

Minutes of the March 10, 2015 Faculty Meeting

Submitted by Amanda Mifflin, Faculty Secretary

Attendance

Faculty members in attendance are listed in Appendix A

Minutes

I. Call to order

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:02

II. Approval of Minutes

M/S/P to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2015 faculty meeting.

III. Announcements

- The Higher Education Opportunities Act helps students know cost of textbook prior to enrolling in courses. The Bookstore believes they are aligned with law, but it would be helpful if faculty submitted their textbook requests on time.

IV. Questions regarding reports from the President, Academic Vice President, and Chair of the Faculty Senate (Appendices B, C, and D)

- George Tomlin asked about whether the proposed budget for next year includes the increase in medical costs, and if so, what it was based on. President Thomas clarified that the estimated cost was based on the prediction of a consultant on likely cost projections. The hope is that the projection more than covers actual costs.
- A question was raised about what happens to the Sweet Briar endowment, which is stronger in terms of endowment per student than that of Puget Sound. President Thomas noted that it will take time to figure out restricted portions, and unrestricted portions may go towards severance packages.
- Anderson-Connolly asked if any changes were made by the Faculty Senate to the language pertaining to the recently approved changes in the schedule for evaluations. Tubert responded that there have not been any changes as this is still an ongoing issue. McBain added that the PSC posted the minutes relating to this issue.
- Bartanen offered a clarification to the Faculty Senate Chair's report that there is still hope for 5 endowed chairs through the campaign. Two faculty positions were funded through the campaign, but there are still others being worked on. More funding to support faculty has come through in terms of expendable funds than endowed funds.

V. Old Business

A. Consideration of two motions to amend the Faculty Code regarding review of associate and full professors

Beardsley presented two motions to amend the Faculty Code regarding review of associate and full professors. The first readings were presented last meeting (see Appendix F of Minutes of the February 2, 2015 Faculty Meeting). Motion 2 was presented first.

M/S/P

Motion 2: To amend the code by striking “in years 5, 15, 25, and 35 of service in that rank” from Chapter 3, section 5a of the Code.

Beardsley spoke in favor of the motion, stating that evaluations are putting a lot of burden on departments and evaluatees. The recommendation was to change current procedures where full professors have a streamlined/short form 5-year review in alternate years to having every 5-year evaluation streamlined, which the Senate endorsed. The protections for full evaluation remain in place. Cannon clarified that the discussion/motion arose from lengthy conversations of the PSC.

Matthews asked what issues were raised as to downsides to this motion? Why wouldn't we want to do this? MacBain offered that full reviews were opportunities for junior faculty to participate in reviews, and Cannon added that we have a longstanding culture of evaluation, and full evaluations are an incentive for maintaining teaching excellence. MacBain clarified that it is important to maintain honest feedback from FAC, which will remain intact. Any person involved in the review can request a full review at any time. Bartanen added that the PSC talked about whether streamlined evaluations should occur by department head or by FAC. The preference was to have a university-wide perspective. Evaluatees will still have a file available to the department for a number of weeks. The transparency to colleagues is maintained. Cannon added that individual departments could still encourage class visitation, not just in coincidence of evaluation. Ward added that he liked the idea of streamlining procedures, but the change of culture gave him pause—the promotion to Professor would be the last time that a department would be required to evaluate a colleague. There is value in streamlining, but removing opportunity to evaluate colleagues gives a moment of pause.

Other faculty expressed concern about the loss of a sense of accountability, and didn't think it was too much to ask colleagues to evaluate each other once in a decade. Bartanen clarified that the number of files that will be affected is about 20. Tubert added that the issue is full review versus some review, not full review versus no review. Sousa added that as a junior faculty member participating in an evaluation, you learn a lot about the trajectory of colleagues, their history, etc. Participating in the process early on to see context is valuable. Butcher asked for clarification on why the work of FAC seems to have increased when the size of faculty hasn't changed that much. Bartanen offered that the motivation for the change was not necessarily with respect to the FAC. It takes some load off of departments as well. McBain added that she has a large department with many reviews each year. Reviews of senior colleagues require a lot of work, and her department would be grateful for the release of burden.

