

Faculty Meeting Minutes October 16, 2001

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. in McIntyre 103. Fifty-six voting members of the faculty were present by 4:15 p.m.

Minutes of the August 15, 2001 faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

In response to President Pierce's call for announcements, Bob Matthews read to the faculty the Draft Mission Statement for the Oral History Project and invited interested faculty to contact those already involved in this faculty-initiated project: John English (Emeritus Professor of Education), Bob Matthews (Mathematics and Computer Science), George Mills (Admission), Gary Peterson (Emeritus Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts), Karen Porter (Comparative Sociology), or Florence Sandler (English).

President Pierce spoke briefly in response to questions she has received in recent weeks about what the tragic events of September 11 and the state of the stock market may mean for Puget Sound. She said we were well served by the timing of the Campaign for Puget Sound. All but \$6 million of the \$68.5 million raised in the campaign was received by December 31, 2000, so that we are not in the position of looking for payment of pledges that people may not be able to meet because of their changed circumstances. She noted that most campaigns included more pledges than ours had. She said that Trimble Hall has been funded, unlike the situation at some other colleges where buildings under construction are now without solid financial foundation. But at the same time, she said, even though we are financially stable, we need to be conservative in budgeting for the coming year, because of increased energy and health costs and because we do not yet know what the impact of recent events will be on fundraising. Also, with the decline in the market, our endowment is smaller than it was a year ago, so that the payout that feeds the operating budget will be smaller as well (the payout is computed on a three-year rolling average).

Academic Vice President Terry Cooney had no report other than to thank the faculty for their good, thoughtful comments on the events of September 11 in various brown bags and seminars. He said these have been very good for students and are much appreciated by them. President Pierce echoed this and said that, in response to a letter she sent to students' parents about what the University has done since September 11, she has received moving letters in return expressing positive feelings about sons and daughters being at Puget Sound.

Faculty Senate Chair Hans Ostrom reported that the Faculty Senate on September 10th charged the standing committees and on September 24th reviewed proposed revisions to the faculty code developed by the ad hoc committee. He invited faculty to read the minutes, posted on the web.

President Pierce asked Curriculum Committee Chair Matt Warning to introduce the agenda item dealing with the nine-unit major. Warning distributed a handout listing the number of units required in each academic major. He said that the faculty charged the Curriculum Committee with evaluating the nine-unit limit in the major and with recommending whether it should be raised to ten units. He said the Curriculum Committee decided the limit should not be raised. He said that increasing the limit in response to a decreased core size was not in keeping with expressed faculty sentiment for improving the overall quality of the curriculum. Warning pointed out that some departments are already over the limit and, just as drivers usually exceed the speed limit, increasing the limit from nine to ten units would probably mean that departments would ask for eleven. In summary, Warning said that the Curriculum Committee decided it should not go against one of the stated intents of the faculty in proposing the new core and that because the Curriculum Committee was proposing no change, no motion was required.

Curt Mehlhaff said that the problem was that every department that applied for a waiver of the nine-unit limit received it. Given that "there is never a bad argument" for waiving the limit, why have a limit at all? Mehlhaff said that, if it is the will of the faculty to limit the major to nine units, then the faculty must tell the Curriculum Committee to be diligent in review before making exceptions. Warning replied that a reason for having a limit is that it makes it costly for departments to get an exception. Mehlhaff responded that was not so; that "any argument wins." Bill Barry replied that the Curriculum Committee does go back to

departments to force them to make better arguments. If we go to ten units, he said, it will be that much easier for departments to try for eleven.

Bill Breitenbach, suggesting he would like “to put in a speed bump” and reduce the limit to two units, instead **M/S/motion withdrawn “to raise the limit to ten.”** After it was pointed out that, because the nine-unit limit was imbedded in the document already approved by the trustees, any proposed change would have to go through that approval process again, Breitenbach and the motion’s seconder (Suzanne Barnett) withdrew the motion.

Discussion continued on whether the limit should be raised and what the correct process for doing so would be. Dean Cooney gave a brief history of the nine-unit limit and how and why it came into being when the faculty changed from the Winterim calendar to the semester calendar in the mid-1980’s. President Pierce suggested that as a measure to promote breadth, units students take in their majors beyond the stated limit could be counted as electives beyond the 32 units required for graduation. Finally we agreed that, if anyone wanted to pursue a change in the existing nine-unit limit, they could inform secretary Finney that they plan to make a motion at the next faculty meeting so that the item can be put formally onto the agenda.

