

University of Puget Sound

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty Senate

April 26, 2010

4:00 pm Misner Room

Senators Present: Rich Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, Kris Bartanen, Dan Burgard, Kelli Delaney, Douglas Cannon (chair), Fred Hamel, Suzanne Holland, Zaixin Hong, Rob Hutchinson, Dan Miller, Steven Neshyba, Marc Phillips, Mike Segawa, Keith Ward, Seth Weinberger

Guests Present: Lisa Ferrari, Bruce Mann, Garret Milam, Leslie Saucedo, Jonathan Stockdale

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM.

Approval of the minutes of April 19, 2010: The approval of the April 19, 2010, minutes was postponed.

Announcements: Anderson-Connolly provided an update on the election. One person had trouble in both rounds and ended up using a paper ballot. The run-off is in process and will close Thursday, with the winner announced Friday.

Anderson-Connolly reported that he has placed Pass-Fail grading on the agenda of the May 3rd Faculty Meeting.

Cannon said that the Senate will have a full meeting on May 10 in order to receive five committee reports. The first meeting of the 2010-2011 Faculty Senate could occur at the end of that meeting or could be scheduled for a different time.

Special Orders: Neshyba expressed his wish that a report come from an individual chair of the FAC this semester.

Reports of Committee Liaisons: Cannon asked senators to remind committee chairs that committee reports include charges for the following year.

Hong reported that the Diversity Committee discussed preparing the final report and will have new charges ready.

End-of-year Report from the University Enrichment Committee: Leslie Saucedo, chair of the University Enrichment Committee gave the report.

- The committee reviewed the student application process and now has one deadline instead of two because of an imbalance of applications.
- The laptop loan program has been discontinued because the computers were outdated and most people have laptops now.
- They continued working with the Professional Development documents so that the application process would be easier to follow.

- The committee found that students (and faculty) were using UEC money to travel to countries with travel warnings. The UEC no longer allows use of UEC funds for such travel. Faculty are to bring draft proposals about what the policies are at other universities.
- Caps on conference travel were reviewed. All first trips were funded this year. The committee found that caps on reimbursement keep some faculty from being reimbursed for the entire amount of their receipts. Many conferences have high registration fees and the \$1350 maximum does not allow some faculty to be reimbursed for lodging and meals. The committee does not have enough money to fund the maximum of \$1350 for everyone. The median reimbursement of \$1150 does seem affordable. A longer term goal is to submit to the BTF the possibility of reimbursing 85 trips at \$1350.
- The UEC has had to trim student budgets for student research grants and travel. The grants are becoming competitive but the process doesn't always work for science students who rely on a student summer research grant and a UEC grant.

Holland asked about item 3 on page 5 ("Draft and approve language for hardships faculty with pending sabbaticals face in meeting IRB requirements for funding."). Saucedo explained that IRB approvals only last a year, but they are asking faculty to write a proposal 18 months ahead of time.

Anderson-Connolly asked about the new requirement that students receive IRB approval before submitting summer research grant proposals. He said this means the IRB and departmental representatives must review a number of grants that don't get funded. It might be better to return to the old system and only review those that have been approved.

Milam said the problem with the old system was when students received funding late in the year, which forced the IRB to compress the review cycle. Additionally, the IRB had issues regarding the protocol of some projects, yet the students had already received funding. It was suggested that an IRB approval deadline be put into the student summer grant process. Milam agreed students need to give the IRB more than a week before their proposals are due.

M/S/P to receive the 2009-2010 report of the University Enrichment Committee.

End-of-year Report from the Institutional Review Board: Garret Milam, chair, said the Senate had a draft report because the final numbers have not yet been filled in.

