

University of Puget Sound
Faculty Meeting Minutes
March 20, 1996

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in room 103 of McIntyre Hall. Seventy-two voting members of the faculty were present by 4:19 p.m.

Minutes of the February 12, 1996 faculty meeting were approved as circulated.

There were no announcements.

President Pierce gave a brief report. She thanked Alan Thorndike for his good work in helping to secure a Murdock Trust \$96,000 grant for science equipment. Thorndike received a round of applause. President Pierce then introduced Mike Rothman, our new Vice President for Finance and Administration, who also received a round of applause. President Pierce announced that she and University Relations Vice President Michael Oman will be scheduling times to meet with faculty to discuss the upcoming capital campaign.

Dean Potts declined to give an Academic Vice President's report so that we could move on to the main event of the day.

President Pierce turned the chair over to Bruce Lind of the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee. Lind put up an overhead projection of seven "possible core models." (A copy is appended to these minutes). As the next stage in its information gathering process, Lind said that the Committee wanted to assess the "sense of the faculty" in six straw polls, pitting the current, "Status Quo Model" against each of six alternatives. He said the purpose of the votes is to "narrow the field" as the Committee continues its work.

Suzanne Barnett expressed concern that we have content for the status quo model only. John Hanson conceded that the models are "loosely defined," but argued that we should think of the "potential" of each model. He suggested that we ask "could the model work?" Later the Committee will come back with detailed proposals. Dean Potts suggested that some of us might prefer "none of the above." Lind responded that we should not think of this as an exercise in selecting our favorite from among the seven alternatives. Rather, the Committee wants a measure of the "contrast" in sentiment for the status quo against each of the other six models.

We then proceeded to six hand straw votes. Here is each result, in turn:

1. Status Quo Model (36 votes) vs.
2. Field of Dreams Model (10 votes)

1. Status Quo Model (43 votes) vs.
3. Hard Core Model (20 votes)

1. Status Quo Model (33 votes) vs.
4. Distribution Model (24 votes)

1. Status Quo Model (15 votes) vs.
5. Soft Core Model (40 votes)

1. Status Quo Model (12 votes) vs.
6. Hybrid Model (41 votes)

1. Status Quo Model (1 vote) vs.
7. Core Lite Model (57 votes)

Discussion ensued. George Guilmet asked for more details on models 5, 6, and 7. Bill Haltom described model 5, the Soft Core Model, as consisting in his view of four core courses, or seminars, focusing on what we believe students need to know to be educated people. The four were communication (writing, speaking, presenting, arguing, and reading skills), analysis (quantification, deduction, induction, generalization, and verification), critique (qualitative judgments and arguments about music, art, literature), and evaluation (living a complete, worthwhile life: the habits of educated people). Hanson described model 6, the Hybrid Model, as consisting of separate categories of core courses and courses designed to ensure breadth across disciplines. Kris Bartanen suggested that the Hybrid Model can be viewed as consisting of core courses selected from the existing core curriculum, plus distribution requirements.

Hans Ostrom asked how many units would be required in the Hybrid Model. Bill Breitenbach said it was too soon to specify a number. Ron Van Enkevort suggested that perhaps the number of required courses is of greater concern to faculty than the "style" of the core. President Pierce called for research on what our students are actually taking in their degrees. She gave as examples of questions the research might address: are electives taken primarily within or outside of the major field, how much coursework is taken at the upper division level, and are students taking courses that consider the world before the 19th century.

Hanson reported that, in the recent informal survey, many faculty expressed interest in reducing the number of core courses required. Hanson suggested that perhaps a twelve-unit distribution requirement would not feel as onerous to students as a twelve-unit core.

Jim Clifford suggested that consideration of which disciplines would be eliminated from the core might affect our thinking about making changes in the core. Jim Evans proposed that perhaps the historical and humanistic perspectives courses could be taken by freshmen in small writing-and-discussion-centered courses, so that writing and speaking skills could be developed in small, intense, content-based courses. Harry Vélez-Quiñones said we need to remember that some disciplines may be central to any set of requirements. He suggested that questions like "do we want our graduates to know a foreign language?" would affect our thinking about these models.

Ken Rousslang pointed out that the participation of some departments in the core would be largely the same, whichever model we use. He indicated that chemistry is an example of such a department.

Dean Potts suggested that, instead of thinking only in terms of "some large framework," additional models might be created by beginning with the needs of entering students. Once courses have been constructed to meet the needs of freshmen, then the remainder of the core might be built on that foundation to meet the objective of producing graduates the faculty would deem well educated.

