

## **Minutes of the November 29, 2017 faculty meeting**

Respectfully submitted by John Wesley, Secretary of the Faculty

Attendance: Faculty members and guests in attendance are listed in [Appendix A](#).

### **I. Call to order**

Faculty Senate Chair Kessel called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

Kessel announced that the minutes of the November 1, 2017 faculty meeting will be approved, along with these minutes, in the February 7, 2018 faculty meeting.

### **II. Discussion of budget decisions in light of a changing enrollment climate, our anticipated budget shortfall, and the strategic plan**

President Crawford was invited by the Faculty Senate to discuss his thoughts and philosophy about budget decisions, and, in particular, to address the following questions: 1) How is the university leadership thinking about spending and reductions in relation to what we value as an institution of higher education? 2) What philosophy guides the budget process? 3) Where will discussion of broad budget considerations/divisional allocations figure into the strategic planning process? 4) How can we think about budget beyond the basic budget “silos” that drive most of the Budget Task Force (BTF) work? 5) What kind of participation and input will be asked of faculty in this conversation? 6) Where are budget cuts being considered for the years ahead? based on what information/data? 7) How transparent can/will this process be?

In his opening remarks, President Crawford thanked the faculty for their good work this term, and expressed excitement about the progress made in the strategic planning process. He also mentioned that, in spite of this year’s under-enrolled class, Puget Sound is in a good position within the Higher Education landscape—that we should be attentive to challenges, but also optimistic about the future. As the institution is built for 2700-2800 students, he iterated our need to stabilize and grow our enrollment, noting also that the current low student numbers will have long-range effects on the budget. Nonetheless, the goal of the university remains to offer a high caliber education for our students while supporting the hard work of our faculty and staff. The strategic plan, he added, will be our blueprint going forward to meet these challenges.

President Crawford opened the floor to questions.

One faculty member asked how the projected enrollment for 2018-2019 was determined.

President Crawford responded that the number was determined through analyses done by the admissions office, external consultants, and Institutional Research, who studied historical levels of student interest, yield, retention and attrition. The university is targeting 645 new first-time-in-college (FTIC) students for next year. Our challenge right now is yield. In other words, the yield of students from our total admitted students who decide to come here has fallen to 12%, and we need to address this.

One faculty member noted that 66% of US colleges did not meet enrollment targets, but, while there is not much we can do about these national patterns, wondered whether there was something in our own admissions process that hampered us. This member wanted to know what we have learned, and how we are adapting to these concerns.

President Crawford concurred that Puget Sound is not impervious to broader enrollment patterns occurring nationally. Only a handful of Washington colleges, for example, made their targets. He expressed his gratitude to our admissions office for their good work in bringing 593 students to campus this fall, and his excitement about the enthusiasm and ideas brought by our new Vice President for Enrollment (Laura Martin-Fedich)—ideas that will shape changes we make to admission tours, how we go about making this college known, how we use analytics, and how we track and stay in touch with prospective students. This last point, in particular, he suggested, was key to the issue of yield mentioned earlier. That is, it is clear we need to develop a better affinity with prospective students so that they feel Puget Sound is the place for them. To this end, he said, we are looking closely at our messaging, how we follow up with them, and new strategies for awarding financial aid. He also made clear that the new strategic plan will include a detailed strategy for the enrollment of undergraduates, graduates, and international students.

One member asked whether the administration has diagnosed the cause of the low enrollment.

In his response, President Crawford expressed the hope that this year's enrollment was an anomaly, because it has never dipped like this before. There may, he suggested, be national reasons for this problem, as there were 81,000 fewer high school students in the US last year. More relevant to our own situation, he noted that one of our most consistent feeder states, California, finally got its act together and opened more seats in their institutions, which meant we yielded fewer students from that state. We also saw a decline in students from Oregon and Hawaii, both also traditionally strong feeder states for Puget Sound. He mentioned further that we need to be thoughtful and systematic in how we go about awarding financial aid in order to be competitive with other colleges. In some cases, we are getting outbid during the students' decision period. So, he offered, we need to look at our value proposition: we are an expensive school, and we need to convince students and families that the extra cost is worth it.

One faculty member asked for specific information on how the university is rethinking its recruitment strategies, particularly with respect to targeting new demographics.

