

University of Puget Sound
Faculty Meeting Minutes
October 31, 1996

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. in room 103 of McIntyre Hall. Ninety voting members of the faculty were present by 4:15 p.m.

Judith Kay announced that discriminatory graffiti had appeared in various places on campus yesterday. She said there would be a student rally tomorrow, Friday, November 1, in the plaza in front of the Wheelock Student Center. She said that the presence of the faculty would be welcomed at the rally, and she invited faculty to discuss these incidents in the "reasoned environment of the classroom." She said that the Tacoma Police Department has assigned detectives to the case, because the fact that one student was specified by name makes the offense malicious harassment, a felony crime.

There were no other announcements.

Dean Potts, who recently announced that he is leaving the deanship on January 1, 1997, thanked those who have supported him and shared their thoughts with him in recent days. He said he has been privileged to serve as Dean, working with a first-rate faculty toward shared goals. He said he regrets leaving this role, but hopes that the decision will serve the best interests of the University. His remarks were greeted with a round of applause. President Pierce thanked Dean Potts for being a good colleague and a good friend.

Grace Kirchner read the following statement from the Faculty Senate: "The Faculty Senate, acting on behalf of the faculty, would like to thank Dean Potts for the dedication, energy, and commitment, particularly to the liberal arts, that have characterized his service to us during the past two and one half years. We wish him the best."

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

President Pierce declined to give a President's report so that we could move on to the main event of the day. She called on Theodore Taranovski to introduce his core curriculum proposal. (Copies of Taranovski's proposal were distributed to faculty on October 3, 1996 and are attached to the archival copy of the October 9, 1996 faculty meeting minutes).

Taranovski said it is time to make a substantive change in the core, rather than merely tinkering with it. He said that any core needs to (1) address skills, especially verbal skills; (2) address ways of knowing, and (3) have content. He said his proposal is a guide, not a blueprint. He said that the two seminars in his proposal (one at the freshman level, the other at the sophomore level) are not intended to be qualitatively different courses, but that the sophomore course should be more sophisticated than the freshman course. Taranovski said that advantages of his proposal are that it relies on existing faculty expertise, and it has the least impact (of the three proposals) on existing majors and programs. He said that a disadvantage is that, by his count, only 86 different faculty could teach the seminars. He urged us to act, rather than create more committees.

Terry Cooney asked if the 86 faculty included social science faculty. Taranovski said yes, it did, but this then spawned discussion about exactly how many faculty would be eligible to teach these seminars. Kris Bartanen offered data she had calculated about staffing implications of the three core proposals. She said that, using the 1996-97 year's curriculum as an example, there are 452 core units to be staffed under the current core. Plan A (the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee (AHCCC) proposal) would require 304 units, Plan B 404 units, and Plan C 265. She pointed out that Plan C requires fewer because it carries no mathematics requirement. Bartanen pointed out that, while Plans A and C take the core from twelve units to eight, those other four units would need to be taught elsewhere, so cannot be ignored. With the four taken into account, the impacts

are: Plan A: 404 units, and Plan C: 365 units. Plan B would reduce the core by two units; with those taken into account, 452 course units would be needed.

Ron Van Enkevort expressed displeasure that Taranovski's proposal does away with a mathematics requirement. He reminded us that we have come a long way from 1971 when the curriculum was relatively unquantitative. He said we would be "the laughingstock of the academic world" if we went back to that situation.

Taranovski responded that his proposal is for a core in the liberal arts, and that we could add to it such things as a foreign language or a mathematics requirement. He said, though, that students probably need work in writing skills more than they do in mathematical skills, because they seem to arrive at the university with good math scores. He said that various majors could continue to require math, and that he was trying to get the core down to eight units.

Droge said he thought that the five principles listed at the beginning of the Taranovski proposal were important. He said the proposal would establish a lower percentage of degree courses in the core than at present and it addresses the criticism that our core is a series of introductory courses. He said he applauds these contributions and thanked Taranovski for a thoughtful document. President Pierce agreed that it is important to discuss principles first, rather than specific proposals.

David Tinsley asked if the freshman and sophomore seminars were the only places where literature would be taught in Taranovski's proposal. Taranovski replied that no, the Historical Understanding core could also be a literature course. A student asked whether pre-requisites for the upper division core courses would in effect add to the eight units Taranovski is proposing. Taranovski responded no, because students, by virtue of their previous interests and coursework, would almost inevitably have already taken whatever prerequisites were in place.

