

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Educational Outreach
Friday, March 14, 2008
36 Gerberding

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Update on Distance Learning Subcommittee
4. Approval of invitation to Tom Lewis (Catalyst) and Discussion
5. Update on feedback re DL pilot Proposal

Chair O'Neill called the meeting to order at 10:14 am.

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Council approved the agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes

Council members approved amended minutes with two minor corrections.

3. Update on Distance Learning Subcommittee

Council member Zierler reported that the University can't charge additional fees for distance learning and the next step should be a survey of those programs that have distance learning courses to explore how to cover the cost of sustainability. Programs can acquire grants and funding for program development but finding funding for production and sustainability is difficult. The council also agreed that there needs to be a standard for what makes up a distance learning course and the costs and support staff required for different styles of courses. Council members expressed concerns regarding TA availability and usage, web support staff, the addition of a Second Life environment, and further faculty development.

A motion was made for Chair O'Neill to approach SEC to request that SCPB ask for additional funding for faculty development in Educational Technology. The council mentioned a survey done on campus which reported that 80% of students want additional technology in the classroom where only 50% of the faculty expressed the same interest and the committee believes the demand on the student side will continue to grow. The council sees the issue as a faculty workload issue and hopes that the SEC will ask the SCPB to provide funding for a faculty "upgrade" and additional technology staff that will hopefully free the faculty for research. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action: DL Subcommittee will expand the proposal to include graduate courses and ask the Senate leadership to add education technology as a line item in the budget. Zierler volunteered to contact the chair of FCET (Professor Werner Kaminsky) and find out what issues their council is addressing and to make sure there isn't overlap between this issue and the issues they are looking into.

4. Approval of Invitation to Tom Lewis

Chair O'Neill reported that Tom Lewis from Catalyst would be happy to come to the April meeting but thought that it might be more useful if he and his boss were to attend at a later date. The council decided that it would be useful to meet with Lewis both in April and in May and agreed to prepare questions over email and organize the information they needed from Catalyst prior to the April meeting.

The council had several concerns regarding Catalyst, specifically that online tools development doesn't seem to address the needs and abilities of faculty and that funds seem to be directed towards new tools and upgrades rather than faculty development. The council members were concerned that current Catalyst tools essential for Distance Learning, such as the Peer Review System, are cumbersome and may inhibit a faculty member's ability to effectively teach students. A council member suggested that Catalyst should present to each department all the tools available in mandatory faculty meetings. The council also mentioned that this is part of a larger philosophical discussion regarding the future of technology in education.

Action: Wilkes and Harrison volunteered to start an email dialogue with Catalyst addressing some of the council's concerns and requesting further information on topics pertaining to Distance Learning and Faculty Development. O'Neill volunteered to find the appropriate member from ATAC and invite them to the meeting as well. Wilkes asked council members to email him any anecdotal frustrations they or their colleagues have had with Catalyst.

5. Update on feedback re DL pilot proposal for Undergrad Registration

Chair O'Neill reported that she presented a brief overview of the pilot program for distance learning to the SEC. She handed out questions raised by the SEC leadership and described their feedback as non-enthusiastic.

6. Other Business

Chair O'Neill addressed the issue of membership for next year. She wondered who would be returning for another term and asked council members to call or email fellow faculty members inviting them to consider joining a council. Chair O'Neill also indicated that she would be on sabbatical next year so the council is in need of a new chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 am.

Minutes by Amy Underkofler, Graduate Research Assistant,
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Present: Faculty Members: O'Neill, Harrison, Keifer, Kyes, Olavarria, Wilkes, Zierler
President Designee: Szatmary
Ex Officio: Reps: Ray, Corbett

Absent: Faculty Members: Breitner, Erdly (Excused), Lam (Excused), Larson
Ex Officio Reps: Esteban (Excused), Caromile