

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The Faculty Council on Educational Outreach met at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, **January 23, 2002**. Chair Steve Buck presided. Members of the Distance Learning Course Design Group joined the council.

Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the December 11, 2001 meeting were approved as written.

Voting status of ex-officio members

The council, by a unanimous vote of members in attendance, approved voting status for Bruce Bennett, Professional Staff Office (PSO) representative, Thom Deardorff, Associated Librarians of the University of Washington (ALUW) representative, and Berta Weissman, Graduate Student (GPSS) representative.

Guidelines for DL-suffix courses – Steve Buck

Buck said that, after discussions with Distance Learning instructors and Distance Learning course designers, the council must now ask: “What do we want to send out as advice to the following sub-audiences: 1) individual faculty and individual instructors and departments contemplating Distance Learning courses; 2) reviewers of Distance Learning courses in the curriculum process; and 3) administrative entities who control resources in the University, and who, in particular, hold the purse-strings which Distance Learning courses and programs are dependent on for development.”

“Do we need to rethink support services?” Buck asked. He said he would like to see the council direct people to existing resources. (He distributed a list of “Distance Learning Guidelines” put together by the Distance Learning Course Design Group, as well as the first two pages of the “catalyst” UW Website for teaching Distance Learning courses.)

Buck said the information presented on the Catalyst/UWEO Web page represents an “impressive accumulation of advice.” The Guidelines are intended to serve those departments offering DL courses through their own academic programs, and those who are going through Educational Outreach. “This is a great resource, and it saves us a lot of work,” Buck noted. “What is required from us?” he asked. “Technically, nothing. We want to provide advice that does not simply repeat advice available on the Catalyst/UWEO Web page.”

Buck said there will be “a spate of C-prefix courses going to Distance Learning,” and faculty and administrators who are responsible for those courses will want to know how that process works. He said all such courses will have to go through the normal review and approval process. This would include the University Curriculum Committee and the department and college level review.

“We have no particular mandate,” said Buck. “We can shape what we want to produce. If it’s short and to the point, it *will* be used and not just filed away.” Treser said, “What people will mostly want is pretty simple; there are many ‘How to Do It’ resources already. The gap is in knowledge of the process. Developers of Distance Learning courses and DL evaluators need to know the approval process, and the administrators also need to know.”

Treser noted that Distance Learning courses “are not different from classroom-based courses; they should go through the same approval process.” Wells said, “We should look at the Student Learning Project bearing on accreditation, and coming out of the office of Debra Friedman [Associate Provost for Academic Planning].” Treser said, “We have to come up with clear objectives, and grading has to be in accord with those objectives.” Wells said, “What are the critical things we teach at the University of

Washington?’ Distance Learning faculty need to answer this kind of question. We should also see what faculty think they’re doing and what students think they’re doing. It would be helpful to look at that comparison.”

Szatmary said, “We mostly have Arts and Sciences courses [in Distance Learning], which are clones of existing courses. How will this play out in the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee?” Buck said, “Paul Lepore [Director of Undergraduate Program Development] is the undergraduate curriculum person to talk to. We could ask him to visit our next council meeting. He will have a large influence on the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee.”

Buck corroborated Szatmary in observing that most courses that will be reviewed for Distance Learning status will have classroom versions already existing. “We could identify issues that need to be addressed by instructors of Distance Learning and by those who review them, with respect to free-standing courses and all others. One issue may be that of credit load. Although there are different audiences, it may be the case that we can identify issues, or aspects and dimensions, of Distance Learning courses that *we* think are key for both groups. To what extent do we talk to one group, or to both groups separately, or to both groups together?”

Treser said, “We should talk to both groups together.” Bennett said, “We could put in general criteria, but beyond that, departments will do what they want to do.” Wells said, “Who are the people who will be expanding Distance Learning programs? *They* could be targeted.” Buck said, “In my department, there is not much overlap between curriculum people and those who are teaching Distance Learning courses. We want to encourage people who will be doing Distance Learning to seek out information they will need.”

Szatmary said, “In the next year or two, of the 120 self-sustaining Distance Learning credit courses, some classes without a significant audience will be offered to matriculated students as part of their regular tuition.” Noble asked, “Will there be a mandate for faculty to teach Distance Learning in the future?” Szatmary said, “No, there is and will be no such mandate.” Noble said, “Then it must be public service, to some degree.” Szatmary said, “It’s another way of presenting course material, but yes, to some degree, it is public service.”

Szatmary said, “An important issue, if Distance Learning is taught on a large scale, is compensation.” Treser said, “Another important issue is time. It takes time to ‘pretty things up,’ to put up graphics on DL Websites, and the like. That kind of technical preparation eats up a great deal of time.” Deardorff said, “Coordination of technology takes a lot of time. We also need to identify Distance Learners vs. non-Distance Learners.” Bennett added, “And matriculated vs. non-matriculated learners.” Deardorff said, “Not everyone has UW Net ID, for instance.”

