

Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting, February 23, 2009. McCormick Room, Library, UPS

Senators Present: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Kris Bartanen, Terry Beck, Douglas Cannon (Chair), Sue Hannaford, Suzanne Holland, Steven Neshyba, Jada Pelger, Amy Ryken, Jenny Wrobal.

Visitors Present: Alyce DeMarais, Priti Joshi, Sarah Moore, George Tomlin.

Cannon called the meeting to order, and asked for corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. Ryken noted additional corrections to the minutes.

M/S/P to approve the minutes, as corrected, of the previous meeting.

Announcements

Cannon: attendance is low for reasons of meeting and class conflicts. Leslie Saucedo has resigned as replacement Senator because of other commitments and may have to be replaced.

Special Orders

Cannon noted that he had submitted a report (appended to these minutes) to the Trustees regarding Diversity Committee bylaws and the ad hoc benefits committee, and had briefly mentioned that the Senate is also addressing questions of early evaluation and other topics.

Committee Liaisons

Anderson-Connolly asked whether we should be assigning Senators as liaisons to other committees.

DeMarais reported that the Curriculum Committee is working on a review of the core curriculum.

Holland said that Saucedo is on the UEC.

Moore noted that UEC has just finished a first pass-through for awards to faculty for the Trimble award. These are for faculty development to study in a foreign country, not restricted to Asian Studies.

Early Tenure and Promotion

Cannon, noting that there is little overlap between the current Senate and those present at the March 10, 2008 Senate meeting at which this subject was discussed, asked Joshi to update the Senate on the topic.

Joshi explained why we should look carefully at the early tenure and early promotion issue, recapping her argument at the March 10 meeting that making early tenure/promotion available might benefit recruitment. The first part of the argument was that a higher standard doesn't make sense. The second part of the argument is that the language seems sloppy: halfway through the interpretation, the word "tenure" is inserted despite the fact that the part of the code referred to concerns promotion. She noted that the code itself contains no mention of a higher standard.

Anderson-Connolly asked what options (see Appendix III) Joshi would prefer.

Joshi replied that Options II and III were her personal preference, but that I and III are perhaps more practical.

Holland wondered whether, in tough economic times, the university doesn't want to encourage early promotion. So perhaps Option II is better.

Beck noted that there are costs associated with searches too. Current economic conditions should not be used to drive code changes. He also preferred to get rid of the up-or-out provision, but recognized that it is political reality to keep it.

Hannaford supported the up-or-out provision but prefers maintaining a higher standard for both early tenure and early promotion. In terms of recruiting and retention, the tenure decision is important enough that six years of evaluation are beneficial for making a sound decision. In any case, it is better to leave the question to the faculty to decide, rather than the Senate.

Tomlin noted that the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) thinks the language has drawbacks. As a side-theme, the PSC tried to discuss the question of what kind of systemic psychological changes would result if the door were opened too wide for early tenure, for example, would junior faculty feel an obligation to prepare files early.

Bartanen said she found the 1987 interpretation to be unclear. The PSC doesn't want to be in the position of interpreting an interpretation. We have a lot of variety of situations to deal with, she said. She expressed a preference for a standard bar for tenure, but a higher bar for promotion.

Cannon commented that after consulting with 12 years of PSC chairs, it seems clear that a code amendment is essential to clear things up. There was a clear sentiment among past chairs, he said, not to leave defunct language in the interpretation; such language should be removed from the code. He discussed ways to implement the change. The situation of the code interpretation as it stands is very confusing and some action should be taken.

Beck noted that although multiple tries at tenure is an unlikely scenario, it is troublesome that the above-and-beyond standard is ill-defined.

Bartanen asked whether Beck would have the same problem with "exceptional merit" elsewhere in the code. Beck: Not sure.

Joshi questioned whether FAC veterans present would like to comment on whether the "exceptional merit" language is also vague.

Hannaford said it is vague. With respect to above-and-beyond, you have to look at the existing standards, and then look for something beyond that.

