

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

The Faculty Council on Educational Outreach met at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, **December 11, 2001**. Chair Steve Buck presided. Members of the Distance Learning Course Design Group joined the council.

**Approval of the minutes**

The minutes of the November 20, 2001 meeting were approved as written.

**Distance Learning Guidelines: Discussion with Champion, Corrigan, Huling, Lewis and Solomon.**

Buck welcomed the members of the Distance Learning Course Design Group, who exchanged introductions with the Faculty Council on Educational Outreach.

Buck said there are three levels of suggestions that FCEO can make:

- 1) FCEO can recommend changes on the “New Course Application” form prepared by the Curriculum Review Committee
- 2) FCEO can offer advice for colleges and schools, and for instructors, on the creation and review of Distance Learning courses.
- 3) FCEO can at some point make suggestions for issues to be considered in the development of programs based largely or exclusively on Distance Learning courses.

Buck said FCEO would like to “make a pitch” to muster infrastructure support for the new Distance Learning courses. Most of these will be conversions from the present C-prefix courses but presumably there will be “stand-alone” Distance Learning courses as well. Both types of courses will have impacts on existing departments, programs (including summer and evening degree), and support services (especially libraries) that the University must acknowledge and mitigate.

Corrigan, Director of Distance Learning Design in Educational Outreach, said it takes longer than most people might imagine to develop a Distance Learning course. But teaching a DL course “does not have to be different inside your head,” said Corrigan. People are “stopped” by thinking that they will be doing everything differently. “It’s simply not true.” Some Distance Learning technologies “make certain communications easier because they allow the participants to interact at any time, from any place.”

Regarding transformational methodologies for Distance Learning, Corrigan said, “There are no solid theories at present. It slowly gets adapted to the way we do things, and becomes more central to the University’s mission.” He said Educational Outreach “is able to help departments develop the most appropriate structure for their needs.”

Asked about pitfalls in course design of Distance Learning, Corrigan said, “Instructors must realize that the course must be fully developed before any students start the course. It must be realized that the student is navigating in large measure on his or her own. How the student gets stuck must be anticipated. For the most part, the student can ‘unstuck him- or herself’ by means of well written material, simple means for self-assessment, and dialogue with other students.”

Corrigan said one highly successful approach to Distance Learning encourages students to associate their Distance Learning activities with “their life experiences.” They should be encouraged to apply what they are learning to concurrent projects on which they might be working, or to some other aspect of their life.

With respect to library resources, Corrigan said they “are very important, and can be a great bridge for instructors and students alike.” Solomon said, “In Nursing, we use the online journals and other library sources a good deal, and the libraries perform an excellent service in coordinating and making this possible.”

As Huling noted, the Health Sciences journals are largely online, in contradistinction to the Humanities journals. “The online journals, however, are very expensive for the Libraries to acquire,” she stressed. She said that if the Health Sciences Library has a considerable amount of money for online journals, the various Humanities libraries “are at the other end of the line, and when they go online it is very expensive indeed.”

Access to library online sources for non-matriculated students is getting better, it was pointed out. Many people get UW Internet ID by default. (Huling said that UW faculty, students and staff can access the proxy server to get remote access to library resources.)

Solomon said that some students get “very frustrated” using non-traditional Web technologies, and are in real need of support. Buck said, with respect to technical support, “There is library support; then there is more general, C&C-based support.” Some of what people learn about setting up a Distance Learning program, said Corrigan, “starts by people passing on what they have learned (a kind of ‘faculty development’). This has to take place at the departmental and college level. Thinking about Distance Learning programs at the departmental and college level is crucial.”

Campion said, “We do lots of video streaming in response to student and faculty requests.” He noted that this, in part, changes the nature of the courses they are used in. “Faculty and students will have a ‘suite of options,’ but they are faculty-driven.” Buck said, “That the Distance Learning courses will have different DL needs and technological methodologies is becoming clear.” He expressed surprise at the “lack of centrally-based Distance Learning initiatives from the Humanities, unlike other sectors of the campus.”

Lewis said about 80% of the Distance Learning technologies – including video streaming – that all departments need are “common”; only 20% are exclusive, or “particular,” though departments often believe their needs are particular. Corrigan said that, “before considering the media you want, you need to look at the overall goals you have for your students. Your Distance Learning choices will meld with your traditionally taught courses; you will want to have the core work done, on your curriculum, before coming to your Distance Learning courses.”

Buck said that impediments to successful Distance Learning courses that are frequently mentioned are “student to student interaction” and “student to instructor interaction.” Given these impediments, Buck asked, “What minimum standards can we recommend in this area?” He noted that, in classroom courses, these impediments “do not come up, because students have opportunities to go to class and to sections.” The question has to be asked: Is the online “bulletin board” – or the “chat room” – equivalent to students talking before and after classroom sessions on campus?