At 4:32 p.m. President Pierce moved to items 6, 7, and 8 on the agenda. She first gave the first reading of the proposal forwarded by the Board of Trustees "to amend the Faculty Code to change the name of the 'Instruction Committee' to the 'Academic and Student Affairs Committee' wherever it appears." This proposal will have its second reading at the next faculty meeting.

President Pierce then called on John Riegsecker, who M/S/P "to amend the *Faculty Bylaws* by replacing the terms 'career faculty' ('non-career faculty') by the terms 'tenure-line faculty' ('non-tenure-line faculty')." Written copies of the proposal were distributed to faculty on October 3, 1996, and the proposal had its first reading at the October 9, 1996 faculty meeting. Riegsecker said the proposal was for a change in terminology, not substance, to reflect the fact that many long-serving instructors do in fact spend their careers here. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. The approved changes are appended to the archival copy of these minutes.

Riegsecker then M/S/P "to amend the *Faculty Code* by replacing the terms 'career faculty' ('non-career faculty') by the terms 'tenure-line faculty' ('non-tenure-line faculty')." Written copies of the proposal were distributed to faculty on October 3, 1996, and the proposal had its first reading at the October 9, 1996 faculty meeting. Riegsecker pointed out that that the term "career faculty" is retained in Appendices A and B of the *Faculty Code*. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. The approved changes are appended to the archival copy of these minutes.

We returned at 4:37 p.m. to a discussion of the core. Florence Sandler said she was concerned about the writing and reading curriculum for freshmen. She argued that "one size may not fit all," and that the current proposals do not address this. She said we have not yet looked at actual characteristics of our freshman nor at what we are doing for them in our writing classes. She asked for fact finding about the writing skills of freshmen and what works at other colleges. She said we

should look at the Yale College option as an example of the kind of plan we might seriously consider. Sandler finished by arguing for a small committee to collect this kind of information and to report back "in a month or two."

Martyn Kingston said that the argument Sandler was making about writing could also be applied to other elements of the proposals; that the need for facts, intellectual justification, and information about available resources could also be used to argue for a similar review of all these different elements. Dean Potts proposed, as an alternative to the committee that Sandler called for, that Kris Bartanen and Julie Neff-Lippman distribute available information, on the Yale plan for example, thereby getting needed information out faster than a committee could generate it.

Taranovski said we should look at the outcomes of a core, rather than thinking that the core itself is sacred and rigid. He said, for example, that some core requirements could be waived for certain students by looking at their outcome, or attainment levels. He said that this kind of fine-tuning of the proposals is better than trying to produce a rigid core that all students must go through.

Droge then wondered if there were a more organized way to proceed. He reminded us that the AHCCC proposal contained a plan for process. President Pierce said we should identify common problems the various proposals were designed to address. She said that the freshman year discussion "blossomed" into a fuller discussion of the core, and that perhaps we should return to a fuller discussion of the freshman year part of the proposals. She suggested that we might agree to focus on the freshman year at our next meeting and other topics in future meetings, such as: lower division vs. upper division requirements, whether we should have a foreign language requirement, and whether we should have a mathematics requirement.

Paul Loeb asked if we could start by agreeing on whether we should have a true core, distribution requirements, or some hybrid of both. President Pierce said she was reluctant for us to move to a voting mode so late in the meeting. Tinsley said that, under Plan A, the core is organized according to principles, and that he wants us to proceed that way.

At this point Bartanen addressed the question of evidence. She said that the AHCCC looked at a lot of it, including: the Curriculum Committee's spring, 1995 report on the freshman year, in which different models were examined; data on the 1995 entering freshman class; a history prepared by John Finney of freshman requirements at Puget Sound over a long period of years; materials from a conference on freshman year core curricula, including core curricula of participating institutions, freshman year data on our comparison institutions, and other information. She said that all of this is available and copies could be provided. She said that the AHCCC discussed various options for the freshman seminars, including recommendations for further work extending into the next semester. She reminded us that we do currently place freshmen in courses based on tests or on prior preparation, and that we do have some expertise in dealing with a range of abilities among freshmen. She agreed that we do need to start by talking about what we want in the freshman year.

