

University Evaluation Standards

(revised April 2025)

The mission of the University of Puget Sound is to develop in its students capacities for critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression that will sustain a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, active inquiry, and reasoned independence. A Puget Sound education, both academic and co-curricular, encourages a rich knowledge of self and others, an appreciation of commonality and difference, the full, open, and civil discussion of ideas, thoughtful moral discourse, and the integration of learning, preparing the university's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship. Such an education seeks to liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives.

The university has articulated and published the following statement expressing its educational goals.

A student completing the undergraduate curriculum will be able to

1. think critically and creatively;
2. communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing;
3. develop and apply knowledge both independently and collaboratively

And will have developed

1. familiarity with diverse fields of knowledge and the ability to draw connections among them;
2. solid grounding in the field of the student's choosing;
3. understanding of self, others, and influence in the world; and
4. an informed and thoughtful sense of justice and a commitment to ethical action

The University, as a community of learning, maintains a strong commitment to teaching excellence, scholarly engagement, and fruitful student-faculty interaction. These values are reflected in the expectations that the university holds for its faculty in all aspects of their work.

The University has also articulated and published the following statement regarding diversity:

UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY STATEMENT

We Acknowledge:

- the richness of commonalities and differences we share as a university community.

- the intrinsic worth of all who work and study here.
- that education is enhanced by investigation of and reflection upon multiple perspectives.

We Aspire:

- to create respect for and appreciation of all persons as a key characteristic of our campus community.
- to increase the diversity of all parts of our university community through commitment to diversity in our recruitment and retention efforts.
- to foster a spirit of openness to active engagement among all members of our campus community.

We Act:

- to achieve an environment that welcomes and supports diversity.
- to ensure full educational opportunity for all who teach and learn here.
- to effectively prepare citizen-leaders for a pluralistic world.

Students come to the University with diverse social identities relating to sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, disability, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, veteran service, and gender, among others. The University acknowledges that embracing diversity strengthens and enriches everyone's educational experience, while the lack of understanding of and respect for diversity can negatively impact students' learning and constrain our ability to prepare responsible and caring world citizens. The University also recognizes the importance of, and remains committed to, recruiting and retaining the best faculty from all backgrounds in whom the diversity of our broader society is reflected. Therefore, faculty members' contributions to building a diverse and inclusive campus community are recognized and valued.

Given the centrality of diversity to the goals of the University, it follows that faculty should invest time and effort toward achieving an environment that welcomes and supports diversity. Teaching, professional growth, and service related to diversity may be enacted in different ways across disciplines, manifesting as varied opportunities and means to further these efforts. Departments, Schools, and Programs are encouraged to articulate in their Departmental Evaluation Guidelines how best practices regarding diversity might be translated in ways that resonate with their respective disciplines.

I. TEACHING

The University of Puget Sound is committed to offering a high-quality liberal arts education that cultivates critical thinking skills and inspires intellectual excitement, encouraging students toward a lifetime of learning. This commitment is the hallmark of the university and influences the entire range of formal and informal activities within the institution. Thus, the identity and purpose of the University of Puget Sound are closely tied to the quality of its faculty, their passion for teaching, and their interactions with students.

The university has identified goals for students that concentrate not simply on the

accumulation of information, but also on the ability to speak and to write, to think critically and creatively, and to learn both independently and collaboratively. These goals can only be met with teaching that opens the minds of students so they see the world in a deeper and more complex way.

Proven excellence in teaching is a criterion for tenure. The ongoing pursuit of teaching excellence is also a process that continues over the entire career of a faculty member. Teachers may use a variety of methods and approaches to achieve this objective; departmental evaluation standards will reflect the variety that exists across the university and provide specific guidelines for assessing success in teaching. The goal, as called for in the mission of the university, is to develop our students' "capacities for critical analysis, aesthetic appreciation, sound judgment, and apt expression." Thus, the challenge of teaching rests with flexibility in approach and with sensitivity and concern for effectiveness.

When teachers are enthusiastic about teaching, learning, and their discipline, students become engaged in learning. Excellent teachers challenge students intellectually and equip them to meet those challenges. Excellent teaching typically involves creating effective course structure, selecting appropriate material, planning meaningful assignments, providing full and fair evaluation of students' work, and developing effective techniques for classroom presentation and management. The manner in which this is done will vary with the nature (e.g., lecture, discussion, or lab) and level (e.g., introductory or advanced) of the course. Teachers seek to remain current and active in their fields to infuse intellectual energy into their teaching, and enhance the quality and integrity of the Curriculum.

