

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
FACULTY COUNCIL ON UNIVERSITY RELATIONS**

The Faculty Council on University Relations met on Wednesday, **May 9, 2001**. Chair Christina Emerick presided.

PRESENT: **Professors** Emerick (Chair), Fridley and Hicks;
 Ex officio members Arkans, de Tornay, Doherty, Grover and Regnier.
 Guest Speakers Theresa Doherty, Acting Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs,
 Office of Regional Affairs; Jack Faris, Vice President for University Relations

ABSENT: **Professors** Ahmad, Crittenden, Dziwirek, Goldblatt, Hauser, Palmer and Robertson;
 Ex officio members Ludwig, Russell, Sjavik, de Tornay, Weaver and Whitney.

Approval of minutes

Due to lack of quorum, voting on the minutes of February 14 and April 11, 2001 was deferred.

New Directions in University Relations – Jack Faris: Vice President for University Relations

Faris said he has been in his new position nine months and “continues to learn.” He has particularly enjoyed the past few months, during which he has conducted a series of hour-long interviews with faculty across campus.

“This is a time of enormous challenge and opportunity,” Faris noted. The state budget is the “challenge,” and reflects decisions made, however unwittingly, by disaffected citizens of the state that leave higher education in the lurch. University Relations at UW is trying to reverse that trend. “This situation is not unique to Washington State,” Faris added. He said a specter of two-tiered education (public and private) looms on the horizon throughout the country. Such a system would be “disastrous” for America, with public and private disparities in faculty salaries.

“We need to win back half the people who voted for Initiative 695,” Faris said. “We need to turn around the political climate in Washington state; this will take, not months, but years. We need people to understand common cause issues for the future.”

Faris said University Relations is developing strategies for making the best possible case to opinion makers about the prospects for a knowledge-based economy. He showed the council a new brochure from the Office of Research entitled “Engine of the Knowledge-Based Economy” that will be distributed to conferences (such as the “Pacific Rim” conference) and to specific “high-end” markets for whom the richness of detail and technical information in the brochure will be appropriate.

Faris said the recruitment campaign for high-school and other K-12 students is going very well. A Website program entitled “Learning@TheLeadingEdge” features students; and other programs are being created to reach both students and parents throughout the K-12 spectrum. The goals are: 1) to build a positive view of higher education; 2) to promote private philanthropy in the direction of higher education; 3) to recruit the best students in the state; and 4), to enhance efforts in diversity at the University of Washington. (For instance, Spanish-speaking students are highlighted in a promotional piece, addressing their own community in their own language.)

Faris said that, to an alarming degree, in various communities and sectors of society throughout the state (and this is true in every state), there is the sense that a knowledge-based economy “is all about high tech.” That this is patently not so is precisely what University Relations wants to communicate to all sectors of society in the state. “A knowledge-based economy is about forestry, fisheries, agriculture, tourism, and a great deal more, as much as it is about high technology,” Faris asserted.

Faris said, “There is a pervasive sense that the world is changing helplessly, and that we have no control over this change. But we do have choices, and we can control our destiny to some degree. It need not be an entirely deterministic world.” He said we need to have “efficient ways to gauge public perception of the University of Washington.” Arkans said, “We need to re-establish the notion of higher education as a public good.” Faris said people must come to know the multifarious facets of the knowledge-based society.

Arkans pointed out the widespread “disconnect” between people’s perception of students before and after the age of 18 (after, that is, their high school years). The perception is that young students (K-12) need encouragement and support, but that university-level students do not, or do not to anything approximating the same degree. (It has been mentioned previously in discussions of this council that the state legislature is noticeably less resistant to K-12 support than it is to support for higher education.)

Faris said the central objective of University Relations in its present campaign is to assure that the University of Washington participates “in a catalytic way” in building a dynamic knowledge-based economy in Washington state. This of course is directly related to the University’s goal of recruiting the best high school students statewide.

Faris said, “This cannot be a mass media campaign only. We need grass roots contacts: PTA’s, church groups, and the like, all across the state. The world has shifted. Because of Initiative 695 and other setbacks, the campaign needs to be robust.”