We then moved to a first reading of proposed Faculty By-Laws revisions. President Pierce reminded us that this was a first reading only and that we could take no action today. Because of the great length of the document, she suggested we not have a literal reading of it, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. The proposed revisions have been and are available on the University’s web site (at <http://www.ups.edu/dean/facgov/byrev.html>) and hard copies were distributed at today’s meeting.

Grace Kirchner, Faculty Senate chair at the time the proposed Bylaws revisions were created, explained that most of the changes were housekeeping items, although some proposed changes could be considered significant. She said the changes were posted to the web in 1998 with a comment period and that no comments were received. Other business prevented consideration of the changes in a full faculty meeting until now.

Keith Ward expressed concern about the proposed elimination of specific representation of professional school and arts and sciences faculty. He said he worried that eliminating this provision could result in an imbalance of representation with no check whatsoever.

President Pierce commented that professional school representation may have been more important when the law school with its hundreds of students and sizable faculty was a part of the University. Kirchner observed that the current allocations are way out of proportion to current numbers of faculty and that this at least needed to be addressed. Barnett suggested that the electorate might be trusted to think about diversity on the Senate, much as it does in nominating and voting for faculty for the Faculty Advancement Committee (FAC). Ward responded that he did have great trust in the faculty, but was concerned about bylaws with no structural checks built in.

Breitenbach said that, despite his former support for eliminating direct representation on the FAC, he is beginning to rethink this for representation on the Senate because of recent experience with OT and PT whereby those programs “were asked to consider themselves separate entities within the university financially, etc.” He said probably they should retain actual representation rather than relying on “virtual representation.” He said that the situation seems to have shifted a bit since the bylaws revisions were proposed

Dean Cooney pointed out that the phrase “professional schools” may mean something different now than it used to. He wondered if BPA would still be counted among the professional programs, given “the current framing of their curriculum.” He said that PE used to be considered a professional program, but that with the department’s change several years ago to Exercise Science their faculty asked not to be considered a professional program any longer. He said there have been “a number of migrations” and that he was not sure where we would draw the lines now.

Ward said he was not concerned about preserving titles, but was concerned about the absence of any kind of check that would ensure balanced representation of all faculty. Dean Cooney asked Ward if he “had an idea what that would look like” and Ward responded “no, not entirely,” but that he would be glad to work on it.

Matthews suggested that the question of representation really goes to the role of the senate. Depending on how that role was conceived, the senate might be established at a different size or remain at the same size, but he said he was unsure what was the best role for the Senate.

There were no further questions or comments about the proposed bylaws revisions, and we moved to the next agenda item, a discussion of the instructor salary scale.

Terry Mace explained the work of the ad hoc committee that looked at some of the issues raised in the conference committee that is working on proposed changes to the Faculty Code. He said the faculty did not address appendix A when it looked at the Code and that the trustees have proposed eliminating appendix A altogether. He noted that the Appendix was approved as a “memorandum of understanding” between the faculty and the trustees. The ad hoc committee concluded that some things in Appendix A were not addressed within the Code and the committee suggested changes to the Senate last week. The Senate endorsed some of the changes by “unanimously failing to reject” them and forwarded them on to the conference committee.

Mace said that one of the issues the ad hoc committee looked at was compensation for instructors, addressed in Appendix A. Appendix A calls for “... compensation ...comparable to career faculty teaching similar courses.” He said the ad hoc committee was concerned about eliminating all reference to compensation for instructors if Appendix A is eliminated from the Code. The ad hoc committee, working with Matt Pickard, devised a salary scale parallel to the tenure-line salary scale and proposed it to the Senate as a mechanism for addressing the instructor compensation issue. The Senate wanted the full faculty to decide whether the issue and the proposed instructor salary scale should go to the salary committee or what their fate should be. This was the question Mace presented to the full faculty at today’s meeting.

Pickard explained that the current instructor salary scale is a six-step scale beyond which instructors may receive merit increases only. The proposed new scale is a twelve-step scale, allowing for the same increases assistant and associate professors experience the first twelve years. Beyond twelve years the same criteria that tenure-line faculty must meet for promotion would be applied to instructors for any further increases. After 25 years an instructor could get as far as Associate 6 on the scale. He said that under the proposed scale instructors would experience about a 33% increase in salary over twelve years, the same as tenure-line faculty. Pickard pointed out that this is only one proposal and that others are possible.

