

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
Thursday, October 7, 2010
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis

1. Welcome and Introduction
 2. Scope of Activity and Mission Statement
 3. Online Grade Submission (Virjean Edwards, Interim University Registrar, and Tom Lewis, Director, Academic & Collaborative Applications, UW-IT)
 4. Adjournment
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Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

Welcome and Introduction

Council Chair Jan Carline welcomed all in attendance to the inaugural meeting of the Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning.

Marcia Killien, Secretary of the Faculty, gave introductory remarks and thanked the members for being the founding members of the council. She gave the history of and reasoning behind the formation of the council, and noted that it was incumbent on the FCTL to set their own mission, focus, and direction. She sees the council's formation as a way to highlight the importance of the educational mission at the University. Having one council that deals with the issues of Teaching and Learning brings broad attention, in a similar manner to the Faculty Council on Research bringing attention to research issues. She noted that the agendas of the council were theirs to develop, and that the council will be key in providing faculty input and advice on the mission of educational quality, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Carline began a round of introductions by saying that the council will have issues it is asked to consider, but will also have opportunities to develop their own issues. His key interest at the moment is exploring where we are going, and what we should be doing.

Each person at the table then spoke in turn, giving a brief personal background and noting their particular interests or issues regarding teaching and learning. The issues noted (some, multiple times) and potential topics for the council to address this year were:

- Educational outreach, informal education, and how former staff duties are being placed on faculty, with an emphasis on how this affects the ability of faculty to teach
- How technology gets into the useful "toolkit" for teaching
- The increasing importance of distance learning in education, which will impact how regular professors perform their duties
- Becoming more computer savvy as faculty

- The role that librarians can play through the departmental liaison program to support faculty with various issues
- Libraries as a part of a new Center for Teaching and Learning, and exploring that partnership
- Tri-campus Library-wide student learning goals
- The effect of Activity Based Budgeting (ABB) on instructional quality, and how to monitor and/or modify this system to take quality into account
- Turning intense, erudite discussions at the council level into actual action in the community
- Meeting the UW's increasing demand for providing courses in the face of decreasing resources, both physical and otherwise, and the logistics of moving ahead and getting the University community on board with changes
- How the FCTL can help with assessment methodologies that can be integrated in the least intrusive way possible
- Working to help create a meaningful accreditation process, which is changing to be a living part of the way business is conducted, with more frequent reports and a shorter time cycle
- Ensuring that the FCTL addresses both graduate and undergraduate teaching and learning
- Providing ongoing faculty development opportunities, like the Faculty Fellows program that aims to help faculty balance teaching and research and provides ongoing support as they develop their careers
- Ways to improve the student learning experience, including a higher sense of ownership and investment in the learning process
- The triennial technology survey of the university
- Mobile applications and what, if anything, students need on their mobile devices for teaching and learning
- Working with the state legislature to further inform them on issues of technology, how faculty publish, and how technology is different at UW than at community colleges

Scope of Activity and Mission Statement

Carline said that group would be developing a vision of the council over the next few months, and reiterated the official charge of the council from the faculty code:

The Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning shall be responsible for all matters of policy, both academic and non-academic, relating to improvement of teaching and learning in the University; including distance learning, educational outreach, and Summer Quarter, and the use of educational technology in instruction.

He noted that the council is stuck in a position of having great ideas and no support to implement its recommendations. Therefore, it is important to figure out how to have recommendations make impacts and get them to the right people. Members clearly have different primary interests and will have to figure out how to handle all those different issues, and how to get all the work done. There might be subcommittees and/or working groups on topics like distance learning.

Carline said he wants to have issues brought to the university, and have the university broadly made aware of those issues. The FCTL should heighten the importance of concerns on teaching and learning with the university at large.

Carline asked for other input on a high-level vision for the council. Comments included:

- The council can have an impact on the crucial work of maintaining a high quality of education in whatever form it's delivered in; this is especially necessary with the transformation higher education is currently undergoing, with a mandate to train and educate more people and the growth of nontraditional higher education models.
- The council reports to the Faculty Senate (by way of the Senate Executive Committee) but should take care to broadcast things to the faculty at large. The organizational structure doesn't prevent other opportunities like writing op-ed pieces in UWeek or developing a website on how to best use educational technology.
- The council must deal with maintaining quality of instruction, faculty, and students in the face of budget cuts.

Online Grade Submission

The council welcomed Virjean Edwards, Interim University Registrar, and Tom Lewis, Director, Academic & Collaborative Applications, UW-IT, for a discussion about online grade submission. Lewis presented a handout with statistics detailing percentages of grades turned in online vs. on paper, and percent on time. Edwards said that in Summer quarter of 2011, grades will be turned in online only. Since this change could potentially disturb a fraction of the faculty, they'd like FCTL's support in the transition. There are too many late grades being turned in.

Edwards and Lewis briefly touched on some issues with online grading. There are some complaints that the online gradebook is confusing or has too many steps. They have asked Catalyst if they could look at providing a more direct, simple way to enter grades, as an alternative to the current extra step where faculty are asked to provide both formative and summative grade reports to students.

Carline asked Edwards to expand on why the move online was necessary. She explained that there are numerous problems with processing the faculty grade reports ("bubble sheets") manually, causing delays in the system and affecting the total financial aid process. Moving to online grades only will result in large efficiency gains for both their office and the students, as grades will come in as they're entered. Additionally, this allows for an extension of the grade reporting window, from the Monday after finals week to Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

Late grades are particularly problematic for a number of reasons. Financial aid is a major issue, especially in the narrow gaps between after fall and winter quarters. Other things affected by late grades include graduation, scholarships, checking that course prerequisites are met, athletic eligibility, admission to majors, work status, pay increases, and general certification. All require grades to be turned in, and late submission delays or hampers all of them. Edwards stressed that the FCTL can play a major role in helping faculty colleagues to understand these issues and support the move to online grading.

The council then discussed a number of related topics, including changing grades after initial submission and the most effective way to disseminate information about the move to online grade submission. After some points were raised about the merits of training staff members and time schedule coordinators, in addition to faculty, to enter the grades, Edwards suggested that her office would contact each department individually regarding the transition to online grade submission and train them as needed, supplying the

materials. With a year for the transition, they will be able to get a variety of messages out and provide help as necessary. One member also suggested developing a “dummy file” for demonstration purposes.

Regarding changes to already submitted grades, it was established that there are provisions for grade changes online, but through a different mechanism. Changes can be made for up to two years, and professors that oversee classes taught by TAs can be added to the system as an instructor with access to the grades. Changes must have good reason, and can only be submitted by an instructor.

At the end of the discussion, Carline noted that this was example of outside persons or groups bringing matters to the council for advice, which will likely happen throughout the year, but that the council will have the right to determine own agenda as well.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:50 p.m.

Minutes by Craig Bosman
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Present: Faculty: Carline (Chair), Kyes, Martin-Morris, Salehi-Esfahani, Elkhafaifi, Nelson, Yeh, Wilkes, Olavarria

Ex-Officio Reps: Hornby

Guests: Szatmary, Lewis, Lowell, Campion, Sugatan

Absent: Faculty: Masuda, Merati, Harrison, Zierler

Ex-Officio Reps: Calissi-Corral

President’s Designee: Taylor