

Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning
2010-11 Annual Report
Submitted by Jan Carline, Chair

The council, an amalgam of three former councils, had its inaugural meeting on October 7th of 2010. We began the year with introductions and a discussion of the scope and vision for the new council. We adopted a formal statement on November 4th as a guide to our future work. The vision statement is:

The major purpose of the council is to support efforts to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning at the University of Washington, inform the academic community on issues of teaching and learning, and provide consultation on these issues to the Faculty Senate, Council of Deans, and Provost, and other campus groups focusing on teaching and learning.

Our initial meetings were partially devoted to the development of an agenda for discussion and activity in the council during the academic year. We selected the following three topics for consideration.

The first issue centered on best practices for faculty development activities in support of the use of educational technologies. We began with an investigation into best practices, lead by Michael Campion, Director of Academic and learning Technologies, School of Medicine. We concluded that there is no single best technology to support learning. Rather, technology is only as effective as the basic pedagogic principles it supports. Further review of the literature led to the following recommendations made to the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Teaching Academy to guide faculty development efforts.

- Faculty development should be based first in learning principles and then technology to support those principles.
- Faculty development should be based on the perceived needs of faculty within an academic unit.
- The best providers of faculty development are educators within a department or school that have mastered a technology who are able to understand the needs of faculty within that unit.
- Methods should include spotlighting innovations prominently in university publications and the development of local 'learning communities' of educators interested in implementing technology in teaching and learning.
- The successful use of technology depends on the quality and support of physical infrastructure (computers, projectors, internet capacity) in classrooms and the internet.

The second major topic entertained by the council was the use of technology to increase teaching efficiency (increasing class enrollments). We began this discussion with a review of appropriate literature led by Deven Hamilton, Research Scientist, Medical Education and Biomedical Informatics. The council concluded the following:

Educational quality and use of on-line technology

- There is no conclusive evidence that on-line education per se is better or worse than traditional methods of college learning. Some studies show increases in learning, particularly in declarative content. Other studies indicate that on-line activities used to augment more traditional learning can be effective and increase retention.
- As on-line tools have gotten more advanced, instructors now can provide interactions and experiences that previously were not available in the on-line format. The quality of the tool, the ability of the instructor to use the tool, and the appropriateness of the tools in meeting the needs of the students will determine its success.
- Maintaining actual and perceived quality in education requires interaction between faculty and students. Student satisfaction with on-line courses is related to the degree of perceived interaction with instructors.

- Methods that blend on-line learning with interactive learning result in better outcomes than totally asynchronous, independent methods.
- Other aspects of education, building community and collaboration within the class, are made more difficult as more is put online. It's important to consider not just learning outcomes but also the educational experience, interaction, and campus community.

Faculty effort

- Time needed for development of on-line courses can be significant.
- Continuing maintenance of course content after initial implementation may also require significant faculty time.
- Some studies have found that on-line courses require more time spent by faculty per student than in more traditional class formats, particularly activities requiring writing and on-line discussions.
- Reductions in time commitment for faculty may be found in totally free-standing courses that do not include online interactions.
- Moving towards a model of a community of learners, where the members of the class provide comment and direction to peers may reduce the level of faculty direction, and consequently time per student, in a course. This may be more appropriate for graduate study than undergraduate courses.

Class size

- The additional demands for interaction between students and instructors in teacher moderated on-line courses reduces the ideal class size compared with more traditional formats of teaching.
- Larger class sizes may be possible if adjunct faculty and staff are used to moderate and provide most individual interaction with students in place of regular faculty.
- Students may be sensitive to the substitution of less qualified instructors for regular faculty, and may become even more sensitive as planned tuition increases are imposed.

Costs of on-line education

- Moving to on-line education takes time and effort. Development time must be taken into account, including time spent with the initial development of on-line course materials, ongoing maintenance of those materials, and adoption of new technologies.
- All faculty members are not native users of on-line technology in teaching, and must be trained and supported in the use of these tools in order for quality of instruction to be maintained.
- On-line education methods have increased the numbers of students enrolled in a class at other institutions with significant cost savings. These savings are realized primarily from the use of adjunct personnel to handle most day-to-day interactions with students. In this mode, costs are shifted to less expensive personnel without any claimed reduction in quality of instruction.

Based on these discussions, a letter to Interim President Wise was composed with the following requests:

- The information we have reported be made available for future discussions of these issues with the Board of Regents, Board of Deans, and other administrative groups considering these issues. We also request that members of the Council be included in these discussions.
- Adequate technologic infrastructure to support on-line learning needs to be developed and implemented to insure the success of any educational offering.
- Support for the development of skills in use of technology and adaption of pedagogic methods to on-line learning should be provided to faculty.
- Any shift in educational responsibility from teaching faculty to temporary, adjunct, or lower paid instructors in implementation of on-line teaching should be monitored carefully for effects educational quality, learning outcomes for those courses, as well as indirect effects on more traditional programs.
- Faculty compensation for new teaching responsibilities in on-line educational efforts, including development of materials and courses and the supervision of adjunct staff must be developed and implemented.
- Methods to recognize the scholarly contribution of faculty in these efforts must be developed and included in decisions about merit and promotion.
- Courses chosen for on-line education need to be chosen judiciously, with decisions based on the appropriateness of goals and objectives of the course for use of on-line technology.

The third major topic considered was methods to improve student engagement in learning. Linda-Martin Morris convened a sub-group of council members to begin these discussions. This group has started a review of student engagement data already collected on campus.

During the year, the council invited representatives from a variety of campus organizations to inform us of their work, including the Center on Teaching and Learning and the Teaching Academy. Leaders from the Provost's office and Senate address the council on Academic Program Review, Policy issues in Fee-Based Programs, Granting Academic Credit for Experience, and Pilot activities in e-Text, eLearning System, Tegrity Lecture Capture

The council also provided guidance on the following issues brought to it for consideration:

- 2011 Faculty and Student Technology Surveys, Learning and Scholarly Technologies
- Status of annual reviews of lecturers, Council on Faculty Affairs
- Changes to course evaluation systems, Office of Educational Assessment
- Electronic textbooks, Vice Provost for UW Information Technology

The council ended its formal activity on June 2nd, with a discussion of topics to consider in the fall.

Council Members for 2010-11 Academic Year:

Faculty: Jan Carline (Chair), Medical Education; Hussein Elkhafaifi, Near East Languages; Robert Harrison, Forest Resources; Randall Kyes, Psychology; Linda Martin-Morris, Biology; David Masuda, Medical Education; Albert Merati, Laryngology, Otolaryngology; Bruce Nelson, Earth & Space Sciences; Jaime Olavarria, Psychology; Haideh Salehi-Esfahani, Economics; Richard Wilkes, Physics; Matthew Yeh, Pathology; Brenda Zierler, Nursing

Presidential Designee: Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Ex-Officio Representatives: Robert Corbett, PSO; Amanda Hornby, ALUW; Jed Bradley, ASUW; Fareed Awan, GPSS

Regular Guests: David Szatmary, Vice Provost, UW Educational Outreach; Tom Lewis, UW-IT; Nana Lowell, Office of Educational Assessment; Michael Campion, Academic Affairs