Loeb M/S "to vote on the question 'do we want to shrink the core?'" Bill Breitenbach pointed out that such a vote would not pre-empt any final vote of the faculty to the contrary, and Loeb agreed that the motion is to shrink the core pending further discussion. Dean Potts supported the motion as a working assumption for our next meeting. Jim Evans suggested that we could take similar non-binding votes on other topics also, "to see how the land lies." Droge reminded us that the AHCCC document outlines a "committee of the whole" strategy for crafting a proposal that we would then "report out to ourselves." David Scott suggested that we should vote down the current motion and then move to a committee of the whole.

Hans Ostrom M/P "to table the motion." Scott then M/S/P "to move to a committee of the whole until we rise in report to ourselves." Loeb immediately M/S "to vote in favor of a

shrunk core.” At this point a student lambasted the faculty for not proceeding the way he would if he were in charge. Gabrielle King asked what the reason was for moving to a smaller core. Bill Haltom responded it was to make it possible for students to take more electives. Nancy Bristow added that our goal for students that they pursue their own education is facilitated by a smaller core. David Ackerman asked whether reducing the core really does that, or should we waive core requirements when appropriate instead. Breitenbach said that reducing the number of required core courses allows for a separation of core from major courses. He said that the current situation of doubling up creates undesirable tensions. Droge offered to write up what operating as a committee of the whole means for us (see his memorandum attached to these minutes). He raised the issue, currently under discussion by the Academic Standards Committee, of students taking college courses before they graduate from high school. He said that this increasing practice has implications for our discussion of the core. President Pierce agreed, saying that the most talented high school students are the ones doing this. **Evans M/S/P to close debate. The Loeb motion then passed unanimously on a voice vote.**

We adjourned at 5:17 p.m., with an understanding expressed by President Pierce that at our next meeting we will focus on the freshman year experience. She also indicated her intention of meeting with the proposers of plans A, B, and C to determine a process for remaining discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty

University of Puget Sound Faculty Meeting Minutes
October 31, 1996, Page 5

To: Puget Sound Faculty
From: David Droge
Subject: What have we done to ourselves?

On October 31 the faculty voted to constitute itself as a "committee of the whole" for the specific purpose of considering revision to the Core Curriculum. As promised at that meeting, I now provide an interpretation of the "committee of the whole" procedure for those of you who (like me) are not very familiar with it. For those of you who want to check on the procedure on your own, my interpretation is drawn from Robert's Rules of Order, 9th Edition (1990), pp. 521-535.

This set of parliamentary devices (committee of the whole, quasi committee of the whole, and informal consideration) enable us to "give consideration to a matter under the conditions of freedom approximating a committee." Essentially, the entire faculty meets as a large committee. At the end of that committee session, we will "rise (equivalent to adjourn) and report" to the faculty--us again. The upshot of this device is that we will be free to debate and vote on the matter at hand--in this case the Core proposals--and have an opportunity to debate and vote on the report of the Committee (us again) when the entire faculty (you got it--that's us again) is reconstituted.

The three forms of this device have subtle distinctions among them regarding who chairs the committee, but I don't think that discussion will serve us well at this point. The committee of the whole also may entertain a motion to "rise" (that is, stop meeting as a committee and instead meet as a full assembly) at any time as other business emerges that requires action. In other words, we are not stuck in the "committee of the whole" status until we are finished deliberating the Core. We may "rise" (recess for a limited period to consider other business, then return to the "committee of the whole" status) when that business is completed.

This device is useful, for example, when in a legislature or Congress members wish to be allowed to vote without having their votes recorded in a roll call. In essence members can vote without a record of the votes being a part of the official record (minutes) of the body. The minutes of the faculty should contain only a record of the motion to commit to a committee of the whole, the report of the committee, and the disposition of the committee's report by the faculty. Indeed, Robert's Rules requires only that the secretary keep a "temporary memorandum of the business transacted" in the committee, rather than the full record of deliberations required for the formal assembly.

What have we done to ourselves? We've opened the door for deliberation and voting on a number of aspects of the core while reserving our right to a final vote until we've reviewed any proposal taken as a whole. I hope that's what we wanted to do.

David Droge
Communication and Theatre Arts
University of Puget Sound
1500 N Warner St.
Tacoma, WA 98416
(206)756-3333 (office)
(206)756-3500 (fax)