

University of Puget Sound
Faculty Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2009

1. Call to Order

President Ron Thomas called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. in McIntyre 103. 29 people were in attendance at 4:45.

2. Approval of minutes

The minutes for the meetings of October 28 and December 8, 2008 were approved as posted.

3. Announcements from the floor

Associate Dean Alyce DeMarais said that some were surprised to receive information in the mail about the reaccreditation visit, which will be coming in April. If you have questions about it, ask her. President Thomas thanked those who worked on the self study, and says he expects the visit to be worthwhile.

DeMarais also noted that the core curriculum review is ongoing. This is unrelated to the reaccreditation process. Faculty will be receiving a questionnaire from the Curriculum Committee soon.

4. Report of the President

President Thomas just returned from a trip to the East Coast. He attended two terrific alumni events in Washington, DC and New York. Professor Nancy Bristow gave an extremely well received talk at the events, on the influenza epidemic. One student drove for four hours to see her! Professors Jeff Matthews and David Sousa have joined Thomas in other visits to alumni clubs; it is lots of fun.

If you haven't been to an alumni event recently, you'll see a transformation in what's happening; the investment in the Office of Parent and Alumni Relations is paying off. The clubs have excellent local leadership organizing events (supported by the Office but initiated by them). The new, robust online community is proving successful. Connections are being made among alumni and between alumni and the university. This is especially valuable in the current economy.

In Washington, Thomas attended the final meeting of the American Council of Education. He met the new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, who is quite a change from his predecessor and an informed champion for higher education. Duncan was largely responsible for some of the significant provisions for higher education in the stimulus bill signed today by President Obama. This included the largest infusion of capital ever into the Pell Grant, and a significant increase in Perkins Loans.

Thomas spoke with colleagues from around the country about the economic situation. Relatively speaking, Puget Sound is in a strong position, projecting a surplus for this year, unlike many far wealthier institutions that are having to make cuts in the middle of the year. Looking forward, we need to establish the principles by which we will proceed should cuts become necessary, partly dependent on enrollment for next year.

This year, Puget Sound started exclusively using the Common Application, and added two essay questions specific to Puget Sound. These changes make it difficult to

compare the admission picture to previous years, but overall applications are up 20% (both completed and uncompleted), while completed applications are down 10%. The Admissions staff is approximately one third done reading through applications, and that third is significantly higher in SAT and GPA numbers than in previous years.

Underrepresented student percentages are about the same, but there is an increase in African-American applicants and slight declines in other categories. Early Decision is running about even with last year. We expected more robust Early Decision I and II groups. East Coast colleges and the Claremont Colleges are receiving significantly fewer applications than usual, while public universities and private research institutions such as Stanford and Duke are receiving more applications.

Professor Randy Bentson inquired whether there was any news on changes in the geographical distribution of applicants. Thomas replied that it looks about the same; we expect people to want to travel less, but we don't know.

In terms of contributions, Thomas reported that Puget Sound has passed \$40 million in contribution commitments; December was the best month of the previous fourteen, with over \$3 million. The Annual Fund is running 5-8% behind last year (our second best year ever); a survey of 20 liberal arts colleges in our category showed that they are running behind by percentages in the mid-teens, so we are doing fairly well. [Did I get this right?] Our goal for this year is higher than last year's. While it will be a challenging year, we see lots of opportunity to continue developing our relationships with donors.

4. Report of the Academic Vice-President

Dean Kris Bartanen thanked everyone for working hard on searches. Some offers have gone out, and there have been some acceptances this week; specifics will be coming as she hears more. Uncertainty about whether 600 or 700 first-year students will enroll next year, and about retention from this year, makes contingency planning difficult. Bartanen has asked department chairs for ideas for a leaner course schedule to be posted pre-registration, so we're in a position to expand as necessary, rather than having to contract from a more fulsome schedule if we turn out to have fewer students. Bartanen said she had heard from only four departments about their leaner scenarios, and is waiting to hear from others. Bartanen has also asked that department chairs work on plans for 5% or 10% reductions in operating budgets. We are hoping not to have to implement such reductions, but it is preferable to think about it now, when we're not in a crisis.

