The University of Washington
Faculty Council on Educational Technology

The Faculty Council on Educational Technology met Friday, November 22, 2002, at 9:00 a.m., in 36 Gerberding.

PRESENT: ***Professors*** Gillis-Bridges, Kitts, Roth, Sinanan
Ex officio Albrecht, Jordan, Macklin, Kline (for Wolden-Hanson)
ABSENT: ***Professors*** Aldea, DeYoung, Goldberg, Leggott, Mizokawa, Prakash, Rojas, Zivot
Ex officio Kuterdem, Lewis, Szatmary.

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.

Synopsis

1. Recruiting a Chairperson
2. Developing an agenda for future projects and activities

Discussion

In a general discussion of the Educational Technology Council's history, mission and role, new and returning Council members shared background information, experience, and observations to help new members pick up the thread of the Council's work and to develop a new agenda:

Two years ago, FCET surveyed 5,000 faculty members about their needs for educational technology, and received a 38% response rate. According to Scott Macklin, the dataset still exists and has been posted on the Web.

http://www.washington.edu/oea/0106.htm

http://depts.washington.edu/webed/presentations.html

The dataset has been used by the Program for Educational Transformation Through Technology to help some departmental chairs and deans make decisions, but FCET – which was instrumental in shaping the survey - has not looked at the data. The dataset could drive a set of recommendations that could be taken to the administration to establish a direction for the propagation of educational technology at the University. Macklin sees FCET as a dissemination channel for making faculty aware of the resources and training opportunities that are available to those who want to make better use of educational technology.

Both Macklin and Bill Jordan referred to Council member Michael Goldberg's plan to disseminate technology via a faculty-to-faculty teaching model. This plan is in effect at the Bothell campus, and might also work well at Seattle.

Macklin said that 75% of faculty who responded to the survey rated themselves as "intermediate or higher" users of technology – 90% say they use word processing, 95% use email every day, about 90% know how to use a Web browser. Macklin contends that anyone who can use these applications can also use the Catalyst suite of tools to create things like virtual cases, online peer reviews, portfolios, etc. What is lacking is the faculty being able to see how these tools could be used for more effective teaching and learning. FCET could perhaps facilitate higher awareness among the faculty of just how these tools could benefit them.

Gerald Roth asked for some examples of educational technology; Macklin cited Catalyst, which was created after research at the Odegaard Library's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology revealed a need for Web-based tools, best practices, and teaching tips that would enable faculty to enhance the learning experience. Catalyst, which is managed by the Educational Technology and Development Group (Tom Lewis) and is under the auspices of the Office of Educational Partnerships (Lewis Fox), can be accessed by pasting the following URL (address) into a Web browser:

http://catalyst.washington.edu/home.html

Ron Kline commented that many UW classrooms are still not wired for Web-based technology. Robert Albrecht added that the support for technology in highly-wired classrooms is very weak. Nevertheless, Albrecht used technology to supplement his Electrical Engineering lectures by showing dynamic, moving examples to illustrate and reinforce his points.

Macklin said in many cases the Classroom Assignment Policy fails to match the appropriate environment to what the instructor is teaching. The Council could take this up as an issue.

Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges commented that learning doesn't only take place in the classroom – it occurs while students are writing, thinking, doing electronic postings to the class discussion board, etc. In addition to wired classrooms, the UW should have multiple types of spaces where different kinds of learning can occur. Roth said in 18 years teaching at the UW, he finds it is entirely up to the instructor to find and obtain any teaching aids and resources needed in classes – and this is even more difficult with computer technology. So there are barriers to the use of technology.

Jordan agreed that support should be part of the teaching infrastructure, and said that "it isn't really there." Albrecht envisioned a "virtual lab" that could connect to (for example) the Hubble telescope live so that classes could participate in real experiments. The mission of faculty councils, said Albrecht, should not be to fix the existing infrastructure, but to have a vision of where the technology should go, and to communicate that vision to the rest of the faculty.

