

Senate Meeting Minutes

9 April 2007

Members present: Anderson-Connolly, Anton (chair) Bartanen, Bristow, Edmonson, Foster, Hanson, Joshi, McGruder, O'Neil, Racine, Ryken, Segawa, Singleton

Visitors present: Rosa Beth Gibson, Doug Goodman, Suzanne Holland, Janet Marcavage, Yoshiko Matsui, Ken Rousslang,

Chair Anton called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the April 2, 2007 meeting were approved as distributed.

Chair's Report

Anton gave an update about upcoming elections for the Faculty Senate Chair, Faculty Senate, Faculty Advancement Committee, and Faculty Salary Committee. Faculty will be emailed a link to a secure electronic balloting system. The voting system will be open for one week. Run-off elections will be held as needed.

Old Business

Report from Rosa Beth Gibson on Medical/Disability issues

Rosa Beth Gibson shared the report developed by the Faculty Senate task force on medical coverage during periods of disability (Attachment 1). Gibson outlined the key issue—staff members who had not yet accumulated six months of vacation/sick leave, and faculty members with fewer than six years of service, will be without pay for the duration of the six month elimination period while also bearing the responsibility of paying medical insurance premiums. The task force recommends that the university continue the Flexible Benefits Program allowance for the entire six month elimination period.

Singleton proposed that the Senate support the task force recommendation as outlined in the report (M/S).

Suzanne Holland added that her own experiences with disability leave made her aware of the weaknesses of our current policy. She praised the work of the task force, reminded the Senate that the proposal deals only with the first six months of disability leave, and suggested that the Senate have further discussions about the waiting periods of up to 29 months before a person becomes Medicare eligible.

Senators focused on the months after the six month elimination period. Anderson-Connolly asked if Holland's point was that we should be more generous? This is a good first step; but could we go further? He noted he would be supportive of a friendly amendment to that effect. Singleton wondered if the task force had considered this issue and asked Holland to clarify the issue she wanted the Senate to consider. Holland asked that the university extend financial help with medical insurance premiums until Medicare kicks in. Gibson clarified that the payment of 60% of salary does not commence until after the six month elimination period, and medical

insurance premiums are not paid by the university, but they are paid by the individual employee through a COBRA plan. Bartanen clarified that for up to 29 months, individuals could find themselves in a situation where they are earning 60% of their salary and having to pay for medical coverage as they are not yet Medicare eligible. Bartanen also noted that if this resolution is passed it will then go to the Board of Trustees for consideration. Bristow proposed a friendly amendment to extend the resolution under consideration to cover the months from 6-18/29 until the individual becomes Medicare eligible (M/S/P).

Request to form a new Standing Committee on International Studies

At the request of the presenters this discussion was postponed until May 7, 2007.

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Standards

This discussion was postponed as Senators turned their attention to new business.

New Business

Salary Committee Report

Ken Rousslang shared the report of the Faculty Salary Committee (Attachment 2). He reminded the Senate that 20 years ago the university set the target to be in the upper quartile of faculty salaries compared to our Northwest peer schools. Rousslang emphasized that for a number of years the committee has made the same recommendation, “to increase faculty salaries across the board by one percentage point above the inflation rate each year.” This recommendation comes from the concern that relative salaries have declined from above average to average or below. He also noted that the dialogue between the BTF and the committee has begun to feel two-way; he noted that we may not have reversed the decade of decline in relative salary position, but we have started productive dialogue.

Senators raised questions about the assumptions of the report and the tradeoffs involved in raising faculty salaries. Singleton highlighted that the report is predicated the assumption that there is still a commitment to the target set in a long range plan of 20 years ago. O’Neil asked how this compares to administrative salaries. Bartanen noted that a recent study of staff compensation compared salaries to local and national markets and set a goal for staff salaries to be at the pay line (median of the market). She highlighted that our peer groups have changed since the 90’s report and that we are in the middle of five Northwest peers. She emphasized that the FSC needs to come up with a goal that can then be considered by the Board. Rousslang noted that the implicit goal at this point is to curb the decline. Goodman noted that faculty salaries fall right in the middle of local and national peer comparisons and emphasized that raising salaries 1% above inflation is what our peer institutions have been doing for a decade. Singleton wondered, absent of an explicit goal, if it would make sense to say we are content to be third out of five, or is it best to revisit this annually without a stated goal? Goodman noted that universities have very different endowments and that the goal of being number one is laudable, but not achievable; he suggested the wise thing to do at this point is to stop the decline. Singleton suggested that the FSC formalize a goal so that the goal can be used as a compelling rationale when requesting salary increases from the BTF. Rousslang noted that despite good dialogue, Bartanen has the unenviable task of going between the FSC and the Trustees. He noted that the members of the FSC do not know what the Trustees would view as a reasonable request. Goodman clarified the difference between the goal—to stay where we are and stop the decline

