

Faculty Senate Minutes
January 27, 1997

Senators Present: Beardsley, Cooney, Haltom, Hummel-Berry, Kirchner, Lind, Maxwell, Nagy, Robertson, Sloane, Smith, Steiner.

Visitors: Breitenbach, Bartanen, Rothman, Singleton, Taranovski

Minutes: The minutes of December 2 were unanimously approved without discussion.

Grace Kirchner asked the Faculty Senate to join her in welcoming Terry Cooney to the Senate.

Chair's Report: Kirchner announced that she had a communication from Carrie Washburn explaining the process of keeping records of committee minutes. Washburn said in an email communiqué to Kirchner: "We do keep one paper copy of each set of Minutes in this office in the official notebook for each committee. At Dave's [Potts] suggestion, we are going to ask they be signed by the Minutes-taker. [We are] in process now of assembling all the Fall 1996 Minutes and sending them to the takers for signatures. From here on in, obtaining the signature will be a regular part of processing the Minutes for this office."

Kirchner also raised a "follow-up item" regarding the Senate's request that Grace talk to the Trustees about their interest in receiving substantive changes to the Code. Cooney remarked that the committee working on revisions of the Code believes that it must distinguish between clarifications of existing provisions and substantive changes in the Code. The ad hoc committee is currently concerned with clarifying ambiguities in the language and process, but it also intends to submit with these revisions a list of possible substantive changes for the faculty to consider. Kirchner indicated that anyone who wishes to propose a substantive change to the Code should contact her to have it placed on the Senate agenda.

Report from the Professional Standards Committee regarding an interpretation of the Faculty Code: William Breitenbach, Chair, Professional Standards Committee, reported on that body's interpretation of the Faculty Code, as follows.

"At its meeting of December 10, 1996, in response to the request of a faculty member, the Professional Standards Committee issued an interpretation of the Faculty Code which it deemed to be of 'significant merit' so as to warrant inclusion in Appendix B of the Faculty Code. Accordingly, in compliance with the provisions of Chapter I, Part F, Section 1, of the Faculty Code, I am delivering to you for inclusion in the Senate minutes the following formal written interpretation:

"Interpretation of Chapter III, Section 6, Whether a Five-Year Evaluation of a Full Professor Entails 'Altering the Status of the Evaluated Faculty Member's Appointment' So As To Be Subject to Appeals Procedures:

"In Chapter III, Section 6, Paragraph a, of the Faculty Code, 'altering the status of the evaluated faculty member's appointment' refers to the following cases: reappointment of an untenured faculty member (Chapter II, Part A, Section 5); promotion (Chapter II, Part B); tenure (Chapter IV); or dismissal (Chapter V, Part A). The five-year evaluations of tenured full professors do not involve reappointment, tenure, or promotion. Hence the appeals procedures specified in Chapter III, Sections 6, 7, and 8, are not applicable. The only instance in which an evaluation of a tenured full professor entails 'altering the status of the evaluated faculty member's appointment' is an evaluation in which the Faculty Advancement Committee makes a 'negative' recommendation (Chapter III, Section 5, Paragraph e) and the faculty member receives an 'unsatisfactory evaluation' (Chapter V, Part A, Section 3, Paragraph a), in which case the Code's provisions for dismissal of a tenured faculty member may be invoked (Chapter IV, Section 7, Paragraph a, and

Section 3, Paragraph a). In that instance, an appeals procedure is provided by Chapter V, Part A, Sections 3 and 4."

Breitenbach explained that the interpretation emerged as a response to an individual's request for interpretations of the Faculty Code. The issue was whether five-year evaluations of full professors, when they involved salary-scale advancement, constituted an alteration of the status of the faculty member's appointment, such that a full professor not given a salary increase had an appeals procedure available under the provisions of the Faculty Code. The Professional Standards Committee concluded that altering the status of the faculty member's appointment did not refer to salary-scale increases (which are not mentioned in the Code), but only to reappointment, promotion, tenure, and dismissal. Hence there is no appeals procedure available for full professors denied salary-scale advancement.

Discussion at the Faculty Senate ensued, and the consensus of the Senate was that a literal interpretation of the Faculty Code seemed fine. Kirchner noted that this interpretation should be published in the Faculty Senate minutes, and that colleagues will have 10 working days to file an appeal with the Senate, and so I comply.

Brief Discussion of the Validity of Student Evaluations

Maxwell gave a short summary of his concerns about whether student evaluations reflect real teaching effectiveness. Maxwell explained that we have an obligation to look at what, precisely, student evaluations are measuring because we may be drawing the wrong conclusions from student and peer evaluations. He referred to recent research results posted on the Web that indicate we "may be really only evaluating personality traits" in student evaluations. Maxwell is concerned about the validity of student evaluations insofar as they measure to what degree faculty are actually promoting learning. Kirchner stated that the Faculty Senate needs to make a decision about process, specifically, about what process we should use to examine the issue. She asked whether we wished to sponsor a faculty discussion, to refer the question to the Professional Standards Committee, or to appoint an ad hoc committee, among other options. Cooney commented that there has been lots of research done on the question of student evaluations' validity, and that he has been aware of such research since at least the sixties. He noted that recent discussion attempts to shift attention to learning rather than teaching. Cooney ended with a cautionary note, saying that "if we do get into this, we need to really think about it and pay attention to the wider debate." Maxwell iterated Kirchner's remarks, saying that "the first step is to decide whether to appoint an ad hoc committee, to think about a process, to figure out how to proceed."