- The majority of their time has been spent on their first change, to "Continue to monitor protocols and maintain and manage records for research involving human subjects."
- Their web page was updated last year, but Milam mentioned that the IRB web page could use more updating and revising with regard to UEC grants (see the discussion above). Milam said they want to make the application process smoother and more transparent, mentioning that the document currently on the IRB web page is 50 pages long.
- Milam said the committee didn't complete work on charge 3, "Proceed with implementing a memorandum of understanding with the Office of Institutional Research regarding IRB oversight of OIR work," but that he plans to get work started on it for next year.
- The IRB found places in the Research Misconduct Policy that needed updating and revision and will send it to the PSC.
- For next year, Milam said the IRB wants to create policies regarding avenues of appeal for rejected protocols, and they want to provide guidance for researchers about their

responsibilities in reporting any knowledge of child abuse that comes to light in research involving human subjects.

Anderson-Connolly asked if revising the 50-page tome is included under charge 2 or if it should be a different charge. Milam said it makes sense to make it a separate charge. Anderson-Connolly recommends this.

Neshyba asked if the workload and size of the committee are appropriate. Milam said they were, but that the committee is planning to start meeting twice a month, having one meeting to consider protocols and the other to deal with procedural and administrative issues.

Hamel asked if there were any patterns in denial of protocols. Milam couldn't think of any explicit pattern of issues, but he said the board has talked about creating a FAQ web page for the IRB.

Milam will submit the final version of the report by the May 10 Senate meeting. (The final report will be included as an appendix to that meeting.)

P/F Grading—knowledge of instructor: Holland asked where we stand with this, since we voted down that Pass/Fail require "permission of instructor." Holland would like to separate the idea of "permission of instructor" and getting rid of anonymity. Holland says we are out of step with other institutions in having anonymity, to her understanding. She says that she will anguish over whether to award a C+ or B- when in the end the grade will simply be turned into a pass or fail grade.

Anderson-Connolly said this is fine with him, but it doesn't address the concern about the number of students. He wants the instructor to decide the number of students taking a course Pass/Fail.

Dan Miller would like data to know how widespread the problem is, and wonders how many students this involves and how many faculty feel this is an issue.

Weinberger said that he has the numbers in his ASC documents, which were not present at the Senate meeting. He communicated that the concerns he heard were about P/F students not pulling their weight in group projects.

Bill Barry said anonymity insures there will be an equality of evaluation from student to student. He is not entirely sure this wouldn't affect the faculty evaluation of student work.

Marc Phillips stated that losing anonymity would be a positive result for both parties and would allow students to meet goals for the course and allow instructors to spend less time evaluating work. Weinberger said that students on the ASC didn't feel that way; they would rather not lose anonymity. Miller said he would support voluntary sharing of P/F status.

Stockdale asked what the detriments would be. Miller said he believes students will think professors will think less of them. Stockdale believes that some professors might grade differently if they knew a student was taking a class P/F. However, he wants open, honest, and free communication between professors and students, and the anonymity bothers him. Holland thinks the culture of anonymity contributes to students worrying about being perceived as "slackers."

Ward asked us to think of our principles regarding P/F, and asked why we are talking about P/F students as “slackers” instead of thinking of the virtue of P/F in allowing students to explore new subject areas.

End-of-year Report from the Student Life Committee: Bruce Mann, chair, began his report by correct the date on the written report. He said there were no major action issues this year and that things thing to be in good shape with the SLC. The primary function of the committee has been to work with the Dean of Students as a sounding board and generator of ideas.

The one carry-over idea from last year was moving the Study Abroad Survey to the International Education Committee. The SLC recommends that the charge relating to the Study Abroad Survey be given to the IEC next year.

One member of the SLC served on the Exclusive Use Agreement Ad Hoc Subcommittee. The Greek system seems better able to meet contracts by filing houses with occupants.

The SLC reviewed the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Retention and found that living on campus leads to higher retention and that there is a need for more housing on campus.

The SLC looked at Residential Seminar Programs and found that there is a significant plus to the program. These seminars are working and support for them should continue.

Mann talked about the Humanities House. Two faculty members took it on and recruited students for it. The SLC thinks it could be a test case for other programs in terms of creating cohesion, and should continue to receive support.

The SLC ended the year in discussions with staff in the library, student affairs, and the Center for Writing, Learning, and Teaching on the question of how students deal with the Integrity Code and their understanding of how one communicates in written and oral form in an academic setting, and what valid sources are. Staff said students simply don’t understand. They think a blog on the internet is an acceptable source. They don’t know better and we’re doing a poor job teaching them about this. The library has put together some resources on doing basic research, but it seems to reach relatively few students. This should be like “Writing Across the Curriculum.”

Mann asked that ASUPS give thought to filling student positions on the SLC as expeditiously as possible. Dan Miller said that ASUPS is working on making a student list so these gaps don’t occur in the future.

Holland said that part of Prelude could be devoted to teaching students about valid sources and plagiarism. Weinberger stated that the ASC has worked on placing this issue of addressing plagiarism and valid sources in the curriculum, recently in first-year seminars, but has always encountered resistance.

Mann noted that there were no new charges for next year beyond those specified in the Bylaws.

M/S/P to receive the 2009-2010 report of the Student Life Committee.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Hutchinson
Scribe of the Meeting

Richard Anderson-Connolly
Faculty Senate Secretary

Appendix A: 2010 Report of University Enrichment Committee

University Enrichment Committee (UEC)

Faculty Senate Report

April 26th, 2010

2009-2010 UEC membership:

Jim Evans, Cathy Hale, Peter Greenfield, Renee Houston (Chair, fall), Jim Jasinski, Brendan Lanctot, Sarah Moore (ex officio), Heidi Orloff, Tamiko Nimura, John Rindo, Leslie Saucedo (Chair, spring), Jennifer Utrata & Matt Warning

The Senate charges to the 2009-2010 University Enrichment Committee in addition to the committee's regular business were:

1. Revise the description of the student research application procedures for UEC funding to incorporate the fact that the March application deadline has been eliminated.
2. Review the laptop loan program.
3. Continue revising the professional development documents for UEC-administered awards with an eye toward ensuring that application, instructions, eligibility, and evaluation criteria are sensible and coherent across different types of awards.
4. Review the category caps currently in place for faculty conference travel funding.
5. Select a recipient of the Dirk Phibbs Memorial Award.
6. Award the Trimble Asian Studies Professional Development Awards.

Committee Actions Regarding Senate Charges and Usual Duties Related to Travel, Research, and Release Time Awards

Usual duties

1. Faculty travel funding

As of this writing, the UEC has funded 85 first-trip faculty travel requests and 2 course and seminar travel requests for a total of 87 approved applications. Seven second trip requests are pending until the May 15th first-trip request deadline. To cover these 87 awards, the UEC has allocated a total of \$93,807 from its pool of \$109,765 (\$93,000 from Budget Task Force allocation with \$16,762 rolled forward and reclaimed from unused department travel sources). The mean cost per trip stands at \$1078, an increase from \$1,021 in 2008-2009. The \$15,958 not yet allocated is likely to cover all remaining first-trip requests this year (estimate 5), with some limited funds remaining for second trip requests.

2. Faculty research funding

The committee received 14 applications this year, and all were funded fully or in part for a total of \$21,083 allocated (\$39,766 was requested) in 2009-10. The mean award per grant equaled \$1506. This was similar to previous years.

3. Release time requests

The committee received 8 applications for teaching release units, and 7 faculty members were granted a one-unit release. (Five release units are usually awarded each year and one of this year's grants was funded from an external grant).

4. Student research and travel funding

The committee has awarded 32 student travel, 19 student research awards, and is currently reviewing 26 student research applications (77 total) received for the spring semester deadline (April 9th). To date, total funds allocated equal \$22,564 of the \$29,868 new funds received at the start of 2009-10. The mean award per grant equals \$460 (with awards capped at \$500). Some savings in this fund will be used to help support the 26 pending requests, but the committee will need to consider ways to address the increasing number of student requests it has been receiving in recent years.

5. Cultural currency travel funding

No applications for travel related to cultural currency were received.

