

University Of Washington
Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., April 30, 2013
142 Gerberding Hall

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Call to Order
 2. Review of Minutes from March 5th, March 19th, April 2nd and April 16th
 3. Class A Legislation of Academic Freedom
 4. Adjourn
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1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Stygall at 9:20 a.m.

2) Review of Minutes from March 5th, March 19th, April 2nd and April 16th

The minutes from March 5th were approved as amended. The minutes from March 19th, April 2nd and April 16th were approved as written.

3) Class A Legislation of Academic Freedom

Chair Stygall passed out recommended changes to UW's current language on academic freedom. The problem with UW's current statement is that it does not clearly define academic freedom. Also, language relating to shared governance should also be included. Stygall described the recent presentation on academic freedom from Helen Arntson (Assistant Attorney General) as "chilling". Additionally, Arntson was not able to distinguish the issues related to shared governance as it applies to the UW. For example, Arntson spoke about the court case where a Washington State University (WSU) professor was fired when proposing a new way to restructure his department as a result of budget cuts. Although it was informative, Arntson did not understand that as a professor it was his role to comment on governance issues. Watts agreed that something was missing there. Stygall explained that this presentation, along with the story of the WSU professor, demonstrates the importance in putting new language into the code. Faculty have to be careful when the issue is purely academic, but there is no language on shared governance which should be specifically included to reinforce UW's concept of shared governance between faculty and the administration.

Killien explained that the UW code has specific language regarding the role of faculty that is contradictory to the cases that Arntson spoke about. For example, part of faculty's role at UW is to advise the dean on the budget which is done through the councils. By including a statement of the faculty's role in shared governance this would take care of some of the issues that Arntson presented. Discussion ensued about proposed language and how to reflect a faculty member's role as part of shared governance.

Several sources were used as part of Stygall's revisions, including the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), University of Utah and current UW language on academic freedom. Stygall mentioned that UW president Michael Young even expressed his concern that the University of Utah had a stronger statement than UW.

Stygall clarified her revisions to UW's current language such as the addition of the term "sex". Discussion ensued about the terms "sex", "sexual identity" and "gender". Additionally, Stygall removed language from the last paragraph of UW's original language which addresses ethical dilemmas. The current language reads that if a professor experiences a conflict between their values and the expectations of the institution, then they have to quit.

Stygall clarified that she will incorporate AAUP and Utah's additions while deleting the highlighted language in UW's current version. Buck suggested deleting the entire last paragraph. Killien explained that the sentence addressing "subject matter" and "collective responsibility" is a question she is constantly asked and should be included. She stated that UW needs a statement allowing individual faculty members to teach an approved curriculum in their own way as long as it adheres to the collective faculty. Discussion ensued about how to restructure that portion of the language. Landis mentioned that a statement like this is critical because her department turns to language in the code when discussing this with faculty. Buck stated that if the department has differing opinions compared to an individual faculty member then their personal opinions can be squashed. Landis stated that UW has an example of this right now. For example, her department is being held accountable to a national organization that sets standards and competencies that need to be incorporated into their program. However, one colleague does not believe that such revisions should occur and has been pushing against those standards. The reaction from some colleagues in the department has been to not teach those courses.

Another example was disagreement between units during the Vietnam War which highlighted this same issue. Discussion ensued about additional revisions to the language. Questions were raised about specific terms. One term, "subject matter", was a reoccurring issue. One example mentioned was the reliance of significance testing in statistics. While this is a standard topic discussed in statistics, some professors think it should go out the window. The question raised asks if a professor is able to state his/her opinion on statistical significance testing when the topic comes up in the curriculum. Discussion ensued.

Killien suggested substituting "subject matter" with "curriculum" because the collective faculty is responsible for more than just course content. Additionally, some balance between collective faculty and individual faculty rights should be included somewhere. Landis stated that FCFA needs more time to think about the Class A legislation and was not sure if FCFA should be pressed to make a decision right now. Stygall stated that she wants this to come out of FCFA today. Discussion ensued about collective faculty stifling opinion of an individual member. The language should prevent an individual from teaching senseless issues, but the restriction should not stifle opinion. Watts raised a question about individual teaching techniques. For example, what happens when a teacher does not want to use a clicker which goes against standard practices for departments? In Physics, the department encourages professors to use clickers and several refuse. Watts acknowledged this is a really extreme issue, but should actions like this be legislated? The reply was that this issue is more focused on academic freedom for faculty to express their opinion. Discussion ensued about specific changes to the wording.

Henchy stated that collectivity is an issue and should protect faculty members within their subject area. Henchy believed that FCFA is taking collectivity a bit lightly, academic freedom should also protect faculty both within the deliberative collective process as well as their individual decisions regarding course content. Discussion ensued about how to incorporate the language.

Landis suggested that FCFA approve the Class A legislation by email vote. Chair Stygall said that the legislation needs to be approved by the end of the week in order to be presented to the Senate

Executive Committee (SEC). Stygall stated that the Class A legislation will be drafted and distributed to members for a vote via email.

Stygall announced that an agenda item for next meeting will be a discussion of issues that FCFA will be addressing next academic year.

4) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Stygall at 10:20 a.m.

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

Present: **Faculty:** Stygall (Chair), Huber, Landis, Buck, Watts
Ex-Officio Reps: Sukol, Henchy, Rees
Guests: Killien

Absent: **Faculty:** O'Brien, Vaughn, Johnson
Ex-Officio Reps: McNerney
President's Designee: Cameron