell stipulated that she thought it was important to raise awareness of the change with both faculty and students. Carline commented that there would be discussion of the matter in the Senate Executive Council meeting as well. It was moved, seconded, and passed to recommend that OEA report one decimal place on Student Evaluations, instead of two.

Carline asked whether the Council would like to invite members of the College Councils to come to an FCIQ meeting to discuss the use of Student Evaluations in the merit process. The consensus was that this is a good idea - Carline will contact deans of the colleges and see who might be scheduled to attend.

Teaching Excellence Visibility Group

Peter McCracken reported that the Visibility group has met and plans to identify people who have received teaching awards or have in some other way been recognized as excellent teachers, and to publicize that across campus and outside campus as well.

McCracken said there is value in emphasizing that teaching is as important to the University of Washington as research, and that there are a lot of different kinds of teaching going on at the University. The group wants to track people who received teaching awards five years ago, see what they are doing now, and get that information out to campus and beyond.

Norm Arkans, McCracken told the Council, thought that perhaps the focus should be more on learning than on teaching. The group wants to keep that idea in mind as they move forward.

Santosh Devasia commented that researchers actually foster learning in other ways, through the teaching they do with grad students. McCracken agreed, and added that librarians are also teaching every time a student walks up to the desk. The teaching that takes place one-to-one between a professor and student in the Medical School is important as well - the group wants to get beyond recognition of just what happens in the lecture and seminar format.

Carline suggested that McCracken might want to contact George Bridges' office for a list of all teaching awards given by departments - Lisa Coutu said she compiled such a list for Bridges, which might be very useful to the Visibility group. Carline hoped to identify any units that do not give awards, so they might be encouraged to consider an awards program.

The group's initial goal, said McCracken, is to identify the awards that are most visible, such as the Distinguished Teaching award, and begin to publicize them with University Week profiles. Publications in Teaching would be another good resource. If Council members have other ideas for good places to publicize good teaching, McCracken's group would welcome them.

Teaching Page

Carline reported that there are recent changes to the Teaching Page <http://www.washington.edu/teaching/> - Council members may want to take a look at them. There has been a change in Rick Ells' approach to assessing the new version of the site, which will now be reviewed by novices. It will not be necessary for the entire Council to go to the computer lab for a review.

The Teaching Page has been in existence for three years, and contains a great deal of information on teaching resources. Ells would like to see a more focused statement of the page's purpose, said Carline. Coutu said the original purpose was to centralize in one place, and for a variety of audiences, teaching information and resources that were scattered around the UW Website. The site is intended to be more question-driven than office-driven.

Carline proposed a statement of purpose based on the points brought out in the discussion: The Teaching Page is intended to make access to information about teaching on campus easier, and to arrange it by the types of questions that any level of instructor might have about their teaching activities. There was consensus that this statement fairly represents the purpose of the site, and should be conveyed to site designer Rick Ells.

Council Reorganization

The Special Committee on Council Reorganization, chaired by Norm Rose, has brought together the chairs of all Faculty Councils to determine ways to streamline the structure of the twelve Faculty Councils and two Special Committees. Are there too many Councils? Is there too much overlap in issues and responsibilities? Would faculty governance benefit by reorganizing the Councils?

Carline reported on the functions of some of the Councils, in which there is great variation of workload. The Academic Standards Council, for example, deals with approving academic programs and changes to academic programs, and has responsibility for admissions policies. They meet twice monthly, with several subcommittees working as well. Faculty Affairs meets every other week, and has responsibility for all Code changes that affect faculty. Both these Councils have very heavy workloads. Other Councils, such as the Educational Technology Council, have relatively light loads - does it make sense to combine FCET with Instructional Quality?

There is one proposal, said Carline, that would lump the Councils into larger units with smaller working groups. Academic Policies and Standards, for example, would include Academic Standards, Educational Technology, Educational Outreach, Instructional Quality, and Student affairs. Faculty Affairs would include Faculty Affairs, Research, Special Committee on Faculty Women, Special Committee on Minority Faculty Affairs, and the Council on Retirement, Insurance and Benefits. How this would work is not clear, but it assumed that the leaders of the Councils would meet in one larger policy group and sit on SEC.

Coutu asked what the rationale is for collapsing these Councils. Carline said there are a couple of issues: Some Councils are far less active than others, and some workloads are unequal. Coutu asked whether it might make more sense to just collapse into related Councils those groups that have light workloads, instead of reorganizing the entire Council structure. She also noted that Educational Outreach and Educational Technology appear to have issues the other Councils don't have.

Carline commented that Educational Outreach has less to do now that Extension Courses are being folded back into academic departments. Does it make sense to combine the Instructional Quality Council with Educational Technology and Educational Outreach? This would increase both council membership and workload, which could be handled with subcommittees.

The consensus of the Council on this issue is that it would be good to collapse some Councils, but not all. If Educational Technology and Educational Outreach are combined with Instructional Quality, perhaps the new Council could be called simply the Faculty Council on Instruction.

Carline will take this information back to the Reorganization Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*