Bartanen would like faculty to think about ways of helping to yield strong applicants. Admissions is continuing the three visit days this spring, which were successful last year. Faculty participate through presentations and class visits. Admissions also worked with department chairs on letters geared toward students with specific interests, such as study abroad. It's best if the specific departments write these letters, rather than Admissions; please update these letters as needed. Also, Admissions is going to be asking some faculty this spring to make phone calls or e-mail accepted students, to try to build the yield. These are not terribly burdensome ways for faculty to help bring in this class.

If you hear continuing students expressing concerns about their financial situation, guide them to Student Financial Services, where they'll work with them.

5. Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate

Doug Cannon has submitted the Senate report to the Board of Trustees for their late February meeting (see attached: [Faculty Chairs Report--Feb 2009.doc](#)). The report concerns the discussion of benefits at the October meeting, the formation of an ad hoc committee on benefits (still being formed—Cannon welcomes anyone interested in serving), and a proposal for amending the Faculty Bylaws regarding the Diversity Committee.

Monday's Senate meeting will concern (1) proposed revision to the course evaluation form in the wake of last spring's survey, and (2) questions in the faculty code about procedures for tenure and promotion earlier than scheduled times. If this second issue is of particular interest, Cannon invites people to let him know; this will influence whether the issue gets dealt with further by the Senate. Currently it doesn't seem to be a hot topic.

President Thomas said that the budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees next week. A workshop is taking place centering on faculty perceptions of who our students are, who they are becoming, our associated strengths and assets and challenges. A good range of faculty are taking part, across disciplines and seniority levels. Thomas commended Dean Bartanen for assembling this group.

6. First reading of proposed revisions to Bylaws

Cannon noted that a revision concerning the makeup and duties of the Diversity Committee was proposed and endorsed by Faculty Senate in January. Cannon formally moved on behalf of the Senate that the Bylaws Article 5 Section 6 paragraph H be revised in accordance with what is printed at the top of the sheet. Motion was seconded.

Professor Judith Kay described the process and rationale for the changes. In fall of 2007 the Faculty Senate charged the Diversity Committee with this revision. By last spring they finalized a draft and submitted it to the Senate. Many faculty, staff, and students have been involved with these efforts, and Kay thanked them for their time and effort. She also thanked those on the Senate and elsewhere for their feedback along the way.

One key issue in the revisions was the structure of the committee. Originally it was a presidential committee, with three Vice Presidents, four staff members, students, and faculty. Though the committee later became a committee of the Senate, it retained that large structure, which has made it difficult to have a faculty agenda and have faculty concerns in the forefront when so many concerns were represented on the committee. The existing Bylaws have only one article pertaining to faculty concerns. Most of the committee's official duties have to do with supporting and assisting vice presidents; the committee played an advisory, supportive role in admission, campus climate, etc. Many colleagues on the committee have noted their lack of authority to direct vice presidents; they also expressed reluctance to monopolize the committee with concerns unique to the faculty.

Another reason for the revision is that the existing Bylaws are 18 years old and out of date. There is now a Strategic Plan for the university, and we have hired a Chief Diversity Officer. In light of the economic situation, it also makes sense to examine the committee from an efficiency standpoint: we need to use the time of staff members (such

as those in Admissions) wisely.

At the next faculty meeting, we will vote on whether to keep the existing Bylaws or to accept the revisions. Kay encouraged faculty to consider which committee they would rather serve on, one operating according to the old Bylaws or according to the revisions.

