

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
Thursday, January 6, 2011
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis

1. Approval of minutes from December 9, 2010
 2. Discussion of the Teaching Academy activities
 3. Changes to the course evaluation system
 4. Adjournment
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Call to Order

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

1. Approval of minutes from December 9, 2010 meeting

The minutes of the December 9, 2010 were approved as written.

2. Discussion of the Teaching Academy activities

Beth Kalikoff, Director of the Center for Teaching and learning, said the Teaching Academy is looking at four kinds of activities for the remainder of the year: faculty workshops, a large class collegium, the distinguished teaching award, and providing a Faculty Fellows follow-up including teaching circles and a pilot program on communities of practice. She also said that a draft of the Center for Teaching and Learning Mission Statement had been prepared, and would be shared with FCTL.

Carline noted that the large class collegium was open to all, and asked if the communities of practice and teaching circles would be open to all as well. Kalikoff said that as a pilot, it would be open to faculty fellows, and would have no incentives other than intrinsic ones. If there are other communities interested, there would be possibilities of further pilots, extensions of program duration, stipends, and deliverables.

Nelson said that in teaching circles, one objective is to bring in research expertise, and asked where it gets injected. Kalikoff said that groups that want one can have a faculty facilitator or participant, or a consultant coming in intermittently. A lot of expertise is located in the Teaching and Learning group in the Libraries. She added that a teaching circle is loose, and can decide what they need and let her know. In response to other questions, she added that the lifetime of a teaching circle is flexible but she'd suggest meeting 1-2 times this quarter and next quarter, and that she hoped the content, community, and collegiality would be sufficient to participate without extra incentives.

3. Changes to the course evaluation system

Nana Lowell, Director of the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA), said that her office is in the process of revising the technological infrastructure that supports class evaluations and is using the opportunity to make improvements to the system. She detailed the work of the OEA, noting that 2/3 of their budget is self-sustaining, with their state funding supporting assessment of academic programs.

She said that part of the redevelopment of the course evaluation system will include integrating online evaluations with those collected on paper. She noted that there need to be special procedures to increase response rates for online course evaluations, such as the possibility of placing a hold on students seeing their grades if they have not turned in evaluations. She also spoke on the purpose of evaluations, saying that if evaluations are used for high stakes decisions such as those around promotion and tenure, then the data have to be of especially high quality. Multimodal evaluations (online, smartphone, text message, etc.) might not be good in this instance but could be an excellent source of formative information for instructional improvement.

Discussion turned to student perspectives, as Bradley noted that it's difficult to get students to sign on to a computer and fill out an evaluation. On paper and in class seems to be best. However, students complain about the bubble sheets. Discussion centered on communication and the knowledge of both the use and purpose of the evaluation forms. It was noted that many students may not understand the importance of ratings for faculty, nor the use of the course evaluation catalog where they can see evaluation ratings for professors.

Lowell noted that the OEA currently serves 65 campuses besides UW Seattle, and the fees from off-campus clients allow for free course evaluations for UW Seattle. But because of this, they can't be entirely UW-centric in changes.

The council then raised a number of other points, including:

- Integration between exams and Gradebook could be made easier through a change to test scoring services.
- Integration between *many* systems could be made easier, including the registrar's office and the student database.
- A short paper form at the end of evaluations could be used for summative questions, and formative questions can be asked separately.
- Evaluation questions ask for students' subjective evaluation of courses. The OEA operates under the assumption that evaluation results will be used in conjunction with other information in evaluating the quality of instruction.
- There is a fair amount of documentation on the evaluation of the reliability and validity of student ratings of instruction, but it's important that they're used correctly.

4. Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:58 p.m.

Minutes by Craig Bosman
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Present: **Faculty:** Carline (Chair), Kyes, Masuda, Elkhafaifi, Nelson, Olavarria, Wilkes
Ex-Officio Reps: Hornby, Bradley
Guests: Sahr, Lowell, Kalikoff, Lewis

Absent: **Faculty:** Martin-Morris, Merati, Salehi-Esfahani, Harrison, Yeh, Zierler
Ex-Officio Reps: Calissi-Corral
President's Designee: Taylor