

**University of Puget Sound
Faculty Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2008**

1. **Call to order:** President Ron Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:00, p.m., in the Trimble Forum.
2. **Faculty Secretary:** President Thomas opened nominations for Secretary of the Faculty. There were no nominations. In the absence of a Secretary, President Thomas appointed Douglas Cannon to take minutes for the meeting.
3. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of April 22, 2008, were approved as distributed.
4. **Report of the President:** President Thomas reported that the Board of Trustees meeting of October 23-24 had included workshops on the alumni survey and the alumni council and on a marketing plan. Time also was spent on the current financial environment, with trustees expressing confidence that administrative financing actions have been appropriate. He reported that the endowment has been affected though not as much as the general equity markets; even so there will be an effect on outlay. No negative impact has been felt in applications so far, and donations are ahead of last year. Greatest concern is the effect of rising unemployment on student families.
5. **Report of the Academic Vice-President:** Dean Kristine Bartanen expressed appreciation for faculty support of searches. She reminded junior faculty of the Collaborative on Careers in Higher Education. The reaccreditation effort is moving to its final stage, and a visit for the special accreditation of the program in Physical Therapy will occur on December 10 and 11.

Continuing her report, Dean Bartanen yielded the floor to Vice President Sherry Mondou for further review of the current economy. Mondou introduced Kathryn Davis, Associate Vice-President for Treasury. Given the primary concern over finances of student families, students should be encouraged to see the Financial Aid office. The college was not among the nearly 1000 institutions affected by the restrictions on the Common Fund whose trustee was Wachovia Bank. Our working capital is in AAA money market funds now guaranteed by the federal government. The Board approved backing up by 1 year the 36-month average used to determine outlay from the endowment, and continuing the annual outlay of 5% of the endowment. The effect of the down market will thus be delayed, as will the effect of a market recovery. Interest on short-term debt increased temporarily with a cost of \$170,000; many universities fared worse. The Budget Task Force will face difficulties with a flat draw on the endowment and little increase in gifts. (There the goal was 7% above the current \$2 million.) The bulk of our income is from

tuition so real effect will turn on enrollments. But our budgeting is conservative, with a 1% enrollment contingency cushion.

6. **Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate:** Chair Douglas Cannon reported that in their May meeting the Board of Trustees approved revisions to the Faculty Code and to the Bylaws adopted in the April 22 faculty meeting. **His October report to the Board will be appended to these minutes.**

7. **Employee benefits:** A Faculty Senate sponsored forum on employee benefits began with a presentation by Rosa Beth Gibson, Associate Vice-President for Human Resources. She introduced Shannon Briggs, the new Director of Compensation and Benefits, who comes with 15 years experience, most recently with REI. **An appended document summarizes the points Gibson made.**

There followed a wide-ranging discussion, with remarks from faculty especially about medical benefits and educational benefits, often followed by explanations from Gibson. Duane Hulbert said that it is cheaper for his family to purchase a high deductible private medical policy from Regence than to enroll under his employee coverage. Hulbert described high costs of multiple doctor visits under the Group Health HMO plan. Similar concerns and experiences were reported by Keith Ward and Heidi Orloff. Suzanne Holland renewed an earlier complaint that faculty in one-semester replacement positions do not receive health benefits, even with successive semesters if they fall in successive academic years. Jim McCullough asked how faculty can effectively object to such policies, mentioning that Holland's concern had been expressed several times and supported by others. Bob Matthews said that he feels strongly that such visiting faculty should be covered, asking how many there are. Associate Dean Alyce DeMarais replied that there are about two per year with 4-unit loads. Heidi Orloff reported that department chairs feel pressure not to exceed that 4-unit threshold.

Judith Kay asked why the college contribution for staff retirement is 10%, compared to 12% for faculty, saying this seemed inequitable. Gibson said that this long-standing practice is based on projections of retirement income and takes account of the fact that professional employees are not specifically compensated for extra time worked.

Hans Ostrom voiced concerns about early retirement arrangements, saying faculty are largely in the dark about them and that different early retirees seem to be treated differently. He said that disability leave arrangements are also opaque, that chaos ensues when faculty members suffer extended illnesses.

Holland favored putting all benefits up for discussion and said that health benefits should perhaps take priority over others, e.g., over educational benefits even though the latter have been a sacred cow.

