

University Of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., January 5, 2011
142 Gerberding

Meeting Synopsis:

- 1) Call to Order
 - 2) Approval of Minutes from meeting on December 1, 2011
 - 3) Demonstration of Canvas System – Karin Roberts
 - 4) IASystem Proposal and Overview – Nana Lowell
 - 5) Discussion on Academic Engagement
 - 6) Adjournment
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1) Call to Order

Council Chair Jan Carline called the meeting to order at 10:41 a.m.

2) Approval of notes from meeting on December 1, 2011

No objections arose to adopting the notes from the December 1, 2011 meeting.

3) Demonstration of Canvas System – Karin Roberts

Carline introduced Karin Roberts, Program Manager Catalyst Research & Development at the UW Office of Learning Technologies. Roberts provided a demonstration of the Canvas system. She discussed the development of this platform and displayed the different views in either the “student” and “instructor” profiles. She displayed the access to courses, assignment descriptions, grades and a calendar which aggregates due dates across courses. Canvas also can send reminders electronically, to cellular phones or email, and students may submit assignments through the system. Additionally, Roberts described the support for interaction, both between the instructor and students and amongst students. A synchronous chat tool is available, and students can work collaboratively on assignments.

Tools are also available for instructors, allowing rubrics and comments to be embedded in assignments, and automated weighting for grades. “Speed Grader,” available online and as an iPad app, allows for instructors to read student papers, add comments and grade electronically and provide comments in text, audio or video formats. Upon discussion of this functionality, the council suggested to have line numbers within the document, to serve as a reference for comments. Questions arose on submitting assignments, and this process in Canvas was briefly outlined. It was noted that the grading system is not integrated with Registrar’s office, but could be done in the future. It was also suggested that students should have access the “Speed Grader” function, to critique other student work.

Canvas is currently being piloted, and is tested across class sizes of up to 500 students. The platform is currently being evaluated with the central question of “What will make Canvas a successful courseware

option at UW?" Further pilots will be conducted during winter quarter, and a cross-campus rollout will be considered in spring quarter, guided by user evaluations.

Roberts noted that overall user satisfaction is high in preliminary results. Benefits cited were quicker course set-up and creation of assignment and activities, and the greatest challenges were with instructors unfamiliar with Learning Management Systems (LMS). Student experience was neutral to positive (70% satisfied or more than satisfied), and different preferences towards other LMS systems were observed across the three University of Washington campuses. Questions followed whether adaptations can be made after adoption, and Roberts added that the manufacturer is quick to respond to changes in UW's needs. Teaching Assistants or guest lecturers had been considered within the development, in addition to support for broad types of courses (regular, large, and infrequent).

Roberts commented that multiple systems would be slowly transferred away from, towards solely using Canvas. Discussion followed on availability of support for this transition. Other catalyst tools will remain available currently, but users will eventually need to migrate to the new system. Security, in terms of who has access to different files, was highlighted as an important issue to faculty.

4) IASystem Proposal and Overview – Nana Lowell

Nana Lowell from the Office of Educational Assessment introduced a new, electronic system for course evaluations, IASystem. She is interested if FCTL would be willing to endorse the proposal to the Student Technology Fund for \$230,000, and provided a summary of the services provided in UW course evaluations. 45 other campuses had paid and used these services, which had decreased costs to UW, however due to recent loss of customers the University would need to begin charging its departments for future evaluations. Lowell noted that students were also lobbying for an online course evaluation system. She commented that despite the decreased cost of electronic evaluations, electronic evaluations tend to have reduced response rates.

Lowell described pilots being conducted at the iSchool, UW Tacoma and future pilots at the Law School and provided a timeline for the IASystem development. Questions were raised on the evaluation periods, and response rates for online evaluations. One idea to improve responses was to offer students incentives to submit responses, similar to the practice with online students. Councilmembers suggested that the Faculty Council on Academic Standards may be interested this development. Discussion followed in concern with the breadth of access to electronic comments, and the helpfulness of such comments in evaluations. Lowell compared that other institutions review comments, removing rude or inappropriate comments, before making them available. She commented that the marketability of this tool will be investigated with the Center for Commercialization.

FCTL formally endorsed the proposal to the STF funding.

5) Discussion on Academic Engagement

Carline sent out three different articles regarding Academic Engagement to the council, and provided a background to the subject. He had been considering the value of having students in classrooms on their academic growth, and read literature comparing learning and student engagement between online and

in-person courses. Carline provided the Council with three questions to structure discussion: “What is engagement on the ground?” “What types of interactions are needed?” and “What kind of setting is necessary for engagement to occur?”

Suggested definitions of student engagement were “active learning” or simulation of tasks in the field with instructor observation, stimulation of critical thinking, discussion and participation, and promotion of creativity. There was an emphasis on providing “real world” applicable experience. Required interactions for learning were suggested to extend beyond the classroom, such as library support for students in paper-writing and research. Councilmembers noted a difference in student engagement needs between large and small class sizes, and engagement tools such as “clickers.” Using students as “peer-TAs” was highlighted as a way both to engage students and provide more individualized support. Carline described the use of small groups, and showed a video clip on “teaching by questioning,” and the trade-off between transmitting content and engagement of students.

Fields were differentiated between courses which require memorization compared to understanding principals. Council debated active and passive transmission of knowledge and concluded that using only one “flavor” of teaching decreases capacity for student learning. Councilmembers noted Beth Kalikoff’s office is recording successful class sessions in order to disseminate successful teaching strategies on engagement. Also there was interest in connecting success in class to success in life. Carline requested to know if the Council would be interested in addressing this subject.

6) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m. by Chair Carline.

Minutes by Jay Freistadt, Faculty Council Support Analyst. jayf@u.washington.edu

Present: **Faculty:** Carline (Chair), Masuda, Salehi-Esfahani, Olavarria, Zierler, Wilkes, Harrison, Martin-Morris

Ex-Officio Reps: Smith, Corbett, Hornby,

Guests: Roberts, Lowell, Lewis, Campion, Sugatan, Ronquillo (Representing Kalikoff), Szatmary

Absent: **Faculty:** Kyes, Nelson, Yeh, Elkhafaifi

President’s Designee: Taylor