Sousa stated that reviewing a senior colleague every 10 years has value, and alternating every 5 years seems like a good compromise. DeHart asked if we are also agreeing to stop evaluating more of our faculty at an earlier point in their careers, to which Beardsley commented that it is important to remember that short form reviews are still full reviews. They take into account student evaluations, etc. The evaluatee won't notice difference in process as much as the department will. Rogers added that it is not necessarily about the FAC's or evaluatees'

perspective, but the ways in which junior faculty learn the process of evaluation in a structured opportunity. Fry added that we aren't taking away opportunity to do that, but rather the demand to do that. There is more burden on junior faculty in participating in evaluations, and they also have the burden of tenure alongside the burden of evaluating colleagues. Bristow commented that her most junior colleagues have the opportunity to evaluate her most senior colleagues, and that seems fair. She wondered if junior faculty have a desire to be relieved of this burden. Fry responded that the opportunity to evaluate is a positive thing, and we have too many positive things to do. Utrata added that she respected the ideal of the process, but it did feel artificial. She learned more from personal conversations about teaching than from the formal evaluation process. Sousa commented that this is a question about the evaluation of a full professor and accountability. Reframing it as a workload issue for junior faculty is a mistake. He continued to learn about his colleagues in these processes, and thinks they're important and that there's something lost here.

Saucedo suggested that maybe colleagues who volunteer to submit letters aren't as happy with a colleague and would be more inclined to go to class visits, and their evaluations may be more skewed. MacBain responded that the evaluatee would be able to read those letters and file a grievance for unfairness. There was a question of whether the letters in a streamlined review are accessible to the evaluatee under the Code. Bartanen clarified that the letters are not required, but are accessible, but there are provisions in the Code for evaluatees to request a full review at the conclusion of the streamlined review process, if desired. One faculty member reiterated that the culture of department evaluation doesn't necessarily have to stop.

Orlin moved to call a question, to which there was an objection.

Tomlin asked if it is the intention that head officer will not have that duty? Beardsley clarified that the language allows the evaluatee to make the decision to have a full review.

The motion passed.

Cannon asked for clarification as to whether motions to change the Code have to go to the Trustees. Bartanen stated that the faculty has not specified, but that the motion will presumably be in effect next year.

The motion passed.

M/S/P

Motion 1: *To amend the Code by*

1. *Striking "Persons in the rank of associate professor who are not candidates for tenure promotion and" from Chapter 3, section 5a of the Code.*

And by

2. *Adding "An evaluation by the head officer shall also be made after each three year period of service for those at the rank of associate professor who are not candidates for tenure or promotion unless the evaluatee elects to proceed with a full review in accord with the procedures detailed in Chapter III, section 4" to Chapter 3, section 2b of the Code.*

B. Consideration of a motion regarding the length of the spring semester (Neshyba and Despres *in absentia*)

Motion: The faculty invites the Senate to craft proposals to shorten the number of teaching days in Spring Semester to 67 days.

Tubert moved to withdraw the motion since Neshyba and Despres were not there to discuss it. Others who were willing to speak for the motion were also not there.

Haltom offered that it might be easier to postpone that item to next meeting. A motion that's already there would still be open and be under unfinished business rather than new business. Tubert agreed and withdrew the motion to withdraw motion, and moved to postpone discussion of the motion to next faculty meeting.

M/S/P: Tubert moved to postpone discussion of the motion to next faculty meeting.

VI. Consideration of a motion from the Ad Hoc Committee on Medical, Family Leave and Disability Policies

M/S/P

Gwynne Brown presented a motion to approve the following statement of faculty support for the recommendation that something should be changed so that various parties can take action on implementation:

The faculty at the University of Puget Sound find the University's leave policies to be inequitable, inadequate, and lacking in transparency. We believe that our policies must be changed in order to: 1) better support faculty in their teaching and scholarship (including that conducted outside the semester calendar) as well as in their personal wellness, 2) improve the students' Puget Sound experience, and 3) align with the stated values of the university. To achieve such goals the faculty requests:

