

University Of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., October 3, 2013
Gerberding 26

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to Order
 2. Introductions
 3. Approval of the Minutes from May 2, 2013
 4. Activities Update
 5. UW-IT Initiatives Supporting Hybrid Learning
 6. Online Course Evaluations Update
 7. Access to Evaluations – Students and Non-UW Access
 8. Possible Agenda Items for the 2013-14 Academic Year
 9. Adjourn
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1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Allen at 10:30 a.m.

2) Introductions

Allen introduced himself and his role as council chair. Members introduced themselves to the council.

3) Approval of the Minutes from May 2, 2013

The minutes from May 2, 2013 were approved as written.

4) Activities Update

In reviewing the upcoming SEC agenda Allen reported that a special task force on online education will be discussed. SCPB has already looked at this issue as a result of recent interest in online education initiatives, including online degree programs and MOOCs.

Allen reported on an upcoming site visit by UW's accreditation committee.

5) UW-IT Initiatives Supporting Hybrid Learning

Karin Roberts, Assistant Director for Academic and Collaboration Applications, reported on the recent rollout of updates to UW learning management systems. The Office of Educational Assessment conducted an evaluation of UW's needs and demands and Roberts will be able to present more detailed findings at a future FCTL meeting.

The assessment found that Canvas was well received by faculty and students. However, it did identify several obstacles that faculty and students encountered which will be addressed with the product vendor to improve product design. The assessment also found that Panapto lecture-capture might be a better alternative to Tegrity, prompting an upcoming pilot program to test Panapto which will be conducted for the duration of the 2013-14 academic year to identify usage, evaluate effectiveness and gather feedback.

There are many new tools that will be able to provide a tremendous amount of usage data. Roberts asked the council if there were any additional issues to look into from the faculty's perspective. One

suggestion was to identify what is being captured and how it relates to innovations in the classroom. Additional issues to look into include the number of students that use lecture capture and what types of classes incorporate the technology. It would be very interesting to compare the data between “flipped” versus “straight” lecture courses. Other issues to track include campus utilization of the technology, notification methods other than email communication, and impacts on student performance.

Roberts mentioned Turnitin plagiarism software will be integrated into Canvas. Their office will spend a couple weeks to evaluate and train staff on the software before faculty can use it.

6) Online Course Evaluations Update

Nana Lowell, Director for Office for Educational Assessment, updated the council on developments to online course evaluations. Over the past two years UW has been slowly shifting from paper-based evaluations to an online format while giving faculty a choice in which format to use.

There is continuing development to phase-in online course evaluations and customizing questionnaires. There are several formats that can be used based on the type of course with the goal to enable customization for specific questions that can result in course improvements. Currently, only standard reports are available but the goal is to incorporate more dynamic reporting to allow for normative comparisons between courses and instructors. The office currently offers this as a separate, stand-alone service but the intent is to incorporate this into the new system. During implementation the office will offer a soft rollout. It will be a complex system and training coordinators will be assisting departments in how to work with the online interface.

The office wants to encourage faculty to use online course evaluations for all online courses. In the shift between paper and online evaluations it is important to emphasize response rates. Online evaluations have a dramatically lower response rate since the biggest factor is faculty involvement. Best practices from other institutions are being reviewed, but the effective methods depend on the culture of the institution. For example, some institutions withhold grades until evaluations are submitted, a practice that would not work well at UW. One thought was to tie online course evaluations to Canvas. Some campuses also have an informal competition between departments to increase participation rates. It was mentioned that students could complete online evaluations in class if they have access to a laptop.

The response rates at UW Tacoma and Bothell are lower than the Seattle campus, but still strong. UW Tacoma is committed to implementing online evaluations and recently conducted a short pilot with three departments during the Summer Quarter. Work is being done to match student response with the database in order to study demographics in relation to STEM courses. It will be interesting to observe the difference between departments, but it relies on the culture of each department to participate in online evaluations.

A question was raised asking if there is any substantive change in ratings when conducted online. The literature says no, but the office will check into that. Online evaluations are confidential and anonymous; participation data are not shared with faculty or departments, it is only used to study demographics of students who participate.

Mid-quarter evaluations are a method to improve instructional effectiveness during the quarter. Anonymous web postings are also effective methods to gather feedback during the academic quarter.