Curt Mehlhaff expressed concern about adding new requirements of freshmen, some of whom are heading into majors that are "vertical disciplines." He said that these freshmen do not have much flexibility, because they must take specific courses in order to be ready for what they need to take later. Mott Greene said that Reed College allows a student to take 3, 4, or 5 units for full tuition, and requires only 30 units in the degree. He said options like these could introduce flexibility that might enhance the potential of some of the core models under consideration.

Van Enkevort argued that some students "take the freshman year four years in a row." He said we need an upper division requirement "to keep from being Survey U." Doug Cannon reported that five 300 and 400-numbered ancillary philosophy requirements were re-numbered as 200-level courses by their respective departments in order to boost enrollments. As a result, philosophy had removed these courses from their ancillary requirements list. He said that without an upper

division requirement, students tend not to take 300 or 400 level courses. Peter Wimberger suggested that we require a certain number of 400 level courses during the junior and senior years.

Ostrom asked that the Faculty Senate extend and revise its charge to the Ad Hoc Core Curriculum Committee, to keep the Committee going beyond this year and to keep it involved in the implementation phase of new developments in the core. He said he values the Committee's having been elected by the faculty, and noted that the Curriculum Committee is not.

David Droge said that we need to avoid the "fix and tinker" approach to the core, and suggested that the Committee ask of a core curriculum "what exactly is it supposed to do?" He suggested that three questions should be addressed: (1) what do students most need in order to be able to participate in sophomore, junior, and senior courses, and what are we responsible for providing in the core; (2) what experiences should students have without requiring them (e.g., study abroad), and what implications do these experiences have for the ability of students to fill requirements; and (3) what are our goals for liberal arts graduates from UPS. With regard to the last question, Droge suggested that we ask alums what they found to be valuable here outside the major. Walter Lowrie suggested that we also ask alums what they didn't get that they wanted. He said that in his experience, graduates remember faculty, not courses. President Pierce agreed that that has been her experience as well; graduates describe how they learned to learn and how they became intellectually engaged.

Vélez-Quiñones suggested that we think about a freshman year seminar that ensures that freshmen come out of the course "awed and exhilarated" about ideas and thoughts "they never dreamt about before," and with an "excitement and thirst for knowledge." Anne Wood suggested that one way to proceed would be to allow faculty to teach whatever they are most excited about, to a freshman class of fifteen students, "and see what happens."

Discussion ended, and Martyn Kingston announced the upcoming Diversity Conference he and John Lear put together, sponsored jointly by the University of Puget Sound and Pacific Lutheran University, to be held April 10 and 11.

President Pierce reported that 300 prospective students and parents attended the recent admission event she attended in Hawaii, compared with only 200 two years ago. She also explained a comment made in her recent memo announcing creation of a planning committee for the new academic building. The comment was that the new building will house departments currently in the library. She said that alternative models, whereby departments in the library would move into existing buildings after renovation, had to be rejected because of the \$7-8 million cost of renovation. She said it is almost impossible to raise money to remodel existing buildings.

We adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty

1. The Status Quo Model: Choices Grouped under Rubrics

The incumbent, the current set of requirements permits students to choose among a variety of courses grouped under rubrics. Each rubric represents at least one skill or perspective believed by the faculty to be important to the well-educated person.

2. The Field of Dreams Model: No Requirements

In this model there are no required "core" courses for students. The "Grinnell" version of this model presumes that students and their advisors negotiate to create programs with sufficient breadth and depth.

3. The Hard Core Model: Common Content in Common Courses

All students would be required to take a common set of courses that expose them to an outline of knowledge. Such a curriculum might take many forms and might be organized according to various principles or perspectives. The "Great Books" approach offers one idea of a hard core.

4. Distribution Models: Choices grouped according to discipline or type of knowledge.

All students are required to take a certain number of courses in each of a variety of academic areas. For example, students might be required to have 2 courses in the natural sciences. Any 2 courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or Geology would suffice.

5. Soft Core Models: Fewer Rubrics

A "Soft Core" would feature rubrics and courses under those rubrics, just as the present requirements do. However, the rubrics would be fewer (4-8) and would be chosen according to criteria different from existing core-rubrics. Under each rubric, a handful of courses approved by those teaching in that rubric would be available. For example, a rubric might be "Criticism" and include courses addressing how humans discuss and disagree about issues of taste in music, art literature, and cinema.

6. Hybrid Models: Cores and Distributions Combined

Models that mix core-categories and a distribution-scheme we call hybrids. Hybrids will require students to take a few "core" courses (as in the soft or hard core models above) and also demonstrate breadth by completing distribution requirements (as in the distribution models).

7. Core Lite: Trimming the status quo

The existing core would be reduced from its current 12-13 units to approximately 8-10 units. Some categories might be eliminated, some might be consolidated, and others might allow students to "test out" of core-courses.