Kirchner asked whether the Senate wished her to contact the Professional Standards Committee (PSC). Beardsley noted that he had served on the PSC subcommittee when they worked on the new form. He said that they recommended doing away with numbers, among other suggestions, and that the subcommittee would have been glad to think along the lines being suggested at today's meeting. However, Beardsley continued, there had been the problem of the Faculty Senate undoing much of the work of the PSC subcommittee in the past. Nagy noted that if we redo the form one more time, that that's not really doing anything. Kirchner asked whether we wanted to think broadly or narrowly; to consider overall validity or to inquire into some particular aspect of the evaluation form. Maxwell said again, "I have no problem requiring teaching excellence. I have a worry about whether we're really getting at teaching excellence with the current form." The Senators present agreed to continue this discussion in a more substantive way at the next meeting, to allow time this day for the report from the Budget Task Force.

Report from the Budget Task Force

Cooney introduced the Budget Task Force Report by stating that the Budget Task Force is a group that is advisory to the president and that by tradition is made up of two students, two faculty, two staff, and two vice presidents, each of whom is asked to represent the whole university, not just their constituencies. The Budget Task Force, Cooney continued, wants to propose a budget consistent with the university's long-term goals. They try to respond to some of the university's

larger statements of direction. Teaching quality and staff remain the highest priority. Cooney explained further that their effort has been-- gradually and modestly--to decrease the student body size. Further, as fees go upward, there is an attempt to ensure that Financial Aid goes up at a faster rate. Further, this year they have made some specific suggestions to the president about how her discretion might be exercised in the administration of the president's discretionary fund.

Singleton reviewed the process the Budget Task Force undertook as it composed its recommendations. He explained that they had invited several groups to meet with them, including the faculty and staff salary committees as well as ASUPS. Singleton noted that this year ASUPS gave a superb, first-rate presentation to the Budget Task Force. He noted further that their job was to consider funding proposals from many sources.

Rothman distributed a hand-out which summarized revenues and expenditures at University of Puget Sound in the 1996-1997 academic year and which projected the same for the 1997-1998 academic year. Attached to the hand-out was a table of "Tuition and Fee Comparisons" which illustrated where University of Puget Sound fell in relation to both a Northwest and National Comparison Peer Groups.

Rothman explained the primary planning variables that underlay his presentation: They planned on a 3.2% faculty and staff rate of salary increase which varies according to individual. He noted that the Employee Benefits plan for the current year will come in the following year. He explained that their calculations assumed that we maintain the current size of the faculty and add one staff person, one who would be a member of technology support systems and work primarily with UNIX. Rothman continued to explain that Financial Aid would increase by almost a million dollars next year. Most of that Financial Aid goes to the entering class, he said, but that they are suggesting adjustments to the upper classes, too. Rothman said that they were able to increase academic operating budgets, but that this was not the case for non-academic departments.

Singleton spoke next, addressing some targeted budget increases. He said that the Task Force was expecting a 4.2% tuition increase next year. Referring us to the Tuition and Fee Comparison chart, Singleton noted that we were offering lower tuition and lower discount rates than were most other schools in the Northwest Comparison Peer Group.

For those of us in the room whose heads were beginning to spin, Rothman explained that the "sticker price" differs from the "real price" depending on the level of financial aid. The cost of an education at Puget Sound, while lower than at many other comparable colleges, is lessened by a smaller level of financial aid than exists at many other places. He continued saying that our discounts are smaller also, and noted that when you make that adjustment, Puget Sound is probably closer to the median in both charts. The Budget Task Force, Rothman said, is recommending an increase in the cost of room and board at 2.5%, and an overall increase of 3.9%. These increases reflect our effort of staying at least within 1% of the cost-of-living increases in the area (which were 2.9% last year).

Singleton continued the presentation by explaining that they were recommending an increase in planned maintenance. They are recommending an incremental upward adjustment until the figure of \$400,000 maintenance costs are reached. We currently spend \$331,000 per annum, according to Singleton, while a more usual cost would be 2% of the \$60 million net value of our buildings. Included in this planned maintenance will be measures to meet the requirements of the Disability Act, including installing elevators in Thompson and other buildings for an estimated cost of \$40,000. Other increases in the budget include the cost of an Information Technology Manager (the proposed UNIX System Manager) estimated at \$50,000 per year. They are recommending an increase in the Academic Equipment Budget of \$27,000 this year, also. Finally, they are recommending funding \$73,000 for a dual-platform lab in Thompson Hall.

Singleton noted that there were many other worthy proposals made, and that some of them are being recommended for implementation. For example, they are recommending the installation of

compact shelving to increase capacity in the library; they plan an expansion of Student Employment; and they are recommending a \$75,000 increase in the Information Technology budget. Further, the group is recommending that the university move to a four-year replacement cycle for computers. Singleton remarked that because it costs so much to upgrade computers, that in the long run such a replacement cycle may well be more cost-effective. Currently, computers are replaced at an approximate cost of \$1800-\$2200 per machine; the Task Force recommends making this amount more flexible. Bartanen noted that we are doing some replacement of general-purpose labs on a three-year cycle.

Rothman stated that in general, the university has done a fine job of maintaining the cosmetic aspects of our campus. However, we have aging buildings, with the most recent academic building having been constructed about thirty years ago. According to Rothman, we need to think about data transmission between buildings, heating, and other non-cosmetic structures and to account for replacement and upgrades in our budget forecasts.

Singleton noted that salaries are increasing 3.2% rather than the 4.5% that faculty requested but added that this figure will allow full professors who do not receive a step-increase to receive a cost-of-living adjustment equal to the rate of inflation.

Rothman ended the presentation by giving the Senate a reminder about the process. He said that this presentation would be the first of three presentations, the other two being given to the Staff Senate and the Student Senate. Following these three presentations, there will be a period of public comment (which may be addressed to the President or the Budget Task Force). The Budget Task Force recommendations will be reviewed by the president and then she will make a recommendation to the Board for their February 14th meeting.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 5pm.

Minutes submitted by Sarah Sloane.