Buck said, “There will be levels of impact all over the campus, but we can warn people that there *will* be impacts.” Treser said, “We could develop a list of issues.” DeYoung said, “University Libraries is a notable success story. UWired, however, did not have in place last year anything beyond quite simple classes. Hopefully, there are more sophisticated class structures available now. We need to make a clear statement as faculty. With respect to foreign languages, faculty must be responsible, and be able to communicate with native speakers of other cultures. We need to be aware of the difficulties involved in securing funding resources.”

Buck said there appears to be agreement on specific points related to Distance Learning courses. “We won’t teach how to develop content for courses; we will just give pointers.” He noted that “some points in the ‘Distance Learning Guidelines’ are very good.” He asked whether, as a “general principle,” all versions of the same-numbered courses should have similar goals. He referred the council to the top of the first page in the “Guidelines” handed out. “Do we recapitulate general principles, or focus on points

specific to Distance Learning courses?” DeYoung asked, “Do we take a minimalist or a proactive stance?” Buck said, “We produce an advisory statement: No one will be compelled to use it.”

Treser asked, “Which points would we highlight regarding Distance Learning specifically? We could recommend that the Course Application Form be revised and updated.”

Buck went over the 19 points on the two pages of the “Distance Learning Guidelines.” He said, with respect to #4 (“Identify the technologies in the course...”), “We would want information on that for a DL course; there is nothing in the Course Application Form at present.” With respect to #9 (“Describe the faculty preparation for teaching online.”), Buck said, “This would be of interest to faculty and departments.” As to #10 (“Describe exit requirements...”), Buck said, “There may be something there we want information on.” And as regards #16 (“How do you assess the number of credits for the activity?”), he said, “That’s a very relevant issue.” The question was asked, regarding #1 (“Describe how the content of the online course matches the content of the onsite course.”): How about a #1B, about things *other* than content? Or a broader definition of content, to include textbooks and other resources. How do these courses fit departmental programmatic goals?

Buck said, “One could ask: How will students get access to the materials in the DL course? And what about technological issues? This is not articulated in the existing Guidelines. The issue of access to materials is crucial, and not only in Distance Learning. Will your target audience be able to access what they need? Segments of the population do not have access to sophisticated technology.”

DeYoung said, “I need to send Arabic materials to a university that does not have compatible technology to receive those materials. The problems created by this are significant.” Noble said a course existing only in Distance Learning would raise questions about quality and access. And students could be forced to take a Distance Learning course, with no classroom-based counterpart available. DeYoung said there is a need to build into the course both possibilities: design elements to be accessed *either* via Distance Learning or non-Distance Learning methodologies.

Deardorff said, with respect to support for Distance Learning courses, “Instructors should be aware that accommodations must be made to disabled students according to the ADA.”

Buck said that, as for Distance Learning courses following the course calendar, the University Handbook says that the length of the course “must be stipulated at the outset of the term. But is 10 weeks enough time for Distance Learning courses?” Noble asked, “Are Distance Learning courses always available for students?” Buck said, “It varies, and depends on the course. A student can take an ‘incomplete,’ but the *maximum* time of the course must be stipulated.”

Buck asked the council if there were other issues “of the same ilk” that are *not* in the “Distance Learning Guidelines” (the two-page handout). He said if such issues occur to members, they should E-mail him after they’ve had a chance to look closely at the Guidelines.

Buck said he will draft a list of recommendations and send it to the council for their suggestions. He said the recommendations can identify a set of issues related to Distance Learning courses that would be of help to faculty who are going to teach DL courses, and to people who will be designing and reviewing DL courses. People will also be directed to the impressive Distance Learning resources of the University Libraries catalog and the Catalyst/UWEO Web page.

Additionally, recommendations can be made to people setting up the Course Application Form, and to the University Curriculum Office and people responsible for curriculum in departments throughout the campus.

Buck said the council will “get the list in place first. Then, we’ll see what *that* leads us to. We could send the recommendations to Tim Washburn, Executive Director of Admissions and Records, and to others we deem appropriate.” The council agreed that Paul Lepore would be an excellent guest presenter to invite to the next council meeting. DeYoung said both Registration and UWired should receive the recommendations as well so that they can “tailor what they are doing to the council’s recommendations.”

Buck said, “A major question, in reviewing a potential Distance Learning course, is that of perspective: What should I *know* to be able to develop a successful Distance Learning course? If the Distance Learning course is a clone of the classroom-based course, should the same syllabus be used for both courses? What exactly must be known to develop the best possible Guidelines for Distance Learning courses?”

Next meeting

The next FCEO meeting is set for Wednesday, February 20, 2002, at 12:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.
Brian Taylor, Recorder

PRESENT: *Professors* Buck (Chair), DeYoung, Marcovina, Noble, Treser and Wells;
Ex-officio members Bennett, Deardorff and Szatmary.

ABSENT: *Professors* Daniali, Jenkins, Kieckhefer, Kim and Simpson;
Ex-officio members Rose and Weissman.