One main change is in the structure of the committee. Rather than having one university-wide Diversity Committee, there would be three: one reporting to the Faculty Senate, one to the Staff Senate, and one (if students desire it) to ASUPS. The faculty committee would be more of a traditional faculty committee than currently, oriented around areas of faculty concern. It would have no enforcement role, but could promote discussion and recommend new approaches. It would have a direct line of accountability to the Faculty Senate and ultimately the whole faculty. Also, the committee could be a forum where diversity-related matters can be discussed. The new Bylaws propose using the definition of “diversity” from the Diversity Strategic Plan. (See <http://www.ups.edu/x26730.xml> for the Diversity Strategic Plan’s glossary of terms.) The definition could be debated in committee and changed if desired as part of a campus-wide process. In this way a particular definition would not be locked into the Bylaws—an advantage should new areas of discrimination emerge in the future.

Kay reported that the committee strongly felt the need to protect educational values, and wanted to see a group on campus ready to provide educational responses to incidents of prejudice and bigotry. This would take the burden of response off of those who might be targeted by prejudice, and concerned individuals would know who to contact about a concern. The response could be more prompt with a group trained and ready to respond. In Fall 2004, the Faculty Senate charged the Diversity Committee with the formation of such a group as a result of these concerns, leading to the Bias-Hate Education Response Team (BERT). The proposal was endorsed by the committee, then by the Senate, and then by the administration. The group has been meeting since Fall 2007.

BERT does the following: 1) receives reports of incidents from targeted individuals or groups; 2) refers people to appropriate offices for adjudication; 3) organizes educational events as needed. It has no enforcement role, nor do the proposed revisions to the Bylaws create any. BERT is still in its infancy, and this is a good opportunity for the Diversity Committee to provide oversight and direction. BERT was the creation of the Faculty Senate and Diversity Committee, but it currently reports to the Academic Dean and the Dean of Students. The committee wants to see the faculty retain control of BERT so that faculty can assess and change it over time, as needed. If we don’t claim that authority as faculty, we lose that ability.

Last, Kay said that the Diversity Committee has remained one on which faculty want to serve; its time should be used wisely, addressing faculty concerns.

Kay asked for a friendly amendment to her own proposal, moving “as needed” in Point 6 to after “will address educationally.” Cannon accepted the amendment and this was seconded.

Professor Keith Ward asked what was reflected by the change in the number of students on the committee from four to one. Kay responded: 1) we hope that ASUPS will come up with a student committee on diversity; 2) other faculty committees also have one student, but that doesn’t keep us from consulting with more students; 3) under Article 4,

the committee has traditionally formed liaisons with other university diversity student groups; 4) in reality, there have only been one or two students on this committee in the past.

Professor Martin Jackson asked whether BERT should be a clearinghouse for students, and whether the Chief Diversity Officer is the right person to head up this kind of thing. Kay responded that faculty members have special concern about academic freedom and expression, and wanted this important group not to be a place where free expression is squelched. The committee felt that faculty might be more attuned to protecting those values if we retain oversight of the committee. The collection of data is for the purpose of discovering what is going on in the campus climate that might warrant educational response. Are there trends like a rash of events directed against a particular group? Many individuals, such as security officers, could contribute to the collection of information, which faculty could then respond to.

Professor Nila Wiese said that it was felt that the Diversity Committee didn't know what was going on on campus. By analyzing the information ourselves, we would have a better sense. Also, the purpose was to be proactive and preempt incidents from continuing to happen.

Professor Richard Anderson-Connolly, a member of the Faculty Senate, said that he had voted against the change to the Bylaws, and that the Senate minutes reflect the discussion. He asked whether we need a Diversity Committee at all. On the BERT issue, the change would make the Bylaws worse by creating a definite problem, a threat to free speech, in response to a possible problem, prejudice and bigotry. He hasn't seen any data indicating that there is a problem on campus, yet BERT has sponsored an event where the *Trail* editor was scolded and picked on for something in the *Combat Zone* section, which was taken as evidence that the *Trail* is prejudiced and bigoted, in need of re-education. This has had a chilling effect free speech on campus. BERT's approach takes a victim's word as enough to convict an alleged perpetrator.