Moore noted that she didn't know that that criterion is any more difficult than when we need to judge "excellence". Service is perhaps the easiest, since it's a matter of record.

Bartanen noted that the criteria for tenure require an affirmation of each area (teaching, professional growth, service, need), while for promotion an overall assessment of quality in terms of performance across areas is required.

Anderson-Connolly suggested we should send three dimensions, two possibilities each, to the faculty.

Cannon noted that we have two faculty meetings left this year. One possibility is to present a specific motion to the faculty.

M/S (Neshyba/Anderson-Connolly): That the Senate recommend to the Faculty that the same standard for tenure be applied regardless of when the application for tenure is made.

Bartanen wondered if, when we get to the faculty meeting, we ought to have more definite language to focus discussion. A partner motion is called for. If we had option I and a modified version of III, we would have more definite language.

Neshyba and Anderson-Connolly **withdrew** the motion.

M/S (Beck) Motions I and III together, exactly as worded in Appendix I.

M/S/P (Ryken/Holland) to call the question.

The motion by Beck **passed**.

Cannon noted that the April 6 meeting of the faculty would be a suitable time for a first reading.

Instructor evaluation form

Holland described options in the handout.

Anderson-Connolly said it is hard to judge which option is the best, and asked whether there were ways to evaluate them.

Hannaford said the proposed changes are purposely baby steps, because we have not had any specialist consultations on them.

Moore commented that what struck her is that we can be much more creative about this. What seems to be the case is that disgruntlement is not about the form itself, but how the administration uses the forms.

Holland noted that one of the changes is to ask the student to indicate the grade s/he expects to get. She asked Hannaford and Moore for their opinions on that change.

Hannaford said having that information was useful.

Holland said she and Hannaford liked B and C a little better.

Moore noted that her personal preference would be to get statistical data, via some number-crunching method. There is less redundancy in option C.

Holland expressed a dislike for triplicate copies, it being hard to read the pinks.

Cannon noted that his department photocopies because of that. In addition, he noted, it seems that it is an open question whether the anticipated grade is itself good data.

Holland said we didn't make that up, we got it from somebody else.

Beck asked why graduate students were eliminated.

Moore said that was an oversight.

Anderson-Connolly asked what the committee wanted from us.

M/S/P (Holland): That we forward the recommendations to the full faculty for discussion.

Other business:

Cannon noted that we need to think about the Senate replacement process.

M/S/P: Adjourn at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Neshyba

Appendix I: Early Tenure and Promotion

Appendix II: Evaluation forms

Appendix III: Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate

Appendix I: Early Tenure and Promotion

A Smorgasbord of Possible Motions concerning Early Tenure and Promotion

Each of the following options is spelled out in a motion on a subsequent page. Senators are invited to choose one or more from among these, but cautioned to avoid choosing two or more that taken together are inconsistent in effect.

- I. To permit early consideration for tenure under the standard normally required, *with the “up-or-out” provision*
- II. To permit early consideration for tenure under the standard normally required, *without the “up-or-out” provision*
- III. To permit early consideration for *promotion* under the standard normally required
- IV. By way of the PSC’s 2007 interpretation, to clearly institute an “above and beyond” standard for early tenure and promotion, except in cases where earlier dates are specified in the original contract
- V. To have the PSC confirm or revise the interpretation with the “above and beyond” standard
- VI. To effectuate the PSC’s interpretation, including the “above and beyond” standard, through a Faculty Code amendment to be drafted by the PSC, rather than through further Code interpretation
- VII. To effectuate the PSC’s interpretation, including the “above and beyond” standard, through a Faculty Code amendment to be drafted by *an ad hoc Senate committee*, rather than through further Code interpretation
- VIII. To put the whole can of worms into the hands of an ad hoc committee

I. **To permit early consideration for tenure under the standard normally required, with the “up-or-out” provision:**

I move that the Senate endorse and forward to the full faculty a proposal

(1) to strike the current language of Chapter IV, § 1, e and e (1) of the Faculty Code [p. 26 lines 31-36 online], and to substitute the following,

If a decision is made to grant tenure, it must be made not later than during a tenure-line faculty member’s sixth year of tenure-line service at the University of Puget Sound. If tenure is not granted after any evaluation for tenure, the next year’s contract shall be terminal. [**Note how revised wording clearly mandates an “up-or-out” policy**]

(1) Upon application of a faculty member and agreement of both the dean and the head officer of the faculty member’s program department, or school, faculty may be considered for tenure before the sixth year of tenure-line service at the University of Puget Sound. Upon such application and agreement, faculty may be considered for tenure before a time specified in the faculty member’s initial contract. No matter when a faculty member is considered for tenure, the decision shall be governed by Chapter IV, Section 1, b and d.

(2) and furthermore, to strike the current language of Chapter IV, §1, f of the Faculty Code [p. 26 lines 42-47 online], and to substitute the following,

Faculty members who have had full-time faculty service in other institutions before employment by the University of Puget Sound shall be evaluated for tenure by a time to be specified in the faculty member’s initial contract. If tenure is not granted by the time specified in the initial contract, the next year’s contract shall be terminal. In no case shall the time for consideration of tenure exceed the time set in Chapter IV, Section 1 e.

(3) and finally, to confirm our understanding and agreement that the references to tenure in the Faculty Code interpretation of 9 February 1987 are hereby nullified and will be deleted from future editions of the Code.

II. **To permit early consideration for tenure under the standard normally required, without the “up-or-out” provision:**

I move that the Senate endorse and forward to the full faculty a proposal

(1) to strike the current language of Chapter IV, § 1, e and e (1) of the Faculty Code [p. 26 lines 31-36 online], and to substitute the following,

If a decision is made to grant tenure, it must be made not later than during a tenure-line faculty member’s sixth year of tenure-line service at the University of Puget Sound. If tenure is not granted by that time, the next year’s contract shall be terminal. **[Note how revised wording clearly accommodates multiple evaluations for tenure.]**

(1) Upon application of a faculty member and agreement of both the dean and the head officer of the faculty member’s program department, or school, faculty may be considered for tenure before the sixth year of tenure-line service at the University of Puget Sound. Upon such application and agreement, faculty may be considered for tenure before a time specified in the faculty member’s initial contract. No matter when a faculty member is considered for tenure, the decision shall be governed by Chapter IV, Section 1, b and d.

(2) and furthermore, to strike the current language of Chapter IV, §1, f of the Faculty Code [p. 26 lines 42-47 online], and to substitute the following,

Faculty members who have had full-time faculty service in other institutions before employment by the University of Puget Sound shall be evaluated for tenure by a time to be specified in the faculty member’s initial contract. If tenure is not granted by the time specified in the initial contract, the next year’s contract shall be terminal. In no case shall the time for consideration of tenure exceed the time set in Chapter IV, Section 1 e.

(3) and finally, to confirm our understanding and agreement that the references to tenure in the Faculty Code interpretation of 9 February 1987 are hereby nullified and will be deleted from future editions of the Code.

III. **To permit early consideration for promotion under the standard normally required:**

I move that the Senate endorse and forward to the full faculty a proposal

(1) to strike the current language of Chapter IV, § 2, b (4) of the Faculty Code [p. 27 lines 32-34 online], and to substitute the following,

A faculty member who wishes early promotion and believes grounds exist for it may request it in writing to the head officer and the dean. The dean may then initiate the evaluation proceedings. No matter when a faculty member is considered for promotion, the grounds shall be as set out in Chapter IV, Section. 2 c.

(2) and furthermore, to confirm our understanding and agreement that the Faculty Code interpretation of 9 February 1987 is hereby nullified and will be deleted from future editions of the Code.

IV. **By way of the PSC's 2007 interpretation, to clearly institute an "above and beyond" standard for early tenure and promotion, except in cases where earlier dates are specified in the original contract:**

I move that the Dean forward to the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Code interpretation concerning early tenure and promotion, passed by the Professional Standards Committee on February 12, 2007, and reported to the Senate in their 2006-2007 Year-End Report. The interpretation reads as follows:

The expected times of tenure and promotion are framed by the Faculty Code (Chapter IV, Section 1, e and Section 2, b). This expected time may be further specified in the candidate's appointment letter (what the Faculty Code calls the "initial contract"). Early promotion or tenure refers only to situations where faculty members choose to apply for promotion or tenure earlier than this expected time.

In cases of early promotion or tenure, the "sustained record of achievement of exceptional merit in all the categories by which a faculty member is evaluated" (Faculty Code Interpretation of Chapter IV, Section 2, b (4), February 9, 1987) is interpreted to indicate a standard above and beyond that normally required for promotion and tenure.

V. **To have the PSC confirm or revise the interpretation with the “above and beyond” standard:**

I move that Professional Standards Committee review the interpretation concerning early tenure and promotion passed by it on February 12, 2006, either to confirm or to revise that interpretation, and to report its decision in its 2008-2009 Year-End Report, in order that the Dean forward the resulting interpretation to the Board of Trustees.

VI. **To effectuate the PSC’s interpretation, including the “above and beyond” standard, through a Faculty Code amendment to be drafted by the PSC, rather than through further Code interpretation:**

I move to charge the Professional Standards Committee to return a proposal for amending the Faculty Code that would effectuate its interpretation of February 12, 2007, thereby rendering superfluous both that interpretation and the interpretation of 9 February, 1987.

VII. **To effectuate the PSC’s interpretation, including the “above and beyond” standard, through a Faculty Code amendment to be drafted by an ad hoc Senate committee, rather than through further Code interpretation:**

I move that an ad hoc committee be appointed by the Senate Executive Committee in consultation with the Dean, and charged with drafting a proposal for amending the Faculty Code that would effectuate the PSC’s interpretation of February 12, 2007, thereby rendering superfluous both that interpretation and the interpretation of 9 February, 1987.

VIII. **To put the whole can of worms into the hands of an ad hoc committee:**

I move that an ad hoc committee be appointed by the Senate Executive Committee in consultation with the Dean, and charged with drafting, in consultation with the Dean and the President, a proposal for amending the provisions of the Faculty Code concerning early tenure and promotion. The committee will report its proposal in the first Senate meeting of 2009-2010.

Appendix II: Evaluation forms.

**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form
Explanation of Revisions**

Option A: Retains much of the current form's content and structure but attempts to address shared faculty concerns raised in the survey. Major changes include:

- Re-organization / revision of some categories and items; deletion of some items to shorten form
- Addition of deserved and expected course grade
- Change from a 6-point to a 5-point response format
- Re-named to reflect that both the instructor and course are evaluated.

Option B: Keeps all close-ended items proposed in Option A. Deletes possibility of commenting after each category, but includes section where student may comment overall on course and instructor. Ideas behind this change:

- Reduces workload for students and readers of the forms.
- Specific comments that students want to make will come out in the overall qualitative section. On the present form, issues raised in comment sub-sections are often repeated at the end in the "overall" section.

Option C: Reduces close-ended items to single ratings of categories that reflect the main concepts. Provides space to comment under each category. Ideas behind this change:

- Reduces workload for students and readers of the form.
- Items that measure the particular components of a category do not yield information that is markedly different from a student's overall assessment of that category.
- Students will be able to comment on the particular aspects of a category in the open-ended section.

**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form
Option A**

To the Student: The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# _____ Semester _____ Year _____ Instructor's Name _____

1. Student Background Information

Major _____ Minor (if applicable) _____

Status: First year Sophomore Junior Senior

2. Instructor's Promotion of Students' Learning

	Disagree				Agree			
a. The instructor was intellectually challenging	1	2	3	4	5			
b. The instructor was skilled in helping students master relevant concepts and skills	1	2	3	4	5			
c. The instructor encouraged students to take learning seriously and to think critically	1	2	3	4	5			
d. The instructor encouraged students' intellectual self-reliance and self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5			
e. Class assignments (e.g., homework, lab reports, papers, readings) were useful learning tools.	1	2	3	4	5			
f. The instructor presented material in a clear manner.	1	2	3	4	5			

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.

