

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
Thursday, February 3, 2011
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Gerberding 142

Meeting Synopsis

1. Approval of minutes from January 6, 2011
 2. Discussion on Academic Program Review (James Antony)
 3. Initial discussion of methods to improve the student learning experience, including a higher sense of ownership and investment in the learning process
 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 January 6, 2010 meeting

The minutes of the January 6, 2010 were approved as written.

2. Discussion on Academic Program Review, James Antony

James Antony, Professor of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies and Associate Vice Provost & Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate School, introduced the academic program review. The regular State of Washington mandated review of degree programs is housed in the Graduate School, but includes both undergraduate and graduate programs. When a new program is launched at the university, one of the contractual arrangements is that it'll be reviewed 5 years after the onset. If the review is positive, the program is taken off probationary status and moves to being reviewed every 10 years. With a high number of new program proposals every quarter, especially at Bothell and Tacoma, academic program review is going to be happening frequently and will be resource intensive.

Antony detailed the review process: a unit (department, school, or college) knows 15 years in advance. Two years prior to the review, the unit is reached out to, and a collaborative process is begun that focuses on strategic planning and the vision for the future. Then, the unit does a self-study that has four major components: (1) to talk about the overall organization of the unit, (2) student learning goals and outcomes, (3) scholarly impact, and (4) where the unit is going in the future. Final steps in the process include a 2-day site visit and written records. From start to finish, the process takes about a year; two, including early conversation iterations.

In response to questions from the council, Antony further detailed the following points:

- The objective of the graduate council review is to examine the written reviews. This review is done by people who have been a part of the process, and looks at whether to endorse the recommendations of the visiting committee, advises the dean what that letter transmittal should look like, and ensures that the process was rigorous and the rules were followed.

- Typical friction points of the process occur when a unit finds it's up for review. It's important to spend time up front to help reframe the process as one of telling a necessary story and positioning the unit in ways it wants to go.
- The review process can (and has) result(ed) in fundamental shifts in curriculum and resource allocation.
- The state mandates the process but doesn't specify how to do it; it only requires rudimentary metrics. This process is the culmination of years of discussion and design.
- The process is mandated in the university handbook and the faculty code.
- In the case of an RCEP (Reorganization, Consolidation, and Elimination of Programs) procedure, academic program review documents get looked at. Also, a review could lead to the invoking of an RCEP, as the point of the process is to raise questions.
- The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) oversees an autonomous portion of the process, designing and implementing an electronic survey of all graduate students in the program, and reports directly to the review committee. There is no parallel process for undergraduates, but they are beginning to explore how this might occur. Where there is an undergraduate program under review, the committee always meets with students.

One council member pointed out that the perception is that the final report sits on a shelf, but all faculty are interested in evidence. If information were available, faculty could be convinced that there are demonstrable results in the way resources are allocated.

Antony said it had been embedded in the process that when members of FCTL wish to be a part of the charge meeting and exit meeting, they have an open invitation, and asked members to contact him if interested.

3. Initial discussion of methods to improve the student learning experience, including a higher sense of ownership and investment in the learning process

The council held a discussion of ways to improve the student learning experience and facilitate a higher sense of ownership and investment in the learning process on the part of students. Carline said that he was having difficulty finding experts on ways to engage students with technology and may move to a literature review. He asked those interested in the next steps of such a review to let him know.

Ideas to increase engagement mentioned by the council included:

- Departmental facilitation of practical seminars such as navigating the letter of recommendation process
- Exploration seminars, which include extended contact hours and small class sizes and feature a different kind of teaching and rewarding interactions
- Regular career seminars featuring successful alumni that can attest that their education helped them
- Sessions for graduate students on how to create a teaching statement or portfolio
- Encouragement for students to make the most of jobs through mentoring and application of learning
- Project based learning, including research or project opportunities, especially when paired with faculty
- Using the 499 course code opportunity to have students join labs and research

- Finding out why students say they're in a major or class, beyond the requirements, and tailoring teaching to that as practical
- Smaller classes or more sections with TAs – situations that emphasize interaction
- Community-wide initiatives like CLUE and Dawg Daze
- Where possible, less emphasis on grades (such as the medical school, which has only Pass/Fail the first year, and adds Honors the second year), which changes the learning style and community interaction

Nelson pointed out that common themes included getting at what practical things students are specifically interested in (letters of recommendation, applications, etc.) and personal contact with the faculty where normal barriers dissolve and students start talking. He emphasized the importance of getting students to realize that the real objective is not grades but to learn how to learn, and learn how to categorize the type of learning one does (metacognition).

The council also discussed whether it was a problem if a student just wanted a good grade and was not invested in the learning process. Arguments included that cheating happens as a direct consequence of divestment, that those who are strictly going for a grade do not learn as well as those who are interested, and that if attention is not paid on how to assess what students are learning, the university is not meeting its objectives of having students learn deeper cognitive skills.

4. Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:58 p.m.

Minutes by Craig Bosman

Faculty Council Support Analyst

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Present: Faculty: Carline (Chair), Martin-Morris, Kyes, Masuda, Merati, Nelson, Salehi-Esfahani
Olavarria

Ex-Officio Reps: Bradley, Awan

President's Designee: Taylor

Guests: Antony, Kalikoff, Lewis

Absent: Faculty: Elkhafaifi Kyes, Harrison, Yeh, Wilkes, Zierler

Ex-Officio Reps: Hornby, Calissi-Corral