- a. *University policy updated to include benefits compliant with the provisions in the Washington State Family Leave Act (2006) and Family Care Act (2002), and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (1993).*
- b. *The implementation of a paid Faculty Family Medical Leave policy.*
- c. *The implementation of a one-semester paid Faculty Parental Leave policy.*
- d. *No- and low-cost modifications to the current leave policies so as to enhance clarity, equity, and transparency, and to recognize and support the scholarly and pedagogical work faculty conduct outside of the semester calendar.*
 1. *Faculty with new child would be able to pause tenure clock for one year as default option (can opt out).*
 2. *Faculty with new child would be released from service and advising (can opt out)*
 3. *Women who give birth in summer have access to same amount of leave as semester births.*

The faculty discussed the motion. Anderson-Connolly asked if “clarity, equity and transparency” were stated goals of the University. Beardsley commented that the motion states that the faculty finds the policies inequitable. Bristow added that her only reservation is the finite pie: would benefits we gain be taken from staff? There was concern about doing this at the expense of other colleagues. Other faculty commented that the staff has access to benefits that we don’t have, like sick days etc. They are on a different benefits plan. They also don’t have the issue of a calendar. Staff are able to use leave in a more standard way. They already have some options in their policy that allow them to take the kind of leave that we are proposing.

Sousa offered support for the statement and added that we are looking at a reallocation of resources for benefits. We have a no net-increase commitment, so it’s a matter of moving funds around from the same pool. Briggs added that the BTF looks at collective benefits ideals and makes sure we are staying on budget. We will have to figure out how to reallocate funds. McBain asked if provision A provides for having to care for ailing family member. Brown confirmed that it did, and Tubert added that provisions A and B may partially overlap with each other. Fry asked why we would be reallocating funds to have benefits that any self-respecting institution would have.

Rogers added that Part A is bringing us into compliance with the law. WA FCA states that if you get paid personal medical leave you are eligible to use paid family medical leave. C is the part that would require the most thinking for the BTF. The pool that this represents is very small compared to total benefits pool (~2.5%). Bristow agreed that the will of the faculty is not to be taking from one place to give to another. Matern added that we are going to come into compliance with the law. BTF will have to make hard decisions about allocating funds to the best place. We have 100% of our health premiums paid for, and a lot of schools don’t. We have 12% retirement, and a lot of schools don’t. We will have to reallocate, but this is really good work.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Professor Brown canvassed the faculty for a show of hands for the no-cost changes to take to the PSC:

1. *Faculty with new child would be able to pause tenure clock for one year as default option (can opt out).*

Matern asked for clarification for whether this would begin at date of hire or after a 1-year waiting period. Weiss confirmed it would start at date of hire.

Unanimous support.

2. *Faculty with new child would be released from service and advising (can opt out)*

Unanimous support.

3. *Women who give birth in summer have access to same amount of leave as semester births.*

Unanimous support.

VII. Adjournment

M/S/P to adjourn at 5:18 pm.

Appendix A: Attendance of March 10, 2015 Faculty Meeting

Richard Anderson-Connolly
Greta Austin
Bill Barry
Kris Bartanen
William Beardsley
Bill Breitenbach
Nancy Bristow
Gwynne Brown
Alva Butcher
Douglas Cannon
Julie Christoph
Monica DeHart
Rachel DeMotts
Denise Despres
Lea Fortmann
Kena Fox-Dobbs
Sara Freeman
Poppy Fry
Chad Gunderson
Alison Hale
William Haltom
John Hanson
Suzanne Holland
Renee Houston
Matthew Ingalls
Martin Jackson
Kristin Johnson
Diane Kelley
Nick Kontogeorgopoulos
Kriszta Kotsis
Laura Krughoff

William Kupinse
Jan Leuchtenberger
Pierre Ly
Tiffany MacBain
Andreas Madlung
Jeff Matthews
Amanda Mifflin
Amy Odegard
Eric Orlin
Elise Richman
Brett Rogers
Leslie Saucedo
David Sousa
Ron Thomas
Justin Tiehen
George Tomlin
Ariela Tubert
Jennifer Utrata
Keith Ward
Matt Warning
Stacey Weiss
Linda Williams

