

**University of Puget Sound
Faculty Meeting Minutes
February 10, 1999**

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. in McIntyre 103. Fifty-three voting members of the faculty were present.

Minutes of the November 11, 1998 faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

President Pierce called for announcements. John Finney reminded faculty that Monday, February 15th is the last day to submit nominations for the November, 2000 Register Lecturer.

President Pierce announced that directors of the occupational therapy and physical therapy programs will participate in a trustee workshop this week as part of the Board's review of the President's recommendation that we move forward with a new facility by hiring an architect to do the design work. She also announced that the William H. Gates Foundation has indicated it will give the University one million dollars toward renovation of the library.

At the request of Staff Senate chair Paul Robertson, Dean Cooney reminded faculty of the February 20th dance to raise funds for book scholarships. He then announced new programs to support the summer research of students in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. These include the Richard Bangs Collier award for study of the crossover between scientific and non-scientific disciplines, and a program established with funding provided by J. Peter Read of \$50,000 per year for two years for \$3,000 summer stipends for students and \$500 stipends for supervising faculty. Dean Cooney encouraged faculty to encourage students to apply for these summer awards.

Students Mele Moore and Ben Heavner presented results of a curriculum survey of students conducted November, 1998 by the Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound. They said that the survey of 1,166 students suggests that most core areas are "okay" with students except for science in context. They said that 56% of respondents answered "no" to the question: "Does the Science in Context core requirement give 'context to scientific knowledge by relating it to other forms of understanding'?" They also reported that 59% of respondents answered "yes" to the question "Should there be a Multicultural component in the new core curriculum?" Moore and Heavner indicated they would send copies of the report to faculty who had signed their names to a sheet being circulated during the meeting. Their report was acknowledged by a round of applause.

Carolyn Weisz then reported for the faculty's Diversity Committee. Based on the Committee's work and on a forum held for faculty last November, Weisz presented two questions to the full faculty: (1) Is it important for students to study, within the core curriculum, issues related to diversity and pluralism? and (2) If yes, should diversity within the core curriculum focus on international study, diversity within the United States, or both? She then extended an offer to faculty on behalf of the Diversity Committee. She said the Committee would formulate arguments both for and against particular responses to each of the two questions and put a report together for faculty if the faculty requested this of the Committee. Suzanne Barnett added that a third question could also be asked. She said that if the answer to question one is yes, one could then ask what format such a course would take. Weisz agreed that this question would need to be answered after the faculty addressed the first two questions.

We resumed discussion of the core curriculum. Bill Haltom reviewed the process for revising the core approved by faculty at our October 20, 1998 meeting and reminded us we were at Decision #2: "Faculty discuss and vote on both the number of units to prescribe for courses required of all undergraduate students that count toward no major and the format and contents thereof." He reminded us that at this same stage we had, at our November 11, 1998 meeting, approved the

inclusion of a freshman seminar in writing and rhetoric in the omnibus motion to be voted on later. He called for additional faculty meetings this spring to hasten the process.

Haltom M/S “To approve a first year ‘Seminar in Scholarly and Creative Inquiry’ to be taken by all first-year students at the University of Puget Sound as part of a general-education curriculum; passage of this motion shall have the effect of including the Seminar in Scholarly and Creative Inquiry in the omnibus motion, to be brought before the faculty according to the process adopted on October 20, 1998.”

Doug Cannon called for an advocate to speak in support of the motion. After an extended pause Cooney recited the history of faculty thought and work leading to the current proposal. He spoke of the current proposal as representing what faculty feel is best for freshmen now. Larry Stern asked which classes will get larger if these small seminars come into existence. Cooney responded that enrollments in core courses reflect the commitments made by the faculty, that Kris Bartanen had counted more than sixty courses with an enrollment under ten in current academic offerings, and that patterns of redistribution could not be predicted with certainty but that staffing two freshman seminars was certainly feasible. Some of the courses the freshman seminars would replace are already about the same size as the new courses would be. Stern followed up with: “so there’s not a problem then?” and Cooney responded no, there’s not “no problem,” but a series of readjustments to be made based on faculty choices.

Barnett expressed concern about “the trend toward topicalization” and away from traditional survey courses for freshmen. She favored the broader perspective of the latter. Veseth added that, while he thought the Scholarly & Creative Inquiry freshman seminar was good and “would do no harm,” we could do better by asking what students should learn in this seminar. He said he was concerned about the current lack of specificity of content. Nancy Bristow responded that the summary section of the Faculty Senate’s document proposing the Scholarly & Creative Inquiry seminar addresses what students would do in them.

Mehlhoff said he thought core revision was “a zero-sum game,” and that he didn’t think we could approve a Scholarly & Creative Inquiry seminar without knowing what course currently in the core would be eliminated as a result. Haltom responded that the omnibus motion is being crafted by the faculty with the understanding that, at Decision #4, anything could be reconsidered that needs to be, so that what Mehlhoff wants to happen could occur then.

David Potts suggested that perhaps the Writing and Rhetoric and the Scholarly & Creative Inquiry seminars could work more closely together. He said they are not “hinged together” well now and that perhaps, for example, the skill of argumentation should be carried over from one to the other. Cooney pointed out that linking the courses could create resource problems to the extent that students completing a particular seminar would have to take a particular next course in a sequence. Keith Ward expressed concern with the notions of themes and links for seminars. He said that by being too prescriptive and by eliminating options for creating “passion” seminars, we would limit faculty participation.

