

Faculty Council on Instructional Quality
Annual Report, 2004-2005
Jan D Carline

The Faculty Council on Instructional Quality (FCIQ) focuses on issues surrounding the quality of teaching at the University and ways to assist faculty and administrators to evaluate and improve teaching and learning. Our discussions are improved by the addition of staff and faculty from the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR), the Teaching Academy, the Dean of Undergraduate Education office, Catalyst, and the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). Topics this year have included:

- Computer access to student evaluations of courses and faculty
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Forum
- Student Goals Project
- Developing a Proposal for Faculty Conversations on Diversity
- Continued work on a scale of Course Challenge from student course evaluation data
- Proposals from the ASUW: Making course overload policies available in the time schedule, a requirement for testing the English capabilities of all TA's before employment
- Discussions of the Classroom Climate survey items to be included in course evaluations
- Controversy over language that implied that the Distinguished Teaching Award was limited only to those faculty who teach primarily undergraduate courses
- Pick-A-Prof: A commercial web-based system that makes course grading information available to the public
- A proposed study of electronic plagiarism from the Faculty Council on Educational Technology

Computer access to student evaluations of courses and faculty: Because of requirements of the recent contract with teaching assistants, a temporary measure was implemented by the Provost's office to limit web-based access to teaching evaluations to individuals with UW NetID's. The contract required that TA's evaluations would have limited access. Because of programming issues and the need for a rapid implementation, the limitation was extended to all teaching and course evaluations. The council discussed whether or not faculty evaluations should be made more widely available, particularly to allow entering students early access to this information as a basis on which to make course selections. In conversations with the ASUW, which provided the initial funding for making the evaluations available on the web, it was concluded that recent changes in how entering students received UW NetIDs allow entering students more than adequate time to review the evaluations using their NetIDs. The council moved and approved the continue practice of allowing access to evaluations on the web only to individuals with UW NetIDs. Any other individual, because of public disclosure laws of the State of Washington, may continue to request this information in printed format.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Forum: The Council, along with the Center for Instructional Design and Research, the Institute for Scholarship on Engineering Education, and the Teaching Academy sponsored a showcase for educational innovation at the University of Washington. The call for proposals stated: "The Showcase will provide a forum where faculty and TAs can learn about the work of others who share this interest in improving student learning in their courses. The Showcase is also designed to help individuals gain ideas and develop connections with others that will further their own work, and to increase visibility and recognition of this type of scholarly work within the university." The showcase was conducted on April 19th in Mary Gates Commons with 18 posters and 25 small group discussions, representing 56 faculty members, 12 departments, and all 3 campuses. The Provost attended the session and offered remarks in support of the excellence of work represented in the offerings. The presenters were consistently enthusiastic about the event. The afternoon session was well attended, and stimulated a good deal of discussion and thought. The Provost's office provided support for space rental and refreshments, and CIDR provided a great deal of logistic support. The abstracts from the showcase can be found at <http://depts.washington.edu/sotl/2005>.

Student Goals Project: This topic was discussed at least twice during the year, including reports from Christine Ingebritsen and Paul Lepore at the last meeting of the Council. Dr. Ingebritsen supplied the council with the interim report to the Northwest Council of Colleges and Universities that described efforts of the university to meet requirements for continued accreditation that centered on projects related to

Student Goals. The council remains interested in supporting efforts to develop web-based tools that allow faculty to publish and students to gain access to the goals and objectives for all courses. While progress is being made in helping departments and schools to develop programmatic objectives that can be expressed in the development of an integrated curriculum for those units, the methods to allow faculty to publish these objectives along with other course information in an easy format are still rudimentary. The Council supports the work to help departments develop curricular goals and objectives. The Council would like to see tangible progress in systems to support the development and access to materials supporting these efforts.

Developing a Proposal for Faculty Conversations on Diversity: Under the leadership of Susan Kemp, a small group of council members including Wayne Jacobson, Rob Coe, and John Holmes developed a proposal to support discussions of diversity in the classroom among university faculty. The proposal was submitted to the Office of Diversity Research Grant program. Although it was not funded with the monies from this one-time grant, the proposal has been funded with other monies. Efforts will begin this summer to further develop activities for the grant which will be carried out during the next two years.

Continued work on a scale of Course Challenge from student course evaluation data: Efforts in this area were reported early in the year by Tony Greenwald. Because of his absence for several months, the project has been slowed. Plans are in place to continue the work over the summer and next academic year.