Guests

Shannon Briggs
Cindy Matern
Ellen Peters
Brad Tomhave
Landon Wade

Appendix B. Academic Vice President's Report

March 5, 2015

TO: Faculty Colleagues

FR: Kris Bartanen

RE: Dean's Report to the Faculty Meeting

Reminders

- Diversity Strategic Planning Discussion, March 9, noon, Rotunda
- Campus Climate Survey – Link is in email from Chief Diversity Officer, 2/27/15 afternoon. **Please complete the survey yourself**, and please encourage students and colleagues to do so. The Title IX section is near the end of the survey.
- If you supervise a staff member: Performance Reviews due 4/15/15.

Kudos

- Nathan Bradley '16, awarded a Critical Language Scholarship – China
- Logger Women's Basketball earning NCAA III national playoffs berth

Opportunities

- Northwest Five Colleges: two-part workshop at Whitman College, June 4-5, including the second **Faculty of College Workshop** (historically underrepresented faculty and allies welcome) and the **TEACH Workshop** (seeking to increase the capacity for NW5C institutions to provide faculty development programming around pedagogy across a broad range of teaching and learning topics). Contact mбенitez@pugetsound.edu or kukreja@pugetsound.edu for information or to be part of the Puget Sound group attending (vanpool, meals and lodging provided by NW5C).
- National Science Foundation Day: Workshop with NSF program officers focused on “how to better compete in an ever-changing funding climate” – April 1, 7:30am-6:00pm, UW-Bothell. Register at www.uwb.edu/research/news-and-events/nsf-day.
- Feedback on Moodle Evaluation sites: Lauren Nicandri and Kyle Cramer have good ideas for improvements for next year; feel free to drop me a note with suggestions based on your experience as an evaluatee, head officer, or reviewer this year at acadvp@pugetsound.edu.

Faculty Compensation Task Force – The following information was shared with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board: On February 6, the subcommittee working on a draft philosophy (Lynnette Claire, Amy Fisher, Andrew Monaco) led the task force in an exercise to open discussion on potential compensation philosophy components, including fiscal responsibility, transparent communication, faculty as a recognized institutional priority, recruitment and retention of faculty, fair (livable) wage, internal equity (within faculty, across institution), professional development resources, family benefits, lifetime benefits. Subsequently, the subcommittee created a first draft philosophy that is under virtual discussion by the task force as a whole.

Another subcommittee (David Sousa, Keith Ward, Martin Jackson, Ellen Peters) is working on recommendation of a valid, realistic, and reliable peer group for benchmarking of Puget Sound faculty salaries. The group of 20 institutional peers (which includes the NW5C institutions) is likely too small as a basis for compensation comparison; larger groups that have been discussed by our consultant include AAUP IIB, Carnegie Baccalaureate-Arts & Sciences, Annapolis Group, CUPA-HR Private Baccalaureate.

A third subcommittee (John Hanson, Danny McMillian, Ben Lewin, Martin Jackson) has begun work to ground the analytics/forecasting that we need in order to be able to determine the long-term sustainability of the faculty salary scale, given the demographic characteristics of the faculty, and to insure that any recommended revisions to the scale will be financially sustainable.

Faculty members of the task force anticipate reporting out draft recommendations for discussion with the faculty by May.

Sustainability

Given faculty interest in matters related to sustainability at recent faculty meetings, I have also posted on the [Faculty Conversation Soundnet](#) site two short documents (click to second page of site, "Sustainability Update January 2015"):

- Sustainability History and Status Report, January 2015
- Summary of Progress on Sustainability from Budget Task Force Reports, Fall 2014

Faculty Priorities

Prior to Spring Break, I anticipate sharing with you some thoughts to open conversation regarding work that we as a faculty need to do to develop a sense of priorities. At present, we have governance groups (Senate, committees, ad hoc groups) and individuals considering a variety of distinct ideas or proposals – each with merit – all without a sense of the whole. We have the capacity to create a whole that is great than the sum of its parts, but we need to figure out how to do so.

