Next Steps – Parents Council

1. Committees will plan to convene by conference call at least once before the April meeting. Committee Chairs and liaisons will be in touch with volunteers with specific details for each committee.
2. Save the date for the Spring Parents Council Meeting, April 9, 2016. A volunteer reception with President Thomas is scheduled for the afternoon of April 8, 2016.
3. Join the Puget Sound Parents LinkedIn Group to stay up-to-date on career information and resources at Puget Sound.
4. Sign up to participate in ‘Ask A Parent’, sharing your perspective as a Puget Sound parent with those going through the admission process.

Executive Summary

The Fall Parents Council meeting was held on-campus as part of Homecoming & Family Weekend. Parents Council Co-Chair, Harminder Sikand P’16, started the meeting by sharing recent accomplishments of the Council over the past several months. The three hour meeting featured an update from President Thomas, who shared with the group recent updates on university initiatives. He was followed by Director of Career Services, Alana Hentges, who shared with the group the work of her department in meeting with and assisting students with employment opportunities during their time as a student and after graduation.

Parents were then given the option to attend one of four committee meetings (Admission, Communications, Career Development, and Parents Fund) and discuss their work for the coming year.

Meeting Summary

Parents Council Meeting

The meeting began with Harminder Sikand P’16, who reviewed council accomplishments since the April meeting and upcoming goals for the council, before introducing President Thomas.

Accomplishments:

- Recruited and welcomed the Class of 2019 through numerous admission events, over 700 welcome phone calls, and 12 summer welcome gatherings.
- Connected with students and shared career advice through Puget Sound Parents LinkedIn Group.
- Supported over 200 Puget Sound athletes and musicians while travelling.
- Hosted students during the first ‘Take a Logger to Work Day’ where students had 13 job shadow experiences with alumni and parents, with plans to expand each year.
- Raised a record $896,000 in support of the Puget Sound Parents Fund.

Conversation with President Thomas

President Thomas provided the group with a general university update, including key initiatives the administration is focusing on in the years ahead, and how Puget Sound is well positioned to remain successful in the ever-changing environment of higher education.

One [of a Kind] Campaign

President Thomas shared the exciting news of the successful completion ($131.6 Million) of the One [of a
Kindred Campaign, and the impact it will have on Puget Sound, including:

1. Ensuring affordability of a Puget Sound education, with $42 Million raised in endowment for Financial Aid.
2. Creating access for a diverse group of young people, regardless of their ability to pay, including 85 new scholarships, and the augmentation of 141 scholarships.
3. Enriching curriculum, including additional programs in digital humanities, Latino/a studies, and a new major in Environmental Policy and Decision Making.
4. Transforming campus, including construction of Weyerhaeuser Center for Health Sciences, beginning construction on the new Athletics & Aquatics Center, and the completion of Commencement Walk, unifying our residential campus.

Challenges Ahead
President Thomas then spoke with the group about the challenges facing higher education, including rising costs and a shrinking pool of college age students, and outlined how Puget Sound is well positioned to meet these challenges through:

1. **Confronting Costs:** Puget Sound has been working to increase revenue through expanding fundraising efforts, building the endowment and holding the line on spending. The next step is to look at the cost structure and rethink the things that drive costs.
2. **Reimagining Liberal Education** in ways that may involve less class time and more lab time, more teamwork on projects, and using technology wisely to help a student's work, but not to replace thinking, synthesis, and guidance from faculty and mentors.
3. **Creating an inclusive environment:** Puget Sound is continually working to build a more inclusive campus, which includes a strong Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Race & Pedagogy initiative on campus, a promising relationship with Tacoma Public Schools, and the first class of Posse Scholars who will be on campus in fall 2016.

Program Feature: Career & Employment Services
Alana Hentges, Director of Career Services, shared with the group the work the Office of Career & Employment Services (CES) does to prepare students for jobs while in school, and well as their first job post-graduation.

She provided an overview of their approach, which focuses on individualized coaching to help students explore potential career paths, connect with alumni and employers, and prepare for life beyond Puget Sound. In addition to offering 2-3 programs per week for students, including career fairs, employer tables, presentations, and workshops, CES staff members meet with students individually to outline next steps on their career paths. Alana mentioned that CES does not have a four-year career plan for students, as their individualized model can be adjusted to be completed in four years, or in as little as a few months depending on a students’ track.

In addition to a wide network of career and internship postings available exclusively to Puget Sound students, CES is part of a consortium with over 1700 national and international employment and internship opportunities. Additionally, Alana reported that 9 month after graduation, 96% of Puget Sound alumni are engaged in employment or continuing education.

Parents were provided information to post jobs for Puget Sound students, as well as encourage their students to take advantage of the many services offered by CES.

Committee Breakout Sessions
As is customary at each Council meeting, committees met to continue their work in support of Puget Sound. At this meeting, Admissions, Career Development, Communications, and Parents Fund committees met for about 60 minutes. Committees welcomed new members and discussed goals for the year ahead.
Committee Updates

The **Admissions Committee** discussed the group’s activities over the past year that welcomed the Class of 2019 (summer welcome events, welcome phone calls and parent attendance at admission events), and agreed to continue those events to help recruit and welcome the Class of 2020. In addition, the group is hoping to expand the number of parents active on the ‘Ask A Parent’ website - where potential parents can reach out with specific questions as their students apply and considers Puget Sound. Parent volunteers can sign up to participate in ‘Ask A Parent’ [here](#).

The **Career Development Committee** met in small groups with staff from Career & Employment Services (CES) to discuss parents’ career paths and an overview of their current role. The Career & Employment Services team recorded the information to help connect students with committee members as appropriate, or for the CES team to reach out directly to deepen professional knowledge. Additionally, the CES team shared ways that parents can help to support their students’ career development.

The **Communications Committee** discussed the annual communication to parents and agreed that the level and amount are very appropriate. Over the next year, the committee will be working on a “What I Wish I Had Known” FAQ document that will be available to new and incoming parents, to include information not available elsewhere. The group will review a first draft during a conference call in December or January.

The **Parents Fund Committee** discussed how parent outreach is an important component to reaching the goal of the Parents Fund each year. The group discussed strategies for making fundraising phone calls to parents, and discussed this year’s goal of $945,000 to be accomplished through a combination of phone calls, annual giving letters and emails, and calls from the student phone-a-thon staff.

Full committee minutes are available [online](#).