Bristow asked if that one event should be taken as representative. There are clearly examples of prejudice and bigotry on campus, such as an African-American student being asked for clothing to wear to a gangsta rap party, graffiti appearing on doors, and blackface incidents. Students shouldn't be left in the position of having to respond to these. As a faculty member she frequently tells students that it is not their responsibility to conduct the education; that's the faculty's responsibility. Without BERT, students are responsible for going to the faculty or the administration to get a response organized. Those students are already suffering enough from the incidents themselves. They're here to get educated, not to have to educate others. The event Anderson-Connolly referred to didn't go the way the organizers had intended, but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Anderson-Connolly said that if the committee is approved, it will look for manifestations of bigotry and prejudice, and if you look for something you can find it. This event won't be an anomaly. There may be many who feel there is a problem with bigotry on campus, but hard evidence should be presented, not just a feeling. Also, the discomfort of some should be balanced against the importance of free speech for all. A student who is asked for gangsta clothing may feel uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean the request was meant to be hurtful. Free speech is fundamental, even if it makes some uncomfortable. There has to be a demonstration of a serious problem before an institution

of higher education starts cutting free speech.

Kris Bartanen said there is empirical data showing that there are incidents and that there are some who feel hurt; the diversity website has the data. It is also important to honor what students say about what happens on campus and in classrooms, and why incidents of prejudice are hurtful. While she values freedom of expression and the First Amendment, Bartanen said this is not a matter of mere discomfort but of students being attacked, dehumanized, and made to feel unwelcome in the community. The educational goals of the Diversity Committee are not to accuse nor to impute motives. When students don't realize they're being hurtful, that's when they need education—not to be labeled guilty or unethical, but to understand the context for and consequences of their behaviors. People can choose their behaviors and words, but we hope they have a better educational framework for those choices. BERT isn't going out to look for things, but to be a place where faculty and other colleagues can build a more welcoming campus climate.

Professor Bill Haltom asked whether the group referenced in point b6 would be BERT. Kay responded yes, but that this could change in the future. The Bylaws revision would give faculty oversight over the future of the group.

President Thomas noted that the language in the revision calls for the Diversity Committee to be responsible for the composition and activation of any group (BERT or otherwise). Haltom asked whether this would be limited to the faculty, and Kay responded in the affirmative.

Professor Suzanne Holland said that having “a group” in the Bylaws means we can get rid of it if the faculty feels that it's an oppressive structure. If it's left out of the Bylaws, it's hard to get rid of. She then asked Anderson-Connolly whether he feared BERT would become our own House Un-American Activities Committee. He responded that he doubted it would be that bad, but since free speech is among our highest principles, anything that would stifle that needs to defend itself more fully. Most will never pay attention to this committee, so it can't do that much damage, but it is more likely to do damage than good unless the problem is serious, which has not been shown. There has not been a rash of violent hate crimes on campus, just people claiming to have been made uncomfortable.

Bentson asked if there is anything else in the Bylaws that digs as deeply into students as residents, as opposed to academic participants. Is this the camel's nose under the tent? Professor Hans Ostrom responded that the Student Life Committee deals even more with students as residents.

Dean Lisa Ferrari said that as outsiders to alleged harm, we are not in a position to understand the severity of the harm. There are problems with listening to subjective accounts as the sole measure, but there are equally serious problems with undervaluing someone's experience. Second, it is important that one take responsibility for what one has said: to take ownership of what one said and respond to those who don't like it. Free speech isn't the freedom not to have people respond to what you said. Part of free speech is dealing with the consequences.

Professor Carolyn Weisz offered a perspective from psychology, echoing Bartanen and Ferrari and Bristow, about harm. The issue is not a lack of evidence that harm was conscious. Some of the harm is a result of things that people are unable to speak about. Discrimination and the fight against it is also an educational issue.