If you want to read ahead, there are several reports and proposals on the [Faculty Conversation Soundnet](#) site:

- Big Ideas Work Group, specifically working notes of May 7, 2013
- Experiential Learning Work Group Report, June 2014
- Pacific Rim, broadly defined folder
- 2014-2015 Experiential Learning folder
 - Arthur Vining Davis Foundations proposal
 - Andrew W. Mellon Foundation proposal
- "The Next Big Thing" Conversation notes, January 2015 (click to second page of site)

If you want to join in informal conversation, I invite you to put a hold on your calendar for one of the following times, locations TBA:

- Tuesday, March 24, 4:00-5:15 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 25, 8-9:15 a.m.
- Monday, March 30, 4:00-5:15 p.m.

Appendix C. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Faculty Senate Chair Report to the Faculty

In advance of 03/10/2015 Faculty Meeting

By Ariela Tubert

- Nominations are currently open for four senator seats and for secretary of the faculty. With respect to this last one, the senate approved a motion to elect a slate of candidates for faculty secretary during the spring senate election with the understanding that the candidate with the most votes will be put forward at the first faculty meeting of the year for election. The position of faculty secretary will fulfill the university service requirement for the elected candidate. Please send nominations for senators or faculty secretary to Pierre Ly no later than Monday 3/9 at 5pm.
- I attended the Board of Trustees meeting last week and one of the main workshops that I attended was focused on the post campaign period. The One [of-a-Kind] Campaign will be coming to an end this fall and the current discussions deal with the post-campaign years. I noticed that one of the few areas where the campaign has fallen short of its objectives thus far is in funding for faculty. The overall long-term financial picture of the university presented at the workshop looked very strong.
- The Library, Media, and Information Systems (LMIS) Committee has worked together with the library to update the faculty loan policies in response to discussions at the senate, previous faculty meetings, and messages to the listserv. The following principles guided the LMIS committee's deliberations:
 - a. We recognize the many diverse points of view associated with loan policies.
 - b. We affirm library resources are a community resource that benefit faculty, staff, students, and our colleagues in the Alliance.
 - c. We recognize the financial concerns associated with fines, loans and loss of materials as well as the research and teaching needs of our community.

The LMIS committee and the senate have discussed and endorsed the updated Library Faculty Loan Policy that you can find in Appendix A below.

- The senate approved the following motion in response to the discussion at one of last fall's faculty meetings: "The Faculty Senate charge the Professional Standards and Student Life Committees to collaboratively work with the Bias-Hate Education Response Team to: 1) investigate existing University policies pertaining to the display of materials for campus/public consumption, 2) make recommendations for changes or additions to the existing University policies including the possibility of another statement regarding freedom of expression, and 3) consider revision or clarification of the procedures for "immediate response" to reported incidences of Bias-Hate ("Response Protocol of Bias-Hate Incidents," Section V.B.1.)." See Appendix B below for the relevant section of the "Response Protocol of Bias-Hate Incidents."

- The senate discussed the recommendations from the ad hoc committee reviewing the Faculty Medical, Family Leave and Disability Policies and provided its endorsement for a statement regarding the leave policies for faculty. The same statement is scheduled to be discussed at this upcoming 3/10 faculty meeting. The statement can be found in Appendix C below.
- At its last meeting on 2/23, the senate discussed steps that may be taken to increase support for faculty encountering students with behavioral and other problems in the classroom. The discussion was prompted by requests from various faculty members that the senate take up the issue. We have decided to continue to think about the issues and bring back recommendations for action at future meetings. We welcome specific suggestions from the faculty as well.

Appendix A

Updated Library Faculty Loan Policy:

