

Faculty Meeting Minutes September 22, 1998

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Forty-seven voting members of the faculty were present.

John Finney was elected faculty secretary for 1998-99.

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

There were no announcements.

President Pierce reported that she has been appointed to a special committee of college presidents to advise the National Institutes of Health's project on alcohol abuse on colleges campuses. The goal of the project is to assess the effects of campus programs to limit irresponsible drinking. President Pierce also reported that on our campus the human resources and communications administrative offices will be reviewed this year, as will several matters, including alcohol use and the efforts our security office in relationship to the neighborhood.

Dean Cooney reminded us that current practice is to try to minimize the number of blanket announcements sent to faculty by email, so only those announcements approved by the Deans' Office go out to the entire faculty from Facultycoms. He said, however, that anyone can type in email addresses from the campus telephone book and send mass mailings. David Droge asked when *Openline* would resume publication. President Pierce said she was uncertain about the timing, and that Mike Oman is reviewing campus communications needs in light of communications director Bob Aaron's recent return to Illinois Wesleyan. She asked how many read *Openline*, and most responded that they do.

Dean Cooney reminded us of his standing offer of a bottle of wine, a latte, or a book from the bookstore to any faculty person who submits an application for an external grant of at least \$1,000 or so and sends him a copy of the proposal.

Faculty Senate Chair Bill Haltom reported that the Senate has been working on proposed revisions to the Faculty Bylaws, and that these revisions have, since last spring, been posted on the web at <http://www.ups.edu/dean/facgov/byrev.html>. He invited comments on them, and said proposed revisions will be forwarded to the full faculty sometime this year. Haltom added that the Senate solicits ideas that faculty may have for the work of the Senate this year.

We then resumed discussion of the core curriculum. Discussion of the core was suspended during 1997-98's consideration of revisions to the *Faculty Code*. President Pierce asked Dean Cooney briefly to summarize where we are. Dean Cooney said that the faculty's Curriculum Statement of 1976, as revised, was designed around the education goals for the university that have been listed in the catalog for many years. The Curriculum Statement elaborates guidelines for each core area, describes procedures for curriculum review, and sets limits on the major. He said that the document is on the web and is available in hard copy from the Associate Deans' office. Dean Cooney reminded us that core review began in earnest in 1989, and that in 1990-1991 we passed several revisions, including a change to the oral core requirement, substitution of an international studies requirement for one of the society requirements, and the new science in context requirement. Freshmen entering since 1992 have studied under this revised core, which is the current core.

Associate Dean Kris Bartanen then picked up the thread of core discussion since 1992. She said modern day core reform discussion began spring, 1995, during which the curriculum committee considered the notion of a common freshman year course. Following five conversations with President Pierce and Dean Potts in summer, 1995, the faculty met in a Faculty Senate forum

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October 2, 1995 and at a fall faculty conversation October 29, 1995, at which Professor Tom Goleeke suggested creation of an ad hoc core curriculum review committee. Goleeke put this forward as a formal motion at the November 14, 1995 faculty meeting and the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee (AHCCC) began its work spring, 1996. The committee was charged with considering the core curriculum with particular attention to the freshman experience within the context of the curricular goals of the institution.

Several core models were evaluated in straw poll votes at the March 20, 1996 faculty meeting. An AHCCC report was distributed to faculty in May, 1996, and discussion of it began at the October 31, 1996 faculty meeting. At that meeting the faculty took a non-binding vote in a committee of the whole in favor of a smaller core. At the February 10, 1997 faculty meeting the faculty, in a committee of the whole, approved in a non-binding vote the notion of two freshman seminars. At the October 8, 1997 faculty meeting three motions were reported out of the committee of the whole and laid on the table: (1) that the size of the core be reduced; (2) that two freshman seminars, a topic seminar and a seminar in writing and rhetoric, be established; and (3) that discussions on the core begin with consideration of the report of the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee elected by the faculty.

Bartanen's thorough presentation was greeted by a round of applause. President Pierce asked that the overheads Bartanen had presented be put on the web for all to review. (Bartanen's "Time Line of Faculty Discussion of Core Reform" can be found on the web at <http://www.ups.edu/dean/zzzz/CurricCore/coretime9598.html>).

President Pierce began discussion by reminding us that three motions were on the table. George Tomlin said that he had been asked by Bill Haltom to make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate on how to proceed with the core discussion. Haltom said he was looking for three things out of the core discussion this year: (1) something to ensure that we teach our students to write, (2) entrepreneurial freshman "passion" seminars, in which Anne Wood's notion that faculty communicate the passion they feel for a subject is realized, and (3) a smaller core. He said we should "shrink the sucker a whole lot," and emphasize more quality and less quantity in the core.

Dean Cooney commented that the first two items Haltom mentioned sounded much like the two freshman seminars already before us in a motion on the table, and asked how we could proceed to talk about the rest of the core. Ted Taranovski responded that in 1976 we had a brand new curriculum that we have tinkered with ever since. He said we should consider starting from scratch, given certain principles such as those already discussed. Otherwise, he said, we will be "like dogs chasing our own tails." President Pierce asked Taranovski how he would envision that happening, given the core discussion that took place in 1996-1997. Taranovski responded that we should start with the AHCCC proposal and see how it can be amended to meet our goals. He said we should repeat what we accomplished in 1976 "to bring us into the 21st century."

Bill Breitenbach suggested (1) that we decide what we mean by a smaller core by putting a number in Paul Loeb's original motion that the core be reduced in size, and (2) that we put a deadline on the life of the current core to help motivate us to bring the core discussion to a conclusion.

David Tinsley pointed out that we can either (1) discuss the core area by area, voting on the whole package at the end, or (2) open the floor to new comprehensive proposals of "complete sets of core rubrics" to be decided among and then voted on as a whole at the end. President Pierce asked Tinsley if he meant that we would start with what we agreed to as a committee of the whole, and Tinsley responded yes, "grafting onto it any new package."

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Mike Veseth suggested that we start with a discussion of principles, rather than with the AHCCC document. He said we should discuss what we think the core should do that the non-core doesn't do. We should ask what we want the core to do from practical and philosophical points of view, leading to criteria by which we decide what is and what is not in the core.

Haltom suggested "zero-basing" the core, asking "if we only had one unit for the core, what would it be?" That could then be bumped to two units, then three, and so on, "escalating upward gently rather than downward from the top." That way, he said, if we "run out of gas" next spring, it is more likely to be at three or four units than at nine or ten. Dean Cooney reminded us that the size of majors is also a part of the discussion, and that we should probably think the same way about majors that Haltom suggested we think about the core.

Bob Matthews suggested that we instruct the Faculty Senate to organize the process for discussing the core so we can finish this year.

Steve Neshyba said we could ask, in addition to what the core does for students, what we faculty are getting out of it, in terms of students who bring certain skills to our other courses.

Taranovski said we could start by voting on three questions: (1) should we have a core curriculum? (2) if we decide we should have a core curriculum, how big should it be? and (3) what class size is desirable in core courses? Then we should assess what the resulting core would demand in terms of resources, compare that to actual existing resources, and then proceed to make appropriate choices and adjustments. Chris Kline responded that she thought we needed to decide first what we want the core to do uniquely and distinctively before we talk about resources. Ray Preiss said he favored an incremental rather than a "slash and burn" approach that throws out everything and starts over. He said we need to be sensitive to the implications of our decisions for other faculty and departments.

Dean Cooney said we should ask more than "what does the core do that's special?" He said we need to ask what experiences belong in every student's Puget Sound education, as well as ask what the core can do uniquely. He said that some experiences that could occur outside the core if all students voluntarily took courses in particular areas may need nevertheless to be included within the core if they are important to the experience of all students. He cited as an example the experiences of students in fine arts core courses.

President Pierce asked whether we had followed up on what freshman seminars should look like. At her request, Sue Owen described how content and process are being combined in a freshman seminar being taught by James Jasinski. Rob Garratt described how, in three freshman seminars in the Humanities Program, writing occurs in the context of historical event modules, "marrying writing, reading, and thinking."

Taranovski argued that our problems are more practical than philosophical, because there is much agreement about what we want. He urged us to concentrate on organizational and structural issues surrounding the core. Suzanne Holland responded that she wants to hear from newer faculty who were not involved in earlier discussions so that they have the opportunity to discuss principles. She suggested that we put off discussion of the practical until later.

President Pierce asked if we thought it was appropriate to ask the Faculty Senate and Dean Cooney to think together about a process for discussion and to come back with a recommendation, not losing sight of work already accomplished in 1996-1997, allowing conversation about the principles underlying the core and ensuring that our new colleagues

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can contribute to the conversation. Bob Matthews agreed that it was appropriate and offered to make a motion to ask the Faculty Senate to come up with a schedule and a process, taking into consideration the past two years' work. The consensus was that a motion was unnecessary because we agreed that is what the Senate should do.

We adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty