

Faculty Meeting Minutes February 10, 1997

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in room 103 of McIntyre Hall. Sixty voting members of the faculty were present by 4:33 p.m.

Minutes of the December 9, 1996 faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

Grace Kirchner announced that a meeting has been scheduled to give faculty the opportunity to discuss with counsel the "second opinion" on tax consequences of the early retirement plan. The meeting will be held on February 25, 1997 in McIntyre 103.

David Droge announced that the Code Review Committee solicits suggestions, in writing, from faculty for changes in policies and procedures in the *Faculty Code*. He named the members of the Code Review Committee to whom faculty can send suggestions: John Riegsecker, Kris Bartanen, Terry Cooney, and David Droge.

President Pierce reminded us of the presentation by Cornel West this Thursday night, February 13, 1997, in the Fieldhouse.

President Pierce then reported on several matters. She announced that we are still in the running with the Luce Foundation for a professorship in the political economy of Southeast Asia.

President Pierce said that we are making good progress on our master plan, a process that was begun as part of our preparations for locating the new academic building. She reported that the master plan probably will not call for more campus student housing. The indication is that many students already living on campus would simply move from existing housing to new housing, and that new housing would probably not attract more students to live on campus. She said also that initial results of the Residential Life Survey suggest that students living within a mile of campus are as involved in campus life as are students living on campus.

President Pierce also noted that the University is conducting a comprehensive review of facilities in order to identify facilities needs for the coming years. The review team is thinking about better defined boundaries and clearer entrances for the campus, and ways to reclaim green spaces and pedestrian walkways from existing parking lots and roads. She said a presentation would be made to the campus community in coming months.

President Pierce reported that we have completed an evaluation of our financial situation and debt capacity for the Trustees as they determine how best to finance the new academic building. The consultant has concluded that we are in good financial shape, and that we may be a bit conservative with regard to debt. As of December 31, 1996, our endowment was \$127 million.

President Pierce reported that freshman applications are running five per cent ahead of last year, and that SAT scores are higher. She said that David Strauss has been hired to survey admitted students who do not enroll and students who do, to help us determine whether we describe ourselves and our programs effectively.

President Pierce told us that a friend of the University, Billy Price Brandt, died recently, and that a new bequest of about \$200,000, added to an \$800,000 trust already established and part of the endowment, totals about one million dollars that will yield financial aid monies in memory of her father, Walter Price.

President Pierce then reported on her trip last week to Washington, D.C. She said that she and the presidents of several other selective colleges were invited to meet with Assistant Secretary of Education David Longanecker about the cost of federal over-regulation of higher education. She also discussed over-regulation and financial aid with Washington Senator Patty Murray, Washington

Representative Norm Dicks, and Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold. She met with Mel Elfin, editor of the *U.S. News and World Report Guide*. She told him his college rankings are biased in favor of affluent institutions, and that the high quality education offered by some less affluent colleges is overlooked. Mr. Elfin said he would review his methodology.

Dean Cooney then made several announcements. He gave the "whimsical" part of his report first, announcing his intention to reward each faculty member who completes an outside grant application with a bottle of wine, or perhaps an espresso card, or perhaps a book from the bookstore's faculty bookshelf. Next, he invited faculty with ideas for creative ways to augment the University's programs to submit to him requests for reasonable sums of money to implement their ideas.

Finally, Dean Cooney addressed the serious subject of our accreditation reaffirmation, a two-year process beginning now and culminating in a site visit during spring, 1999. He said that the accreditation environment is different now than in the past, with assessment of progress toward goals and objectives permeating every accreditation standard. He said that, while we may be in good shape in many areas, we need better assessment of student learning. We need to state goals and to measure achievement in a cyclical process of improvement. He asked that departments think about their goals for student learning and how they might measure progress toward those learning goals.

We then resumed, as a committee of the whole, discussion of the core. Discussion focused on a proposal for seminars in the freshman year. The attached document contains informal notes on the discussion, and are provided for our temporary use during deliberations. They are not part of the official record of faculty business.

We adjourned at 5:21 p.m. with no report from the committee of the whole.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty

University of Puget Sound
Informal Notes of Faculty Discussion in a Committee of the Whole
February 10, 1997

David Sousa withdrew the item he had placed on the agenda, so we moved directly to Florence Sandler's presentation of a freshman year proposal drafted by Bill Barry, Bruce Lind, Susan Owen, and Sandler. The proposal was distributed to all faculty by email on January 31, 1997, as an attachment to the agenda for today's meeting. Hard copies were also made available at today's meeting. The proposal, described by Sandler as being the product of "an emerging consensus," is for two freshman seminars, a Topic Seminar (referred to herein as "seminar I"), and a Seminar in Writing and Rhetoric (referred to herein as "seminar II").

Early discussion sought to clarify the distinction between seminars I and II. In response to questions, Sandler said that the focus in seminar II is on argumentation and "process writing," that trains students how to proceed through the sequence of drafts and revisions to produce a polished written argument. These seminars would be taught by faculty who can teach process writing. On the other hand, Seminar I, with its focus on a particular topic, could be taught by anyone. While writing would be expected, "process writing" would not be the object of seminar I. She said there is no expectation that the seminars be taken in any particular order.

Several faculty wondered how the proposed seminars are different from what we already have in the core. Sandler responded that the proposal consolidates changes already going on in some freshman seminars. David Tinsley said he would feel better about the seminar II courses if we had some sample syllabi to look at. Kris Bartanen rattled off a list of eight new freshman seminars that teach writing. She said that Terry Cooney's syllabus is on the web, and that Denise Despres's syllabus is on reserve in the library. She said that for her, the distinction between seminars I and II turns on which is "foregrounded:" the topic or the writing.

Ives wondered if moving from an exciting topic seminar in the fall semester to a process writing seminar in the spring would seem to freshmen like "a step backwards." Sandler responded that it should not, that the proposal calls for "exciting process writing courses," as happened in the Honors Program, when writing and argumentation were extracted from courses that formerly combined them with topics.

A couple of faculty objected to the proposal on practical grounds, worrying about logistics and the university's ability to staff the required number of sections. Several administrators and faculty responded that a great number of institutions across the country offer freshman seminars and have solved the operational problems. David Tinsley said that he hopes that argumentation courses in foreign language could be included among seminar II courses. Bob Matthews said that he, too, was concerned about the potential loss of a foreign language option for freshmen in the core.

Bill Barry suggested that faculty should embrace the proposal because of the opportunity it provides for more faculty than ever before to teach small seminars in areas about which they are excited. Jim Evans said he likes the plan because it pays attention to what faculty who teach freshmen say that freshmen need during their first year in college.

Dean Cooney suggested that we might ask what it is we expect students to learn and where students might learn those things. He suggested that a single freshman seminar would not be adequate to encompass serious exploration of a topic *and* engagement with process writing *and* oral argumentation.

Sousa suggested that there may need to be incentives for faculty to get involved in the freshmen seminars, or else we may have a situation in which faculty teaching existing English 101 and oral core courses are the only ones motivated to teach the new seminars.

Grace Kirchner M/S/P “that we endorse the Barry *et al.* proposal as a working document.” The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote after the motion was amended on Barry’s suggestion to read “the Sandler *et al.* proposal.” President Pierce reminded us that the vote was a non-binding straw vote.

President Pierce suggested, and there was no objection, that at our next meeting we follow the recommendation in the November 13, 1996 memo from Kirchner, Breitenbach, *et al.* to faculty colleagues that we next focus on: “What kind of breadth requirement best serves our students? Do we favor a ‘distribution’ requirement over ‘perspective’ courses? There are several possibilities that need to be discussed in turn, such as: Should we implement a foreign language requirement? Should we maintain a mathematics requirement? Should we contract the natural world requirement from two courses to one?”

We adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

(Notes by John Finney, Faculty Secretary)