Next Steps – Parents Council

1. Council members are invited to join the Admission Committee in calling and welcoming the Class of 2018. If interested in making these phone calls over the summer, sign up online before May 9.
2. All Parents are encouraged to join the Puget Sound Parents Linked In group.
3. Council members are given the opportunity to participate in the Admission Committee ‘Ask A Parent’ program for parents of prospective students. Parents interested in participating can sign up online with their contact information and specific interests and activities their student is involved with.
4. Distribute a summary of the meeting including next steps – COMPLETE

Executive Summary

The Spring Parents Council meeting was held on-campus as part of Homecoming and Family Weekend. Parents Council Co-Chairs, Betsy and Todd Stone, started the meeting by sharing recent accomplishments of the five committees over the past several months. The three hour meeting featured an update from President Thomas, who was joined by Vice President for Enrollment Jenny Rickard to discuss Puget Sound’s commitment to college access programs, and the work being done to successfully position Puget Sound to remain competitive among peer institutions. Four committees met for approximately one hour to plan their work for the coming months. The meeting ended with committee reports and an announcement of the new Parents Council Co-Chairs, Harminder Sikand and Amit Vasavada P’16, who previously served as the chairs of the Admission Committee.

Meeting Summary

Parents Council Meeting
The meeting began with Betsy ’79 and Todd Stone P’14, who introduced themselves before inviting introductions from the parents and staff members present. Betsy then shared the following recent council accomplishments with the group:
- Improved parent communications, including launching a new Puget Sound Parents website (pugetsound.edu/parents)
- Worked with Admission to provide resource for parents of admitted students by creating the ‘Ask A Parent’ program
- Created opportunities for parents and students to network by creating a Puget Sound Parents LinkedIn Group (which currently holds over 250 members)
- Hosted over 100 student performers while touring in WA and CA
- Parents Fund raised over $590,000 in support of Puget Sound

Conversation with President Thomas
President Thomas shared insights from the national leadership workgroups he has been invited to participate in related to the future of independent higher education and college access programs. These discussions, which took place in Washington D.C. and included President Obama and 80 independent university presidents, focused on three areas: access to college education for underrepresented communities; affordability by advocating for additional financial aid for families in need; and accountability of universities providing a clear Return on Investment (ROI). A discussion about the challenge of measuring value of a
liberal arts education followed and concluded with the agreement that institutions must begin to measure what they value and value what they measure, including productivity and well-being of its graduates.

President Thomas then introduced Vice President for Enrollment Jenny Rickard, who spoke about Puget Sound’s efforts in identifying and recruiting best-fit students for the institution. She discussed the work being done with the Enrollment Workgroup (consisting of Trustees, faculty members, and students) about how to best meet the ongoing challenges presented by the changing landscape of higher education.

**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, Athletics, Career Development, and Communications committees met for roughly 60 minutes. Committees continued their work from their activities begun in the fall, outlining activities for the months ahead.

**Committee Updates**

The **Admissions Committee** is planning their welcome activities for the Class of 2018, which includes participation in ‘Ask A Parent’, an online resource for parents of prospective and admitted students; Summer Welcome Gatherings; and welcome phone calls for incoming families. The group determined that the ‘Ask A Parent’ program will be extended and made available year-round as an on-going resource for parents. The group then finalized details for the welcome phone calls to be made between late May – early June. The calls will be more standardized this year with introductory email templates, and training provided to all parent callers. All Parents Council members are invited to participate in the welcome calls for the incoming class or ‘Ask A Parent’ by signing up using the links below.

The **Athletics Committee** met briefly to discuss opportunities to engage parents in support of Puget Sound athletes, specifically teams and geographic regions of focus for the upcoming year.

The **Career Development Committee** is building on the momentum of parents interested in networking with students by holding two “Project: Hometown” networking events this June in Portland and San Diego. Additionally, the group discussed the Puget Sound Parents LinkedIn group, specifically ways to increase membership and participation among the group.

The **Communications Committee** reviewed a quick reference of key parent communications which outlines when parents are hearing from the university. They then discussed analytics of the newly redesigned website, including increased traffic, decreased bounce-rate, and increased length of time spent on the site. The group then discussed in detail the role of parent-to-parent communications, where current parents could make themselves available as a resource for other parents. The group will determine at a future conference call how they might be able to adjust the ‘Ask A Parent’ program currently being used by Admission to also be used for current parent-to-parent communications.

Complete committee summaries are available [here](#).