6. Trimble Asian Studies Professional Development Awards

The committee received 7 applications for the Trimble Professional Development Awards, and 5 faculty members were granted their requests for a total of \$25,000.

7. Selection of the Register Lecturer for 2011

After reviewing the work of seven outstanding nominees, the Committee concluded that Nancy Bristow's scholarly contributions and teaching excellence made her an exemplary representative of the University community. Nancy Bristow was chosen as Register Lecturer for 2011.

8. Selection for the Dirk Andrew Phibbs Memorial Award

The committee reviewed proposals from faculty for UEC research funding and decided that David Smith and Leon Grunberg's proposals most closely fit the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Phibbs award (particularly the desire that the recipient use the funds to "learn through travel" and "gain new perspectives" in another culture). Both David Smith and Leon Grunberg were chosen as recipients of this year's Dirk Andrew Phibbs Awards.

Senate Charges

1. Revise the description of the student research application procedures for UEC funding

The March deadline has been eliminated from website instructions and application materials. There are now only two deadlines: one in fall (November) and one in spring (April).

2. Review the laptop loan program

The UEC previously administered a laptop loan program to faculty who have received research grants. There is no money to replace the three old laptops provided by the UEC and although they are not borrowed often, some faculty do use them occasionally. Members of the UEC agreed to no longer administer this program since laptops become obsolete so fast and notebooks are available for loan in Media Services. In addition, department chairs can request laptops in their capital budget requests.

3. Continued Revision of Professional Development Documents

There were several changes made to the University Resources for Professional Development document as well as the accompanying forms and website. These changes were made during the summer and were largely undertaken due to external needs. Namely, it came to the attention of Sarah Moore that not all UEC-funded work was necessarily securing timely IRB approval. In addition, the UEC had funded some faculty and student research projects that involved travel to countries that had travel warnings; this is out of compliance with the university's travel policy. To address these two problems, Moore, working with John Hickey, Lisa Ferrari, Jannie Meisberger, and the university's legal representatives revised a number of the UEC-related documents so that faculty and students whose research involves human participants will be required to submit IRB approval (either from the full board or the departmental designate, as appropriate) upon submission of their applications to the committee. Regarding foreign travel, student forms now clarify that the university will not fund projects that involve travel to countries with either a Department of State (DOS) travel warning or a CDC health travel warning. Faculty, by contrast, will be able to have their work funded even if they plan to travel to countries with such warnings; however, they will be asked to sign a special waiver that acknowledges this risk and releases the university from liability. Also related to the issue of foreign travel, all faculty and students will be asked to sign a basic waiver whenever they plan to travel abroad even when it does not include travel to countries with either a DOS or CDC warning. Policy changes were communicated to the faculty via facultycoms on September 16, 2009. Documents outlining the aforementioned policy changes are available on the University's Professional Development page.

For most types of UEC-related support such as faculty research and student research grants, requiring IRB approval as part of the application process does not present a difficulty. The timing is such that there is virtually no delay between application and receipt of the funding and applicants will have/ should have already completed the IRB process anyway. Still, the UEC has received important feedback on the IRB and foreign travel changes. For one faculty, having students complete the IRB work so far in advance

was very difficult. However, in the future this should not be a problem since the conflicting deadlines pertinent to this case was only a problem this year and (deadlines won't cross in future years). The UEC considered making UEC awards contingent on IRB approval; however, members of the UEC agreed that it would be difficult to track these processes. IRB requirements are also tricky for sabbaticals. The issue is that the university cannot support faculty research requiring IRB approval if, in fact, the approval is never obtained. This puts the university at risk. Once the sabbatical is granted, it becomes too difficult, in practice, to ensure that faculty comply with IRB application guidelines. On the other hand, sabbaticals are granted between 12 and 18 months before the leave occurs. IRB approval expires at the end of a year after which time an extension must be sought. This strikes the committee as unfortunate bureaucracy for the faculty member. Moreover, faculty often do not have the time to launch all preparatory methodological steps so far in advance of when they might actually engage in the work. It was decided that the UEC would draft a sentence saying something along the lines of "if these requirements present a hardship for faculty, then let us know." The changes to this language are pending UEC committee approval.