Students come to us from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them an array of experiences and abilities. Students' needs also vary as they progress through their university education. Excellent teachers should recognize this diverse range of students - for example, by incorporating diversity of perspectives into class content and developing pedagogies with an awareness of identity and positionality. This recognition of differences should lead to flexibility in teaching strategy and tactics to ensure the continued development of students' knowledge.

Because learning occurs in informal as well as formal settings, activities beyond the classroom are recognized as modes of teaching. Informal settings include, but are not limited to, mentoring, summer research advising, and overseeing experiential learning opportunities.

II. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The mission of our university is to foster a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, therefore the professional growth of faculty members is of vital interest to the University of Puget Sound. Professional activities should reflect sustained growth across an academic career.

The university seeks to evoke in students a recognition of learning as an ongoing process extending far beyond their years of formal education. Faculty members serve as models of a continuing engagement with the life of the mind. Faculty members should strive to embrace the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge and be actively engaged in research, writing, creating, exhibiting, or performing since such a teacher is better able to convey to students the importance of these activities to intellectual development. Faculty are encouraged to consider how their research and/or professional development might contribute to the University's broader commitment to diversity.

An important function of a university is to encourage the pursuit of knowledge and the

advancement of understanding in many fields. Individual faculty members demonstrate their own intellectual vitality, contribute to the larger purposes of scholarship, and positively represent the university as a place of learning when their ideas are shared in a public form. Faculty members should seek opportunities for public sharing of their work.

An important element of professional growth involves engagement with the larger professional community where ideas are debated and modified. There are many ways a faculty member can be involved in the larger professional community including (but not limited to) peer-reviewed publication, making presentations at meetings, reviewing books or scholarly manuscripts, organizing meetings or forums, or taking leadership positions in professional societies. Faculty members must strive to be actively engaged with professional peers within an area of expertise.

III. ACADEMIC & CAREER ADVISING

Academic advising is a significant faculty responsibility. Faculty members should be conversant with the learning community of which they are a part, in order to assist students in understanding that community and the language of university regulations and curricula. To advise students well, faculty members in all departments will need a clear understanding of university curricula, rules, regulations, and policies; an in-depth knowledge of their own departmental curriculum; knowledge of the requirements of external agencies as appropriate; sufficient knowledge of university support offices to make appropriate referrals; and familiarity with advising resources provided to them. Faculty members must show a readiness to advise, to make themselves available to students at reasonable times, to welcome students' questions and concerns, and to make appropriate referrals. Advising can be formal or informal, and faculty should be willing to share their expertise with students who are not their advisees as well as with those who are. In addition to participating in first-year advising or advising students who have chosen a major, advising can include activities such as serving as the advisor for a student club, or guiding a cohort of graduate students through their program. Faculty should also be knowledgeable regarding career opportunities for students in their discipline and able to refer students to university and off-campus resources related to work experience.

IV. UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Tenure-track faculty must be actively engaged in university and departmental service. University service refers to faculty activities that are not part of the teaching, professional growth, and advising functions, but advance the mission of the university. Activities under this rubric include (but are not limited to): contributing to university governance, serving the school, department, or academic program, contributing to co-curricular programs, promoting intellectual and cultural vitality on campus, helping convey the nature and purpose of this institution to its constituencies, working on diversity initiatives on campus, and/or assisting in recruitment and retention of a diverse student body. Individual faculty members need not participate in all areas.

In the long-term functioning of the university, the competent performance of a reasonable share of university governance and departmental service by each faculty member is indispensable. Participation in university governance, including formal standing committees, ad

hoc committees and Faculty Senate, is a valuable contribution to the effective operation of the institution and ensures that faculty will, in general, have opportunities to help shape university policies. Substantial departmental service is also a necessary component of service to the university as a whole, and includes regular participation in departmental meetings and other ongoing or occasional tasks, such as searches, curriculum planning, and budget preparation.

A faculty member's contributions to informal and co-curricular activities help create a stimulating atmosphere that enriches the intellectual and cultural life of the campus. Such involvement is an extension of the faculty's central teaching role. Activities that help convey the nature and purpose of the institution may be a part of a faculty member's service to the university. Faculty involvement in Admissions programs designed to acquaint prospective students and their parents with the character of the institution or enhance student recruiting, provides one example of such activity.

V. COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service related to professional interests and expertise is required for promotion. All faculty should consider engaging in service outside the university that enhances a person's value to the university or enriches teaching. For example, faculty engagement in regional and national professional organizations increases the visibility and reputation of the university and strengthens the faculty member's connection to their broader disciplinary community. Faculty may also choose to engage in the local community through activities showcasing their professional expertise, creating new educational or experiential opportunities for students, or working on diversity initiatives.

Language regarding diversity was developed collaboratively by the Professional Standards Committee and the Committee on Diversity, in conversation with the Faculty Advancement Committee and the Provost.