Discussion ensued regarding the methods of evaluations and ideas of what could be included to enhance the evaluation process. Implementation might look different between departments and the office will keep an eye on response rate to identify departments that are exhibiting low participation rates. If departments demonstrate low response rates they may not even use online assessment because it is preferable to prevent bad data from contaminating the entire data set.

Discussion ensued. Online evaluations have a tendency to allow students to flame and submit inappropriate comments which can be harmful to the faculty member. It is difficult to incorporate “profanity checkers” into the process since so many course evolutions occur each quarter

One potential agenda item for future meetings could be reviewing the assessment of student learning and how it is tied to effective teaching. This discussion is commonly driven by the Board of Regents, but it should come from the faculty and students since they are so closely tied to the learning process. This concern is closely tied to the use of technology in the classroom and its effect on approaches to learning.

Discussion ensued regarding alternate methods to course evaluations. One method suggested would require a student to write a short letter to next year’s students of what to expect in the course. This method came from *Tomorrow’s Professor* blog which discusses interesting pedagogical ideas for the classroom.

Online Course Evaluations and Paper Reduction

Funding has been difficult for expanding online evaluations. The source of funding comes primarily from other institutions where they offer course evaluation services. However, this funding source has been gradually diminishing as those institutions move to online course evaluations. Being self-supported in the past, the office recently had to apply for outside funding. Around this time their office was approached by UW’s paper-reduction committee. UW and all state agencies have been tasked by the legislature to reduce paper by 30%. The committee worked with their office to send out position paper for online evaluations and recently brokered a request for funding that provided funding for another year of development.

7) Access to Evaluations – Students and Non-UW Access

There are two level of access in order to review evaluations; access with UW Net Ids and access without. Last year a group of students, as part of a project, went to the site, hacked into the data and posted evaluations online. This received a number of complaints and the decision was made to protect faculty evaluations through UW-IT. The matter was forwarded to the Attorney General’s Office requesting advice but there has been no response.

Public access to information in Washington State is very open; anything interpreted as normal business is considered public record. However, it is acceptable to protect evaluations behind UW Net Id as long as anyone without access can be provided the evaluations through a separate request. Councilmembers reviewed the online access site and discussed UW policy restrictions. The government is required by law to disclose information upon request as a result of a public records request. However, this does not require the UW to publish the evaluations online, just to provide them when requested.

The council was asked for its feedback and guidance from a faculty perspective. A question was raised asking if online evaluation access could simply be turned off. Evaluations are helpful for current

students, however many students do not even know the online system exists. Most students use ratemyprofessor.com instead because the website allows for individual comments on teachers.

8) Possible Agenda Items for the 2013-14 Academic Year

Allen was approached by Patricia Kramer, chair of the Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS), to gauge FCTL interest in creating an ad hoc sub-committee tasked with defining courses and course credit. Allen asked the council if there was any interest in developing this proposed committee. FCTL will be looking into online and hybrid learning so this may be a concern worth reviewing. The old formula in assessing credit hours is not up to date so it will be useful to discuss the matter. FCTL will invite a member of FCAS to discuss this with the council.

McNerney reported that the ASUW Senate will meet next week and will be identifying issues to address for the upcoming academic year. ASUW will convene a working group with TAs to address their needs and concerns. McNerney will discuss the outcome of the workgroup at the next FCTL meeting.

FCTL will follow up on the letter to President Young addressing online learning.

9) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Allen at 12:00 p.m.

Minutes by Grayson Court, Faculty Council Support Analyst. gcourt@uw.edu

Present: **Faculty:** Allen (Chair), Carline, Harrison, Masuda, McGough, Nelson, Olavarria, Spyridakis, Turner
President's Designee: Taylor
Ex-Officio Reps: Corbett, Jankowski, McNerney
Guests: Karen Roberts (Assistant Director for Academic & Collaboration Applications UW-IT), Claudia Frere and Elena Johns (UW Committee for Paper Reduction), Nana Lowell (Director of Office of Educational Assessment)

Absent: **Faculty:** Schwartz, Wilkes, Yeh, Zierler
Ex-Officio Reps: none (no GPSS representative has been appointed)