

Faculty Meeting Minutes November 7, 2001

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in McIntyre 003.

Minutes of the October 16, 2001 faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

In response to President Pierce's call for announcements, Florence Sandler invited her colleagues to congratulate Bill Baarsma on his election as Tacoma's mayor. She found it encouraging that college faculty were not in such disrepute with their fellow citizens as to be unelectable.

President Pierce offered brief remarks on a recent donor's gift that made possible improvements to the University's track and field facility. Given that it was Puget Sound's first major gift since the events of September 11, she noted that it was a heartening reminder that despite the troubles in the world, some of our friends recognize that it is still important to make gifts in support of the work we do. She also said how happy she was that the donor wanted to make the gift in Joe Peyton's name, given his noteworthy contributions to the University.

Academic Vice President Terry Cooney had no report to give. Faculty Senate Chair Hans Ostrom had no report to give.

President Pierce then invited Grace Kirchner to address the proposed Bylaws Revision document that had been developed in 1997-98 when she was Faculty Senate Chair. Replying that she hadn't anything to add to the document as posted on the web, **Kirchner M/S/vote reported later "to adopt the proposed bylaws revisions."** President Pierce invited discussion. **Keith Ward M/S/vote reported later "to amend Article IV, Section 6, D (Nomination and Balloting Procedure), subhead c, adding the sentence: 'Nominees shall be identified by name and academic department on election ballots.'"** Ward's rationale for the amendment was that though it would not mandate representation by division or department, it would show the degree of diversity in representation offered in the election. Bill Breitenbach suggested that it would be useful also if ongoing members were identified by department on the ballot (though the Bylaws don't currently stipulate that they appear on the ballot at all). Breitenbach was asked on several hands if he wished to offer the suggestion as a friendly amendment, and agreed to do so, with Ward's concurrence. **Ward M/S/P (by unanimous voice vote): "Nominees and ongoing members of the Senate shall be identified by name and academic department on the election ballots." The main Kirchner motion then passed on a unanimous voice vote.** President Pierce thanked her colleagues who had contributed to the revision for their time, energy and good work in the effort. **Kirchner then M/S/P (by unanimous voice vote) "that the changes in procedure for Faculty Senate elections be phased in as vacancies occur."**

President Pierce then invited colleagues to discuss the draft document—Charting the Future: Goals for the Decade. She opened the discussion by telling us that at their most recent meeting the Board of Trustees decided they wanted to approve the framework created in the goal statement (specifically, the six numbered objectives) but considered the items cited beneath those objectives as illustrative rather than definitive. In other words, the Board endorsed those broad objectives. They then asked that fundraising goals for the decade be developed as the University had done for the 1990's. For this fundraising effort we will need a formal document to include specific objectives, all of which we already have under discussion but most particularly new science facilities, enhanced student financial aid, improving the student-faculty ratio and support for academic programs. President Pierce and the cabinet will be working on these objectives in the next month. The Board of Trustees also asked us to look at how we will measure whether we have accomplished our goals at the end of the decade. Goals that can be expressed numerically will be easy to measure, but qualitative, non-numerical goals will pose a greater challenge.

President Pierce invited Ostrom to add his comments on behalf of the Senate (given that the draft document was discussed at the most recent Senate meeting, whose minutes have not yet been posted), noting that she was pleased that the faculty was returning to this draft, which it had previously discussed

in August at the Fall Faculty Conversation. Ostrom stated that the Senate's chief concern was that the full faculty have a chance to talk about some of the specifics in the goal statement, particularly signature programs, cluster programs, and diversity efforts. Breitenbach then inquired what exactly the draft document goals signified. Were they the Board's goals? Were they the President's goals? What status do they have?

President Pierce replied that the Goals for the 90s, developed before her arrival, seemed to provide a useful foundation for fundraising, and it seemed to her that this new goal statement might prove useful in the same way. For the Board of Trustees, these goals could represent a set of parameters for fundraising and the allocation of resources. Suzanne Barnett then inquired whether the Senate had taken a position on the goals statement. Ostrom replied that they had not, but wanted clarification of some of its details (e.g., signature programs, honors, and cluster programs). Michel Rocchi inquired of President Pierce whether the Board had asked us to consider any additional goals, not included in this draft document. President Pierce replied that they had not. She thought the Board's focus was on the more general thrust of overall institutional priorities. She reported that she had done with the Board the 3X5 card exercise that had proved so interesting with faculty and staff this fall, followed by a brainstorming session using poster boards on which the six main goals from the draft document appeared. Her assessment was that the Board supported these larger goals in the main, but were not so much concerned about curricular issues as about student financial aid, facilities priorities and funding. In her view, the Board is largely content to have faculty develop programs according to their own enthusiasms and wisdom.

Martin Jackson reported that at the most recent Senate meeting one senator expressed the concern that developing more signature programs or a larger honors program could have unfortunate consequences. Specifically, students not chosen for these programs might suffer as a result of having stronger students extracted from the University's general program.

Barnett wondered if changes in the goals could be debated in the future if the document were accepted in its current form. President Pierce replied that she didn't think any of the points listed beneath the more general goal headings should be seen as definitive. She was content to take the first line in each goal statement as a general objective, and then look at how these objectives could be developed and how they might intersect with our fundraising goals. She added that even as the faculty needed to determine the curriculum, donors would most likely be prompted to give if they were engaged by specific programs. In the past, certain goals have been very successful in drawing support. For example, we have been quite successful in eliciting donor support for student financial aid. On the other hand, we failed dismally to raise funds for technology when we made that a priority. As another example, we were very successful in soliciting Boeing's support for student summer research in the sciences, but failed to endow a comparable student summer research program in the humanities, arts and social sciences although we have raised expendable funds for those purposes. As we think of fundraising priorities, she said, we might want to change some of the goals language to find better language, perhaps even vaguer language. The draft document wasn't intended to dictate program development, but specific goals will be needed to generate support from prospective donors.

Cooney offered an example of a linkage between a signature program and donor support, recounting the way in which the Honors Program had been developed with a significant donor gift that brought with it an endowed chair as well as Lantz and Nelson faculty development funds. In this sense, sometimes donors do help us shape what we do and how we do it. He added that in the 80's, the concern that pulling stronger students out of the general program into Honors might weaken other classes had been expressed as well, but in the event faculty were soon noting as many strong students outside the program as within it. Today, the academic profile of the first year class as a whole is such that it would be difficult to make a case that the identification of some students for the Honors program in any way harms the academic quality of other classes. If we are to anticipate negative outcomes from the development of academic programs, he said, we need to examine the data to assess the grounds for those concerns.

Breitenbach declared himself relieved by the tenor of today's conversation and the explanation that the details under each goal statement were not "fixed." He expressed concern, however, that the use of the draft document in fundraising might lead to the creation of programs that might otherwise be

controversial. He didn't want us driven into these choices. He also expressed concern about the profiling of students in signature programs, not strictly as a matter of SAT scores and the like, but with respect to treating certain groups differently. He worried that proliferation of signature programs might have negative consequences, if not exactly by "ghettoizing" certain groups, then by creating the impression of superiority among them. He supposed that in time we could create a Lake Wobegon effect among our students, all of whom would be persuaded they were above average.

Rocchi said that the Honors example reminded him of how our Business Leadership Program had been generated by faculty with good ideas in search of donors, and how the development of BLP had led to improvements in BPA generally. In his view, we now have stronger students emerging from BPA. He inquired of Breitenbach whether he was looking for an institutional framework or plan for the development of signature programs. Breitenbach replied that he was not, nor was he proposing a moratorium, but he was asking for faculty to be engaged in the conversation before the development of signature programs. The President and Board of Trustees have every right to propose these ideas, he added, but he wanted the faculty to talk about them before they are developed. We need to discuss the downside of these ideas, rather than simply accepting them on the basis of their upside, he said.

President Pierce then offered her reassurance that she could not envision accepting a gift for an academic program that had not been developed by the faculty. The gifts we've gotten in her time at Puget Sound, she added (citing Asian Studies and the development of a visiting artist program from Geoff Proehl's idea for the Voices of American Theatre), have in each case come as means to develop ideas generated by the faculty. As another example, she noted that Hewlett and Burlington Northern money have followed faculty ideas like the Language and Culture Residence program and the Humanities program. The faculty have developed IPE and other programs, and the University has sought support, for example from the Luce Foundation, for these programs. She said she saw her fundraising role as finding resources to support institutional priorities, including programs initiated by the faculty. On the subject of fundraising to support goals of the draft document, she offered one qualification, saying that she thought it would be very difficult to add faculty positions in the current economic climate. And in whatever areas we seek support, she said, we will need very clear ideas with which to approach donors, specific ideas that we have already developed.

Breitenbach replied by requesting that draft document language reflect our wish to seek support for faculty-developed initiatives. President Pierce was happy to support this idea, and invited Breitenbach to write such language for inclusion in the draft document. She noted the popularity of student summer research with donors (re: Item 1:c in the draft document), and said we don't necessarily have to talk about signature programs in it. Barnett inquired how the faculty could be sure Breitenbach's suggestion on language would be carried out. Pierce replied, "Because I said so," with a smile. Cooney noted that because this is a draft document, it currently has no fixed language and is open to revision. President Pierce continued by saying she would be happy to eliminate reference to signature programs and clusters from the document if that was what the faculty wanted.

Returning to the topic of increasing the size of the faculty, however, she suggested that we change that goal to improving the student-faculty ratio. In the spirit of modifying goals, Ostrom requested that the document reflect a stronger and more specific commitment to increasing diversity and to tying it to fundraising. President Pierce replied that while she shared his commitment to this goal, she thought we had to be realistic about what we can achieve. She added that diversity has been a major priority for us for years, and one for which we've received, for example, \$500,000 from the Boeing Corporation as well as support for such programs as the Bob Ford scholarship. But recently foundations have walked away from funding diversity. She said that promotion of diversity will continue to be a goal. Sandler asked why foundations have walked away from funding diversity. Frankly, President Pierce replied, because so little progress has been made in that area. Foundations typically want to fund new initiatives, not to sustain old ones, particularly old ones where they've seen little success. She noted that she has talked with many national and regional foundations about support for diversity. Some she has talked to tell her that because they haven't seen a model that has worked, they can't justify funding those that are proposed. She credited Liz Collins and Beth Herman for their aggressive work in fundraising for diversity, and stated that it remains a high priority, but admitted that it was a hard area in which to find donor support.

Juli McGruder asked to return to the goal of increasing the size of the faculty (Item 1:a in the draft document). She noted that changing our goal from increasing the size of the faculty to improving the student-faculty ratio might mean that we could achieve our new objective by eliminating the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy programs and moving their faculty lines into the undergraduate program; if that was a possible outcome, she said she would prefer retaining the original language of the goal statement. Cooney replied that reducing the number of students while holding faculty numbers constant was indeed one way of achieving a reduced student-faculty ratio. When the University had in the mid-1990's reduced the size of the freshmen class from 700 to 650, the University had modeled reducing the implications of reducing the size of the student body even further. At the time, the administration and the Board had decided that it would be too difficult to do so because of the economics of sustaining the same infrastructure with fewer students. Nevertheless, it is still a possible strategy. In any case, Cooney noted, goals language won't affect the different ways of analyzing the options or the views of the Trustees, who can see both sides of the equation, and are "smart people" who can think for themselves.

President Pierce, commenting on the reduction of student body size, noted that the number of incoming transfer students has been declining in recent years, partly by our choice because overall retention has been better. We still want academically able transfer students, but we have reduced our targets both for the above reasons and because the pool of prospective transfers who want to come to Puget Sound, are admissible, and can afford to do so, is smaller than it has ever been. Last fall's target, for example, was 100, but we enrolled only 82 or 83. We asked ourselves why we fell short, she continued. One limiting factor was housing, and Trimble Hall should help us there. But over all, the applicant pool is smaller, she said, and she could see us further reducing the number of transfers, with a resulting improvement in student-faculty ratio. McGruder speculated that changes in the OT program (i.e., the program change from undergraduate to graduate) might have had some impact on the undergraduate transfer student pool. Yes, President Pierce replied, but we accounted for that impact last year and this year had already reduced our target from 120 to 100. The shortfall we have experienced this year is not related to the OT program change. Cooney added that while our undergraduate retention has risen about 20 percent since the early 1980's, our incoming transfer student population has been in steady decline for years, noting that in the mid-1980's we enrolled approximately 350 transfers each year.

Breitenbach addressed a further concern about the draft goal statement, observing that it seems to commit the University to how we do what we do. As written, it might appear that we expect the faculty to be generally available outside normal class times to sustain academic life in residential/social situations (Item 2:b). He said he could see the advantages of such efforts, but found it problematic that the "intellectual life of campus" had to be sustained by faculty. His preference would be to see students take more responsibility for this. President Pierce, noting once more that the language in the draft statement was merely that, expressed a willingness to modify this language, too, to refer to support rather than encouragement for faculty involvement in academic-residential programs. She stressed once more that there had never been an intention to mandate that faculty do these things. She said, however, that a number of younger as well as senior faculty have in fact expressed interest in these programs and have found them beneficial for those courses. The University had never intended that any particular model would prevail nor that there were any numerical goals for these programs. On the other hand, the University wishes to support programs that faculty found valuable and that served students.

Alva Butcher stated her view that though donors don't seem to want to give in support of technology improvements, she would still like to see the creation of more technology-enhanced classrooms appear under item 4. President Pierce agreed to consider this addition under item 4. Dean Cooney noted, as an example of other changes already in the works, that at the request of the Department of Athletics the draft would be modified to add "recreational" to "athletic." (Item 4:e).

President Pierce concluded by noting that the University would proceed with the six major goals but that she would bring back to the faculty for its thoughts a draft of the fund raising goals for the decade before taking the document to the trustees for action

Mehlhoff said he was curious about what had been done with the 3X5 cards faculty had filled out at Fall Faculty Conversation. President Pierce replied that the card idea had begun as just an exercise to get the conversation going, but had turned out so interesting that she had repeated it in her conversations in September with each of the divisions of the staff, with the Student Senate, and most recently with the Board of Trustees. Her current plan, she said, is to have a member of the staff go through the cards and pull out all new ideas for particular University activities and also to sort the remaining ideas into broader categories, and finally to group them by faculty, staff, and board. Her goal was to have this process complete by February.

Rocchi, addressing the question of whether simply to refine the goals or to include illustrations, expressed a preference for the latter, though with Breitenbach's caveat. More illustrations suggest more ideas, he said, and inquired whether President Pierce would welcome more ideas for the document from faculty. President Pierce replied that more ideas would be welcome. She reminded us, however, of the current challenges of fundraising and the importance of a clear set of goals to that effort. She remarked that she currently spends only about 15-20% of her time in fundraising, but would certainly do more if there were more prospective donors to ask. She said she thought Michel was right, that it's good for our fundraising to have some specifics connected to our goals.

Bill Beardsley offered another perspective. In his view, the Goals for the 90s document had one organizing theme that focused all the goals within it. He asked if we could aim for a comparable organizing theme for this document. President Pierce said she thought the preamble provided such a theme. It begins by giving a history of last 20 years, and goes on to assert that our aspiration to be a national liberal arts college of academic excellence has been achieved. Then, in what she called the "ever-more paragraph," it states that our challenge in the coming decade is to realize the promise of the institution and to build on the strengths we have already developed rather than changing institutional direction.

Sandler offered a perspective on the distinctiveness of Puget Sound, saying that we are not merely a national liberal arts college, but one located in a particular part of the country with its own culture, facing Asia, and characterized by a unique international/cosmopolitan flavor. She suggested that we adopt this as a defining descriptor. Cooney noted that he found this idea problematic, given that the faculty has just eliminated our International Studies requirement. An argument to now identify internationalism as a defining theme for the campus might leave the Board of Trustees quite legitimately wondering what we were up to. To him, the faculty's decision not to retain International Studies or to support any theme within the core ran contrary to the nature of Sandler's suggestion.

President Pierce said she would love to find the right language with which to talk about where we want to be at the end of the decade, in measurable terms. What if we said we wanted to be one of the three top choice places in the West, she asked? What might be the others? Whitman, Pomona? There's Reed, but it has its own distinct flavor. Cooney suggested Claremont-McKenna. President Pierce replied, how about the top five, then? She asserted that we should no longer view ourselves as "aspiring." She conceded this exercise was difficult, however, because we don't want to broadcast "empty rhetoric" in defining ourselves.

Hearing no wish to continue to the discussion, President Pierce invited a motion to adjourn, which Ili Nagy promptly supplied at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Roundy
Secretary for the Day