1. Faculty will receive a one year (12 months from the time of check-out) loan for regular Puget Sound materials, with one six month renewal. This addresses concerns for extended loan of materials by faculty and supports academic research associated with sabbatical leaves.
2. Faculty will receive overdue notices for materials not returned, but will not be fined overdue fees for Puget Sound materials, including short-term loans like media, reserves, popular books, and print journals. Faculty will be billed for the replacement cost of items held longer than 18 months. This bill is waived, or refunded if already paid, once materials are returned if the library has not yet purchased a new copy. This addresses concerns about fines expressed by faculty.
3. Materials borrowed by all library users, including faculty, through Inter-Library Loan (ILL) or Summit will be subject to fines. There is no change to this policy as fines for Summit and ILL materials were in place prior to implementation. In compliance with the Summit sharing policy, the replacement cost for a lost Summit item is \$90. Daily fines accrue at \$1 per day. This supports our partnership with Alliance libraries and the scholarly community.
4. Items recalled by a Puget Sound library user will be subject to fines of \$1 per day. Only Puget Sound users may recall Puget Sound materials. There are no recalls associated with borrowing and lending within Summit by patrons. However, each Summit institution may recall a Summit loan if it is needed for Course Reserves or DVD/Video class viewings (Bookings). This provides the opportunity for Puget Sound materials to be used more broadly.
5. We recommend that faculty on sabbatical or out of town coordinate renewals and/or returns accordingly. We recommend that faculty who receive recall notices but are unable to return the materials due to extenuating circumstances contact the circulation staff to make

appropriate arrangements. This reinforces the library's willingness to work with faculty on an individual basis to support academic engagement.

Appendix B

The following freedom of expression statement is contained within the "Response Protocol of Bias-Hate Incidents."

"As a fundamental commitment and as part of the progress we envision, the Puget Sound community protects academic freedom, the open exchange of ideas and creative, intellectual expression. Freedom of expression on this campus means equally that we shall not seek to limit individuals' First Amendment right to express their views and that we shall reject conduct that hinders in any way the right of all to pursue their educational goals in a safe and respectful environment. We understand that these freedoms and rights do not permit us to tolerate speech, symbols, or other actions that are wounding or threaten harm to specific individuals or groups because destructive hostility has no place in open and honest learning" ("Response Protocol of Bias-Hate Incidents," p. 1).

<http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/communicationresponse-protocolfor-biashate-incident.pdf>

Appendix C

Statement regarding leave policies endorsed by the senate and up for faculty consideration at the 3/10 faculty meeting:

The faculty at the University of Puget Sound find the university's leave policies to be inequitable, inadequate, and lacking in transparency. We believe that our policies must be changed in order to: 1) better support faculty in their teaching and scholarship (including that conducted outside the semester calendar) as well as in their personal wellness, 2) improve the students' Puget Sound experience, and 3) align with the stated values of the university. To achieve such goals the faculty requests:

A. University policy updated to include benefits compliant with the provisions in the Washington State Family Leave Act (2006) and Family Care Act (2002), and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (1993).

B. the implementation of a paid Faculty Family Medical Leave policy.

C. the implementation of a one-semester paid Faculty Parental Leave policy.

D. no- and low-cost modifications to the current leave policies so as to enhance clarity, equity, and transparency, and to recognize and support the scholarly and pedagogical work faculty conduct outside of the semester calendar.



President's Report

March 2015 Meeting of the Faculty

February 26-27 Board Meetings: The Board of Trustees convened on campus for two days of board meetings on February 26-27. The primary issues on the agenda (in addition to regular business) were: approval of the FY2016 operating budget, a strategic look at emerging challenges in higher education and the kinds of responses they demand, consideration of fourteen tenure and/or promotion files, review of advancing architectural plans for the Athletics and Aquatics Center, and a workshop on the plan for constituent relations and fundraising in the five-year period following the conclusion of the ONE-of-a-Kind comprehensive capital campaign this June. Since the Alumni Council Executive Committee also meets on campus during the February Board meetings, the group joined together with the trustees for dinner and exchanged perspectives on their agendas and activities. Attendance at the trustee/faculty breakfast was strong by both faculty and trustees offering good opportunities for conversation. The trustees appreciated this interaction.