Ward asked about health insurance consortia with non-educational employers. Gibson replied that such consortia by law must comprise groups of similar institutions. Cannon

asked whether the college had self-insured earlier. Gibson replied that we had done so with Regence but that we ended in a downward spiral because of high costs that we incurred. She said the question could be reopened by a benefits task force.

Orloff suggested self-insuring educational benefits freeing us from the shortcomings of Tuition Exchange, Inc.

8. **Travel funds:** Harry Vélez-Quiñones opened a discussion of the criteria used by the Enrichment Committee for funding faculty travel to conferences. He noted that until about five years ago, there were funds sufficient to cover two conferences, but recently faculty have been limited to one sponsored conference. The system of funding per conference provides no incentive for travelers to keep costs down. Vélez said better to be awarded an amount of funds that you could control. Associate Dean Sarah Moore has replied that, with current funding levels, doing so would not provide more opportunity. Vélez suggested that the Enrichment Committee and the Budget Task Force push for increased funding for junior faculty, enough to ensure at least two trips per year for them. He also suggested facilitating local conferences that would be less expensive, as well as fostering a more enriching academic climate for us, particularly interaction with other institutions in the area. Moore said that the Enrichment Committee has considered other funds structures, and she invited ideas. Bartanen said that the Budget Task Force added \$18,000 to the travel budget last year, but even so funds are not sufficient to fund additional trips. Matthews supported the concerns expressed by Vélez.

Finally, Holland asked for opinions about the venue of this meeting.

9. **Adjournment:** As the meeting ended, Holland asked for opinions about its venue. The meeting adjourned at 5:30, p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Cannon
Professor of Philosophy

Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate

to the

Board of Trustees of the University of Puget Sound

October 6, 2008

As I write, rainy weather confirms that fall indeed is upon us. Carrying forward last spring's attention to diversity issues, the Senate will take up a reorganization proposal from the faculty Committee on Diversity. The idea is for separate committees of faculty and staff to be coordinated by an administrative Diversity Advisory Council, with the guidance of the Chief Diversity Officer in particular. The Faculty Senate's part in this restructuring will be to bring to the faculty a detailed revision of the relevant section of the Faculty Bylaws. Such revision of course would subsequently come to the Board for its approval.

There are no other pending proposals for changes to the Faculty Code or Bylaws, so the Senate sees the way clear to address new topics. One involves assessment of the core curriculum, which has now been in place for five years. When the time comes, Senate deliberation will draw on the review of the core as a whole, which the Curriculum Committee has been charged to conduct, and also on the assessment sections of the reaccreditation self-study.

Another large topic is the process of faculty evaluation, which has had no fundamental examination for many years. Such examination could potentially lead to significant changes in the Faculty Code. Beginnings include a Senate request that the Professional Standards Committee craft language for a Faculty Code revision, to provide that standards for those wishing to be considered for early tenure or promotion be the same as for those coming up at the usual times. Also the Senate conducted a survey of faculty on the instructor evaluation form currently filled out by students. The results of that survey are being digested, but initially there seem to be more issues arising out of the use made of those evaluations than about the design of the form itself.

A looming background issue is the efficiency of our system of evaluation in the sense of achieving the objectives of faculty evaluation within a reasonable allocation of valuable faculty time and energy. An effective evaluation process is essential for securing a highly capable and professionally distinguished body of faculty who will provide the excellent instruction that our institution is known for. Further, it serves to motivate those whose membership on the faculty is

more or less assured. For over thirty years that our process has been in place, these objectives have been achieved to a remarkable degree. Even so, faculty and administrative resources devoted to them have been ever increasing and promise to continue to increase in an era of higher faculty turnover. It will be a challenge for the Senate, the faculty as a whole, and ultimately the administration and Board, to settle on an optimal balance.