President Crawford said that the February faculty meeting will speak more directly to this question, but confirmed that, looking ahead to the next decade or so, we are going to see greater changes in the kinds of students applying to and attending college, such as first-generation college students, students of color, and students with fewer financial resources. This means we need to focus on affordability and accessibility, and President Crawford went on to assure the faculty that future capital campaigns will continue to focus on scholarships and endowments in order that we might meet the funding challenges of these changing demographics. As well, he suggested, we need to work harder to recruit international students: at present, international students account for less than 1% of our enrollment, and it should be closer to the 10% we see at similar institutions. We also need to be more mindful about how we approach and integrate

transfer students, particularly in light of a bill, recently signed by Seattle's mayor, that will provide free education for students pursuing community college courses and degrees. He reminded the assembly that VP for Enrollment Martin-Fedich will address these concerns in greater detail at the February faculty meeting.

One faculty member suggested that one reason international students may be reticent to come to Puget Sound is that they tend to pay full price, and we are more expensive than comparable institutions. Turning to matters of retention, this member wondered if the increased presence of students with psychological disabilities is putting undue strain on advising, CHWS, and other supports. This member asked whether this strain had any bearing on retention.

President Crawford revealed that we currently have an 86% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate, which, while enviable, should be higher. Raising this number, he suggested, does involve providing an array of academic, advising, and mental health resources, as well as ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment; however, research shows that the most common reason students depart a college is cost. Our students graduate from Puget Sound with levels of debt that are higher than the national average. He stressed the importance of meeting demonstrated need, and at the same time making students feel at home and comfortable here. Other research shows that, along with cost, retention depends to a large extent on the degree to which students make a strong connection with a faculty member, and our tracking data indicate we trail in this area compared to our peer institutions. One faculty member asked why this sense of connectedness or engagement is lower here than at comparable institutions, and President Crawford suggested that part of the explanation may relate to the kinds of places from where we recruit students, and their struggle to adapt to the unique culture of the Pacific Northwest. He said we need to create further opportunities for students to connect with peers, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the broader Tacoma community.

One faculty member returned to the issue of our low international recruitment, and wondered whether this situation occurred as a result of the current US political situation.

President Crawford answered that, nationally, there was not a precipitous drop in international student enrollment for 2017-2018, since many international students were already in the process of applying to US colleges prior to the communication of isolationism from the White House over the past year. Instead, analysts are forecasting that the impact of US isolationism will impact the 2018-2019 enrollment cycle. On the other hand, President Crawford noted that the excellent reputation of American higher education means the US will continue to be an attractive option for international students, and that, in any case, we can certainly make headway in improving our own institution's 1% enrollment from this pool.

One faculty member asked what was the rationale for setting an enrollment goal of 645 students for 2018-2019, and what would happen if we failed to meet that goal.

The FTIC student enrollment goal, explained President Crawford, is based on an analytical model that outlined 645 as a reasonable (rather than ambitious) target, and worked under the assumption that this past fall was indeed an anomaly. The model also took into account new financial aid packages we plan to offer admitted students, our targeting of different markets in

the US, and a more focused approach to increasing a sense of affinity with, and draw for, our prospective students. With respect to the possible consequences of another under-enrolled class, President Crawford reported that he had not yet received the Budget Task Force's information for 2018-2019, but that there would be an effort to build into the budget the financial flexibility required in the event we once again fail to meet our enrollment target. However, President Crawford expressed a cautious optimism about next year's enrollment. He mentioned the new initiative whereby, starting in 2018, admitted students will enroll in the early summer for their fall courses, and be introduced to their living arrangements and campus resources, which will hopefully create a stronger connection with Puget Sound over the summer. By way of adding further perspective on the current under-enrolled class of 2021, President Crawford revealed that an unusually large number of students admitted for the 2017-2018 academic year decided to take a gap year (42 students, which is more than double the figure from the year before). It is not clear whether this was a national trend, or whether this gap year draw was unique to our admitted cohort.

Returning to the issue of yield, one faculty member asked how our low yield on admitted students compared to that of other colleges in the region.

President Crawford reported that our yield on admitted students was 12% this year, while over the last seven years that percentage has slowly declined from 18%. We should be at 20-25%, and so we are looking carefully at the reasons for our inability to close the deal. In other words, application numbers are up, and campus visits are up, but students are not committing to Puget Sound when it comes to decision time, or, if they do commit, they eventually decide to go somewhere else or take a gap year. For example, this past year, 660 students said, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, that they would come to Puget Sound, but we ended up with 593 FTIC students.

