

University of Puget Sound Faculty Senate
22 March 2010, 4:00, Misner Room

Senators present: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Kris Bartanen, Douglas Cannon (chair), Kelly Delaney, Fred Hamel, Suzanne Holland, Zaixin Hong, Robert Hutchinson, Lisa Johnson, Dan Miller, Steven Neshyba, Marc Phillips, Keith Ward, Seth Weinberger

Guests present: Jack Roundy, Brad Tomhave

The meeting was called to order at 4:03.

Revision of the published agenda

Douglas Cannon moved, Richard Anderson-Connolly seconded, and the Senate passed that the published agenda be revised to include “Review of ‘Procedures and Guidelines for Conducting Faculty Elections’” following item V.

Approval of the minutes of March 1, 2010

Following considerable discussion, Fred Hamel moved, Suzanne Holland seconded, and the Senate passed that the following phrase be added to Anderson-Connolly’s motion in the March 1 minutes: “The Senate forwards to the full faculty with a recommendation to pass the following motion: Students must obtain permission of instructor in order to enroll a course with a pass/fail grade.” This change brought the motion into agreement with item V on the agenda for today’s meeting.

Fred Hamel moved, Suzanne Holland seconded, and the Senate passed to adopt the minutes, as revised and amended.

Announcements

Suzanne Holland announced a national Bioethics conference is being held on campus Friday and Saturday, March 26 and 27.

Speaking on behalf of the Benefits Task Force, Steve Neshyba reported that numerical results of the recently conducted survey are in but have not been analyzed yet. The interpretation of the results will be shared at three open house meetings forthcoming in April, dates TBA. Following an inquiry from Suzanne Holland, Steve Neshyba confirmed that the ad hoc task force will report back to the Senate.

Fred Hamel announced a presentation in Trimble Forum, scheduled for March 22, on the Zina Linnik project, an initiative by students at McCarver Elementary School in conjunction with community partners, including the University of Puget Sound.

Keith Ward announced that the School of Music is going to be visited by evaluators from the National Association of Schools of Music as part of its ten-year reaccreditation review. Individuals are coming from Carnegie Mellon University and Heidelberg University (Ohio). The School of Music has been accredited since 1947.

Following up the interpretation of the Code made at the last meeting of the Senate, and as a way of emphasizing the exceptional circumstance regarding changes to the Bylaws, Douglas Cannon asked that the statement he made to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board be added to the minutes.

Fred Hamel reported the positive results of the School of Education's accreditation review with the Washington State Board of Education.

Special orders. None were offered.

Reports of committee liaisons

Suzanne Holland met with UEC subcommittee that is reviewing allocation policies for conference travel funding, taking into special account the realities of the current economy. She anticipates UEC will eventually have something to bring to the Senate.

Zaixin Hong reported that the Diversity Committee is continuing its work on reflections gleaned from the diversity survey.

Course eligibility for Pass/Fail Grading

The Senate returned to the motion left on the floor at its last meeting: "The Senate forwards to the full faculty with a recommendation to pass the following motion: Students must obtain permission of instructor in order to enroll a course with a pass/fail grade."

Issues raised in the discussion regarding course eligibility for pass/fail grading included the benefits and drawbacks of removing anonymity, whether faculty should be given the option of limiting the number of pass/fail slots in a course, problems that may arise in registering for classes, whether students taking courses pass/fail would need to identify themselves in course evaluations, and whether the motion maintained the spirit of pass/fail for students, who wish to have the option of exploring a particular academic area while protecting their GPAs, while also addressing the expectation of faculty that students taking a course pass/fail will be fully engaged in the content and activities of the course.

Upon voice vote, the motion failed.

Review of "Procedures and Guidelines for Conducting Faculty Elections"

Richard Anderson-Connolly provided historical context for the document, which arose from revisions to the faculty Bylaws in 2009 and is intended to respond to the call in the revisions (Article IV.6.D.h) that we detail our approach to conducting faculty elections. The discussion that followed included corrections of small inaccuracies and a confirmation that the computer program used to collect data will strip out any identifying information of faculty casting votes, thus assuring that the balloting is secret.

Steve Neshyba moved, Seth Weinberger seconded, and the Senate passed approval of the document.

Independent study – proposals from Academic Standards Committee

Seth Weinberger presented issues brought to the Senate by the Academic Standards Committee regarding the concern that students are using independent studies in ways that the ASC considered inappropriate and not in line with the spirit of what independent study should be, namely providing the opportunity for motivated students to pursue an interest that is not currently met in existing courses in the curriculum. Related to this concern, ASC also noted that there are a number of students who seem to be using independent study as a way of making up credit. Seth also brought to the attention of the Senate ASC's observation that some departments are essentially offering courses "off the books" by having a cluster of students doing the same thing but who register through independent study. A final issue of concern was the strain independent studies are creating on faculty loads.

As a result of these concerns, Seth said the ASC brings these issues to the Senate, asking that it discuss who should talk about the impact of independent study on the faculty in a broader sense. Additionally, the ASC would like the Senate to give the curriculum committee a broader overview of independent study proposals to assure that proposals are meeting the spirit of independent study. This would mean that the curriculum committee would review *all* independent study proposals, that problematic ones (those from students with GPAs below the minimum required for independent study) would no longer go to ASC.

Prior to a formal motion, points of discussion included whether the issue should be sent to the full faculty for discussion, that the work of the curriculum committee would not trump departmental issues as they relate to independent study, and whether issues regarding consistent standards for awarding of credit should be brought up (that is, when should an independent study be worth one unit, .5 unit, or .25 unit).

Kris Bartanen moved and Suzanne Holland seconded **that the Senate charge the curriculum committee with reviewing the standards and process for independent study proposals.**

Other matters raised in the discussion included whether this motion should lead to revision of the Bylaws (not at this point, although it would likely lead to revision of the academic handbook); that students, not faculty, remain responsible with submitting independent study proposals; the concern for faculty loads remains; and that the motion would result in the curriculum committee reviewing the entire process of approving independent studies, regardless of a student's GPA.

With a voice vote, the Senate passed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Ward
Scribe of the Meeting

Richard Anderson-Connolly
Faculty Senate Secretary