As you will have learned by the time of the faculty meeting from a general report to campus:

- The proposed balanced budget for FY 2016 was approved—with the lowest increase in tuition in more than forty years (3.56%) and a lower discount rate (both in accordance with our five-year plan to contain price and maximize revenues). Salary pools assume a 3% increase for staff and a 4% increase for faculty and a benefit pool increase of 6.3%, which includes an estimated 20% increase in medical costs to the university in calendar 2016.
- The Investment Subcommittee had a thoughtful discussion about fiduciary responsibility and socially responsible investment, following on two meetings with students concerned about carbon-based fuel investments.
- Ten faculty members were approved for tenure (3 of whom also received promotion to associate professor) and 4 others were promoted to associate professor.
- The Athletics and Aquatics Center, now with most of its funding secured, received approval to proceed to construction documents with expected completion of construction by Fall 2016, consistent with the campus master plan approved in 2005.
- A detailed plan for the five-year period following the conclusion of the ONE-of-a-Kind comprehensive capital campaign was presented and discussed by the Board as a critical strategic effort to maintain momentum in the constituent relations program activity and

advancement operations that have increased alumni and parent engagement and annual fundraising by more than 40% annually over the campaign period. Features of the plan were presented to faculty and staff at the Continuing Conversation session in February.

Enrollment: Most of our record high number of applications (just short of 6,000) have been acted upon with decisions and scholarship offers and we now focus on the work of yielding the class. Three “Puget Sound Decision Days” will be held on campus as well as personal outreach, email and new media efforts. Faculty involvement with campus visitors and contacting of admitted students are always meaningful in enrolling students and are greatly appreciated. Ten Matelich Scholar finalists and ten Lillis Scholar finalists have been invited by their committees to attend campus for interviews this month (and all have accepted those invitations). Nine Access Programs students have been admitted and approximately 60 so far from Tacoma Public Schools—a notable increase over previous years. A number of additional, as yet incomplete, TPS applications (and others) will be acted upon once supporting material is submitted.

Continuing Conversations: Our final in a series of five Continuing Conversations with faculty and staff was conducted on February 17. The conversation covered issues surrounding Title IX, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence including a consideration of the national context, our continuing and new initiatives for education and prevention, the progress in review and enhancement of policies and procedures, and our policies on (and recent experience with) adjudication and discipline of complaints.

Travel: I will be in Los Angeles, Newport Beach, and San Francisco for local alumni club events and/or campaign calls this month, and in New York and Portland next month (with an additional trip to San Antonio for NAICU leadership meetings in April as well). I am delighted that Professors Steve Neshyba and Alisa Kessel will present at the upcoming alumni events. We have scheduled numerous donor cultivation and appreciation events on campus during this period as well. We currently have a number of foundation proposals pending and several campaign “asks” and appointments scheduled as we near the completion of the campaign in June. We closed February at \$124.35 million, drawing closer and closer to our goal.

Pierce Lecture in the Arts: We are pleased to present celebrated novelist Edwidge Danticat as this year’s Pierce Lecturer in the Arts on the evening of March 31, part of our recognition of the 40th anniversary of the African American Studies Program at Puget Sound. Danticat is a MacArthur Fellow, American Book Award winner, Langston Hughes Medal winner, National Book Critics Circle Award winner, and two-time National Book Award nominee.

Cautionary Tales: The announcement of the decision to close Sweet Briar College this week was a shock to many of us. A very reputable liberal arts college more than a century old, Sweet Briar faced a particular set of challenges: a single-sex institution in a rural location at a small scale (enrollment had dwindled to under 600 students)—all at a time when interest in liberal arts education is waning nationally. With a beautiful, 3200-acre campus (often ranked among the most beautiful in the country), and strong endowment (higher per student than ours), Sweet Briar had significant resources. It recently ranked around 60 in the US NEWS national liberal arts college listings (though had fallen lately), was often cited by publications like Princeton Review for most accessible professors, quality of classroom discussion, and career placement, and even had received a perfect academic quality score. But Sweet

Briar could not sustain its enrollments and saw its discount rate grow from 40% to 60% in recent years in an effort to encourage enrollment. Other colleges have met their demise in recent years, but Sweet Briar is perhaps the most reputable—and will not be the last to go. This sad loss to American higher education is a reminder to us of the importance of our continuing to innovate with big ideas and build on our strengths, take full advantage of our urban location, recognize how our mission can meet the demands of the marketplace with integrity, ensure that our price does not exceed demand, and make sure we remain affordable by managing our costs with creativity and discipline.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Thomas".

Ronald R. Thomas
President