

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Instructional Quality
October 19, 2004

Synopsis:

1. Introductions, Chair's remarks, voting rights for ex officio members
2. Academic Progress Report
3. Computer Access to Student Evaluations of Courses and Faculty
4. Proposed SOTL activities

Chair Jan Carline called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Introductions, Chair's remarks, minutes, voting rights for ex officio members

At Carline's request, members introduced themselves. The minutes of the May meeting were approved. It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed to grant voting rights to all eligible ex officio members. This includes Garrett Parks (ASUW), John Holmes (ALUW), Karen Brooks (GPSS), Michelle Trudeau (PSO), and the emeritus faculty representative when named. Carline discussed the Council's recent work, which has centered on the evaluation of teaching and on a Web page that provides resources for teaching.

Academic Progress Report

George Bridges, Dean of Undergraduate Education, visited FCIQ and described the Academic Progress Report now required of all Washington colleges and universities. The report is one outcome of a bill passed by the state legislature in 2003 in response to concerns that Washington State lags behind other states in the production of baccalaureate degrees. Legislators believe that students are taking too long to complete their degree programs and would like them to graduate after completing 210 credits. However, Bridges pointed out, the students with more than 210 credits are the UW's strongest students. What response is appropriate for the strongest students and how can the UW best help the struggling students? There are also implications for under-represented minority students, many of whom transfer in from community colleges after the sophomore year with more than 90 credits but whose graduation rates are flagging.

In response to the 2003 legislation, the UW appointed a Task Force that surveyed the situation, made recommendations, and filed its report in January 2004 as required. Bridges has decided to continue the study because the issue turned out to be more complex than the legislature supposed. For example, some of the brightest, most motivated students transfer in from Running Start or high school AP programs with as many as 45 credits. These students expect four years at the UW but will only get three if the Running Start credits are counted – unfortunately, some RS or other pre-college credits don't transfer well to a UW degree program and should probably be counted on an optional basis as part of a credit bank. The provost supports the credit bank idea, but it may be a hard sell in Olympia.

One underlying problem is enabling students to gain access to classes they need to fulfill their degree requirements. Bridges is relying on Academic Advising for help in meeting the standards. Deborah Wiegand, Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs, told the Council that more creative approaches to student advising are under consideration. Mandatory advising in certain cases or an electronic "warning" when a transcript looks odd might enable an advisor to provide suggestions that would get the student's degree progress back on track. These electronic processes already exist in some larger departments, but not in smaller ones. Advisors should intervene earlier, where there appears to be a problem. Wiegand is also looking at "refresher" training for advisors, as well as a better information flow in the entire advising system.

Bridges wants to form some small groups to create an action plan that will implement the Task Force recommendations. He asked FCIQ to help by participating in a work group to look at the academic

progress of under-represented minority students and to make recommendations for supporting these students. Robert Coe, Susan Kemp, and John Holmes volunteered to meet with Bridges and Wiegand to look at the project and bring back to FCIQ a road map for a working group. Carline suggested that the Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS) and the Faculty Council on Student Affairs (FCSA) also be involved.

Computer Access to Student Evaluations of Courses and Faculty

For a number of years, student evaluations of UW courses have been accessible on the Internet not only to UW faculty, students and staff, but to the entire world. Some faculty have been uncomfortable with this, but a ruling under the public records laws precluded them from limiting general access to the evaluations.

The new union contract between the UW and the UAW-organized Teaching Assistants, however, requires that access by the general public be limited. To comply with the union contract, the student evaluations on the UW Website are now password-protected. To comply with the public records laws, anyone in the general public may still file a public records request to obtain paper copies of the evaluations of any UW instructor. Tom Lewis said that this may not completely solve the problem, because search engines cache many years of the information. He could provide a demo of this at the next FCIQ meeting if desired.

Carline asked for a motion indicating Council support of the password-protect solution, which requires that only a person who has a UW NETID can gain access to the online version of the evaluations. The downside is that faculty who would like to point to favorable evaluations to anyone outside the UW would not be able to do so. This could be solved by the voluntary use of an online Catalyst portfolio by anyone who desires to use one.

After discussion, it was decided that Carline and Nana Lowell will talk to the ASUW and Susan Jeffords to gain their support, and the Council will look forward to voting on the issue at the next meeting. It is anticipated that support for password-protection of the student evaluations will be forthcoming.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Innovation Fair

Wayne Jacobson of CIDR advised the council of an idea put forth by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) group for an Innovation Fair that would showcase innovation in teaching. SOTL works on the perspective that instructors can approach their teaching as a form of scholarly work.

Because the UW is a research institution, teaching is not as universally emphasized as it might be. SOTL would like to raise consciousness of teaching as a scholarly activity. Questions about the proposed fair include who the true audience is – the Teaching Academy? The Faculty Senate? – and how the scholarly information on teaching might best be presented, preserved and used.

Jacobson emphasized that the Innovation Fair is in its very earliest planning stages. He asked for a statement of support from FCIQ, and volunteers to join a planning group. It was MSP to issue a formal statement in favor of the Innovation Fair. Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges will draft a statement for the next FCIQ meeting. Volunteers for the planning group should contact Wayne Jacobson via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*

Present: Carline, Coe, Kasonic, Kim, Gillis-Bridges, Kemp, Bridges, Parks, Jacobson, Lewis, Lowell, Holmes

Absent: Greenwald, Wenderoth, Brooks, Trudeau

Guests: George Bridges, Dean of Undergraduate Education. Deborah Wiegand, Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs