Faculty Senate Meeting
January 27th, 2014
McCormick Room, Library

Faculty Senate Members Present
Haley Andres, Brad Dillman (chair), Kris Bartanen, Derek Buescher, Andrew Gardner, Cynthia Gibson, Eric Hopfenbeck, Alisa Kessel, Kriszta Kotsis, Andrea Kueter, Amanda Mifflin, Maria Sampen, Leslie Saucedo, Mike Segawa, Jonathan Stockdale, Ariela Tubert, Nila Wiese.

Guests
Kelli Delaney, Sherry Mondou, Steven Neshyba, Kate Stirling, Landon Wade.

Chair Dillman called the meeting to order at 4:03.

Announcements
Kessel announced a faculty party at the Faculty Club 4-7 pm on 1/31. Kotsis announced the Kittredge Gallery exhibition of work by Art faculty Chad Gunderson. New Senate members Andrea Kueter and Andrew Gardner were welcomed.

Approval of Minutes
M/S/P to approve minutes of December 9, 2013 as revised.

Updates from Liaisons to Standing Committees
Tubert reported on the recent meeting of the Committee on Diversity at which the revised KNOW proposal was discussed. The Committee endorsed the revised proposal, which will be discussed at the next faculty meeting on February 3.

Dillman suggested that we discuss the KNOW proposal at our next meeting; we should have approximately 30 minutes available for that discussion in addition to our upcoming agenda item on PeopleSoft.

Buescher reported that the Professional Standards Committee is working to clarify and/or redefine language in the faculty code pertaining to “class visits” in relation to the evaluation of faculty.

Agenda Item: Budget Task Force Recommendations
Steven Neshyba and Kate Stirling presented a summary of the Budget Task Force recommendations regarding the 2014-15 operating budget. Stirling expressed appreciation for the careful marshaling of resources expressed in the budget; mentioned that the creators of the budget are cognizant of the university’s mission and strategic initiatives, and that resources have been allocated with an eye toward fulfilling the mission of the university and strategic initiatives that will yield the greatest good. At the same time, there is a continuing need to balance revenue

constraints: trying not to drive tuition up, while yet remaining competitive with our peer institutions (e.g. in areas such as faculty salaries).

Neshyba reported that the recommendations include a faculty salary pool increase of 4.5%. He added that the Budget Task Force has communicated to Trustees the desire for a long- term vision on the need to improve faculty compensation, including long-term goals for achieving a more competitive position among our peers.

1. Regarding the process of coming up with recommendations, Neshyba explained that President Thomas first provides some guidelines and context for the BTF to consider. Among items mentioned by President Thomas were: The prior year was a great recruitment year, but this hasn't been the trend overall.
2. The recession led to a fundamental restructuring of family incomes.
3. The declining size of the overall student pool we are recruiting from.
4. Continued unemployment.

Neshyba mentioned that Puget Sound has trimmed $2.7 million through budget cuts over the last few years; an indication of what a "lean machine" Puget Sound is now.

Neshyba noted that guidelines for tuition increases usually hover between 2.5-4 %; the BTF is recommending 3.75%. In addition, the planned tuition discount rate is around 40%. In terms of other revenue sources, we have seen a modest increase in gift revenues, while on the expense side medical premiums are up 42%.

Neshyba pointed out the conscious effort by presenters to the BTF to demonstrate benchmarks relative to our peer institutions (e.g., on items such as the cost of security services). He also mentioned that we could try to improve attention to the sustainability impact of budget decisions on the campus, and welcomed Senate support for that. Neshyba concluded the informal report by mentioning that the university is aiming to reduce freshmen enrollment gradually over five years to 640, but we need greater retention to go along with that in order to meet the budget base of 2650 students enrolled. He also wondered whether it is sustainable to maintain an ongoing tuition increase of 3.75% each year, with inflation rates averaging 2.5%? If so, what is the long-term plan regarding that?

Bartanen responded that the BTF works with a long-range planning model in order to project that decisions we make this year are affordable down the road. ; i.e., recommendations in a given year have to be feasible overtime. The university has worked hard to bring the rate of tuition increase down; this year's recommendation represents the lowest rate of increase in 40 years. Bartanen mentioned that we can *wish* for a 0% tuition increase, but that would come with consequences (e.g. no faculty salary increases), since our budget is so tuition dependent. The different groups who come before the BTF discuss what cuts they have made, what cuts they could make, and what increases they are requesting; the BTF has to take into account all of that, and then figure out "what can we afford to do?" Some things we simply have no choice about, such as insurance premium increases or bigger license fees for major software systems.

