

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

The Faculty Council on Educational Outreach met at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, **March 2, 2001**. Chair Roger Simpson presided.

Approval of minutes

The minutes for February 9, 2001 were approved as revised.

First reading of a draft report from the Task Force on Distance Learning

Simpson reviewed the process of the draft of the Task Force report on Distance Learning. Today, both FCEO and FCAS (Faculty Council on Academic Standards) will discuss the draft, to which Simpson, Buck and Treser from FCEO contributed. The draft will then come back to the two councils in the next two weeks. If the councils concur with each other on the wording of the draft, it will then go before the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) at its meeting on April 2, 2001.

The draft currently reads as follows:

TASK FORCE ON DISTANCE LEARNING

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

History: In Spring 2000, the Faculty Council on Academic Standards and the Faculty Council on Educational Outreach agreed to form a joint task force to consider changes in UW policy toward distance learning courses offered by University of Washington Educational Outreach (UWEO). The effort followed the refusal of both councils to endorse recommendation of an ad hoc committee that would have ended all undergraduate residence requirements, ended transcript distinctions between distance and classroom courses, and included all distance learning courses in undergraduate grade point averages.

The Task Force recommendations resulted from Task Force meetings that began in October, review of policies at peer institutions, and numerous responses from faculty offered in writing and in a public hearing. (These proposals will have no bearing on graduate degree programs by reason of a recent graduate School decision to end all residence requirements.)

The Current Policies:

1. Distance learning versions of regular undergraduate credit courses receive a "C" prefix but the grades are not counted in GPA. Not more than 90 "C" course credits can be applied toward a bachelor's degree and none can be applied to the final 45 credits in a degree. The final 45 credits must be taken in residence. (Exceptions to these requirements can be made by schools and departments.)
2. Departments are free to develop and use web-based instruction or other distance-learning methods in regular credit courses.

The Task Force recommendations support these objectives for distance learning in University of Washington undergraduate education:

1. Distance learning is evolving steadily in this university. Units need freedom to experiment with distance learning versions of existing courses, with distance learning-only courses, and with distance

learning components in existing courses. Neither these changes nor existing policies will limit unit options in curriculum decisions.

2. Distance learning courses offered by UWEO, if truly equivalent to classroom credit courses, should be available to students to include in their matriculated courseloads and undergraduate grade point averages and should be labeled on transcripts as DL versions of credit courses. (At present, such courses are designated with a “C” prefix and provide only “independent study” credits that cannot be included in the final 45 credits of an undergraduate degree or in the student’s grade point average.)

3. Distance learning courses should be comparable to classroom courses in terms of prerequisites, content and educational outcomes. This can be assured by review at the faculty, college and university levels by the same bodies that review regular classroom courses. Courses that gain the DL designation should be taught by a member of the UW faculty, or by a person judged by the offering unit to be adequately prepared for the assignment.

4. Courses that gain the distance learning designation should be taught by a member of the UW faculty, or by a person judged by the offering unit to be adequately prepared for the assignment.

5. The growing availability of UW courses to an international market is an issue to the extent that a highly diverse student population may affect the evaluation standards and learning outcomes of a course. Students enrolling in UWEO courses who are not seeking a UW degree should have the same course prerequisites and meet the same learning objectives as regular UW students.

6. So-called distance learning technologies will inevitably become a part of undergraduate education at this university. The ability to provide educational opportunities to students whose circumstances keep them far from our campus is their greatest effect. Ours sense, however, is that the cautious experimentation and innovation that has characterized the UW response has been a wise one. Student representatives have affirmed the high value students place on classroom contact with peers and with instructors. We believe these proposals support unit freedom, affirm the importance of face-to-face contact in undergraduate education, and maintain oversight at college and university levels.

Addendum: Use of distance learning places new burdens on university support resources, especially libraries, departments and other administrative units. While these proposals cannot address the financial costs of new uses of distance learning, we urge the Administration to provide for these needs.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

To receive a baccalaureate degree from the University of Washington, a student must take at least 45 of the final 60 credits in residence.

Distance learning courses, including “C”-designated courses, may be included in the grade point average of matriculated students and recorded on the student’s transcript as a DL courses, in the same section as regular courses, if the following conditions are met:

1. The course must be reviewed by the faculty of the proposing unit and at all other levels as regular courses.

2. The reviews must include consideration of specific means of content delivery and time allowed for completion.

3. The course must have the same prerequisites and the same educational outcomes as the same-numbered regular course.

4. All students (matriculated and non-matriculated) must meet all course prerequisites with exceptions requiring approval by the instructor.

