

Faculty Senate Chair Report to the Faculty
In advance of 10/06/2015 Faculty Meeting
By Ariela Tubert

- The senate has been busy in the weeks since our last faculty meeting. The senate has met three times over the past three weeks and we have now approved initial charges for all standing committees. We are likely to approve additional charges in the next few meetings as we still have several pending issues. I highlight below a few notable issues and charges that we have discussed in these past three meetings.
- Notable among the charges approved for the Curriculum Committee, is a charge to *“Craft proposal(s) to reduce the number of teaching days in spring semester; report back to the Senate.”* The Curriculum Committee has purview over the academic calendar and this charge is following up on the following motion approved by the faculty at the April 14, 2015 meeting: *“The Faculty invites the Senate to craft proposals to shorten the number of regular teaching days in Spring Semester to 67-68 days.”*
- Also notable among the Curriculum Committee charges is a charge to *“Draft guidelines for evaluating short term, study away, experiential learning, and other ‘new format’ course proposals.”* This charge is motivated by last year’s committee report indicating that proposals envisioning new formats (e.g. Food Systems Northwest; CONN 370 in Rome; Washington State Legislature Internship) required significant attention by the Curriculum Committee last year. The report indicated that some guidelines would be beneficial both for the Curriculum Committee (in evaluating) and for faculty (in proposing) such courses.
- Among the charges to the University Enrichment Committee is the following: *“Create a standardized rubric for evaluation of Faculty Research Award applications and reflect any changed wording the Faculty Research Award application itself.”* This charge was suggested by the committee in the 2015 year-end report to the senate. The committee believed that such a rubric would be helpful in evaluating the applications and would mirror the newly established and adopted rubric for evaluation of Student Research Award applications.
- The senate discussed the next steps regarding discussions related to freedom of expression on campus that started last year at a faculty meeting and continued in the Professional Standards Committee, the Student Life Committee, and the Committee on Diversity. In response to the end of year reports from these committees, the senate approved the following charge for the Committee on Diversity at the end of our last meeting: *“Work with the PSC, BHERT, and SLC to identify conflicts, if there are any, between the Faculty Code and the Response Protocol to Incidents of Bias or Hate.”* The senate is planning to pursue similar charges for the Student Life Committee and the Professional Standards Committee at our next meeting.
- Among the charges to the International Education Committee, there is a charge to *“Make recommendations to the Senate for improving the rate of participation in study abroad based on survey data collected in 2014-2015.”* This charge is following up on work done by the committee in 2014-2015 when it investigated the reasons for the steep decline in Puget Sound students studying abroad. They conducted a survey and requested that the senate charge them during 2015-2016 to

analyze the results of the survey and make further recommendations. Among the possible solutions the committee already identified are increasing the number of Puget Sound study abroad programs and of programs initiated by Puget Sound faculty. Following up on these recommendations, the senate approved the following two charges for the committee: *“Work with faculty to develop exchange programs with colleges and universities abroad”* and *“Work with faculty to develop in-house study abroad programs.”*

- Among the charges issued to the Professional Standards Committee is a charge to *“Propose the creation of a cycle of review for department and program faculty evaluation standards and criteria.”* This charge is the result of a request from last year’s PSC, they noted that at present, there is no cycle or timeline for the revision of departmental evaluation standards and criteria; as a result there is great variation among departments on when departmental standards were last updated. In addition, the senate approved the following charge to the PSC: *“Review and consider revising the following statement in the Faculty Code: ‘Advancement to the rank of full professor is contingent upon evidence of distinguished service in addition to sustained growth in the abovementioned areas’ (III.3.e).”* It has been noted that the wording in the Code is ambiguous, as it can suggest either that a candidate’s record must be distinguished in all areas or specifically in university and community service. The received a letter from faculty members pointing to this issue with potentially high-stakes consequences and the PSC asked to be issued this charge in its year-end report.
- We had various discussions of the issue of revising the course schedule so as to allow for a Common Hour for faculty meetings. This issue has been discussed by the senate and the Academic Standards Committee for several years now. Just this semester, I have received various emails from faculty members about the issue. In the past couple of weeks, members of the senate started conversations with Brad Tomhave and Associate Dean Sunil Kukreja to put together proposals that would allow for a Common Hour. The issue had stalled before due to the transition to People Soft, as some of the data needed to move forward was not available. The senate plans to discuss this issue again once it receives further information and perhaps some specific proposals in the weeks ahead. At that point, the senate will determine whether to forward the issue to the Academic Standards Committee and/or to the full faculty for further discussion.
- These are just some of the issues that the senate discussed over the past few weeks. They should set up the agenda for interesting work in all committees. I would like to emphasize that committees are free to pursue other issues within their purview, even without a senate charge to pursue that particular issue. In some cases, the senate decided against issuing charges that would duplicate the general duties of the committee as assigned in the Faculty ByLaws. For reference, in addition to the Faculty ByLaws, the duties for each committee can be found in the new webpage for each committee which can be found through the following link: <http://www.pugetsound.edu/gateways/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/standing-committees/>
- As always, I want to encourage questions about the senate’s work and suggestions for issues that you would like the senate to pursue.