

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**  
**FACULTY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH**

The Faculty Council on Educational Outreach met at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, **May 18, 2001**. Chair Roger Simpson presided.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes for April 6, 2001 were approved as written.

**Report on the DL Task Force proposals on Distance Learning – Roger Simpson**

Simpson said the Faculty Senate leadership declined to place the proposals on the agenda of the final Senate meeting, proposing instead that the legislation be considered at the first Fall meeting. (In an email to Roger Simpson, Doug Wadden, and Steve Buck, Faculty Senate Chair Mary Coney said, “It was with great reluctance that I decided to pull your legislation off the action column yesterday. Your Task Force has produced an important and complex piece of much-needed legislation, and it deserves to be moved forward. My concern was that it would founder on objections to technical details, given the short time the SEC [Senate Executive Committee] had to examine it, and either be tabled or voted down. Either outcome was not, to my mind, worth the risk....I hope you will take this time to seek as many different responses as necessary to assure a smooth sail through next Fall’s first Senate meeting....Please forward my thanks to members of your Task Force and your two councils for their work on this very critical topic.”)

Simpson said the 10 original conditions of the first proposal – essentially agreed upon by both FCEO and FCAS – are represented in the codification the council has seen. The endorsement of Distance Learning degrees remains problematic for both councils. The sense of both councils, and of the Task Force, is that the proposed DL legislative changes and the endorsement of DL Degrees need to be looked at separately.

Simpson said that he, Doug Wadden and Steve Buck have met in various groupings with Mary Coney, Faculty Senate Vice Chair Brad Holt, Vice Provost Steve Olswang, Vice Provost David Szatmary and others to discuss the proposed DL legislation and to get some sense of where the administration and the Senate leadership stood. Simpson said he hoped that some form of the proposal would go to the Faculty Senate at its final meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Early negotiations focused on the issue of the Distance Learning degree. Both faculty councils and the Task Force felt that, unless some provision about DL degrees was in place in the Faculty Code, DL programs could go through the approval process without proper oversight.

Simpson said the DL Task Force leadership looked at existing code language with both Steve Olswang and Secretary of the Faculty Lea Vaughn (both of whom are attorneys) to get a better sense both of the language that is in place now in the Faculty Code, and of the language that would be most effective and exact in the proposed changes to Distance Learning legislation.

Simpson said that, at the SEC meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>, he discovered there was still “substantial resistance” to the proposed changes to DL legislation, particularly to the provisional DL degree. (The greatest resistance resides in the Cabinet, he noted.) “The primary problem is the residual hostility to the discussion of DL degrees,” said Simpson. The strongest resistance continued to come from Brad Holt, who is not on principle opposed to changes in DL legislation, but who believes that the current proposed changes will not succeed in the Faculty Senate.

Simpson said that, hopefully, the proposed changes can be placed on the Faculty Senate action agenda in the Fall. The resistance to altering the current UW Distance Learning practices is strong, he stressed. The administration's view, however, was "more friendly" than had been expected. Both Steve Olswang and Provost Huntsman were favorably disposed, for the most part, though Huntsman is concerned about a review process that would discourage departmental experimentation, as he sees it. President McCormick remains less enthusiastic about the proposed changes.

Asked about differences between FCEO and FCAS in their current reading of the proposed changes, Simpson said the two councils are in essential agreement. A small faction in FCAS continues to be skeptical of the proposed changes, but the council as a whole is in concert with FCEO. Simpson said an "overlap group" could be created from the two councils.

Simpson said his guess is that there will continue to be controversy about the provisional DL degree. He said the language could be kept as it is now, which allows for a provisional degree to go through, or that language could be stricken to disallow any attempt at Distance Learning programs from going through.

Buck said he senses the same opposition to which Simpson alluded, and also said that there are three options for carrying forward. First, the current language (of the proposed DL changes) could be carried forward in the Fall. Second, the existing language of the code could be upheld, which would allow for experimentation but without a mandated review mechanism. Third, the possibility for provisional DL programs could be dropped. He said he thinks it is important to establish review mechanisms similar to those established for regular programs. (Buck has said on many occasions that he is congenial to DL experimentation so long as proper oversight and review mechanisms are in place.)

Simpson said there will be a tactical meeting on the Distance Learning proposal this coming Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 3-5 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall. The DL Task Force, the Faculty Senate leadership, the Provost's Office, and others participating in this ongoing process will be represented at this meeting.

Asked about the "philosophical resistance" to Distance Learning experimentation, Simpson said the core of the philosophical resistance has always centered around the argument (made by Brad Holt, among others) that Distance Learning cannot be equivalent to face-to-face learning in which students and faculty are directly interactive in the same physical space. (That space could be the campus lawn in Spring.)