In terms of travel changes, the main feedback had to do with faculty who were upset that students can never go to countries with a travel warning, in the specific instance of when they are going to help faculty with research in a particular country with a travel warning. The reasoning is that often faculty feel like they know the safety of a country better than others and should be allowed to use their judgment in terms of a student accompanying them or not. Others have noted that travel warnings are often given to low-risk countries just for political reasons. One faculty member who had concern with the current policy argued that he or she will be evaluated in terms of doing research with students and now cannot bring students along, complicating research plans. Sarah Moore, Lisa Ferrari, Leslie Saucedo and Renee Houston (Fall '09 UEC Chair) met with a group of faculty who had these concerns earlier in the year and, on the basis of this meeting, the faculty planned to propose a modest revision to the prohibition on student travel to countries with travel warnings under the specific circumstance of when a student travels with a faculty member for the purpose of assisting the faculty member with his or her research. As of the writing of this report, Moore and Ferrari have not received a proposal but hope to meet again with faculty this summer.

- 4. Review the category caps currently in place for faculty conference travel funding**

UEC members once again took on the challenge of determining whether there is a way to rethink the caps on funding for faculty travel. Despite the fact that the (1) UEC has managed to keep faculty travel allocations within budget as noted above and (2) faculty do not necessarily spend all of their allocated funds, there are still a number of concerns related to the degree to which faculty travel is supported. First, because of the UEC caps there is a systematic "bias" in reimbursements; with the way category caps are set presently, those with greater airfare, lower conference fees and lower lodging expenses are reimbursed at a greater rate than those with low airfare but high conference and hotel costs. Second, faculty often cannot be reimbursed for their actual expenses because of the various category caps. It is not uncommon for a faculty member to spend several hundred dollars beyond what is covered by the UEC grant (and department funding) due to the various category caps. Two new options were discussed at length: rearranging

category caps to try to prevent the bias or removing category or removing all category caps. The major obstacle to altering the current system is the likelihood of overspending the UEC budget. The max for faculty conference travel is \$1350, however the mean reimbursement amount is around \$1100; presently UEC does not have the means to afford a change in caps that would cause the mean reimbursement to increase. UEC members considered surveying the faculty to see if they would be in favor of lowering the maximum reimbursement if that meant greater flexibility (no category caps). However, it seemed unlikely this scenario would be embraced by the faculty. The change still under consideration is moving the registration fee out of the category it shares with lodging and airfare (which is capped at \$740) and instead group lodging and meals with airfare. The rationale for this modification is that faculty do not have control over registration fees but could find cheaper flights, hotels or meals to try to keep costs within the overall cap limit. New caps still need to be determined on the rearranged categories while estimating what would still result in an average reimbursement of \$1150. However, it is very likely that the reorganization of categories and caps would result in more money requested for reimbursement than available. While not a desirable outcome, it would provide strong impetus for the UEC to submit a request to the Budget Task Force for adequate funds to better support faculty scholarship.

NOTE: Charges 5. And 6. are part of the normal duties of the UEC described above

Recommendations for next year's committee

1. Rearrange category caps in place for faculty conference travel funding while trying to estimate what would still result in a median reimbursement of \$1,150.
2. Begin drafting a request to the Budget Task Force that would allow the UEC to reimburse faculty conference travel up to the \$1,350 maximum budget that is currently in place.
3. Draft and approve language for hardships faculty with pending sabbaticals face in meeting IRB requirements for funding.
4. Consider adjustments to student research and travel awards to "spread the wealth." Some possibilities included lowering the cap for the maximum award or limiting students to one type of award (travel or research) per year.
5. Standardize reimbursement for mailing and printing costs (similar to mileage reimbursement) for student research grants.

