

Faculty Senate Minutes
September 22, 2008

Present: Senators: Anderson-Connelly, Bartanen, Beck, Cannon (Chair), Foster, Holland, Hutchinson, K. Johnson, L. Johnson, Ryken, Segawa, Weiss, Word.
Visitors: David Balaam, Peggy Firman, Rosa Beth Gibson, Doug Goodman, Jenny Wrobel.

Senate Chair Cannon called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes from the September 8, 2008 meeting were unavailable and will be discussed and approved at the next Senate meeting.

Chair Cannon introduced Jenny Wrobel as a student representative and Professors David Balaam and Doug Goodman.

Announcements

Senator Weiss noted that she convened the Diversity Committee and Judith Kay was elected Chair. She commented that the Diversity Committee had submitted a revision of the by-laws to the Senate and wondered what had become of it.

Cannon noted that the proposal was included with the final report and would come up on the Senate agenda without further action by the Diversity Committee

Suzanne Holland said that she convened the University Enrichment Committee. Paula Wilson was elected chair for the fall and Amy Spivey was elected chair for the spring. The minutes for the first UEC meeting are posted on faculty coms.

Lisa Johnson commented that she convened the Curriculum Committee and Linda Livingston was elected as chair.

Kristin Johnson continued the trend by announcing that she convened the Academic Standards Committee and Seth Weinberger was elected as chair.

Mike Segawa commented that Nick Kontogeorgopoulos was elected chair of the Student Life Committee. Terry Beck convened the committee.

Kris Bartanen noted that Puget Sound is participating in The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), a project investigating the careers of junior faculty members and making recommendations to participating

colleges. 55 schools are participating and junior faculty at Puget Sound will be invited to take part.

Cannon, observing the plentitude of power held by the Faculty Secretary, noted that the September faculty meeting has been cancelled. He commented that the absence of volunteers for the position of Faculty Secretary is a serious problem.

Foster noted that she had met with Rosa Beth Gibson to talk about presenting information on benefits at a faculty meeting. Gibson did not believe she had time to gather the necessary information prior to the September faculty meeting but was planning to do so in October. Gibson would welcome Senate input (in advance) regarding her presentation. Senators can funnel their input through Cannon or Foster.

Cannon stated that President Thomas has agreed to the Senate's suggestion that the venue for faculty meetings be changed. The Rotunda is booked during the faculty meeting scheduled for October 28, 2008. However, Trimble Forum has been reserved. Trimble Forum reportedly can accommodate 80 people with chairs and tables. Auditorium style, Trimble Forum can accommodate 100 people. It was noted that this should be enough space.

Anderson-Connelly asked about the position of faculty secretary, wondering if there was some assurance that volunteering for the position did not create an expectation that the volunteer continue for longer than a year or two.

Holland wondered if the position of faculty secretary had to be filled by a current faculty or if emeritus faculty might be able to fill the position.

Special Orders

Anderson-Connelly hopes that the committee in charge of honorary degrees will not honor an individual for accomplishments in warfare or weapon development. He stated that this should not preclude someone who has served in the military, but he reiterated that he would vote against any recommendation that honored an individual because of his or her accomplishments in warfare or weapon development.

Beck told the Senate that the ad hoc committee on faculty elections is finishing up their report and hopes to present their findings on November 3, 2008.

Business

Cannon said he would entertain a motion to bring forward item #5 from the agenda (Faculty Representation on ASUPS Senate) because Yusuf Word had a prior engagement and needed to leave early.

Holland moved and Anderson-Connolly seconded to bring item #5 forward. Motion passed unanimously.

Faculty Representation to ASUPS Senate

Cannon noted that the ASUPS Constitution allows for faculty representation with full voting rights. Anderson-Connolly served as the faculty representative last fall and was on leave during the spring. The commitment is every Thursday evening. There is an informal ASUPS Senate meeting on Tuesday evenings, but the faculty representative does not attend. Last year, Cannon approached four people. This year the appointee backed out after learning that the position wasn't advisory and required attendance every week. Cannon asked the Senate to discuss this issue, keeping in mind that if the Senate re-affirms the current process, Cannon will need some help finding someone to fill the position.

Word stated that faculty representation to the ASUPS Senate is important. It allows the faculty member to get a better sense of what is happening on campus. The ASUPS Senate appreciates those who give their time and would be willing to entertain attendance that isn't every week.

Foster wondered if it was the evening commitment that is discouraging people from volunteering.

Holland asked if there was another way ASUPS might achieve their goals other than have the same person there every week. She questioned that a faculty member's attendance educates any faculty beyond the one who attends.

Discussion ensued and was wide ranging. Senators hypothesized that the weekly evening meeting time was at the heart of the problem. And yet, the assignment appears to be "light duty" because all the faculty member needs to do is to attend a one to 1.5 hour meeting once a week, with little to no outside preparation. There is precedent for faculty involvement in other groups (e.g., faculty representative on the media board). It seems like some faculty would enjoy a service commitment outside of the work day.

A motion was made to redefine the position to make it a shared position. The motion was withdrawn when it became clear that a consistent faculty member (or 2) would be preferable to other options, allowing this deliberative body to deliberate and to foster continuity on the ASUPS Senate.

Word agreed to take the question to the informal ASUPS Senate meeting to consider ways in which the position might be made more attractive to faculty. Cannon noted that two people in attendance had volunteered to serve, but he wanted to wait to see if someone might be found who could be excused from service elsewhere.

Additional Charges to the IRB

Cannon noted that somehow the memo from Roger Allen regarding the Institutional Review Board's self charges had been overlooked. Thus, the charges to the IRB did not include:

1. Continue to review protocols and maintain and manage records for research involving human subjects.
2. Post and monitor upgraded IRB information on the webpage for UPS researchers.
3. Explore 'Federalwide Assurance' registration for the University IRB.

Anderson-Connelly moved that the three suggested charges be added to the two already approved for the IRB. Weiss seconded. The motion passed unanimously without further discussion.

Educational Benefits for Children of Faculty

David Balaam was invited to present an issue he had raised by letter on September 12, 2008.

Under the current University policy, faculty and staff can receive a tuition benefit for their children if the children are claimed as dependents for tax purposes. Balaam's understanding is that children cannot be claimed as dependents after age 23. Balaam noted that medical conditions might postpone a child's attendance at college. College can be delayed as well by church or military service after high school graduation.

Balaam articulated four points in no particular order of importance. 1) The University might be at risk for a discrimination lawsuit under the American's with Disabilities Act. 2) Balaam has worked for the University under a social contract that if he reached age 55 and had at least 10 years of experience, his children would be eligible for a tuition benefit if they were admitted to the University. 3) Cost is not an issue. The administration must consider every

faculty member with children as a possible cost down the road. Children of faculty often don't take advantage of the benefit. 4) Tax dependency should not be an issue. Children cannot be tax-dependent after age 23 and this requirement unfairly discriminates against children of faculty and staff who would come to the University later.

Rosa Beth Gibson provided as much history as she could gather on very short notice. Gibson stated that she had been unable to locate definitive answers to Balaam's questions that afternoon as the IRS website wasn't very helpful. She wants to read the specific IRS code language and get some advice before answering authoritatively. That said, it is Gibson's belief that the requirement for dependency status is in place to avoid opening up the entire program as a taxable benefit for all dependents.

Gibson reviewed the criteria for educational benefits and reminded Senators that this information is available on the Human Resources web page.

Balaam felt there is abundant justification to remove all age caps from education benefits for children.

Foster voiced her support for extending the benefit to older children, especially if those children have a disability.

Anderson-Connolly agreed and wondered if the taxation issue (in the event that non-dependent children received the benefit) would be borne by the employee or by the child.

Gibson stated that the burden is usually borne by the one in a relationship with the University. She was unsure what would happen if the faculty or staff member was retired.

Anderson-Connolly moved that the Senate request that the Faculty Salary Committee (FSC) examine this issue. The motion was seconded.

Douglas Goodman, current chair of the FSC, spoke passionately that the FSC was not the place for this discussion. He suggested that a group able to explore the legal implications would be in a better position to explore the issue. The FSC prefers to work with issues of compensation that don't require changes in by-laws. Further, there are issues of reciprocity that the FSC is unprepared to address.

Bartanen wondered that since the FSC doesn't feel they have the expertise if the Senate was comfortable asking Human Resources to continue to explore the issues.

Gibson articulated the following issues: the taxation of benefits; coordinating our practice with other institutions; cost; the community values we are attempting to address. She voiced a willingness to partner with any individual or group wanting to look at these issues. In a response to a question by Hutchinson, Gibson noted that her main concern is with the tax free status of the entire program and cited IRS code 117. "Are we allowed to provide a benefit to those who aren't dependents?" she asked.

Holland voiced support for extending the benefit to older children. She stated that to break the social contract was a clear injustice and we should attempt to remedy the problem. She also reminded the Senate that not all faculty and staff have children and that benefits should be available equally to all faculty and staff members.

Anderson-Connolly withdrew his motion with the expectation that Gibson would come back to the Senate when she knows the tax implications of making a change.

Balaam reminded the Senate of the ADA issue and the prospect of a discrimination case. Balaam agreed to Bartanen's request that he ask his attorney to point out where the potential conflict with the law exists.

Cannon noted that there had been no discussion of cost and he would like to have a better idea of the costs of making a change.

Business carried over from 2007-2008

Developments on course scheduling

Cannon noted that the Senate had created principles for course scheduling last year. He reported that Sarah Moore and Brad Tomhave are very aware of the principles and are using them as they build the schedule. He noted that the principles emphasize cooperation. He has invited Moore and Tomhave to the next Senate meeting to talk about their thoughts.

Responses to survey on Course Evaluations

Cannon reviewed the process the Senate undertook at the end of last year to survey faculty regarding course evaluations. He noted that some new senators

might not have a copy of the results as they were distributed last year only to senators. He asked for a discussion about how we should proceed.

Holland distributed an article from the Sunday New York Times Magazine section on course evaluations, suggesting that Senators read the article and then have a conversation.

Foster noted that the results of the survey have not been formally tabulated, but have already been useful. She said that when she noticed that the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) was looking at the issue of on-line evaluations, she sent to George Tomlin (PSC chair) the comments written by Puget Sound faculty on the subject. Foster felt that a report on the survey would be very beneficial.

Holland moved that the chair appoint a committee to draw up a report on the results of the course evaluations survey. Anderson-Connelly seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Anderson-Connelly moved that the Senate adjourn. Beck seconded enthusiastically.

Cannon declared the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Terence Beck