Dean Bartanen mentioned that the May 1<sup>st</sup> commit number is no longer reliable, since more and more students these days are paying multiple deposits before waiting to see what financial offers will be made. President Crawford also disclosed that some institutions are contacting students in the days leading up to May 1<sup>st</sup>, to ask what financial aid they expect to receive from their other intended colleges, and then offering to beat it. This practice is becoming more common as colleges get more competitive, and though it is not, he reported, a violation of any ethical framework, it is also not something Puget Sound has done in the past, and there are no plans to do so in the future. Nonetheless, we do need to respond to this practice. President Crawford expressed his appreciation for the suggestion made by one faculty member, who said that, while the outbidding process might be unscrupulous, our own method might involve, instead, calling students to tell them they are a good fit, and that we believe they will succeed at Puget Sound.

One faculty member asked whether we can track where these students (who commit to us, but go elsewhere) end up, and whether there was a better way to target them.

President Crawford revealed that indeed we can track where they go, and, contrary to the intuition that these students chose to attend a different liberal arts college (e.g., Reed, Lewis and Clark, Willamette), this year we lost more students to Western Washington than any other college. More and more R1 and regional comprehensive institutions now market themselves as offering a liberal arts experience, and at a more reasonable expense. Increasingly, we are

competing with liberal arts colleges, regional comprehensive institutions, and large research universities, whereas historically it was largely with our liberal arts counterparts.

One faculty member asked whether the university might consider offering a three-year baccalaureate.

President Crawford confirmed that this idea had been considered in strategic planning meetings and community forums. He noted that some proponents of the idea point to the attractiveness of cost savings, and that it could be done using, perhaps, summer and winter terms. However, he also reminded the assembly that three-year BA programs met with a cool reception when they were launched by other colleges in the 2000s. There is a sense that the four-year experience is as much about social development as it is about academics.

One faculty member wanted to hear more about why freshman registration is being shifted from late-August orientation week to the spring.

President Crawford replied that part of the reason is to engage admitted students earlier (in early summer), in order to develop a sense of connection with the university over the summer, which is when, increasingly, students are making decisions about where to attend (apropos of Dean Bartanen's comments earlier about the unreliability of the May 1<sup>st</sup> commit numbers). Dean Bartanen added that there were concerns, too, about the length of orientation, and that one way to address the problem was to move registration earlier, but retain the advising component in the fall when students arrive on campus. It is increasingly the case that colleges are moving to summer registration, and doing so enables them, and now us, to make adjustments to offerings well in advance of the start to term.

With respect to summer attrition, one member asked whether it would be helpful if faculty members called committed students over the summer. Dean Bartanen replied that this is already occurring with faculty from departments that had patterns of summer attrition. One faculty member reported calling eight pre-med students last summer, and heard back from one. Dean Bartanen reported contacting twenty-eight faculty members over the summer to make calls, and all of them accepted the opportunity to talk with students about Puget Sound.

One faculty member asked if there was data on yield in terms of those who visit campus versus those who do not, and whether anything about the visit may be hurting us.

President Crawford revealed that students who visit campus are six to seven times more likely to enroll than those who do not. The admissions team is working hard on improving all aspects of the tour, including when it occurs. For example, the tour is less effective when the campus is dormant (e.g., on weekends), and therefore, to maximize its effect, should be done when people are around. Prospective students need to see students, faculty, and staff on campus.

One member asked about how the lower enrollment numbers will affect faculty and staff compensation.

President Crawford affirmed that his focus was on exceeding the promise we make with respect to our educational mission, and that faculty and staff are crucial to this endeavor. To that end, his concern is that the budget, even with the effects of under-enrollment, should not undermine our ability to provide the highest caliber of education. He outlined the spirit of his approach to the coming budget changes as follows: that we look to be as efficient as possible while ensuring we continue to offer competitive compensation to faculty and staff. He admitted that there will be difficult decisions to make, but expressed his optimism not only with respect to our ability to weather this storm, but also to the opportunities for future growth.

One faculty member expressed concern about the shift to spring or early summer registration, namely that it seems to remove the individual face-to-face attention that might enable better connection to the campus and faculty, and also that it might disadvantage some departments (i.e., non-STEM disciplines) whose value they might not appreciate without faculty advising.

President Crawford responded that the summer registration will involve the guidance of faculty and staff. As well, it will help to get students to campus during the late spring or early summer when the weather is nice.

One member asked how our academic budget compares to our peers.

President Crawford expressed his sense that we are competitive with other institutions, and that, in any case, we are not underspending. Mondou confirmed that Puget Sound's total allocations (inclusive of compensation) to academic and other related areas of the budget are within a few percentage points of peer medians. See [Appendix B](#) of these minutes for a chart comparing our budget allocation with that of our peer institutions.

The discussion turned to entrepreneurial incentives and other, non-tuition sources of revenue. President Crawford elaborated that we might consider, for purposes of example, placing solar panels on our land, engaging in programs for senior living, and weekend classroom rentals. In general, he said, we should be looking to use our assets to generate the revenue that will help us achieve our educational goals. One faculty member asked about the intellectual property aspect of entrepreneurial incentives, to which President Crawford responded that some institutions contract their faculty to consult with companies and receive fees for services rendered. We may, he continued, wish to determine how that would look for Puget Sound. He mentioned that other institutions also generate revenue with their faculty's expertise by offering evening classes for adults in the community (continuing education), and faculty-led travel excursions. One faculty member suggested offering a daycare service that would serve both the campus and the wider community, while another member added that OT and PT could contribute to a combined adult care and daycare center. President Crawford appreciated these suggestions, which could be considered in the strategic planning process. He noted that some institutions have added services like these, while others have dropped them, and that, along with looking at how other colleges have managed these decisions, factors such as expense, regulatory complexities, and liability will need to be taken into account in thinking about such programs and facilities. Another faculty member said that many of these entrepreneurial ideas have been floated before, but, even though they were found to be reasonable in discussion, either took an unusually long time to implement, or were never taken up. President Crawford responded that it will be incumbent on us, if we want

to supplement our core mission, to be adaptive and committed when it comes to implementing additional revenue streams. Part of the strategic plan will involve the development of viable initiatives in this regard.

One faculty member noted that the Gender and Queer Studies program has no tenure-line positions, and that next year only one class—out of the eight being offered—is currently staffed. On the other hand, this member continued, we hear of assistant deans being hired. This member wondered why more administration positions are being created while faculty appointments are not being made.

President Crawford answered that Puget Sound's operating budget is lean, and that the work required to promote diversity and the strategic plan, for example, cannot be tacked onto existing portfolios. Resources are limited, there are difficult decisions to make, and not everything can be funded as fully as we would like. Dean Bartanen added that the university recently hired a Title IX officer, not an assistant dean, and that the workload for this position meant that it could not have been appended to the Dean of Diversity's assignment. With respect to faculty appointments, Dean Bartanen clarified that we have a cap on tenure-line positions, but that any opening can be transferred to another line (to GQS, for example). Two faculty members suggested that the university revise its early retirement program to phase out full professors (who currently make up over 50% of the faculty), and which would have the effect of switching faculty lines to where they are most needed or desired. President Crawford said this is something we may wish to consider.

With respect to administrative expenses, one faculty member wondered how much money is being spent on consultant services—most recently, as an example, for our strategic planning—and where this expenditure might be reported. Consultants are costly, and this member expressed a concern for efficiency and transparency.

President Crawford responded that his intention is to be as thoughtful and as conservative as possible when it comes to hiring consultants. Regarding the strategic planning consultants, President Crawford said that the decision to hire them came as a result of conversations had within the campus community, which indicated a desire to bring in external resources to help us with this work. He added that, although we have the internal talent to consult on strategic planning, making use of it would detract from other work crucial to serving our educational goals. On the concern over transparency, President Crawford said that the point was well taken, and that it is reasonable to report on what our consultant spending looks like.

One faculty member asked how different parts of the budget related to one another, particularly with respect to how and when money is moved between different budget categories. Another faculty member clarified the issue to be one of faculty compensation, since it was not clear how its budget allocation was determined in the context of allocations made elsewhere (e.g., Facilities Services).

Dean Bartanen answered that the Budget Task Force provided to the entire campus pie charts that show exactly how the money is divided, and that the BTF is responsible for recommending a balanced budget, which involves recommending reductions in some areas in order to support

others. Although she understood the questions, Dean Bartanen pointed out, first, that Facilities Services has cut twelve positions, and, second, that the total budget's largest allocation (77%) is given over to faculty and staff compensation. In response to a question about whether money would be taken from faculty compensation in order to increase financial aid, Dean Bartanen said that the administration is looking into how much aid it will take to attract 645 FTIC students, and that the BTF will make recommendations about what parts of the budget will need to be reduced in order to offer money to students during a flat net revenue situation.

One faculty member said that during previous times of flat or declining revenue, the faculty were told that it was a period of sacrifice, but it became clear that the sacrifices were not shared by all sections of the university (this member brought up as an example the high salary raises of certain administrative positions). President Crawford thanked the faculty member for that context.

### **III. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.



## Appendix A – Attendance

### Attending

Roger Allen  
Rich Anderson-Connolly  
Greta Austin  
Kris Bartanen  
Bill Beardsley  
Francoise Belot  
Michael Benveniste  
James Bernhard  
Sigrun Bodine  
Luc Boisvert  
Bob Boyles  
LaToya Brackett  
Nick Brody  
Gwynne Brown  
Derek Buescher  
Dan Burgard  
Alva Butcher  
David Chiu  
Julie Christoph  
Lynnette Claire  
Jo Crane  
Isiaah Crawford  
Monica DeHart  
Alyce DeMarais  
Rachel DeMotts  
Alicia Dueker  
Regina Duthely  
Joel Elliott  
George Erving  
Lisa Ferrari  
Kena Fox-Dobbs  
Poppy Fry  
Betsy Gast  
Barry Goldstein  
Andrew Gomez  
Dexter Gordon  
Bill Haltom  
Fred Hamel  
Sue Hannaford  
Jennifer Hastings  
Peter Hodum

Suzanne Holland  
Renee Houston  
Rob Hutchinson  
Martin Jackson  
Greg Johnson  
Kristin Johnson  
Priti Joshi  
Tatiana Kaminsky  
Chris Kendall  
Alisa Kessel  
Jung Kim  
Grace Kirchner  
Nick Kontogeorgopoulos  
Kriszta Kotsis  
Sunil Kukreja  
David Latimer  
John Lear  
Ha Jung Lee  
Sam Liao  
Lynda Livingston  
Pierre Ly  
Tiffany MacBain  
Andreas Madlung  
Janet Marcavage  
Mark Martin  
Jeff Matthews  
Gary McCall  
Amanda Mifflin  
Sarah Moore  
Jill Nealey-Moore  
Eric Orlin  
Susan Owen  
Rachel Pepper  
Jennifer Pitonyak  
Sara Protasi  
Siddharth Ramakrishnan  
Brad Richards  
Elise Richman  
Brett Rogers  
Doug Sackman  
Leslie Saucedo  
Eric Scharrer  
Adam Smith

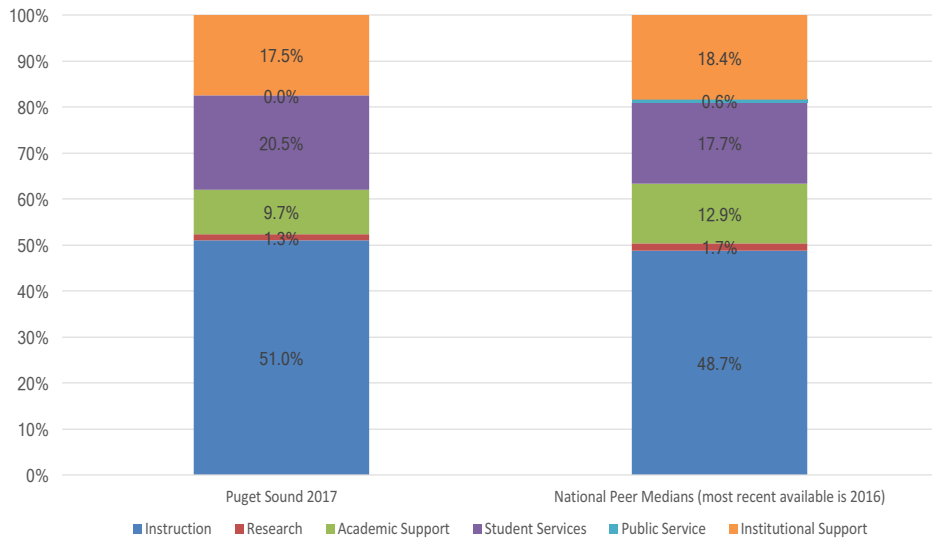
Jess Smith  
Stuart Smithers  
David Sousa  
Amy Spivey  
Karin Steere  
Jonathan Stockdale  
Jason Struna  
Peter Sullivan  
Yvonne Swinth  
Justin Tiehen  
George Tomlin  
Ben Tromly  
Ariela Tubert  
Alexa Tullis  
Andreas Udbye  
Jennifer Utrata  
Kurt Walls  
Matt Warning  
Renee Watling  
Seth Weinberger  
John Wesley  
Heather White  
Kirsten Wilbur  
Paula Wilson  
Ann Wilson  
Peter Wimberger  
Anna Wittstruck  
Rand Worland  
Sheryl Zylstra

### Guests

Jane Carlin  
Kate Cohn  
Liz Collins  
Anna Coy  
Amanda Diaz  
Sherry Mondou  
Mike Pastore  
Ellen Peters  
Ben Tucker  
Landon Wade

## Appendix B – Allocation of Resources in Comparison to Peer Institutions

# Allocation of Educational and General Resources in Comparison to Peers



Source: IPEDS