Professor Alisa Kessel said that “Bias-Hate Education Response Team” suggests

that there's hate involved in every incident, which seems accusatory. Surely we can do better.

Professor Monica DeHart said that the revisions help to promote some of Anderson-Connolly's agenda in terms of academic freedom and freedom of expression. A forum (notwithstanding the *Trail* editor one) creates the opportunity to address educational issues. Since there is not clear agreement on these issues, we need bodies like this one to debate and think about what is at stake in different spheres of academic life, including hiring. The spirit of BERT is not to investigate anybody or be purely responsive, but to be proactive about issues that define campus debates, to create educational fora for faculty and students to think through the moral and ethical issues at stake. It is meant not to quash discussion but to create vehicles for dialogue, creating more expression.

Jackson asked, regarding point #6, whether BERT or the Diversity Committee is supposed to "promote academic freedom and freedom of expression." Kay answered that it is the Committee that activates, collaborates, and promotes. The language was discussed further. Jackson suggested it be made more explicit that part of BERT's charge is to promote freedom of expression, rather than have that built in as an oversight function of the committee. Kay responded that we don't want the Bylaws to be so explicit about the group's activities, because the Bylaws are difficult to change. By putting oversight of the group in the Bylaws, it will be easier to shape the group over time.

Holland agreed with Kessel about the unfortunate, inflammatory name of BERT. Cannon said there was widespread agreement in the Senate that the oversight language provided in the #6 clause gives the Diversity Committee authority to change the name, subject to the approval of the faculty as a whole. Without the change, the Committee has no authority to change BERT's name.

Anderson-Connolly said that since we don't know what future Diversity Strategic Plans will be, the mission of the Diversity Committee should be stated in the bylaws, not left open to the DSP. Thomas said that the definition of diversity came from Jean Kim and the students, faculty, and staff on the Diversity Task Force two years ago.

George Tomlin asked what kinds of functionality would be lost by having individual constituent committees as opposed to one universal Diversity Committee. Thomas said that this was a deferral to implementation teams comprised of students, faculty, and staff for the University's Strategic Plan. This revision is meant to get rid of some redundancy with those. The Chief Diversity Officer's office is doing the global things; this is meant to be more specifically oriented toward faculty concerns.

Wiese said that staff members were particularly strong supporters of the split into three constituent diversity committees. They felt their agenda was not getting addressed. The idea was that the three constituent committees would send representatives to an overarching group headed by Kim Bobby.

As this was the first reading of the proposed revision, there was no vote.

7. Repairs to the Fieldhouse

Bartanen said that in September, a crack in one of the main crossbeams supporting the Fieldhouse roof was discovered. Investigation showed that 7 out of the 9 trusses holding up the roof were failing. Facilities Services staff came over immediately

and were part of shoring up the roof so no one was injured and it could be repaired. The cost was \$3.5 million. \$1 million of this was for the scaffolding to hold up the roof. We are pursuing an insurance claim respective to the lost use of the building and the relocation of things including academic programs in the fall. The claim will not cover the total cost, but Sherry Mondou and her team are pursuing it aggressively.

Money for the repair came from plant funds, not operating dollars. These funds come from gifts, savings on other construction projects, and funds designated by the Board of Trustees for such emergencies. Since the scaffolding was so expensive, it made sense to do other repairs that were needed, so additionally the lighting and sprinkler systems were upgraded, along with a seismic upgrade. (The costs for these were included in the figure quoted above). Some work still needs to be done on lighting, the sound system, and the air conditioning system.

8. Venue for faculty meetings

The venue for the April faculty meeting was discussed. Cannon suggested the Boardroom, which holds 55 people; in the event that more than 55 attended, we could move elsewhere. Holland noted that the turnout for this meeting was the lowest of the year, and that this may be due to the location. Bentson said that Thompson 175 seats over 80.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwynne Brown
Secretary of the Faculty