versus the tool—raising salaries 1% above inflation. Foster asked if Rousslang’s comments had an implication for reconsidering the identity of the FSC. Rousslang noted it might be helpful to establish the FSC in a more formal way. McGruder asked if the goal is to be in the top half and recommended that a specific goal be articulated. Anderson-Connolly reminded the Senate of a fall meeting in which a 6% increase in tuition costs was discussed. He wondered what tradeoffs were involved in raising faculty salaries and stated that he would be hesitant to state a goal for faculty salaries without knowing the tradeoffs. Foster shared that Terry Cooney once said that faculty salaries were the white elephant of the budget and questioned how interdependent faculty salaries and tuition actually are. Singleton noted that the BTF engages in exactly that sort of balancing act as they consider the requests of different constituencies. Anderson-Connolly repeated that a salary increase is not the only objective, so a goal cannot be stated in the abstract. McGruder emphasized that this is a faculty committee and should represent faculty concerns in the budget process. Singleton noted that the tradeoffs are real and complex, but that much of how UPS is perceived depends on the faculty we attract. He noted that this year the economics department lost a candidate to a very similar liberal arts college with a starting salary that is 20% higher. McGruder noted that faculty salaries also impact retention of faculty. O’Neil noted that the salary numbers might not be the best, but that from a student’s perspective faculty are helpful, give support, and are concerned about teaching, not just their own research. Bartanen emphasized the importance of this discussion as it demonstrates why the capital campaign is so important. She suggested that although we have work to do, we are outperforming relative to resources (we rank 18th in total endowment, and 20th in endowment per faculty member).

Proposal from Diversity Committee

Janet Marcavage shared the proposal to establish a Bias and Hate Education Response Team (BHERT) (Attachment 3). BHERT members will take an active role in addressing trends of hate or bias incidents, create opportunities to confront these issues, and encourage dialogue for change. The primary goals of the committee are to create awareness of how hate and bias incidents shape the campus community and to lift the burden of response off individuals.

A motion was made to receive the report (M/S).

Hanson wondered where this committee would fit structurally and/or institutionally. Marcavage described the committee composition as cutting across administrative units. Matsui emphasized that responses to campus bias and hate incidents need to be elevated outside only Student Affairs. Hanson expressed concern that if the committee does not have a formal place within the institution it could get lost. Bristow thanked the BHERT committee members for their work and asked them if they had a preference or suggestion for a home for the committee. Matsui noted that many of functions described in the proposal currently exist in the Office of Student Affairs. She also shared that the Diversity Plan is still under discussion and thus might impact how BHERT evolves over the next few years. Bristow highlighted that the purpose of establishing BHERT is to have a more formal process to report incidents and for the campus to respond educationally. McGruder suggested that the Office of the Dean of the University might be a good structural home for BHERT.

Bristow moved that the Senate support the BHERT proposal and encourage implementation (M/S/P).

Anderson noted that bias and hate incidents are social problems and he wondered about the scope of the problem on campus. Matsui emphasized that bias and hate incidents tend to have a destructive impact on the campus community. She noted that the campus already tracks incidents (e.g., vandalism), but does not currently examine trends in the data using the lenses of bias and hate. O'Neil asked if BHERT is a place where students can come with concerns. Matsui shared that the sub-committee has discussed setting up a website where incidents can be posted anonymously. Bristow noted that when incidents do occur they tend to be a major event on campus and that the responsibility for response has typically fallen on student groups (e.g., the Black Student Union). Matsui reiterated the importance of removing the burden of response from those that are the targets of the attack. McGruder noted that faculty of color and gay faculty also experience an undo burden. She suggested that the establishment of BHERT will send a message that the campus does not tolerate bias and hate incidents. Segawa suggested that Student Affairs could be a short-term home to BHERT to establish the process and to give the community time to develop a Diversity Plan. He noted the awkwardness of proposing that Student Affairs serve as the institutional home when BHERT was developed by a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Anton thanked Segawa for offering to begin the implementation of BHERT.

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Amy E. Ryken