Kessel asked whether the 10% increase in planned major maintenance is one of the items in the budget in which we have no choice. Bartanen responded that yes, that increase is mandated by the Board. Overall, for fiscal year 2014 the BTF tried to put every dollar it could into human beings (e.g., staff and faculty). This included recommending funds for a fraction of additional staff FTE for the Office of Student Accessibility and Accommodation to support students with disabilities; another small fraction of additional staff FTE to coordinate prevention efforts to address sexual harassment and sexual violence; staff support for the analytics and data warehousing work needed to support student retention; and faculty and staff; compensation. The faculty salary pool increase will likely be used for: 3% increase in the faculty salary scale and, 1.5 % for faculty steps and promotions.

Mondou added that the BTF worked hard to keep tuition down as much as possible, but that we do not yet have the resources necessary to keep compensation competitive while also keeping tuition down to the rate of inflation.

Saucedo asked what happens with a department that continually overspends? Bartanen replied that in general this balances out with departments that underspend. Saucedo wondered whether it was fair that science generally spends more than other departments such as those in the humanities, and wondered whether the burden for certain expenses (e.g., lab fees) should be shifted onto science students. Andres mentioned that as a student, she's responsible for paying an additional fee for art supplies, for example. Sampen mentioned that in music students pay a fee for private lessons, and that there are schools that have variable tuition rates depending on the major.

Buescher asked whether the capital campaign would reduce our dependence on tuition for revenue? Mondou replied that some funds are targeted for items like facilities and endowment, and part of it is for financial aid. However, our base is so small to begin with. Bartanen added that the largest portion of the campaign is for financial aid, but that due to the recession funds from the campaign will not make as big of an increment as had been originally hoped. Mondou added that our discount rate had been roughly 35%, but has in recent years climbed up to 43%. Buescher asked whether the university has had a debate about the pros and cons of high tuition/high discount vs. simply having lower tuition. Mondou replied that yes, lots of models have been considered, adding that in the current market it appears that sticker price signals quality, and links us to our competitors. Lower sticker price universities have not been as successful in attracting applicant pools. In addition, people are responsive to merit awards. She added that the modeling is very complicated, and the university grapples with this every year.

Kessel mentioned a hope for flexibility in the 3% faculty salary increase, so that we could become more competitive at the assistant level in particular, moving us beyond the 80 percentile. Bartanen replied that what our compensation philosophy should be is definitely part of the discussion, and that she would be meeting with the faculty salary committee soon. Stirling added that the BTF does not determine *how* the increase pools are applied, but only how large of an increase there should be overall. Bartanen added that it is her job to decide how the increases in faculty salaries are distributed.

Kessel asked whether salary increases for administration are lumped together with faculty salary increases. Mondou replied that these are included with staff increases in the budget model, not with faculty increases.

Neshyba mentioned that the university is committed to step increases. One might think the cost of those increases would add up to zero, counterbalanced by dollars saved from people retiring. But it has not been zero, because we have hired people at higher levels (e.g. associate rather than assistant). This restricts our ability to stay competitive regarding salary. In other words, he continued, if we continue to hire at the Associate level, it's hard to get back to our median. Bartanen responded that this analysis is not accurate, since we hire only a very few new faculty at the associate level, in disciplines where we have difficulty attracting large candidate pools. We have also had fewer retirements in recent years. And we have had several big hiring classes, like around the time of her first year as Dean, and those faculty members are now being promoted to Professor.

Buescher stated that we seem to be unique in that we have a transparent and standardized scale for advancement, which speaks volumes to how we regard our faculty. Regarding revenue projections, Buescher asked whether there was an expectation that the remodeling of Wheelock and the new residency requirement would lead to revenue gain? Mondou replied that housing revenues will pay for the ongoing cost of those facilities (e.g., heat, cleaning), and repayment of debt. Commencement Hall, therefore, is revenue neutral. The gain will come, it is hoped, through retention; this is what our data forecasts.

Bartanen mentioned that feedback on BTF recommendations is still open; comments to President Thomas are welcome. Saucedo asked whether Commencement Hall could be used to generate profit through more summer programs. Mondou replied that, due to our low bond cost and property tax exemptions, we cannot do much profit based, non-mission based conferencing. Tubert wondered whether we could attract more non-Puget Sound students to our summer programs. Segawa replied that revenue from summer courses is relatively small compared to our overall tuition revenue. Summer conferences have a short season. Additionally, there are a lot of cheap sublet options off campus for students during the summertime, limiting our revenue from summer housing.

Dillman brought up the fringe benefit increase of 9.3%. He asked whether that includes health care as well as educational benefits. He asked if there is any expectation that there will be an increase in education benefits for the children of faculty who attend 4-year institutions, given that tuition is increasing nationwide. Mondou replied that we have a task force on that topic, and they are tracking the staff/faculty use of education benefits in order to sort things out and forecast future options. But medical benefits have just gone up 42%, so it is a really tough situation. It would be hard to increase education benefits without seeing improvement in the cost of medical benefits.