David Droge said that for him there were three questions that should be addressed in the discussion: (1) what do faculty and students think of existing “prototype” freshman seminars; (2) what are faculty teaching Scholarly & Creative Inquiry seminars to be held accountable for; and (3) what are the staffing and scheduling implications of these seminars? President Pierce responded that we cannot answer question number three until we go through the whole process, which is designed to be “fluid.” George Tomlin suggested that Droge’s question number two is answered by point number two in the summary section of the Faculty Senate’s document proposing the Scholarly & Creative Inquiry seminar: “Provide sustained intellectual engagement

University of Puget Sound Faculty Meeting Minutes
November 11, 1998, Page 3

with a scholarly topic or theme of significance through careful examination by professor and students of texts and sources (broadly defined to include data, media, visual, aural, graphic, and/or other material). One test of recognized significance shall be whether a substantial body of sources and of secondary materials related to the seminar topic is extant and available to students in order to ensure an intellectual environment necessary for sustained serious study.”

Barnett asked: “We wouldn’t want freshmen to think that the Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry is the only place to find creative and scholarly inquiry, would we?” Molly Pasco-Pranger suggested that while we would not, most freshmen experiences are in larger courses. Bill Breitenbach added that the Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry would offer students an opportunity for mastery of a more limited topic than would a survey course. Duane Hulbert said he thought more faculty would do a good job with the depth of subject in a Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry than they would in a survey course.

Taranovski said that, while seminars in Writing and Rhetoric are in a sense interchangeable, seminars in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry are not. He said that limited enrollment in favored sections would mean some students would wind up in seminars dealing with topics they might dislike, so that the impact would be the opposite of that intended. He said that matching students with topics would be a real problem. Cooney responded that an existing model of how this might work is the process for assigning freshmen to advising sections. He said that most students get into a course they have listed as being among their top three choices.

Cannon said he didn’t think there was necessarily any logic in having these seminars in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry so small when survey courses are so large. Why not, he suggested, reduce the size of historical and humanistic perspective courses instead? Cooney suggested that a couple of false dichotomies were being created in the discussion. He said that freshman seminars should not be pitted against survey courses as if freshmen would take only one or the other. He added that the seminars in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry would not necessarily be narrow in topic as had been implied.

President Pierce asked how many faculty had taught freshman seminars that could qualify to become seminars in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry. Seven or eight faculty indicated that they had. She asked if these seminars had accomplished what was expected of them. Ward indicated that he thought his had, in that the course had “set a tone” for students who appreciated later the skills they had learned.

Mehlhoff repeated his concern that the proposed seminar is a new class taking the place of something else. He said that for him voting no is a “no-brainer.” Haltom responded by suggesting that combining the existing written and oral communication core courses into a single Writing and Rhetoric seminar creates “a boon” that we might want “to invest” in a Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry, and that we could do so without necessarily eliminating anything else in the existing core. He added that we need to keep Barnett’s concern about survey courses in mind if we see we’re losing them. He said there’s no reason a seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry could not be a survey course.

Paul Loeb said he thought we should discuss the proposal for a Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry after we discuss distribution proposals. Weisz asked if a Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry could fulfill a distribution requirement. President Pierce said yes, if the faculty so decides.

At this point **Barnett M/S/F to table the motion. The motion to table failed on a hand vote 22-24.**

University of Puget Sound Faculty Meeting Minutes
November 11, 1998, Page 4

Haltom commented that he would have argued against tabling because we can always undo anything we've done, given the process we have approved for revising the core. Taranovski said he thought momentum would make it difficult to undo anything that's passed. Cooney said he fears we may wind up endorsing the existing core out of an inability to do anything else. He said the current process is not about making firm decisions, but is about seeing what we might want to include in an overall package. Christine Kline said she thought we were not feeling compelled about a Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry and that we should go back to a discussion of what it is we really want there to be in these seminars. Potts agreed that we need to talk more to test our commitment to them.

Hans Ostrom said that the idea of a "passion" seminar has been around for a long time. He said it gives faculty and students more freedom, and is an experiment worth trying. Cannon added that he also supports the motion because it is inclusive and will accommodate a variety of styles.

Kline reiterated her belief that we need to give the same careful attention to these seminars that we would give to our own syllabi. Veseth agreed, suggesting that currently the Seminar in Scholarly & Creative Inquiry might be characterized as a "Seinfeld" seminar, about nothing.

Haltom, arguing that it is important "to do this right" and to take into account the arguments presented today, M/S/P to adjourn. Before we actually did adjourn, Stern asked to be given the opportunity to say that we seem to take announcements of large gifts to the University for granted without acknowledging the tremendous effort involved in securing them. He congratulated President Pierce and her administration on the William H. Gates Foundation grant she had announced at the beginning of the meeting. This was greeted by a loud round of applause. President Pierce commented that this gift is the first by the Gates Foundation to an educational institution not attended by a member of the Gates family or associated with Microsoft.

We adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty