

## Minutes of the October 4, 2010 Faculty Meeting

Academic Vice President Kris Bartanen chaired the meeting in President Ron Thomas' absence. She called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. with about 38 members of the faculty present.

The first order of business was the faculty secretary election. Senate Chair Steven Neshyba nominated Alyce DeMarais.

**M/S/P** by acclamation.

Approval of the minutes of the May 4, 2010 Faculty Meeting

**M/S/P** as written by acclamation.

There were no announcements.

### Academic Vice President's report:

- Congratulations to those with books published recently, as well as other scholarly accomplishments:
  - Sarah Moore, Leon Grunberg, *et al.*
  - Eric Orlin
  - Keith Ward
  - Andrew Gardner
  - Laurie Frankel
  - All who contributed to research compilation, "Advancing Knowledge, Building Understanding" (and Gayle McIntosh for putting the compilation together)
- Thanks to advisors for participating with the third week check-in in support of student retention and academic success.
- Thanks to all who are working on the Race and Pedagogy Conference (coming October 28 – 30, 2010). Registration numbers are good; faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to register.
- Reminder about study abroad advising: students entering Fall 2009 and beyond are under the new pricing model (students pay tuition and fees, Puget Sound pays program fees; students can use all financial aid up to level of need (both need-based and merit aid that goes toward need); students and families have received letters regarding financial aid and study abroad; a few students will not be able to use some or all of their merit aid. It is important that faculty advise students accurately.
- Budget planning for 2011-2012
  - Due to multiple factors, we will need to make \$2M budget reduction for next year
  - Alyce DeMarais and Kris Bartanen have looked carefully at the projected faculty salary budget (particularly regarding steps and promotions); estimate \$177K needed to cover steps and promotions

(~3 positions), so at the outset we will have to reduce visiting by 3 positions.

- Lantz and Nelson funds are healthy: will be able to fund five Lantz fellowships; will fund up to all 13 junior sabbaticals (although Mellon grant ends this year, good stewardship has allowed us to have funds available for 2012-2013 junior sabbaticals as well).
- No changes will be made to University Enrichment Committee faculty development (research, travel) funding.
- Kris Bartanen will ask department chairs and program directors to let Alyce DeMarais know what 5% and 10% reductions would look like in departmental operating budgets (academic administrative departments will also be asked for 5%, 10%, and 15% reduction scenarios). For 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 we reallocated \$4000 from teaching departments and \$66,000 from academic administrative department, so we understand we are asking for contingencies from those who may have already made reductions.
- Reductions in operating budgets will not get us very far. For example, if we reduced operating 5%, froze departmental travel budgets and only funded start-up equipment, we would save ~\$450K—can't do this in operating side for long. Therefore, we must look for reductions in the compensation budget: sabbatical coverage is our "cushion" in compensation.
  - 24 FTE leaves predicted for next year
  - right now, there are funds for ~20 FTE visiting positions; therefore, we will work down from this number to save funds (i.e., be more conservative about faculty leave coverage)
  - Our planning does not assume that there will be no increase in the faculty salary scale for 2011-2012. As an example of the magnitude of potential tradeoffs: a 1% increase in faculty compensation = ~4 positions

### Senate chair's report

Steven Neshyba reported that the Senate has met two times, in addition to the retreat; tasked all committees (or most). At the last meeting, the Senate discussed the Pass/Fail (P/F) policy and the activity credit proposal (endorsed by Senate); both will be discussed later in this meeting.

The following is the text of Steven Neshyba's report with comments from the meeting in brackets. Steven has also posted his comments on the faculty governance listserve.

Gayle McIntosh's Report to the Campus Community, sent by email on Friday, describes goings-on at the September Trustee's meeting, and much of what I have to say here is covered in more detail there. The report includes an account of a pricing study that we also heard about

at the Fall Faculty Conversation, Enterprise Resource Planning, Fundraising, and other events. I attended: lunch, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, the Finance and Facilities Committee, the business meeting (all trustees), and dinner. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommended, and later the full board approved, the invitation of Sigma Alpha Epsilon to join the Greek community.

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee also discussed the interim educational benefits proposal from HR, the "patch" that would have provided for a maximum of \$20k/year for UPS dependents. Kris voiced support for the notion that perceptions of benefits are important, even if the "fine print" says otherwise (my quotes).

Subsequently I went on to the Finance and Facilities Committee. By then it was clear to me that the issue was not whether the proposal was generous enough [Steven and the faculty did not think the patch was generous enough], it was whether the Trustees would consider the proposal at all, on the grounds that the university cannot afford to provide faculty and staff with a benefit that was never guaranteed in the first place. One Trustee expressed the view that the university is under no moral or contractual obligation to implement the proposal, and that there is no obvious cost associated with rejecting it. I responded that the cost is likely to be a degradation in faculty morale, retention and recruitment [this was the only time Steven was recognized to speak during the session]. The Committee went into closed session almost immediately afterward, where the proposal did not survive a motion to endorse, by a vote of 12 against, none supporting, one abstention. Hence the proposal was never voted on by the entirety of trustees; it died in committee.

I should add that while I perceived some moments during the exchange to be adversarial, I imagine others might characterize them as being well-intentioned candidness on the part of the Trustees, with the benefit of the university foremost in mind. At an informal gathering after the meetings, one Trustee told me that he appreciated my comments, and that the decision was not an easy one.

In terms of moving forward, I will say that there are several issues the Trustee decision may raise that will be of importance to faculty governance. I think the morale, retention, and recruitment issues are real. It has been suggested to me that the Trustees underestimate the role faculty morale plays in our teaching and, in general, on the ranking and competitiveness of the university.

On a more pedestrian level, it seems inevitable that we will see an

increase in the number of UPS dependents who will elect to attend UPS. This in turn will result in increased total UPS enrollments, or displacement of paying students, either of which will likely have costs or other consequences that have not been fully considered.

The Senate discussed this topic at its meeting Monday 27 Sept. There were no motions in regard to it, but there was a lengthy discussion, and I encourage others who were at that meeting to share their views.

After his prepared remarks, Steven asked for two pieces of feedback:

- 1) a straw poll regarding faculty response to the Trustees' decision (later amended to determine the faculty's view of the current system)
  - 2) recommendations for the Benefits Task Force and the ad hoc Task Force for Benefits
- Straw polls—three categories regarding current system:
    - 1) OK with current system/status: 0
    - 2) Somewhat dissatisfied with status quo of NIC exchange as it stands: 18
    - 3) Very dissatisfied with the current status: 7
  - ideas for task forces and discussion:
    - How are other institutions feeling about this? (Carolyn Weisz)
      - Collaboration of analysis and operating issues
      - Sherry Mondou is meeting with representatives of the Northwest institutions to try to address some of these issues
      - Kris noted that we have both a larger employee base and lower thresholds (e.g., how long employed prior to using program); it is surprising we have not been on hold before now
      - Steven noted that the exchange system has a permanent trend problem that won't correct itself in future years. He wondered if one way to address the issue is to work with the other Northwest institutions by analyzing the numbers of who is closed out (e.g., we can't send students to Willamette, Lewis and Clark can't send students here, Willamette can't send students to Lewis and Clark) in order to find a way forward?
    - Bill Breitenbach recalled reading the fine print that stated the children of Puget Sound faculty could attend Puget Sound only after all paying students were enrolled. Kris will follow up on question—she thinks tuition remission students are included in numbers of incoming class. [Secretary's note: Bill Breitenbach corrected his statement after the meeting; the "only after all paying students are enrolled" clause refers to career faculty members taking classes, not to tuition remission students. Kris also confirmed with George Mills that tuition remission students are accepted and treated the same as any other students in the admission process.]
    - Barbara Warren asked about tuition exchange and Northwest Independent Colleges (NIC) agreements. Kris reported the following

numbers: 70 students this year (including our own): 40 Puget Sound dependents using tuition remission and 10 NIC students (both groups are “non-paying”), and 20 TE (national Tuition Exchange program; maximum Puget Sound scholarship for TE is \$30K so those students could be paying \$7K each). How many of our faculty/staff children are using tuition exchange? Kris did not have these numbers but they are available.

- Nancy Bristow asked if the “patch” was for both faculty and staff children? Yes, the educational benefits program is available for both faculty and staff.

### Continuing Business

#### 1. Pass/Fail policy

Nick Kontogeorgopoulos reviewed where we left this topic last May: Motion for instructor permission [secretary’s note: we later determined a second motion was open—to remove anonymity]; straw poll: 1) instructors set limit of P/F seats in their classes (21 for:6 against), 2) instructor permission (8 for:22 against), 3) remove anonymity (22 for:10 against).

Many faculty members thought professors should have control over what happens in their courses. Some courses have large numbers of P/F students with no control by instructor; this can adversely affect the tenor of the course. Nick reminded us that we are not debating the philosophical merits of P/F grading, just a change to give instructors control.

Initially, there was a motion to allow instructors to set the number of P/F students in each of their courses (including barring P/F students from a course); however, Bill Barry wondered about the status of the motion that was still on the floor from the May 4 meeting. Jonathan Stockdale recalled that a motion to remove the anonymity of P/F students was on the floor when the motion to extend the May 4 meeting failed. The initial motion was withdrawn and we turned our attention to the motions on the floor. Kris asked if removal of anonymity could be incorporated into instructor permission or should it be a separate issue (motion). Jonathan replied that it could be a different motion.

**Motion on the floor/F:** to require students to obtain the permission of instructor in order to enroll a course for a pass/fail grade. [May 4 faculty meeting minutes]

Bill Beardsley, recalling that the instructor permission motion was on the floor (from previous meeting), noted that instructor permission accomplishes what we are looking for in all areas. Rich Anderson-Connolly noted that setting a cap in each class may have unintended consequences if the preset cap made the situation worse for students. Rich favors instructor permission through generated codes on Cascade (established technology). Nick also prefers instructor permission because the instructor has a say as to those students who may take the course P/F (similar to the audit policy). Bill Breitenbach had concerns about timing—students must be motivated to seek permission to take a course P/F before registration or run the risk

of classes filling. Fred Hamel recalled the discussion in Senate, which included students, noted concern about the arbitrary nature of instructor permission; implementation would be uneven across the faculty. Nancy Bristow shared Fred's concern and the attendant risk of us treating students differently. Sarah Moore reported that the student members of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) voiced concern about being treated differently by faculty who may not take their work as seriously. Rich noted that instructor permission would provide more information to faculty members. He opined if P/F students were indistinguishable from those taking the class for a grade, then the ASC would not have made the decision they did—there must be some difference in student effort. Dan Burgard noted that student concerns are less validated in next two motions—instructor permission forces dialog and gets past assumptions.