5. Instructors must be approved by proposing unit and must have UW faculty titles, with exceptions requiring case-by-case approval of offering unit.

6. Starting and completion dates will be shown on the transcript for DL courses that do not conform to a quarter schedule.

Unsuccessful completions will be listed on the transcript for DL courses completed by matriculated students.

Academic units must accept all versions of same-numbered courses as equivalent for fulfillment of specific program requirements. However, a unit may set a minimum number of regular credits taken in residence and a maximum number of DL credits that may be applied toward the unit's degree.

In addition to the initial review, DL courses must be reviewed by offering units in the third year.

UWEO will provide colleges and offering units grade distributions, student evaluations, characteristics of enrolled students for DL courses on a regular basis.

Simpson said that, regarding the framework of these policies, the focus in recent Task Force discussions has been on the need to establish distance learning versions of undergraduate credit courses viewed as "equivalent" to DL courses. He said the Task Force does not want to stifle distance learning or other kinds of experimental programs. But the goal was to be more cautious than the ad hoc DL Task Force Committee was last year.

Treser said the Task Force is trying to establish "equivalency" with DL courses, which can be difficult. Sometimes, DL courses are not taught by UW faculty, which exacerbates the effort to establish equivalency.

The need for DL courses to receive necessary support was emphasized. This includes support from libraries and all other facilities involved in DL production. Simpson said the administration needs to be mindful that libraries and departments can be overburdened by some of the changes that have to occur for DL courses to proceed effectively.

Council members agree that DL courses, if equivalent to regular, face-to-face courses, would be designated as DL courses on the transcript. Zoller said it was especially important to label DL courses so that a clear record could be maintained of which and how many courses in a student's transcript were distance learning. "Students are losing their capacity to talk with each other," Zoller stressed, and the more distance learning courses a student takes the more that student potentially loses the capacity for interactive communication. Kiyak said DL courses could be required to have at least one face-to-face classroom session, if not at the outset of the course, then at the soonest possible opportunity, so that students have met one another when they meet electronically in the "chat room." She pointed out that, in her experience, she does not get a lot of response from certain students in "chat room" situations; it is easier to be "anonymous" in DL settings. In a regular, face-to-face classroom, taciturn students can be addressed directly, and brought into the class discussion.

Szatmary said that, because different people learn in different ways, attempts are being made to create pre-assessment tools in order to gauge people's best learning methods. He also pointed out that different people learn at different speeds. For all these reasons, "pedagogically sound" DL methodologies are needed to accommodate different learning styles.

As for changes in legislative language, the council urged that stronger emphasis be placed on student interaction. Szatmary recommended "decoupling" undergraduate DL courses from Educational Outreach, as other people besides Educational Outreach administer DL courses.

It was noted that it is the Task Force's intent to regularize the "C"-designated course. It was further noted that there is a host of "global" issues for any course offered online. Kiyak said a uniform policy is necessary for all departments. As it is now, a department can only offer a course (of any kind) to matriculated students.

A crucial philosophical question being asked by both FCEO and FCAS is: What distinguishes a DL course from a non-DL course? (Technically, a DL course is presently defined as a course that contains 51% or more DL content; this at least is the HEC Board-accepted definition.. But as the council acknowledged, deciding if a course has 51% DL content is a highly subjective call. The consensus was that a definition of distance learning is needed, but one that is flexible. As Zoller said, "We need to use some definition, whether the HEC Board's or some other definition that is out there. We need a specific definition of distance learning to refer to, until such time as it needs to be changed." The suggestion was made to endorse the HEC Board definition of distance learning in the preamble to the proposed legislative changes.

The council agreed that FCAS might be the best body to define distance learning, or to recommend a definition that already exists, such as the HEC Board's.

As to the last paragraph in the "Legislative Proposals" section, Buck emphasized that what is needed is "standard data: demographic data," however that data is garnered.

Next meeting

The next FCEO meeting is set for Friday, March 9, 2001, at 9:30 a.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.
Brian Taylor, Recorder

PRESENT: *Professors* Simpson (Chair), Buck, DeYoung, Jenkins, Kiyak, Treser and Zoller;
ex-officio member Szatmary.

ABSENT: *Professors* Daniali, Jorgensen and Kieckhefer;
ex-officio member Huling, Marcovina, Rogers, Root and Slater.