Proposals from the ASUW: Making course overload policies available in the time schedule, a requirement for testing the English capabilities of all TA's before employment: Representatives of the ASUW sought support of the FCIQ for two proposals. The first requested overload policies be published in the time schedule. The council supported this proposal, and representatives of the Provost's office and the Registrar's office agreed that this information would be included in future web-based publications of the time schedule. The ASUW also asked for support of a requirement that the English skills of all TA's be reviewed during a rigorous interview before their employment at the university. The Council unanimously supported this proposal.

Discussions of the Classroom Climate survey items to be included in course evaluations: Nana Lowell presented questionnaire items that are to be included in future course evaluations at the University focusing on classroom climate for diversity. These items are part of efforts of the Office of Diversity to better access these issues in the classroom. Ms. Lowell sought input on the wording of items and in the design of a pilot test. Ms. Lowell was scheduled to present an interim report on the pilot at the last meeting of the Council but was unable to do so because of an unexpected trip out of the city. We will continue to review this issue next year.

Controversy over language that implied that the Distinguished Teaching Award (DTA) was limited only to those faculty who teach primarily undergraduate courses: The Faculty Senate office received a number of complaints from faculty that an e-mail announcing a call for nominations for the DTA stated that this award was specifically for faculty who taught primarily in undergraduate courses. The language of the award, as found on the web-based site (<http://www.washington.edu/oue/academy/distinguished.html>) does not contain any such limiting language. Through a number of conversations with Christine Ingebritsen of the office of Undergraduate Education (UGE) and representatives of the Teaching Academy, it was determined that a staff person from UGE had developed text for the announcement based on several internal conversations within the office, and had not consulted previous calls for nomination or the formal description of the award. Although this was brought too late to issue another call for nominations, Dr. Ingebritsen agreed that in future this error should not be made.

Pick-A-Prof: A commercial web-based system that makes course grading information available to the public: Vice Provost Jeffords brought to the Council's attention a web-based service called Pick-A-Prof that publishes grade information for courses taught at the University. The site receives grading information through public access to grade reports regularly published for used by departments. In addition to grade information for individual courses and professors, the site provides comments from students who taken the course. Several members of the council were able to obtain access to the site, and review grades and comments published there. At least five faculty members discovered that the grade data reported was incorrect. Other faculty found that the system published comments from students with little, if any, attempt to verify the source of the information. Besides the issue of accuracy of information, the Council was concerned that grade data was presented without any contextual information, such as the grading practices for similar courses within similar departments, or the nature of

grading practices – such as contract grading vs. normative grading, etc. Although no formal action was taken by the Council, it was our sense that efforts should be made to provide similar information to our own students using University resources as part of an effort to develop a web-based information source for all courses. This issue will be discussed again in the fall.

A proposed study of electronic plagiarism from the Faculty Council on Educational Technology:

The Council reviewed a proposal from FCET to mount a research effort to identify the amount and type of plagiarism being undertaken by our students using electronic resources. Several council members agreed that electronic plagiarism was a significant issue, and that was done by as much as 25% of students in courses that relied on electronic materials. While the council was reluctant to support a large effort to investigate the extent of this issue, it did support a resolution to continue work with FCET and the Faculty Council on Academic Standards to forward the following efforts as described in the proposal:

While the core of the proposal is to initiate a pilot/research study there is also a more overreaching goal: to guide and teach students how to correctly do research in the age of the Internet. When using new technology like the Internet, students may not have been guided in its proper use. FCET wants to initiate the development of a process that will teach students how to effectively use electronic information technology while preserving academic integrity and respecting copyright restrictions.

The Council conducted its last meeting on June 2nd. We hope to continue the level of involvement and work in the next academic year. Specific issues for consideration in the next year include continued discussions of the following:

- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Forum: Continuing the work with a second forum
- Student Goals Project: Continued discussions about efforts in this area
- Curriculum Compass: Continued discussions on vision for an integrated web-based system to help faculty publish information about courses and to help students in identifying courses and study to further their own educational objectives
- Faculty Conversations on Diversity: Development and implementation of this effort
- Course Evaluation Work: scale of Course Challenge and Classroom Climate
- Continued work with FCET and FCAS on the issue of electronic plagiarism
- Continued efforts to increase the visibility and reward for excellence in teaching on this campus

I wish to thank the members of the council, and Linda Fullerton, the Council Recorder, for all the work and time spent this last year on Council discussions and activities.