Agenda Item: Consideration of Endorsing the Staff Senate's Community Service Leave Policy Proposal.

Kessel explained that at their meeting last Wednesday, the Staff Senate approved a request to develop a Staff Senate Community Service Leave Policy. Kueter added that the Staff Senate is asking the institution to consider developing a policy similar to Seattle University's model regarding community service leave. As context, Kueter noted that at the last Race & Pedagogy Conference, it became apparent that there was inequity regarding participation for staff. The Staff Senate is requesting equity for participation. The Staff Senate is proposing a community service leave policy, and would like to work with the Cabinet to craft such a policy.

In support of this idea, Saucedo mentioned that the University might even be able to benefit financially in that employers may be able to count the volunteer time as a "donation." Dillman asked what might be the financial impact of the proposal. Kueter responded that it is hard to know exactly how many staff would make use of a new ~~leave~~ policy; some people may already have the flexibility within their work schedule (e.g., to attend events such as the Race & Pedagogy Conference). Tubert pointed out that the proposal states no replacements would be hired, so there should not be any additional cost. Kueter noted that it is not a given that one could get the time off, you would have to request it. Also, the proposal will need to go to Sherry Mondou, and since this could be considered a benefit, it may also have to go to HR, likely to the Board of Trustees as well. The hope of the Staff Senate is to have this in place in time for the next Race and Pedagogy conference.

Kueter motioned that the "the Faculty Senate endorse the Staff Senate's request for the university to consider developing a staff community service leave policy."

Buescher noted that the religious language from Seattle University's model will need to be edited out; Kueter replied that the S.U. model is just a sample.

M/S/P to approve the motion.

In general discussion getting back to the BTF recommendations, Sampen expressed the desire for clarification regarding Neshyba's comments welcoming Senate support for raising the level of sustainability on campus as a cost saving measure.

Kotsis expressed concern about how, in Mondou's explanation of fringe benefits, education benefits appeared to be intertwined with cost hikes to medical benefits: why should education benefits be subject to the rising cost of medical benefits? Gardner suggested that perhaps the two could be disaggregated, in order to protect one from the other.

It was mentioned that currently there is an education benefit task force, but no longer a general benefit task force. Wiese mentioned that the increase in medical insurance premiums and reduction in education benefits continue to be a very real faculty concern, with overall compensation not being as competitive as faculty would like it to be.

Kessel pointed out that the ad-hoc benefits committee is not a Senate appointed committee, and therefore the Senate has no oversight over it. As a result there is no official place for the faculty to have a conversation about compensation, including issues such as health, maternity, education, retirement, and childcare benefits. Kessel added that this is a larger question than any short-term issue: where is the proper place within the university to have this conversation, structurally?

Buescher stated that the Senate could create a faculty compensation committee or salary and compensation committee that would be a standing committee. Kessel noted that the data collection is pretty complex. In addition, Kessel asked, why isn't the faculty salary committee a committee of the Senate?

Sampen asked whether the faculty salary committee considers benefits. Kessel replied that, if not, perhaps the purview of that committee should be enlarged.

There was concern expressed regarding additional committee service. Wiese mentioned that last year, the Senate had talked about addressing the issue of fair/equitable service, so that service in standard committees and other departmental or university groups is fairly distributed among the faculty. Saucedo added that this could also help reveal all the hidden work people are doing across campus.

Kessel noted that it is fairly procedurally complex to create a new committee or change the structure of a committee.

Wiese wondered whether the Senate was then interested in developing a motion, addressed to the President and Trustees, to consider separating education benefits from health benefits in future budget discussions. Stockdale replied that he would be more comfortable doing this if the Senate had a clearer understanding first of how education and medical benefits are tied together within the current budget. Kotsis responded that it may not be time to create and send such a motion to the president for this budget discussion, but that we should not lose sight of this important issue.

Kessel added that she would like somehow to communicate the importance of education benefits not remaining stagnant, and that maybe this is important enough of an issue that funds need to be located somewhere. Dillman concurred that he would like to see the existing education benefit not lose any further ground.

Segawa noted that the cost of the educational benefit is relatively small within the overall budget; dwarfed by medical and retirement. It is a small piece of the overall compensation budget.

Buescher asked whether we could ask for clarification from the BTF of the breakdown regarding the educational benefit and its relation to medical and retirement benefits. No agreement was reached at this point, but the sense of all senators is that this was a topic that needed to be further explored and addressed by the senate.

The meeting concluded with Tubert reminding the senators that we can include questions on the 2nd round of the HERI faculty survey; she encouraged everyone to think of questions we might ask—such as 'why don't more faculty attend faculty meetings?—with the goal in mind of increasing participation in faculty governance.

Meeting adjourned at 5:36.

Submitted by Jonathan Stockdale.