GPSS representative Berta Weissman said, "There are more large graduate classes now than there used to be; in such cases, it would be helpful to use Distance Learning modes of instruction." It was noted, however, that student and faculty interactivity, more than even the content of courses, is an important issue for many. ASUW representative Summer Slater, in several previous FCEO meetings, has corroborated this point (as has ASUW President Jasmin Weaver in several faculty council meetings), stressing that, at the undergraduate, as opposed to the graduate, level, what is far more significant is *how* a student learns, and not *what* a student learns; and that learning in a face-to-face, directly interactive setting is therefore of greater importance to undergraduate students than it is to graduate students.

Szatmary spoke to a concern that many members of the two councils have. "We are shrinking down the length of time of those Distance Learning courses that can be shrunk," he said. He

noted that certain kinds of DL courses lend themselves much better to time shrinkage than others do. Each course must be assessed individually for this kind of adjustment.

Jorgensen said he believes that much resistance to Distance Learning experimentation can be traced to one factor: “It’s a threat to the status quo.” Administrators and faculty alike become entrenched in specific modes of instruction, and are naturally cautious about changing. It is simply human nature, he observed.

Buck said, “We should press to keep it right where it is [the proposed DL legislation], and pressure the Faculty Senate to consider the proposal exactly as it is now. It’s a reasonable proposal that tries to give a regular place to these DL courses. Hopefully, most will come to see that.”

Szatmary suggested deleting the word “certificate” in the phrase “certificate programs,” under the proposed changes on page 7 of the DL legislative proposal. [The FCAS Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs, or SCAP, has recommended that the phrase “certificate program” not be used in the Time Schedule or course catalog, as “certificate” courses do not truly constitute a “program” as that word has been used.] Szatmary said, “Such undergraduate ‘certificate programs’ that appear as certificates on the official UW transcript do not exist. Graduate certificate programs have been approved by the Graduate School several years ago with a set of specific criteria and guidelines. As this proposal deals with undergraduate education, it would be better to say ‘programs’ and eliminate the word ‘certificates’ until this issue has been clarified.”

Simpson said there are two “hanging items” to which to attend. One is the formulation of an “oversight structure,” and the other is the drawing up of “review criteria.” He said, “Time is on our side, on this score.”

### **Discussion of the opportunities for 2001-2002 with incoming chair Steve Buck**

Buck offered a couple of ideas for council members to consider over the summer. FCEO should play a role in setting up guidelines for new DL-suffix courses, whether from “C”-prefix courses offered through UWEO or courses offered directly by departments, he noted. (The council has had a series of discussions about such courses over the last several years.) The guidelines include standards for the process of reviewing such courses. Buck said that, in similar fashion, FCEO could be part of the group that looks at the DL proposals (for programs) before they go to FCAS (and SCAP). He said it would be a useful role for FCEO: “to play a part in how Distance Learning is substantiated at UW.” He would like the council “to have representation at the forefront of that battle.”

Buck said he would like FCEO to be part of the process creating the resources and infrastructure at UW that would benefit courses wholly taught via Distance Learning and those courses taught in UW classrooms that use DL methodologies in part. He said the council could cooperate with the Faculty Council on Educational Technology in this effort. He said one purpose of the council’s participation would be to help identify the relevant issues in this process. DeYoung said faculty need more information in this area.

Buck said he sees a “shift culturally” at the University. The use of DL technologies in classroom courses “is changing the evaluation of efforts in this area.” There are no guidelines in the Tenure and Promotion section of the Faculty Code to address this, he said. The question presents itself: To what extent is this a reflection within departments, and what can be done at an institutional level?” DeYoung – who is a member of the Faculty Council on Educational Technology – said that council conducted an excellent survey this year on what faculty at the University are doing in

the areas of technology. She said the survey, whose results are still pending, should provide “very good data for next year.”

Buck said he would like to see the council focus “on things we can do something about.” He does not want to abandon “areas in which we are being informed, and gathering useful information,” but he wants to be proactive wherever possible.

Jorgensen asked, “What can we do to gain support from the faculty on non-traditional modes of teaching?” Buck said, “That is an interesting challenge, as we do not have resources to do much as a council in this regard, though we can identify areas that have not been developed yet.”

Jenkins said, “Why not sell Distance Learning to the faculty from a constituency viewpoint (from the viewpoint of the students)?” Buck said no-one is looking at the availability of support groups as a whole. Jorgensen said perhaps FCEO could do that.

#### **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be in October 2001.

Brian Taylor, Recorder

**PRESENT:** *Professors* Simpson (Chair), Buck, DeYoung, Jenkins, Jorgensen and Kieckhefer;

*ex-officio member* Huling and Szatmary;

**ABSENT:** *Professors* Daniali, Kiyak, Treser and Zoller;

*ex-officio member* Marcovina, Rogers, Root and Slater.