

Report to the Faculty
Sara Freeman, Chair of Faculty Senate
January 30, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

And, we're back. Happy new semester.

The agendas for the February and March faculty meetings are very full. We can anticipate that the April and May meetings will be equally lively. We have a lot of shared business to attend to, in particular business that requires faculty reflection, revision, and eventual affirmation. One of the reasons I like my work is because I am often in a place of creative problem solving with colleagues. That's what I'm gearing up for this spring. I had a great experience with faculty creativity and connection during the retreat on intercultural competency and inclusive pedagogy in Olympia the week before classes began. Thank you to the organizers of that retreat, most of all for the time to talk together as colleagues.

Here's an overview of the ongoing activities from my vantage point, and an anticipation of things to come.

Faculty Senate Business

Since the November Faculty meeting, Faculty Senate has met four times (November 12 and 26, December 3 and January 28). The business of these meetings focused on:

- Creating and charging the Curriculum Task Force to carry out an 18-month iterative process with the faculty at large toward the goal of revising Puget Sound's undergraduate curriculum framework in relation to the strategic plan.
- Hearing the first report and action plan from the Student Evaluation of Teaching Committee.
- Finalizing a proposed language revision for the section of the faculty code about promotion to full professor, which now comes before the faculty for a vote.
- Endorsing the Draft Statement on Academic Freedom and Free Speech brought to the Senate on behalf of cabinet by Gail McIntosh.
- Endorsing a Staff Senate resolution on Living Wages and staff compensation.
- Hearing and discussing the Budget Task Force's report.
- Reviewing the proposed slate for Honorary Degrees.

Senate also receives regular reports on the activities of the Standing Committees (such as the new survey from the COD and the survey from the SET committee) and has received an update on the process the FEPPS program is pursuing to bring a major proposal before the full faculty. Additionally, the Benefits Task Force will soon make its report to the Senate and the faculty at large.

Curriculum Task Force

It seems important to include a separate section on the CTF since one of the most forceful faculty requests in the November 7 meeting was that communication around the curriculum revision not proceed “business-as-usual.” The CTF began meeting in December and elected Professors Alisa Kessel and Dexter Gordon to co-chair. The task force is taking a number of steps to communicate early and often: a shared google drive accessible to the whole faculty is up and functional. All the proposals, concerns, and visions shared by faculty with the CTF are available there. CTF is uploading notes from each of its meetings immediately, not waiting for the next meeting to vote and approve minutes. CTF is reporting to the Senate at each Senate meeting, and will have a significant amount of time in each full faculty meeting to report, engage in discussion, and ask for feedback and decisions from the faculty. There are plans for feedback sessions outside of full faculty meeting to be scheduled for each week leading up to spring break. In short, there are online and in-person avenues for communication, with formal and informal formats.

We are already hearing a lot from colleagues. No one is under the illusion that we face easy decisions, but there are options and ideas matching the concerns and doubts. The work is serious, and the energy is strong. I think I can safely say, on behalf of the CTF, that we deeply appreciate the vitality of faculty engagement with this process so far and we hope it continues.

Looking Ahead

The Board of Trustees meets during the third week of February and there are chances for faculty to engage with Trustees during this period. On the agenda for Thursday the 21st is the groundbreaking for the Welcome Center. Given faculty discussion of the Welcome Center last year, I anticipate there may be desire for faculty to understand more about the functions of the Welcome Center as it moves toward opening. Beyond February, we face the crush of business to complete before the end of the academic year. On that note, I want to remind us all that in the fall we officially added an additional full faculty meeting on Wednesday, May 1. If you didn't get that on your calendar in November, I hope you will add it now. Depending on how our work goes, we may also want to add a full faculty meeting on April 24. Please save the date.

Sincerely,

Sara