

**Faculty Senate Chair Report to the Faculty  
In advance of 04/12/2016 Faculty Meeting  
By Ariela Tubert**

We had two senate meetings since my last report. I summarize below some of the main issues that have come up during that time.

- The senate continued what has been an ongoing discussion over the past year of possible changes to the course schedule so as to accommodate a common period and approved a common period on Wednesday from Noon to 1:30pm. At its March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the senate continued a conversation started at the previous meeting considering a report from the Academic Standards Committee on various alternatives for a common period and requested that the committee re-consider a middle of the day possibility (as opposed to early morning or late afternoon times that had been proposed.) During its March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, based on the senate's request that the committee consider a time in the middle of the day, the Academic Standards Committee recommended a common period on Wednesday from Noon to 1:30. During its March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, the senate amended the "Principles on Which to Base the Schedule of Classes" approved by the faculty senate in November 2007 (included below in Appendix A highlighting the changes.) These Principles adopted by the senate in 2007 are used by the Registrar's as the basis for the Scheduling Guidelines that are distributed to department chairs each year. The senate approved a motion to add the following new principle:

*"Faculty members' involvement in the business of the shared governance of the university is essential. In order to facilitate deliberation and decision making that is most broadly inclusive of faculty colleagues, it is incumbent on the university to assure a Common Period where governance-related meetings can take place, and to maximize the opportunity for colleagues to participate during the work day. Wednesdays between Noon and 1:30 will constitute the Common Period. Departments should avoid scheduling classes during this time so that as many faculty members as possible are available to participate in the affairs of governance that concern the whole community."*

Once again, I would like to recognize the Academic Standards Committee for their work on this issue throughout this academic year.

- At its March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, the senate discussed a report from the Curriculum Committee on various proposals for shortening the length of the Spring Semester. A brief presentation of those proposals will take place at the faculty meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- At the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the senate discussed the motion to change the Bylaws so as to have the Senate Chair, rather than the President, preside at faculty meetings. This issue will be up for discussion at the April 12<sup>th</sup> faculty meeting.

- Also, at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the senate received reports from the faculty members of the policy committees of the Board of Trustees. These faculty members serve as liaisons between the faculty and the Board and have been reporting back to the senate after each Board meeting.
- For the remaining meetings of this semester, we will be discussing a report that summarizes the results of the faculty focus groups about the university's education goals and the possibility of a degree associated with the Freedom Project, among others. In addition, we will be discussing end of year reports for the 10 standing committees.
- I want to conclude by turning to the faculty governance elections that are currently still underway. We had a very high number of nominations for most positions and a high participation rate in the primary. Please remember to vote on the final round! I would like to thank all of those who participated in the nomination process, all of those who agreed to run for or serve on the various positions, and Pierre Ly (secretary of the senate) for all his excellent work over the past few weeks making sure that the elections run smoothly.

## Appendix A

### Principles on Which to Base the Schedule of Classes

Approved by the faculty senate in Nov/Dec 2007

Amended by the faculty senate to add principle #7 on 3/28/2016

1. The schedule of classes serves the diverse needs of students, faculty members, department-chairs, and program directors. It necessarily reflects the resources and limitations with which the administration, academic advising, the staff, and facilities- services must work, including the physical spaces available for teaching and learning. The process of scheduling is complex and dynamic. By articulating some principles, the faculty intends to contribute productively to this process, but relatively broad principles cannot address all circumstances. Consequently, good communication among students, faculty members, department-chairs, program-directors, staff members, and the administration remains essential. Some issues connected to scheduling may be addressed by articulating principles; others are best addressed individually, with flexibility, cooperation, and practicality in mind.
2. The university's primary mission is to educate the whole student; therefore, in addition to providing an academic education, the university continues to value students' participation in athletics; in the performing, visual, and literary arts; in media; in the ASUPS; and so on. Consequently, those involved with scheduling need to take these elements of academic education into account. At the same time, the core-curriculum, majors, minors, graduate programs, and interdisciplinary curricula form the basis of a Puget Sound education. Departments should avoid scheduling required classes for the majors, of which classes there are not multiple sections or alternatives, after 4:00 p.m. Legitimate exceptions to this guideline may arise, and there are different kinds of "required classes," but in general, departments should include this guideline in the several considerations that go into scheduling classes. By the same token, some courses (in the

core curriculum and in majors, minors, and graduate programs), to which students may readily find alternatives, may be scheduled after 4:00 p.m. Such courses can serve the needs of many students and faculty-members without undermining athletics, arts, and media.

3. The schedule should reflect an optimal use of the classrooms available, of the five working-days available per week, and of the hours from 8:00 a.m. to 9:50 p.m. It is understood, of course, that there are other teaching-spaces besides actual classrooms, such as laboratories, practice-rooms, and studios. "Classrooms" here is used in a broad sense, therefore. The principles articulated in this document acknowledge the diversity of educational venues and methods at the university.

4. In academia, the 50-minute and 80/90-minute periods remain effective and venerable. It is understood that, for sound pedagogical reasons, some colleagues prefer the former, some the latter, and some a combination of both. It is understood that neither period is inherently better pedagogically even if individual professors strongly prefer one to the other. Personal preference does not reflect an inherent pedagogical value of either time-slot. Therefore, the schedule should reflect an optimal combination of the 50-minute and 80-minute time-slots for classes.

5. No classes should begin before 8:00 a.m., and no classes should end later than 9:50 p.m. Moreover, as has been the custom at the university, individuals, departments, the staff, and the administration should attempt to accommodate reasonable preferences for a class-schedule. The main scheduling-custom now seems to involve good communication among individuals, departments, associate deans, the advising office, and the Registrar. There appears to be no reason to change this customary practice of reasonable negotiation and accommodation.

6. One-day-per-week, three-hour classes should be limited to 300- and 400-level courses and graduate courses. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no professor should teach more than one of these classes per term. Currently, such classes are rarely scheduled; therefore, debate about the drawbacks and merits of such courses is probably unnecessary and wasteful. However, three-hour slots beginning at 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, and 6:00 should be available to teach in, as long as scheduling such a class reflects guidelines expressed in item #2 above.

7. Faculty members' involvement in the business of the shared governance of the university is essential. In order to facilitate deliberation and decision making that is most broadly inclusive of faculty colleagues, it is incumbent on the university to assure a Common Period where governance-related meetings can take place, and to maximize the opportunity for colleagues to participate during the work day. Wednesdays between Noon and 1:30 will constitute the Common Period. Departments should avoid scheduling classes during this time so that as many faculty members as possible are available to participate in the affairs of governance that concern the whole community.