3. Instructor's Organization and Ability to Establish Clear Expectations

	Disagree				Agree			
a. Overall, the course was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5			
b. The instructor was well prepared for each class session.	1	2	3	4	5			
c. The instructor established clear expectations of students' responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5			

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.

4. Instructor's Interaction With Students

	Disagree			Agree	
a. showed concern for the students' understanding of the material.	1	2	3	4	5
b. was respectful of a variety of viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	5
c. was available during office hours and/or by appointment.	1	2	3	4	5
d. led students to engage the course material.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.

5. Instructor's Evaluation of Students' Learning

	Disagree			Agree	
a. Tests, quizzes, papers, homework, etc., were consistent with the course's contents and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The instructor provided reasonable preparation for tests and quizzes.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The instructor did a thorough job of evaluating my work.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the choices you checked above with comments that help give context to your ratings.

6. Overall Rating of Course and Instructor

- a. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of this course.
- | | Poor | | | Excellent | |
|--|------|---|---|-----------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- b. What grade do you anticipate receiving in this course? _____
- c. Considering the effort and quality of your work, what grade do you believe you deserve in this course? _____
- d. With reference to the subject in this course, please explain how and why your interest and/or curiosity have increased or decreased over the duration of the semester.

- e. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your instructor.
- | | Poor | | | Excellent | |
|--|------|---|---|-----------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- f. Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think should be improved.

Instructor and Course Evaluation Form
Option B

To the Student: The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# _____ Semester _____ Year _____ Instructor's Name _____

1. Background Information

Major _____ Minor (if applicable) _____

Status: First year Sophomore Junior Senior

2. Rating of Instructor Please consider and rate each of the following:

	Disagree				Agree
a. The instructor was intellectually challenging	1	2	3	4	5
b. The instructor was skilled in helping students master relevant concepts and skills	1	2	3	4	5
c. The instructor encouraged students to take learning seriously and to think critically	1	2	3	4	5
d. The instructor encouraged students' intellectual self-reliance and self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5
e. Class assignments (e.g., homework, lab reports, papers, readings) were useful learning tools.	1	2	3	4	5
f. The instructor presented material in a clear manner.	1	2	3	4	5
g. The instructor was well prepared for each class session.	1	2	3	4	5
h. The instructor established clear expectations of students' responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
i. The instructor showed concern for the students' understanding of the material.	1	2	3	4	5
j. The instructor was respectful of a variety of viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	5
k. The instructor was available during office hours and/or by appointment.	1	2	3	4	5
l. The instructor led students to engage the course material.	1	2	3	4	5
m. Tests, quizzes, papers, homework, etc., were consistent with the course's contents and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
n. The instructor provided reasonable preparation for papers, tests, and quizzes.	1	2	3	4	5
o. The instructor did a thorough job of evaluating my work.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Overall Instructor Evaluation:

- | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| a. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your <u>instructor</u> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- b. Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think should be improved.

4. Overall Course Evaluation:

- | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| a. Please provide an overall rating of this <u>course</u> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- b. What grade do you anticipate receiving in this course? _____
- c. Considering the effort and quality of your work, what grade do you believe you deserve in this course? _____
- d. With reference to the subject in this course, please explain how and why your interest and/or curiosity have increased or decreased over the duration of the semester.
- e. Please provide any feedback you have about the course that would be helpful for the instructor to know the next time s/he teaches it.

**Instructor and Course Evaluation Form
Option C**

To the Student: The evaluation you are about to write is an important document for your instructor. The information provided will be used by the university in the evaluation of your instructor's teaching. It will also be used by the instructor for improving course structure and teaching. Your evaluation does count. You are encouraged to respond thoughtfully, to take this evaluation seriously, and to provide written remarks; we have allowed time for you to reflect and provide an honest appraisal.

Your instructor will not see these evaluation forms until after he or she has turned in final grades. If you do not want the instructor to see your hand-written form, check this box and your responses will be typed before it is given to the instructor.

