

University of Puget Sound Faculty Senate
23 November 2009, 4:00, Murray Boardroom

Senators present: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, Kris Bartanen, Dan Burgard, Douglas Cannon (chair), Kelli Delaney, Fred Hamel, Robert Hutchinson, Kristin Johnson, Lisa Johnson, James Luu, Tiffany Aldrich MacBain, Steven Neshyba, Mark Phillips, and Stacey Weiss

Attending faculty member: Lisa Ferrari, Associate Dean

The meeting was called to order at 4:03.

I. Approval of minutes of October 26, 2009.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

II. Announcements.

No special announcements were made.

III. Special Orders.

Stacey Weiss presented the question of why finals periods are two hours long rather than three hours, as they are at many other institutions. Stacey wanted to know if the topic is worthy of broader discussion and, if so, what would be the appropriate way to address it.

IV. Reports of Committee Liaisons.

On November 4 the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) determined that a student cannot exercise the Pass/Fail (P/F) option within a major or minor or as a freshman or sophomore.

The ASC presented related questions to the Senate: Should they change the number of P/F available to students? Should certain classes be off limits? The ASC suggested that these issues should perhaps be included in a future agenda.

Richard Anderson-Connolly responded that he is uncertain of what resulted from the full faculty discussion of the changes to the P/F option and if the ASC's determination reflects the preferences of the full faculty. He asked if the next Senate Faculty meeting would be in the next thirty days and received a general, affirmative response. Anderson-Connolly announced that he might make a motion to stop the changes from becoming policy.

Stephen Neshyba reported that the Senate Ad Hoc Benefits Committee (Neshyba, Dwayne Hulbert, Janice King, Ross Singleton, Jill Nealey-Moore), an ad hoc sub-committee created by the Senate, have met and plan to continue to meet every week or as needed. They are in the process of soliciting information and feedback from faculty. Neshyba indicated that three subjects are of primary interest to faculty: early retirement; healthcare; and education benefits for dependents.

During this report, Douglas Cannon echoed faculty concerns about early retirement and on behalf of a faculty member with whom Cannon had been in discussion, and urged the sub-committee to consider a creative solution to the problem. Cannon presented Whitman's policy as an example; that college has created a category of professor that allows for a salary but requires no duties.

V. Charge to Professional Standards Committee regarding A) Open and Closed Files and B) Evaluations

A. Open and Closed Files

From early in the 1980s through the spring of 2005, all tenure evaluations were closed and summaries of letters used to allow evaluatees knowledge of the content of colleague letters. In the spring of 2005 the practice was changed so that at every level of evaluation a faculty member has the option of choosing an open or closed file. In response to questions, Cannon noted that the primary motivation for the change in practice approved by the 2005 Faculty Code change was that a group of people felt that there was an asymmetry in the system, that senior faculty were able to read commentary about a promotion decision that might come up for them but that there was no reciprocity for junior faculty. In its 2007-2008 and 2008-09 year-end reports the Faculty Advancement Committee (FAC) voiced a continuing concern with the revised system, particularly as it affected junior faculty participation in reviews, noting more guarded language in (junior and senior) colleague letters and a general reluctance of some to weigh in on change of status evaluations.

Kristine Bartanen answered a number of questions about review policy within the FAC and shared anecdotal evidence of the FAC having difficulties with some letters not forwarding clear recommendations, and letters being guarded; some faculty members worry about retribution, and some departments are encountering fair amounts of trauma as a result of the current review process. These issues crop up around change of status evaluations, a concern to the FAC because, in tenure reviews, the faculty is called upon to make the most important decisions with less than full information. In response to a question about how the FAC is able to talk to departments, Bartanen reminded that the Faculty Code provides three possibilities for consultation: 1) to gather more information or ensure that the departmental evaluation has been adequate, the FAC may consult with department members; 2) if the FAC ends up with a different recommendation than does the department, the FAC is required to talk to the department; 3) if the FAC is unable to make a positive recommendation, the evaluatee has the opportunity to talk to the FAC.

After some discussion, Richard Anderson-Connolly suggested that we bring the issue to the full faculty. Bill Barry advocated for utilizing the existing committee structure and charging the PSC to review the issue, in consultation with the FAC.

M/S/P to charge the PSC expeditiously to consult with members of the FAC since 2005 about the impact of the 2005 decision by faculty to allow open tenure files.

B. Evaluations

Last year's Senate formed an ad hoc committee (Rob Hutchinson, Robin Foster, Sue Hannaford, Suzanne Holland, Jill Nealey-Moore) to survey faculty about the course/instructor evaluation form. The result was a suggestion of three alternative revisions to the form. Rob Hutchinson reported that the feeling at the Faculty Meeting was to go forward with Option A, the revision that a number of faculty will "test drive" at the end of Fall 2009.

M/S/P to charge PSC to review Option A of the proposed revision of the evaluation forms with the aim of identifying potential problems for the broader evaluation process and to report findings, if any, to the senate.

VI. Charge to International Education Committee (IEC)

M/S/P to replace old charge #4 to the IEC to read: Establish a procedure for the analysis of the pre-departure and post-return study abroad surveys.

Prior to the vote, Lisa Ferrari raised the concern that the motion does not clarify whose responsibility it is to administer the surveys. If the analysis of the data moves from the Student Life Committee (SLC) to the IEC, Lisa would want the Senate to be clear about which committee will administer the surveys.

VII. Projection of Next Major Agenda Item

Childcare

Doug Cannon announced that on Monday, December 7, 2009, the Faculty Senate would be continuing the discussion of childcare from April 13, 2009. He asked that we not replay the last meeting and said he would redistribute the minutes from that meeting (which should also be online).

VIII. M/S/P to adjourn at 5:32.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Aldrich MacBain
Scribe of the Meeting

Richard Anderson-Connolly
Faculty Senate Secretary