Kline observed that it is a lot easier to develop the technology than it is to get it to the user. Macklin agreed that awareness of resources is a great need. The UW won the

EDUCAUSE Award for the best integration of technology in teaching and learning among 1750 member institution of higher learning and 180 member corporations, but the knowledge and use of that technology has not trickled down to the classroom level.

If it would be helpful, FCET could have some demonstrations of Catalyst tools and could, for example, see what the Locke Computer Center has done with computer-aided visualization techniques.

(Examples from the Locke Center Web site)
http://www.washington.edu/computing/Vislab.html

- A physicist graphically displaying numerical data, such as interaction probabilities, using color or exaggeration to enhance small features
- A forest ecologist "aging" the plants in a photo of a clearing, to see how the clearing will change as time passes
- A drama student testing the visibility of parts of a stage with scenery in place, from various parts of the theater, in order to plan where action should occur
- A medical researcher viewing a 3-D display of the position of a tumor constructed from CAT scan data
- An engineer observing an animation of the distortions of an airplane's fuselage under various wind conditions

Dissemination of information about services like Catalyst and the Locke Center could be a major focus for FCET. Macklin sees the role of faculty councils as giving the computer people their marching orders so that useful technology is developed and disseminated. At this point, some 25% of faculty have used the Catalyst tool and continue to use it - that number has remained constant. More can be done to promote the technology for the benefit of both students and faculty.

Gillis-Bridges said that educational technology involves using technology to achieve your pedagogical goals, not just being able to use the Web or archive information. Mika Sinanan commented that setting goals too high, when there are people who can't use the Web and can't use the available tools, will not raise the level of performance for everyone. There needs to be some attention to basic technological education, or even a set of standards, for those who can't use the technology.

Sinanan said that finding ways to accomplish those goals could be the concrete work of the Council, and could give the University some direction about where money needs to be spent to make the best use of technology. In the Medical School, Sinanan said, the technology is driven on the capabilities of what the technology itself can do, with little regard for what people need the most or where the most benefit will be derived from the technology. The IT folks have one focus, and the faculty have another, and the two do not always mesh.

Albrecht said that the implementation of the idea of faculty meeting certain technological qualifications is the province of deans and chairs. The vision and the promulgation of the educational technology vision should be the province of FCET.

Sinanan said another vision question is a base standard of educational technology at the UW. What is the standard? Should every teaching site have an active Ethernet port, for instance? Should every student seat have an Ethernet port? These kinds of standards need to be set and documented.

After the discussion of possible agenda items, it was suggested that a member who has been on the Council for some time should volunteer to serve as chair. Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges volunteered to chair, and will try to recruit Michael Goldberg of the Bothell campus as her co-chair.

Albrecht suggested narrowing the pool of possible action items to a manageable agenda. Gillis-Bridges will use a Catalyst tool to develop a site that the Council can use for the exchange of ideas.

Compilation of possible agenda items for the Council:

- Review the survey dataset to determine needs.
- Review Goldberg/Bothell plan to disseminate knowledge of technology via a faculty-to-faculty (tribal) teaching model.
- Facilitate higher awareness among the faculty of ways Catalyst tools could benefit them.
- Determine how Classroom Assignment Policy might be hindering the use of educational technology.
- Determine the infrastructure barriers and other kinds of barriers to the use of educational technology.
- Find ways to foster awareness of, and disseminate knowledge about, available educational technology resources.
- Find ways to provide basic technological education, and a set of minimum standards, for those who can't yet use the technology.
- Develop vision and standards for high-level use of educational technology at the UW.
- Use knowledge gained to give direction to the administration about where money needs to be spent to make the best use of technology, based upon what users need the most or where the most benefit will be derived.
- Find ways to integrate IT focus with what the user actually needs, for the benefit of both.

The Council will meet next in Winter Quarter, date to be determined. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder*.