Course# _____ Semester _____ Year _____ Instructor's Name _____

1. Background Information

Major _____ Minor (if applicable) _____

Status: First year Sophomore Junior Senior

2. Please rate the following areas as related to your Instructor. Provide comments to clarify and provide context to your rating.

	Poor				Excellent
a. Instructor's Promotion of Student Learning: (e.g., intellectual challenge, promotion of critical thinking, intellectual self-reliance)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

	Poor				Excellent
b. Preparation of Instructor: (e.g., use of class time, organization of course and class sessions)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

	Poor				Excellent
c. Instructor's Communication: (e.g., clarity of explanations and presentation of material, clarity of expectations of student work and role)	1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

- | | | | | | |
|--|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| d. Instructor Interaction with Students: (e.g., rapport and availability of instructor, openness to other points of view, concern for student learning) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comment:

- | | | | | | |
|--|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| e. Evaluation of Student Learning: (e.g., methods of evaluation, helpfulness of feedback on work, timeliness of feedback on work) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comment:

3. Overall Instructor Evaluation:

- | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| a. After carefully considering the items above, provide an overall rating of your <u>instructor</u> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- b. Please describe what you think your instructor does best and what you think could be improved.

4. Overall Course Evaluation:

- | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----------|
| | Poor | | | | Excellent |
| a. Please provide an overall rating of this <u>course</u> . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- b. What grade do you anticipate receiving in this course? _____
- c. Considering the effort and quality of your work, what grade do you believe you deserve in this course? _____
- d. With reference to the subject in this course, please explain how and why your interest and/or curiosity have increased or decreased over the duration of the semester.
- e. Please provide any feedback you have about the course that would be helpful for the instructor to know in preparing to teach this course again.

Appendix III: Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate

Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate
to the
Board of Trustees of the University of Puget Sound
February 10, 2009

During the last four months the Faculty Senate and the Faculty meeting as a whole have attended to topics that I projected in my October report. These include revising the Faculty Bylaws concerning the Committee on Diversity and discussing employee benefits enjoyed by faculty members. Working groups are also preparing proposals on the design of our Instructor Evaluation Forms and on standards and procedures for early tenure and promotion, proposals to be brought to the Senate for its consideration.

A college-wide reorganization of efforts to realize the objectives of the diversity strategic plan entailed restructuring the standing Committee on Diversity and revising the Faculty Bylaws to provide for that. Two Senate meetings, as well as several meetings of the Committee on Diversity itself, have resulted in a Bylaws amendment that will have its first reading to a full faculty meeting next Tuesday. (If approved by the faculty in a subsequent meeting, the amendment will come to the Board of Trustees in May.) The proposal makes this more truly a faculty committee, narrowing its membership and focussing its duties on matters that are clearly faculty responsibilities. (The newly formed Diversity Advisory Council has assumed more properly administrative responsibilities.) Most challenging have been generalizing the language of the Bylaws to accommodate unpredictable changes in the college's diversity planning, conceiving the needs of diversity in the classroom environment, and reconciling educational efforts addressing manifestations of prejudice and bigotry with respect for academic freedom and freedom of expression.

In late October the faculty met with the Associate V.P. for Human Resources in a forum on employee benefits, focussed especially on health insurance and on educational benefits. Issues discussed included options for health insurance, the high cost of insurance for dependents, the subsidy for low-income employees, the prospects for a health-insurance consortium, health insurance for visiting faculty, limitation of educational benefits to dependents, and equity for faculty with varying family circumstances.

Subsequently the Senate adopted a motion to appoint a faculty-wide ad hoc committee to further study such topics, in consultation with the Staff Senate. The Senate executives are currently recruiting faculty to serve and, in order to avoid duplication, seeking to coordinate this ad hoc committee with a task force envisioned by the Human Resources department. As the economic climate threatens to limit budgetary resources more strictly, the Senate has felt that a review of the benefits package and deliberate prioritizing have become even more timely.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas F. Cannon
Professor of Philosophy
Chair of the Faculty Senate