

Faculty Senate Meeting  
January 27, 2020  
Minutes

**Senators Present:** Heather Bailey, Laura Behling, Sara Freeman (Chair), Megan Gessel (Vice Chair), Alison Hale, Jairo Hoyos, Chris Kendall (Secretary), Jung Kim, Tiffany MacBain, Andrew Monaco, Sarah Moore, Heather White

**Guests Present:** Lindsey Antos, Uchenna Baker, Emily Holloway, Diane Kelley, Alisa Kessel, Sherry Mondou, Nila Wiese

- 1. The Senate Chair called the meeting to order at 12:01pm.**
- 2. There were no announcements**
- 3. M/S/P approval of minutes from December 9 meeting.**
- 4. There were no updates from ASUPS or Staff Senate**
- 5. Report of the Budget Task Force (the “BTF”)**
  - Kessel, Mondou, and Wiese presented on behalf of the BTF. They began with a reminder of the BTF’s charge to achieve a balanced budget, and situated this in the context of a \$5MM shortfall with lower enrollment and retention. They noted a decline in enrollment, from 2775 students in the 2011–12 academic year to a current enrollment of 2400, with expectations that this may be the new norm. Retention has also dropped, from 86% three years ago to 81% over the past year. They noted that 75% of the budget is compensation. Based on this, the BTF recommends a 2% increase in the staff and faculty salaries pool, with 1.5% dedicated to steps and promotions. This would be accompanied by a two-percentage-point decrease in university contributions to non-exempt staff and faculty retirement benefits. The BTF further emphasized that they recommend this for one year, as the BTF charge only allows for one year of planning.
  - The Provost indicated that Academic Affairs has undertaken to achieve a 5% reduction in its budget in line with cuts across the University. Academic Affairs hopes to achieve this through a combination of reduced sabbatical replacements, less overload and adjunct pay, reduced public relations costs, and a decrease in food costs across departments.
  - The Senate Chair opened the floor for questions and discussion.
    - It was noted that a 2% increase in the overall compensation pool will result in unequal distribution across faculty members because of the need to account for steps and promotions. A clarification was made to the extent that the 1.5% increase dedicated to steps and promotions amounts to approximately \$500k; the savings

- from the two-percentage-point reduction in retirement benefits will amount to approximately \$700k.
- Several noted that, although the university's retirement contribution is higher than some peer institutions, it is less than helpful to look at that one benefit in isolation, especially since medical benefits and salaries may lag. It was also noted that it is difficult to ascertain peer information on non-salary compensation.
  - A question was raised as to why the educational benefit was increasing. Members of the BTF noted that this increase was very modest (approximately \$20k) and that the last increase was about seven years ago.
  - In response to a question about a decline in unrestricted gift-giving, BTF members offered several explanations for the decline: tax code revisions that increased the standard deduction threshold, structural changes in philanthropy including the rise of online gift-giving, an increase in donors' desire to attach restrictions to gifts, and the fact that the university is currently between fundraising campaigns.
  - Mondou noted that the endowment has gone up, but that exact numbers were not available until the annual report, which should arrive shortly.
  - Several Senators and guests indicated a desire to take a "big picture" look at the budget, beyond the BTF's limited, one-year charge. A member of the BTF indicated that concerns about this year's recommendation should be communicated to the President. The Senate Chair also noted that the Senate can form and charge committees with powers beyond those of the BTF.

## **6. Appointment of the Co-chair for the Search Committee for the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (the "VPDI").**

- The Senate Secretary summarized the process of securing nominations as well as the current state of the nominating process.
  - At its December 9, 2019 meeting, the Senate engaged in a lengthy discussion on the appropriate process of appointing a faculty co-chair to the VPDI search committee. At that meeting the Senate received input from a group of faculty deeply concerned with and involved in the work of diversity and inclusion on campus. The Senate took the decision to ask the relevant members of the Administration for a six-week suspension in search activities so as to allow for greater Faculty input, with a goal of appointing a co-chair at the January 27, 2020 meeting.
  - The Chair on December 18, 2019 then elicited a call for nominations through the facultycoms listserv.
  - During the nomination period, the Faculty nominated eleven individuals; nine declined the nomination. Of the remaining two nominees, one (Amy Ryken) accepted the nomination and one (Grace Livingston) indicated support for Ryken's nomination.
- Based on this history, the Senate discussion focused on three interlocking issues:
  - *The need to proceed with respect for the university's history.* Minoritized communities' contributions to the university in the face of ongoing systemic erasure of the contributions of faculty, administrators, and student members of those same

communities remains a concern when filling this post and engaging members of the campus community.

- *The desire to proceed with a balance of thoughtfulness and alacrity.* One of the challenges in forming the VPDI search committee is the desire for inclusivity. This requires engagement with multiple campus community stakeholders; timing and logistics require a Faculty co-chair for that process. It is not possible to conduct interviews over the summer, so any delay past the spring semester could delay the hiring process an entire year. The current interim VPDI will be on sabbatical in the fall and unable to serve, leaving a gap in a vital post.
- *The relationship between the nomination of the VPDI co-chair and the future members of the committee.* The Senate expressed its sincere appreciation for the nominees' many contributions. The Senate noted in particular the significant contributions and qualifications of Professor Grace Livingston, and how these would make her an apt member of the VPDI search committee when the co-chairs form the full committee.
- Given these many considerations, the members of the Senate proceeded to **M/S/P that the Senate appoint Amy Ryken as co-chair of the VPDI search committee.**

## **7. Discussion of Curriculum Process in February and March**

- Kim offered an update on behalf of the Curriculum Task Force (the "CTF"). The CTF's approach has been guided by the past year of conversations as well as the ranked voting, in which 75% of respondents voted for change in the first round of voting. The CTF interprets this as meaning the Faculty desire change but are weary of the exact form that might take. Taking this into account, the CTF has opted to propose at the next faculty meeting a model that provides for a flexible first-year experience. Namely, the CTF proposal allows students to navigate the core individually or as part of a cohort. The proposal will also address mentoring and advising while reformulating the SSIs.
- The Senate Chair has communicated to the Board of Trustees that the CTF is taking the direction indicated by the ranked-choice vote, and that the new proposal will work with existing approaches in the university curriculum. The CTF's recommendations will be on the agenda at the February and March faculty meetings, and will also include a discussion about workload.

## **8. Other Business**

- The Senate Chair shared information that Evergreen State College developed a document entitled, "Ten simple things faculty can do to support staff," and wondering if Faculty here would be interested in developing something similar.
- MacBain volunteered to work with staff on this effort.

## **9. M/S/P to adjourn the meeting at 1:28pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Kendall