Appendix B : 2010 Report of Student Life Committee

To: Faculty Senate
From: Bruce Mann, Chair, Student Life Committee
Re: Year-end Report
Date 26 March 2010

The members of this year's committee were: Christian Brink (student), Jorden A. Greiner (student), Alison Tracy Hale, Jan Leuchtenberger, Bruce Mann, Aislinn Melchior, Geoff Proehl, Lisa Ferrari (Dean's Office), Mike Segawa (Dean of Students). The committee met almost every other week.

Carry-over business from last year related to the committee's role in the study abroad program. After consultation with other interested and concerned groups, it was decided that the evaluation, assessment, and planning for returning students were not Student Life Committee issues. The newly formed committee(s) on study abroad and/or international studies should continue this work. The Student Life Committee would become involved (in the future) in this issue again to the extent that life on campus is impacted by the international study students. So, this issue has been moved to the appropriate committee(s).

The chair, with the committee's approval, served on the Exclusive Use Agreement Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate and recommend the allocation of university owned residential facilities. The discussions of use agreement, housing plans, and allocations were reported. The committee felt that no additional action was needed. A future issue continues to be the desire, feasibility, and need to house more students in university residences.

The committee received information concerning the residential seminar program. The Dean of Students reviewed the history and operations of the program. A number of committee members have served in this program. Student committee members reported on what they have learned from peers about the program. The committee concluded: 1) the program appears to be meeting a need for both students and faculty, 2) the current administration of the program is strong and capable of assessing future needs and challenges, and 3) at this point there is no need for direct action by the Student Life Committee. However, this topic should remain on the committee's agenda for review again.

The committee reviewed the on-going work of the Ad Hoc Student Retention Committee. The Student Life Committee's concerns revolved around whether there were campus-based issues that needed attention. The Dean of Students reported on the analytical and conceptual analyses for retention. An issue being considered is the role of on-campus housing. The newly implemented student alert program, housing on campus, and student engagement in co-curricular programs appear to be important variables for retention. The Student Life Committee offered counsel to the Dean regarding the student alert program, and concluded it appears to be working well and serving a useful purpose. Student peer intervention and reporting has helped the Dean of Student staff and the Office of Academic Advising. University funding and campus planning will determine the ability to provide more on-campus housing. Faculty and student committee members believe that providing more on-campus housing is an important goal, both to serve as a retention aid and to enrich on campus student life.

The committee reviewed, in light of the retention work and the as part of the residential life program, the success of the Humanities House program. The committee suggested that other discipline-related housing /academic programs be considered.

The committee met with representatives from the library, academic advising, Center for Writing and Learning, and the Dean of Student staff to consider issues related to the Integrity Code, honesty, and information literacy. Students need help in 1) learning how to navigate the world of academic research, 2) understanding how to assess the validity of source material, and 3) presenting results (both in written and oral form) in an appropriate manner. The library, working with the Dean of Students Office and the Office of Academic Advising, has develop on-line and computer-based materials to assist students. The Library staff also meets with students, in groups and individually, to provide counsel. The Center for Writing and Learning organized faculty-led programs to address these concerns. The Dean of Students staff reports that while cases of academic dishonesty do arise (students are disciplined), the larger problem is that students are unfamiliar with, or do not understand, the standards and norms for reporting and presenting their research in an academically acceptable manner. More work needs to be done on communicating expectations, methods, values, and principles with students. This should be an on-going process, one that takes place in and out of the classroom, and one that continues from orientation to graduation. The committee concluded this is an issue beyond the “one-course” fix, but rather needs to be continually addressed by faculty and staff with students.

In summary, the committee spent this year working with the Dean of Students to review major initiatives and issues regarding student success at the university. The committee’s main conclusions were: 1) the university should address ways to provide more on-campus housing, 2) the residential seminar program should continue to receive support, and 3) issues of academic integrity and literacy need continued attention.

Appendix C: Chair's Report

Report of the Chair of the Faculty Senate

to the

Board of Trustees of the University of Puget Sound

April 26, 2010

This will be my last report as Chair of the Faculty Senate. I will be on sabbatical in fall semester, 2010. As a result of faculty elections currently coming to a close, Steven Neshyba, Professor of Chemistry, will be the new Senate Chair. He has been serving as Vice-Chair and working particularly on the Benefits Task Force and on Enterprise Risk Management.