Reflecting widespread faculty concern, the Senate has asked for a full faculty forum on employee benefits, which will occur on October 28. We have requested information from the director of Human Resources, who plans a presentation on which discussion will be based. She will focus on health care benefits and educational benefits. Faculty have particularly expressed concern about the high cost of health insurance for employees with dependents, this having sometimes been a deterrent in hiring. And the limitation of educational benefits to dependents as defined by the Internal Revenue Service has already been the topic of a preliminary discussion in the Senate.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas F. Cannon
Professor of Philosophy
Chair of the Faculty Senate

**Full Faculty Meeting
Benefits Discussion with HR**

October 28, 2008

4:15 to 5:15 pm

Trimble Forum

Opening Remarks

- Introduce Shannon Briggs, Director of Compensation & Benefits (x3296)
- TIAA-CREF and Vanguard resources (handout)

Objectives For Our Time With You

- Provide a brief overview of the 2009 Flexible Benefits Program
- Address the matters that Faculty Senate Chair Doug Cannon identified
- Describe Human Resources' near-term plans
- Collect your questions, comments, requests and identify your interests

2009 Flexible Benefits Program Changes

- Subsidy program
 - 4.6%-10.5% increases
 - Greater subsidies to those with children
- Health Profile
 - Change to Momentum
 - \$25/month benefits allowance incentive if you complete the Health Profile by December 1
- Online open enrollment forms
- Health screenings and flu shots on November 11
 - From 7am to Noon in Wheelock 101

Medical Insurance Eligibility

- Eligibility for visiting faculty members who teach full-time (3 units of coursework) for one semester only
 - “Faculty members teaching part-time, who do not bear the full range of expectations associated with full-time faculty, have a half-time appointment when they are contracted to teach four units of course work or to meet an equivalent set of responsibilities during the academic year.”

Consortium Membership

- Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) Efforts
 - Medical
 - Other forms of insurance
- Oregon Independent College Employee Benefits Trust (OICEBT)

Health Insurance Carrier

- Factors that determine costs:
 - Claims
 - Administrative expenses
 - Stop/loss insurance coverage
 - Network discounts
 - Gatekeeping practices
 - Disease management programs
 - Relationships with providers

Group Health Options

- o Not-for-profit organization

o In a study of 107 health plans by J.D. Power and Associates, Group Health ranked "Highest Member Satisfaction Among Commercial Health Plans in the Northwest Region." The study looked at coverage and benefits; choice of doctors, hospitals and pharmacies; information and communication; approval processes; claims processing; insurance statements, and customer service. J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information firm that represents the voice of the customer.

- o More than 40 GHC doctors have been ranked by their peers as the best in their fields and featured in the "Top Doctors" issues of several local magazines.

Education Benefits

- Opposite-sex domestic partners
 - October 2008 survey conducted by PACCON of 26 private colleges in the west
 - 21 schools participated
 - 47% do not offer tuition benefits to domestic partners
 - 26% offer to just same-sex domestic partners
 - 26% offer to both same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partners

Education Benefits

- Children who are not dependent
 - October 2008 survey conducted by PACCON of 26 private colleges in the west
 - 21 schools participated
 - 55% use the IRS definition of dependent
 - 45% use other definition of dependent
 - August 2008 survey conducted by Puget Sound of schools on our list of comparison schools
 - 20 schools responded
 - All have IRS, 50% support, and/or age (24,25, 26) requirements for children
 - One provides education benefits for children by birth or adoption who are not claimed as IRS dependents, but the children must be under age 24 and the faculty/staff member is taxed on the value of the benefit

Onsite Childcare Center

- Childcare Advisory Committee (2001-2002 and 2002-2003)
- Center for Health Sciences
- Master Plan

Next Steps for HR

- Develop hiring toolkit for search committee chairs
 - Making it easier for search committee chairs to communicate the Flexible Benefits Program
 - Subsidy eligibility
 - Impact of pre-tax contributions
 - Value of participating in the Health Profile incentive program

Next Steps for HR

- Survey faculty and staff to determine
 - How current benefits are valued
 - How current and potential wellness benefits are valued
 - How potential voluntary benefits are valued
 - Overall experience with Group Health Options
 - Effectiveness of HR's benefits practices (e.g., enrollment, communication)

Next Steps for HR

- Reconstitute the benefits task force
 - Formed in 2000-2001 and reconvened for consultations in 2002 and 2004
 - Revisit our benefits philosophy
 - Puget Sound survey results
 - External data from peer liberal arts colleges
 - Develop recommendations
 - Review and approval process may vary based on recommendation
 - Human Resources/Vice President for Finance & Administration
 - Budget Task Force
 - President after consultation with the Cabinet
 - Board of Trustees

Thank you for inviting us!

Recommendations?

Questions?

Comments?

Requests?