Motion failed (13:15).

**Motion on the floor/F:** to remove the anonymity of P/F [May 4 faculty meeting minutes]

Jonathan Stockdale voiced his concern that students could be enrolled in his course and he has no knowledge of their status. This corrupts the classroom environment by removing transparency that fosters open communication and sends two messages to students: 1) some things are best kept from the professor, and 2) professors don't have students' best interests in mind.

**M/S/F Bill Breitenbach/Bill Barry** to amend the motion to read that anonymity ends after the final grade is submitted. Bill Breitenbach noted there is much that the instructor does not know about a class as it is. Nick Kontogeorgopoulos objected, noting that instructors give grades throughout the semester and should know the students' status.

The discussion returned to the motion to remove the anonymity of P/F students. Bill Barry asked, "How serious is the problem of lack of anonymity?" He wondered where the proposal originated. Sarah Moore replied that the ASC looked at a number of proposals about P/F. The ASC recommended that first and second year students be precluded from taking courses P/F, particularly since they may eventually need a given course for their major. The ASC could not come to a consensus about the other issues regarding P/F so they brought the issues to the full faculty.

Fred Hamel noted students see this as a situation of competing interests: students see anonymity as protecting students, but are less clear about how open communication may be in their best interests. Given that instructors' concerns about giving grades, including during the semester, is a "flash point," students are concerned that instructors will not torment themselves and spend time on papers, etc.; this may apply a double standard. Eric Orlin replied that this should be a

mutual conversation—students may not feel they need to torment themselves about writing the papers.

Bill Barry asked for an estimate of the number of P/F students in classes. Brad Tomhave estimated about 5% choose P/F (out of about 12,000 grades). Rich noted since we don't know which students are taking the class P/F, there is an absence of evidence and we don't know what we can infer. Julie Neff-Lippman confirmed C- is the passing grade then pointed out that she usually submits a student alert form if a student's grade is hovering between C/D. Sarah Moore noted that students taking courses P/F usually get grades comparable to the grades they receive in their non-P/F courses. Eric Orlin shared his concern that he usually tries to have conversations with all students early in the class; anonymity of P/F students interferes with this open communication. Alisa Kessel identified the issue as a matter of trust—instructors get students to buy into their intentions—anonymity of P/F students belies this trust.

Nick Kontogeorgopoulos called the question.

Motion failed (12:13).

**M/S/P** (Nick Kontogeorgopoulos/Bill Breitenbach) Instructors may designate the number of students who may take a given course for a P/F grade.

Bill Barry asked about setting a minimum. Nick did not think this was a good idea—he wants control of his course. Alisa Kessel noted the mechanics of certain courses require that all students be in the same situation (e.g., all graded).

Motion passed (15:5)

## 2. Activity Credit Proposal

The Curriculum Committee advanced a proposal, endorsed by the Faculty Senate, to change the allowable number of activity units that count toward graduation to two units.

**M/S/P** (Steven Neshyba/Amy Spivey) to allow two units of activity credit to apply toward the 32 units required for graduation.

Alyce DeMarais gave an overview of Curriculum Committee's discussion regarding activity credits and the recommendation to increase the number of activity units applying toward graduation to 2 units.

Dan Burgard asked if the proposal is in line with other institutions—yes it is. Eric Orlin expressed his concern that there was no limit on the number of units devoted to athletics, etc. Eric related an anecdote about a student taking bowling in her senior year in order to fulfill her units for graduation. Nancy Bristow urged the group to thinking about the benefits of students being involved in meaningful

physical activity; more careful monitoring of what activity courses get approved for credit is a better way of addressing “bowling” than the 1.5 cap. She noted that that 1.5 is a silly number and several students would not take a physical education course if they cannot get credit (no time in schedule). Co-curricular activities are an important part of our students’ education. Alisa Kessel discussed the Curriculum Committee deliberations but concluded there is not an easy way to decide what is more or less important for the education of our students. Bill Breitenbach noted that departments and programs can create their own activity courses (and facetiously noted that increasing the number of activity credits applied toward graduation requirements could be a way of reducing number of visiting faculty). Dan Burgard asked how many students use all 1.5 units of activity credit toward their graduation requirements. Brad Tomhave reported 31% in Fall 2009; Alyce DeMarais confirmed an average of 34% over the last five years (using numbers supplied by Brad). Kris Bartanen noted that approving the proposal for counting 2 activity units towards graduation will not necessarily alleviate the partial unit issue (e.g., students receive partial units from study abroad or other transfer credits).

Amy Spivey called the question.

**M/S/P** to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted by Alyce DeMarais.