

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

The Faculty Council on Instructional Quality met Friday, December 13, 2002, at 10:30 a.m. in 36 Gerberding Hall. Chair Jan Carline presided.

**PRESENT:**     *Professors* Carline, Greenwald, Kyes, McGovern  
                  *Ex officio* Bowen, Bridges, Brooks, Clark, Croft, Lowell

**ABSENT:**     *Professors* Copland, Coutu, Devasia, Hoffer, Mulligan, Nichter, Reinhall, Wenderroth  
                  *Ex officio* Jacobson, Lewis, Pitre, Stromberg

Carline called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

### **Synopsis**

1. Approve agenda
2. Approve minutes
3. Senate Meeting Report - Calendar Change Proposal (Silberstein)
4. Discussion - Recommendations for use of student evaluations of teaching

### **Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the November meeting were approved.

### **Senate Meeting - Calendar Change Proposal (Silberstein)**

Faculty Senate Chair Sandra Silberstein visited the meeting briefly to report that the Senate, at its regular meeting, had voted to postpone the proposed change to the academic calendar, which would involve a start date several days earlier than usual. Concerns were voiced about the timing of the change; e.g., that many faculty have already committed to September 2003 seminars that would conflict with the change if implemented in Fall 2003, that TA/RA training schedules would be adversely affected, and that more lead time is needed to develop new schedules, etc.

Silberstein said she appreciated Tim Washburn's efforts to involve Faculty Councils early, as it is evidence of the administration's commitment to shared governance. She voiced regret that the matter went before the Senate, however, without the input of the Councils that had in-depth discussion of the change last fall. This might have changed the outcome.

Carline said this also related to the joint faculty/administration council proposal (Rose Report). In joint councils, changes such as these would be brought before a broader constituency and many more of those affected would decide on the course of action to propose to the Senate.

George Bridges commented that three Faculty Councils vetted and approved the calendar change proposal, so it is frustrating to see it fail in the Faculty Senate. He thinks it may have to do with the structure of the Faculty Senate, which sometimes see these proposals without as much background information as they need.

### **Recommendations for the Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching**

The Council continued its discussion of the recommendations, item by item, to determine whether any of the items should be revised or eliminated. When the recommendations were presented at the last SEC meeting, Steve Olswang had major concerns about the possible financial impacts of some of them. The administration (Debra Friedman) has had the recommendations for several months, but no one has responded with comments.

At present, every faculty member is entitled to one course evaluation per quarter, free of charge, except assistant professors, who are entitled to two. Bridges asked the Council to also discuss whether it would make sense for the UW to move to a model where every course is evaluated every quarter, free of charge. What would it cost? Nana Lowell said it would take some time to calculate that cost - she can look into it. Tony Greenwald said some classes are taught so informally, or are so small, that evaluating them statistically would be both difficult and meaningless. Graduate seminars are probably best evaluated in-depth, in writing. Carline added that some courses at the UW are evaluated by some other means than the OEA system. Would instructors of these courses use OEA evaluations, even if free of charge?

Bridges would like to see a cost impact assessment, so departments would have a realistic idea of what it would cost to implement the evaluation recommendations.

#### Item-by-item Discussion of Recommendations

1. (Use of student ratings) Lowell wondered about making a distinction between course evaluations and evaluations of faculty. Carline was reluctant to broaden the scope of the recommendations, and would like to reserve that distinction for another discussion. The item was accepted, with the change in wording from "must" to "should."
2. (Number of evaluations to be used in ratings) Accepted.
3. (Only global ratings to be used) Accepted with the addition of missing word "as."
4. (Do not overestimate small differences) The intent of this item is to caution against the use of over-fine numeric differences, but to use broader categories when comparing individuals. This language will be re-drafted per discussion.
5. (Use comparative data) Evaluations are useful for larger units, and should be tracked over time. This item will be split, and some of the information included in a preface to be written by Greenwald.
6. (Consider course characteristics) Accepted.
7. (Give faculty members an opportunity to respond...) Approved, with the striking of the last sentence.
8. (...one third of enrolled students included in results) Accepted.
9. (Interpretations of ratings should be guided...) The level of teaching at the UW is strong. Do not use the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile as a dividing line between good and bad teaching. This item will be split. Some information will be combined with item 5, and some included in Greenwald's preface.

The recommendations will be revised per the discussion, and will be reviewed again at the next meeting. The final draft should also be reviewed by Steven Olswang and Debra Friedman. Lowell will look into the costs that would be incurred by the increased use of OEA evaluations.

Greenwald will write a preface to the recommendations, combining information from items 5 and 9. Carline will make editorial changes per discussion and route to members for discussion at the January 10 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*