Corrigan said, “The education process cannot be ‘canned’; it’s dynamic, and full of change. But that’s good. That’s how it should be.” He said it is important to “try different kinds of teaching.” He said students’ general reaction to Distance Learning is paradoxical; they like it because it fits their life style, yet they miss the “live” experience of the classroom.

Buck said, “It is easier to think about doing these things in a synchronous course, but most Distance Learning courses are asynchronous.” Campion said that in an asynchronous Distance Learning course, the focus should be on student interaction to the degree that it is possible, though there may be individual

courses in which it is inessential. Corrigan said, “Sometimes the goal of the particular DL course may require student-to-student interaction; in other cases, that might not be necessary.”

Bennett said that, in his department [Sociology], “students care very much about student/instructor interaction, and not at all about student-to-student interaction.” Other council members, however, could not corroborate this in their departments, and generally felt that students did indeed care about their interactions with one another in a classroom setting. This would naturally be less urgent among older Distance Learning students, who are well embarked on their professional careers, and are taking DL courses to enhance their professional skills and marketability.

Corrigan said, “As the technology [available for Distance Learning] changes, course instruction must change as well.” He said there is confusion among faculty as to what approach needs to be taken, both as regards technology and instructional mode. He said some explanation about “who works with whom” might be helpful in setting up a Distance Learning program.

Solomon pointed out that there is no definitive definition of Distance Learning, either in the Handbook or elsewhere. This poses a dilemma, he said: Is it Distance Learning only if the students never get together? He said people ask this question frequently. “I do like the courses where students get together at least once,” he stressed. “How often should students meet in person in a Distance Learning course?” he asked. Buck said it is difficult to answer this question because different DL courses would have very different replies. “Departments and individual students and instructors will determine the outcome of this dilemma. It will play out differently in different departments.”

According to the HEC Board, if more than 50% of any of five delivery modes is used in a course, then that is a Distance Learning course. But, as Corrigan pointed out, “you can always get around this definition, if so desired.”

Corrigan observed that an advantage to students of relaxing the residence requirement (the 45-credit residence requirement is maintained in the new Distance Learning legislation, but the timeline is greater) would be “greater flexibility in meeting particular academic goals.” And the disadvantage to students is that if they do not complete the course, they will get a “W” on their transcript. The timeline to meet the course requirement may be shortened to approximate the ten-week quarter. (The current requirement is six months for completion of a Distance Learning course, with a three-month extension, if necessary. “But we’re now designing our courses to be completed within the ten-week quarter, if possible.”) Corrigan asked, “Will this be an incentive for students to complete a course, or not to take Distance Learning at all?”

Buck said the “trickiest things” to translate into Distance Learning are those aspects of a course that require student interaction. And lab courses are still exceptionally difficult to translate into Distance Learning. Corrigan warned “not to develop your DL courses around exams; find other ways of measuring yours students’ progress.”

As for the issue of setting up Distance Learning courses as UW credit courses, Corrigan said, “We suggest a ‘work breakdown analysis’ to try to set up DL courses that are truly ‘equivalent’ to classroom-based courses in content and quality. We ask such questions as: What does our experience say about the time one spends on a Distance Learning course in comparison to time spent on a traditional credit course at the UW?” Buck said that students have reported spending less time on Distance Learning than on classroom-based courses. But Corrigan noted that most students suggest that they spend more, and not less, time on DL courses. However, he added, the evidence is sketchy at best.

As for the New Course Application form, Corrigan said, "It would be difficult to say that you're developing a quality Distance Learning course if you're entirely excluding student-to-student interaction." Simpson added that it sometimes goes beyond informal student-to-student interaction to actual presentations to other students.

Buck said the "Guidelines for Developing a Distance Learning Course Introduction" are "very helpful." Treser said a question to consider is: To what extent should unique features about Distance Learning programs be added to the New Course Application form.

Corrigan distributed two handouts: the "Guidelines" and "Developing a Web Course: How to Work with Your UW Distance Learning Instructional Designer." He said these two documents contain most of the guidelines and precepts that Distance Learning Design uses in setting up new DL courses.

Buck asked FCEO members and today's guests to send him E-mails if they have further ideas for the council to consider as it develops suggestions for the establishment of Distance Learning guidelines.

**Next meeting**

The next FCEO meeting is set for Wednesday, January 23, 2002, at 12:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.  
Brian Taylor, Recorder

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

*Guests* Michael Campion, Bill Corrigan, Nancy Huling, Tom Lewis and Cliff Solomon.

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