A number of efforts involving the Senate and its committees, both standing and ad hoc, have come to fruition in recent days and weeks. Most visible to the Board is the approval by the faculty as a whole of a revised version of an amendment to the section of the Faculty Bylaws concerning the Committee on Diversity. The substance of the amendment remains essentially the same, but the wording that will come before the Board during this meeting responds to concerns about legal liabilities and more accurately specifies the duties of the Committee and of a campus-wide group that the Committee activates, which provides for educational efforts addressed to patterns of bias and hate that may become visible in the campus community. Sessions leading to the adoption of this revised amendment, both of drafting committees and of the full faculty, were lively and inevitably time-consuming. Discussion of our educational aims involving diversity was thorough, and the outcome was an unequivocal 86 percent vote in favor during the April 5 faculty meeting. An additional minor amendment to the Bylaws, this one concerning the Library, Media, and Information Systems Committee will almost certainly be approved by the faculty in its May 3 meeting. This one was motivated by organizational changes with the appointment of a new Chief Technology Officer.

The faculty has been reviewing policies concerning pass/fail grading. The prevailing sentiment so far has been a reaffirmation of permitting students to take a small number of courses without specific letter grades, in order to encourage exploration of unfamiliar areas in the spirit of liberal arts education. A modest restriction of this option will have final review by the faculty next week; it aims to prevent missteps and abuses involving courses in the student's major or minor, which courses don't fit the rationale of the pass/fail program.

The faculty continue to be occupied with issues concerning benefits—particularly medical benefits, as our employees suffer the familiar financial squeeze resulting from nationwide increases in costs of medical care and health insurance. Last year the Senate appointed an ad hoc committee whose membership overlaps that of the administration's task force. This committee fulfills two important functions. It keeps the Senate in touch with the ongoing work of the task force, but secondly it presses benefits issues that particularly concern the faculty and that risk being overlooked as the task force focuses on the overall balance of benefits funding among medical, retirement, and educational benefits.

One example that has come up recently is the now second restriction of our access to tuition benefits in the Northwest Consortium. Last year the tuition exchange at Willamette was closed to newly admitted students, and just now the exchange at Whitman has also been closed. Many members of the faculty have planned for the education of their children through this benefit, and they are calling for ways to be found to broaden or at least restore the range of options for tuition exchange without increasing costs to the college.

In the wake of last year's modification of the evaluation schedule in the Faculty Code, there have been only muted considerations of evaluation matters. A revision of the Instructor Evaluation form is still in its test phase. The 2005 decision giving candidates for tenure the option of a file open to their examination does not seem to be widely questioned at this time, and there has been no sign so far that this policy has adversely affected the processing of tenure decisions in the most recent couple of seasons. Finally, a recent action by the Senate will publicize a roster of veterans of the Faculty Advancement Committee who are willing to meet with any faculty coming up for evaluation, to more fully inform them as to the procedures and practices of that committee, but also as to other steps in the evaluation process.

Under Senate sponsorship a committee drawn from staff and students as well as faculty has been meeting this spring to find resources for parents in need of childcare. New leadership has come forward to continue their work through the summer and into next year. Of course those most in need of this kind of support are also most pressed for time, so the committee has been goal oriented and prudent with its energies. It has drawn subrosa support from many faculty the demands on whose time have prevented their playing an official role. We can look forward to constructive proposals for childcare support in the months to come.

I close by expressing the pleasure that has been mine in serving with you on the Board of Trustees. In urging colleagues to consider putting themselves in the running for Senate Chair, I have emphasized the valuable perspective on our college life given by participation in Board gatherings and Board decisions. Perhaps more than anything this experience has strengthened my already considerable gratitude for the service and devotion that members of the Board render this college. I will miss meeting with you.

Sincerely yours,

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