

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Educational Outreach
Friday, May 9, 2008
36 Gerberding Hall

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approve agenda and minutes from April 4, 2008, FCEO meeting.
2. Discussion regarding Catalyst with Tom Lewis, Director of Catalyst, and Laura Baldwin, Public Information Specialist for Catalyst.
3. Discussion/Report on Educational Outreach with Vice Provost David Szatmary.
4. Planning for June meeting and final FCEO report to the Senate Executive Committee.
5. Other business.

Chair O'Neill called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda and the minutes of the minutes from the April 4, 2008, were approved.

2. Discussion regarding Catalyst

Council Chair Kate O'Neill introduced Tom Lewis and Laura Baldwin from Catalyst who had been invited to attend the meeting to continue the discussion begun at the previous meeting. The discussion centers on finding how Catalyst currently interfaces with departments, and particularly with faculty. Some faculty have questioned whether learning and ultimately using Catalyst tools constitutes an efficient use of their time. Lewis and Baldwin were invited to address the Council because at least part of its charge is to determine how to ensure maximum efficiency with regard to the use of faculty time. She suggested that the Council would be interested in hearing about current systems for gathering faculty input when a change to an existing Catalyst program or a new program is being contemplated. Specifically, O'Neill asked Lewis to talk about how Catalyst approaches "ease of use" when it comes to the design and re-design of its programs. She also asked him to address the kind of guidance and help provided to the users of these programs.

Tom Lewis gave an overview of support provided by Catalyst. Help lines are staffed from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. daily. The nature of calls and e-mail inquiries are tracked and monitored through Laura Baldwin's office. There are a number of "pulls" on Catalyst's time and attention, including ATAC, the Office of Educational Outreach, the Faculty Councils on Educational Outreach and Educational Technology in addition to requests and suggestions from departments and individuals. In addition there is currently increasing pressure on Catalyst to provide more support to the research community. There's clearly a need to coordinate and focus all of these pulls, especially given the limited budget Catalyst ultimately has to work with.

Vice Provost David Szatmary reiterated that Catalyst doesn't have the budget to provide extensive staff support for its users. Ideally this kind of support would be a part of local IT support within each department. He suggested that an effective use of FCEO time and energy would be to lobby administration to consider more central funding for this kind of departmental IT support. O'Neill added that local support would mean a line item in a department's budget, which would only be

possible at the expense of faculty salaries. She suggested it would be better to find a creative solution that can be implemented with existing resources. It's difficult to quantify the cost of time wasted by faculty struggling to learn and use unfamiliar software. That cost would even include the salaries of those participating in this and other similar discussions. Perhaps seeing a dollar amount associated with this issue would increase its visibility with the Provost. Szatmary agreed, saying that this, along with competitive faculty salaries, should be seen as a retention issue.

O'Neill asked Laura Baldwin to describe her work at Catalyst. Baldwin reported that she is frequently involved in contacting faculty for input – through events such as BizTech, faculty orientations, post cards announcing free courses and talks on specific topics and various e-mail announcements. The user group (“Q-Team”) that Tom Lewis had mentioned earlier in the discussion is made up of volunteers who are asked to serve only two to three hours per year. Volunteers are asked to fill out a brief survey from which they are recruited to serve on various projects as they come up throughout the year. She readily acknowledged the point brought up earlier that these are clearly the faculty that have time for this kind of activity. In addition she has interviewed top Catalyst users and departmental IT people who are in a position to provide technical support to faculty using Catalyst programs. Tom Lewis added that each fall quarter, Catalyst documents an increase of 30-50% in use of its programs.

Chair O'Neill thanked the guests from Catalyst for their time and moved to the next agenda item.

3. Discussion/Report on Educational Outreach

O'Neill referred Council members to the report distributed with the agenda entitled “Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting [SCPB] – Monday, April 7, 2008.” This report was prepared by Vice Provost Szatmary in response to questions raised by the SCPB at a recent meeting and is available through his office. The issue had come to the attention of SCPB as they reviewed a proposal to allow regular, matriculated students to register in online classes provided through Educational Outreach for a fee. The mission of Educational Outreach includes providing broad access to educational programs at the UW, and this proposal offered a way for students who could not attend onsite courses to stay on track toward an anticipated graduation date. He reviewed the document distributed point by point. Subsequent discussion revealed the following issues and concerns:

- The cost (in addition to regular tuition) of these courses.
- UWB and UWT have completely separate systems for summer quarter. Many feel that it is a disservice not to allow summer quarter classes at the other campuses.
- Challenges presented by the recently approved “performance agreements” to be adopted by institutions of higher education in this state – particularly with the UW’s bifurcated funding that includes both state-supported programs and self-supporting programs. Questions were raised whether UW would receive credit for providing those online courses in the performance evaluations.
- Financial aid is applicable for these courses, but Husky Promise funding is not, since it does not cover fees. The same applies to those enrolled in classes through the tuition exemption program. That program will cover tuition, but not fees.
- When taking one of these courses, a student would register as usual, be charged an additional fee, then the fee would be returned to Educational Outreach to pay for

instructional, administrative and operational costs associated with the online fee-based classes.

Szatmary is working on a subsequent proposal and will circulate it to FCIQ when it's completed.

4. Planning for June meeting and final FCEO report to the Senate Executive Committee.

Chair O'Neill asked the Council to consider the agenda for the final meeting scheduled for June 6. Her final duties as chair include writing a report of the Council's accomplishments over the academic year. This would also be a part of "passing the torch" to Leslie Breitner, chair-elect of the Council for next year. She asked members to contact her by phone or e-mail if they felt the final meeting should be canceled – or if they would like to discuss goals and agenda items for the coming year

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Minutes by Susan Folk, Assistant to the Secretary of the Faculty
slfolk@u.washington.edu

Present

Faculty Members: Breitner, Erdly, Harrison, O'Neill, Olavarria, Wilkes, Zierler

President's Designee: Szatmary

Ex Officio: Corbett, Ray

Guests: Tom Lewis and Laura Baldwin, Catalyst

Absent:

Faculty Members: Keifer, Kyes, Lam

Ex Officio: Esteban, Caromile, Brown