

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Educational Outreach (FCEO)
Friday, November 7, 2008, 10:30 a.m.
36 Gerberding Hall

Council Chair Leslie Breitner called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approval of agenda and minutes of the previous meeting.
2. Brief discussion on status of the charge.
3. Discussion about next steps with respect to development of the database discussed at the October meeting (programs not included in current data, categorization, goals).
4. Set clear direction for intended accomplishments for the year.

1. Approval of agenda and minutes of the previous meeting.

Council members approved the agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting. Council Chair Leslie Breitner encouraged council members to contact her with any suggestions for future agenda items.

2. Brief discussion on the status of the charge.

Chair Breitner reviewed the mandate for the Council as written in the *Faculty Code* (Section 42-43): “The Faculty Council on Educational Outreach shall be responsible for all matters of policy, academic and nonacademic, relating to distance learning, continuing education, UW Extension, and summer school programs.” She noted that this mandate overlaps with a number of other Councils. The fact that issues are being addressed from different perspectives is generally a good thing. Nevertheless, coordination among councils addressing the same issue is necessary to avoid a possible duplication of faculty effort. Faculty Senate Chair David Lovell has called a meeting of the Chairs of the following Faculty Councils: Educational Outreach, Educational Technology, Faculty Affairs, Instructional Quality, Academic Standards and Student Affairs, to examine issues that may be under consideration by more than one council and to consider whether council mandates or work assignments should be adjusted in some cases. The Chair asked the council for any related feedback that she could take with her to that meeting on November 21.

The current mandate is very broad. Is it better to have a broad mandate and the freedom to choose among a greater array of issues, or is it a more efficient use of faculty effort to focus its work on a smaller, more specific group of issues?

Vice Provost for Educational Outreach David Szatmary suggested that one way to focus the work of the Council would be to change its mandate to include the realm of fee-based activities at the University of Washington. This would broaden the Council’s mandate to include aspects of the University not previously considered within the purview of FCEO.

Szatmary also suggested that with state budget reductions forecasted, it is a good time to examine ways that fee-based programs might help mitigate the impact of those reductions.

Concerns were raised that recommendations made by the previous FCEO Chair, Kate O'Neill, about the need for funding of technical support for faculty had been lost over the summer. Is the work of Faculty Councils (in preparing these recommendations) given adequate attention? One member suggested that the recommendation may have been too broad. Representatives from every program and initiative at the University will be calling for increased funding this year and over the next few years, especially in light of the current economy. Proposals that are "lean, mean" and very specific will be given more considered attention.

Szatmary noted that the proposal to include distance learning courses in the general student course schedule will be taken to the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB) in December. With increased enrollment this quarter, the University was scrambling at the last minute to find classroom space for nearly 700 scheduled courses. Szatmary anticipates that the situation may be even worse in Winter quarter. Being able to offer some of these courses through distance learning would be a partial solution to the problem. The demand for online courses is increasing significantly, and if the Faculty Council on Educational Technology is not addressing this issue, Educational Outreach certainly should.

The initiative to increase the UW's offering of online courses is being supported by the administration and by most of the Deans. Szatmary hopes that the pilot programs planned for Spring and Autumn quarters will provide evidence to support the effectiveness of online courses.

Szatmary reported that he is a part of the working group charged with the reorganization of UW Technology, which includes Catalyst. He would welcome Council input for policy recommendations regarding content and structure of any educational technology initiatives based on faculty needs and perspective.

There would be some value in working toward a centralized approach to distance learning and online courses – providing some similarity across the board so that students don't need to learn a new platform with every online course they take. Although desirable in theory, there would be problems in the implementation. Platforms that work well for the College of Arts and Sciences may not work well at all for the Schools of Nursing or Medicine. Perhaps a centralized approach within each college would be possible. Given that technology and software evolve so quickly, and given that academic fields evolve so quickly, it may be difficult to prescribe a centralized approach campus-wide.

It would also help if the Council could work with SCPB to demonstrate the benefits of the proposal to provide staff to the academic units to help with the technology needs of students

3. Discussion about next steps with respect to development of the database discussed at the October meeting.

Chair Breitner noted that the concept of the database discussed at the October meeting is an integral part of the discussion of today's agenda item #2. Central points include the importance of defining the problems, issues and options involved in order to be able to consider an effective approach to the solution. The Chair noted that the Council should work on the survey to identify the variables, the problems and the right questions.

Council members exchanged personal experiences related to distance learning opportunities at other institutions. It is clear that this is quickly becoming an attractive alternative to the conventional classroom experience for many students today – and an attractive potential supplement to the budget for many institutions of higher education.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to define what success would look like at the UW in this regard. Council member Bill Wells suggested a strategy that would include laying out (in this order): issues, assumptions, facts, discussion, conclusions and recommendation. It's important to have a clear picture of the current situation as well as any vision of the future in order to be able to measure the gap between the two and outline the steps required to get from the current situation to that vision of the future.

4. Set clear direction for intended accomplishments for the year.

The Council will move forward with the survey at the next meeting – fleshing out questions to be included and deciding to whom it should be sent. The survey will address the following issues:

- Faculty spend too much time on technology;
- There are virtually no distance learning or online courses at the UW other than those offered through Educational Outreach and the School of Nursing;
- The UW is facing significant budget reductions and fee-based programs might be able to provide part of the solution;
- The UW is facing significant lack of classroom space available for the courses planned.

The Chair offered to summarize the discussion and issues raised at today's meeting as they relate to the four bullet points above. She will distribute this summary to council members before the next meeting, so that members can be better prepared to work on the survey.

Wells will draft a grid that would help frame the issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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

Present: **Faculty:** Breitner, Kyes, Olavarria, Wells, Yeh, Wells, Zierler
 President's Designee: Szatmary
 Ex Officio Reps: Brown, Ray

Absent: **Faculty:** Erdly, Harrison, Lam, Wilkes
 Ex Officio Reps: Allen