Barry asked if merit increases would disappear under the proposed salary scale. Pickard responded that they would, except for those who have already earned them. Pickard added that an issue to be addressed is how to move instructors who are here already to the new scale. He said we would need to decide how to move long-timers across to the new scale in an equitable way

Alan Thorndike said he was sympathetic to the idea of a scale that goes beyond the current cap. **Thorndike M/S/vote reported later “to ask the faculty salary committee to develop a definite instructor salary scale plan and to bring it back to the full faculty for consideration.”**

Mehlhoff asked if there had been any discussion about what the “comparable” language means in Appendix A. Mace responded “no,” but Dean Cooney suggested that when the current instructor salary scale was created, it was constructed by the same faculty that had approved the language of Appendix A. The faculty’s understanding of “comparable” at that time probably took into account the different expectations and requirements of instructors. He said, for example, that professional growth and service have different meanings for instructors. He said that what “comparable” means has not been ignored, but

that what “comparable” meant in the 1980’s may not be what “comparable” means now, and that he supported addressing this issue in some way.

Pickard suggested the instructor salary situation is perhaps the result of an evolutionary process in which merit pay may have come into existence as the six steps were no longer seen as being adequate, and that now it may be time for a new phase in the evolutionary development of the instructor salary scale.

Warning asked if there was a statement of policy on instructors somewhere that would help faculty understand the context for this discussion. He wondered how our situation compared to that at other schools. Dean Cooney said that in addition to the language of Appendix A the instructor letter of employment has been standard for fifteen years or so. He said that instructor pay here is better than at other schools. He said we have not tried to undercut the market with part-time employees as other schools have done; that instructor salaries are high relative to other liberal arts colleges because of our original purpose in hiring instructors to meet core needs.

Warning suggested that maybe it was time to revisit the role of instructors and that the salary issue might be part of that. Dean Cooney said we could do that if the faculty wanted to. He reminded us that the Senate last year charged the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) with exactly that responsibility and that the ASC’s report to the Senate was available on the web. Dean Cooney pointed out that we look at some instructor slots when they became vacant and that, for example, the tenure-line slot currently held by Kurt Walls was created when instructor Scott Weldin retired from the University.

President Pierce mentioned a survey of hiring patterns across college and universities in the country that showed that many institutions have turned to part-time faculty and adjuncts for budgetary purposes. We have moved in the opposite direction and have added eleven additional tenure line faculty positions in the last ten years, all additions to the size of the faculty. As an institution we have been committed to not having a revolving door of part-time people.

Martin Jackson wondered if the Professional Standards Committee could interpret the language of Appendix A. President Pierce pointed out that the trustees do not believe appendix A is a part of the Code because it was never approved as such. She said that the ad hoc committee has attempted to resolve the issues of Appendix A in a different way. Jackson added that he favors the salary scale proposed by the ad hoc committee.

Nancy Bristow argued for the importance of creating a new salary scale for instructors who, she said, make “hugely important contributions to the campus.”

Tom Rowland asked what group of people the proposed salary scale was concerned with. Dean Cooney responded that we do not have any instructors here with fewer than six years of service who were hired with the assumption they would be here longer than six years. But he said this could happen, perhaps in response to the new foreign language degree requirement. Dean Cooney said we have temporary instructors just as is we have visiting faculty in all ranks.

Warning asked if we did in fact have 23 instructors who have topped out on the salary scale. Dean Cooney said that was correct in so far as the scale alone is concerned. He added that the current scale has six steps and that some instructors have up to five levels of merit pay on top of the six levels. Pickard mentioned that sixteen of 25 instructors have received at least one merit increase. The problem is that if only three or so receive merit increases each year, some instructors may never receive merit, depending on which cohort of instructors they are in when they come up for their three-year evaluations. Dean Cooney said there were no budgetary constraints on the number of merit increases that can be awarded in a given year; that the same review process may lead to different numbers of merit increases each year.

Jackson asked if clinical instructors were paid on the same scale as instructors. Dean Cooney responded that clinical instructors are paid in response to market conditions on the basis of degrees held and years of experience. He said the clinical instructor position was created in the 1980’s when salaries for OT and

PT clinicians in the private sector were substantial. He said clinical instructor salaries could range with years of service at Puget Sound as high as the top of the associate scale.

Ostrom M/S/P to close debate. The motion to end debate passed on a voice vote. The main Thorndike motion then passed on a unanimous voice vote.

We adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty