Next Steps – Parents Council

1. Committees will plan to convene by conference call at least once before the October meeting. Committee Chairs and liaisons will be in touch with volunteers with specific details for each committee.
2. Council members are given the opportunity to make welcome phone calls to incoming families this summer. Parents interested in participating can sign up online. Parents who have completed these calls in the past are asked to sign-up again.
3. Save the date for the Fall Parents Council Meeting, October 31, 2015. A volunteer reception with President Thomas is scheduled for the afternoon of October 30, 2015.

Executive Summary

The Spring Parents Council meeting was held on-campus as part of Spring 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 Dean of Students Mike Segawa who discussed Title IX and Puget Sound’s sexual violence education, prevention and response. Parents were then given the option to attend one of four committee meetings and discuss their work for the coming year.

Meeting Summary

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

Accomplishments:

- Launched new Parent Communication plan with tailored messaging based on student year
- Hosted a successful Take a Logger to Work Day – 8 hosts; 12 shadowing experiences in 4 cities
- Hosted over 100 student performers in OR and WA
- Helped raise over $714,000 for the Parents Fund
- Communicated with hundreds of prospective parents through Ask A Parent, Accepted student events and parent panels

Goals for today’s meeting:

- Use member time wisely and do meaningful work
- Engage the group in more strategic discussions
- Find an Admission Committee Chair (freshman or sophomore parent)

Conversation with President Thomas
President Thomas provided the group with a general university update, including campus development, student achievement, Campaign progress, Puget Sound’s continued work at the national level as a leader in the broader higher education public policy discourse, and upcoming key initiatives.
Campus Development
President Thomas shared with the group updated renderings of the new Athletic & Aquatic Center, which will begin construction this summer. This facility will be the final project aimed to enhance the South-end of campus, following Weyerhauser Center for Health Sciences, and Commencement Hall.

Student Achievement
While there are many successes each year at Puget Sound, President Thomas updated the group on some recent and exciting student awards, including a Rhodes Scholar, Watson Fellow, 5 French Government Teaching Assistantships, 2 Fulbright Scholars, and a Critical Language Scholarship to China for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Campaign Progress
With the ‘One [of a] Kind’ campaign set to wrap-up at the end of June, President Thomas shared with the group that, with the help of many parents and alumni, the $125 million goal has been achieved. While the $125 million campaign goal has been met, there is still a ways to go to reach several of the university’s most important fundraising goals prior to June 30, including endowment for financial aid. President Thomas shared that because financial aid is so important for Puget Sound students, the endowment goal remains of top priority between now and the end of the campaign in June.

Key Initiatives
Following up from the meeting in the fall with much discussion around experiential learning, President Thomas updated the group on the work being done to ensure each student leaves Puget Sound with the ability to articulate how their education was enhanced by experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

“Every student will graduate from Puget Sound with a coherent set of experiential learning opportunities—internships, mentorships, independent research, employment, international experience, civic engagement—that will be integrated with curricular work and effectively prepare every graduate for a successful career and life after college.”

Inside Puget Sound with Mike Segawa
Dean of Students Mike Segawa shared with the group Puget Sound’s longstanding commitment to sexual assault education, prevention, and response, and discussed the policies, reporting structure, and prevention education in place to handle any issues that may arise.

Puget Sound has had, for many years, a campus-wide policy prohibiting harassment and sexual misconduct, which is first shared with students during Orientation and again at several other points during their time at Puget Sound. Dean Segawa shared a bit about the staff resources and policies in place that ensure a campus environment that respects and protects the rights of all community members, and the commitment to taking all complaints and accusations very seriously.

Additional information about this topic and available resources is online at the Sexual Misconduct Resource Center.

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 80 minutes. Committees debriefed on their work since the October meeting and discussed committee goals and strategic objectives for their work going forward.
Committee Updates
The Admissions Committee discussed the group’s upcoming activities during yield season for the Class of 2019. Parents are asked to join ‘Ask A Parent’ program to help answer questions from parents of admitted students prior to the decision deadline of May 1. Additionally, the group discussed the welcome activities for the Class of 2019, including welcome calls and summer welcome gatherings. Parents interested in making welcome calls to incoming families can sign up online.

The Career Development Committee reviewed data provided by the office of Career & Employment Services about student use of services, recruiting activities, and job and internship postings. The group then discussed the first Take a Logger to Work Day, which was held over winter break. Given the success of the event, the group decided to phase out Project: Hometown in favor of this more personalized job shadowing experience, with hopes to enhance the number of opportunities in the coming year.

The Communications Committee reviewed the schedule of communications sent over the past year and areas where improvements or changes could be made. The group decided that the level of communication is just about right, but suggested considering some sort of letter or email at the end of the year to wrap things up for the summer. In the coming months, the group will work on enhancing a list of ‘What I wish I would have known’ to make available on the website for incoming families to review prior to Orientation.

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 outreach trends, mail outcomes, and topics to focus on in future contact with parents. The group also discussed the success of the Parents Fund over the last four years and how that compares to other schools members are associated with. This year’s goal of $845,000 will 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.