

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Educational Outreach
Friday, April 4, 2008
36 Gerberding Hall

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approve agenda.
2. Approve minutes from March 7, 2008, FCEO meeting.
3. Discussion with Tom Lewis, Director of Catalyst.
4. Other business.

Chair O'Neill called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

With correction of the starting time of the meeting, the agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes

With correction of the spelling of names (O'Neill, Kyes, Olavarria, Szatmary and Erdly) the minutes of the March 7, 2008, FCEO meeting were approved.

3. Discussion with Tom Lewis, Director of Catalyst

Chair O'Neill initiated the discussion by posing the following three questions to Catalyst Director, Tom Lewis:

1. How do the operations of Catalyst relate to UW infrastructure?
2. In what ways does Catalyst function to meet (or not meet) the needs of faculty (including questions of stability)?
3. With regard to the impending Catalyst planning process, what is the focus of that planning and how will faculty input and concerns be incorporated?

Lewis began by addressing what Catalyst has planned for the imminent future and who has provided input for those efforts. He qualified what he was about to say by adding that there is a perception that Catalyst can fix any problem on-line with a few key strokes. In reality, the challenges are very complex, they require lots of collaboration across many populations with diverse needs, and quite a lot of teamwork is required to devise workable solutions.

1. Problems with the grade book will be resolved in time for Fall Quarter.
2. Issues with the class lists will be addressed over the next nine months.
3. Integration and navigation between supplemental course accounts will be fine-tuned in order to function more seamlessly and effectively.

Discussion then turned to faculty needs, which for the most part are for more hands-on support for existing courseware rather than more and different kinds of courseware. How this can be managed is a challenge, given that faculty have little time to attend workshops and training sessions. With increasingly less funding provided for staff support, faculty are faced with having to spend inordinate amounts of time learning software required to manage grades and course lists, not to mention on-line courses. Ideally, courseware should be designed with the very shortest learning curve (for the instructor) possible.

The primary obstacle to providing sufficient staffing to allow professors more time to spend on course contact (instead of format) is funding. Were it possible to overcome that obstacle, the ideal would be to have staff support in every department that could interface between the faculty and Catalyst staff. Staff currently hired by departments to support information technology are often overwhelmed with other kinds of duties.

Lewis reported that Catalysts has recently been transferred from the Office of the Provost to UW Technology and that relatively minor structural changes are in the works. These changes, however, will not include the capacity for instructional design.

O'Neill raised the issue of centralized responsibility for educational design aspects of faculty courseware and support issues. Lewis commented that the Undergraduate Academy provides regular technology training sessions every quarter and that attendance is increasing each quarter.

The Chair also asked Vice Provost Szatmary if there are data from other universities that do have funding for more comprehensive IT support – and whether universities that are better funded see a “pay-off” by allowing faculty more time to pursue academic affairs. Szatmary responded that IT support is the last thing that’s funded and the first thing cut when budgets fall short of funding. He added that a lot of help could be provided to departments given \$1 million to hire graduate students to serve as IT support staff to UW departments. This possibility would be greatly enhanced if the Faculty Senate were to lean on administration to make this a budget priority!

Returning to the question of faculty input into Catalyst’s planning process, Lewis noted that their “Q” group, consisting of both faculty and students, gives regular feedback to Catalyst. He also regularly attends both FCIQ and FCET to discuss related issues. Given the input of this Council, however, he would consider a more extensive faculty advisory board.

Other concerns raised:

- User interface needs to be kept as stable as possible.
- Retrieval of previous course lists would be helpful (Lewis noted that this was being addressed with the office of the Registrar).

Lewis offered to return, along with Laura Baldwin (Catalyst’s public information specialist), to address other questions at a future FCEO meeting. Chair O’Neill thanked him and assured him someone would be in touch with him to confirm.

4. Other Business.

Chair O’Neill announced that Leslie Breitner had volunteered to serve as Chair of FCEO for the 2008-09 academic year, and thanked her for taking on this responsibility.

Vice Provost Szatmary reported that at a recent meeting of the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB) he had been asked to address the following questions:

1. What are the overall gross revenues and expenses of EO?
2. What are the overall gross revenues and expenses of EO for summer session? SCPB does see an income line item to central administration's budget but how does that income line relate to income and expenses for summer session?
3. What is the distribution of faculty ranks teaching in summer session?
4. During summer quarter, how much revenue is generated for 599, 600, 700 and 800 credits? Where does this revenue go? How are faculty paid for overseeing graduate students in summer session?
5. How are self supporting degrees set up? What would be a typical financial agreement with a department setting up a self supporting degree program? How are programs at UW-B and UW-T arranged?
6. Has EO developed any financial aid for self-supporting programs?
7. How are faculty selected for developing EO courses? How are they compensated?
8. What would be the impact on summer session net revenues for paying faculty for three months instead of the two they are now paid (less than the TAs are paid)?
9. What features of the ESL lecturers' contracts distinguish them from other EO instructors? Is their pay comparable to pay for lecturers on campus in academic departments?
10. What generated the proposal to have EO develop additional sections for "bottleneck" courses? Would the courses be eligible for financial aid? Who would be teaching the courses? Where would the revenue go? How would less affluent students be able to take these courses?

Szatmary offered to share these questions (along with the responses he expects to deliver at next Monday's SCPB meeting) with the FCEO.

Finally, Chair O'Neill encouraged Council members to consider the best use of the Council's time during the up-coming last two meeting of the academic year.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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

Present

Faculty Members: Breitner, Erdly, Kyes, Lam, O'Neill, Olavarria, Wilkes

President's Designee: Szatmary

Ex Officio: Corbett

Guest: Tom Lewis, Catalyst

Absent:

Faculty Members: Harrison, Keifer, Larson, Zierler

Ex Officio: Ray, Esteban, Caromile, Brown