Hicks said, “There’s a lot of fear out there; people need to be prodded to change.” Faris said that, precisely because of this anxiety, “We need a delicate balance of positive and negative (or critical) assessment in our dialogue with people at the grass roots level.” He stressed that “initiative is one way to get change,” then added: “Building public consciousness is my job.”

Faris said there is the perception now that a college degree is necessary to participate in the economy of the future. “Nationally, 60% of all high school graduates participate in some kind of college or university experience (even if they do not complete a baccalaureate degree). It’s a growth industry, but it’s not being sold as a growth industry. This is the challenge and the opportunity with which University Relations is presented.”

Update: Light Rail / UW – Theresa Doherty: Acting Assistant V President for Regional Affairs

Doherty was asked to come and report to the FCUR what the most recent thinking is from Sound Transit regarding alignments that affect the University of Washington. On May 1st several staff members from Sound Transit came to the UW Sound Transit Advisory Committee to present as much as they knew about the two new alignments that ST is considering. While the alignments were not defined, Sound Transit did leave a map with Doherty that she then shared with the FCUR. The two new alignments shown on the map enter the campus around the Montlake Bridge and work their way up to 45th and 15th by two different routes. One snakes behind the Medical Center and Health Sciences center along Columbia Road, turning up Pacific along the Portage Bay vista, and moves up 15th to 45th. The other drives straight up Rainier Vista, through Drumheller Fountain and under the Undergraduate Library and up 15th to 45th.

Doherty said these additional light rail alignments are being considered by Sound Transit given the concerns and costs over the current alignments that are covered in the University’s MOA with Sound Transit.

The concerns expressed to Sound Transit by faculty and staff at the meeting on May 1st revolved around the fact that the alignments being considered would place a light rail line under several vitally important engineering and health science research buildings. The potential damage to sensitive equipment in laboratories and other research settings from the vibrations of such an alignment could be catastrophic. The disturbance to researchers and other faculty and staff in those buildings would be significant in terms of emotional and psychological stress. Doherty said another concern raised by faculty was federal funding for research, which could also be affected by this alignment. Doherty said that all of the issues and concerns raised by the Advisory Committee after the ST presentation will be put in a letter and sent to Sound Transit

so they can look at these issues as they move forward with additional analysis. Doherty said the Sound Transit staff is now waiting for the next communication from the Board.

Someone asked if consideration had been given to running the light rail up I-5. Doherty said such an alignment has been mentioned by members of the community but ST is not considering it at this point. Concern over that alignment rests with ridership: getting riders from the I-5 corridor to the University of Washington campus.

Asked why two light rail stations are being considered on the possible alignment running north from lower to upper campus under 15th Avenue N.E., Doherty said there are two distinct ridership bases that Sound Transit is trying to service: one at the Medical Center on the south campus, and another representing the campus and community at the northern end of campus.

“We are open to all comments and concerns on these two new alignments,” Doherty said.

Grover wondered if this light rail project would do anything that Metro does not already do as well or better. The one clear-cut difference is that light rail is underground, and would not contribute to the traffic bottlenecks to which metro buses cannot help but contribute.

Olivia Yang of Capital Projects is the University’s point person for the light rail project. Yang reports to Executive Vice President Weldon Ihrig, and works with two groups to gather input and advise on what issues need to be addressed by Sound Transit. One group is called the Advisory Committee which consists of 20 representatives from the departments around campus that are physically affected by the placement of the stations. The second group is smaller, the Steering Committee, and it takes the issues identified by the Advisory Committee and works with the Sound Transit staff to resolve issues that affect the campus. In the most recent negotiations with Sound Transit, that resolution came in a Memorandum of Understanding that was ultimately voted on by the Board of Regents.

Doherty said Sound Transit “needs to figure out what they want to do before we can really respond. We are in constant contact with the staff and leadership to keep abreast of their thinking, but the ST Board will ultimately decide which alignment they want and once that decision is made then the University will begin to work on resolving the issues that a new alignment will create for the campus as a whole.”

She said Steve Goldblatt – a voting member of FCUFS – serves on the light rail Project Review Committee as a representative of the Citizens Oversight Committee.

Honorary Degrees – Christina Emerick

Emerick said a meeting was held on May 20, 2001, to discuss Honorary Degrees. (The meeting included Faculty Senate leadership and other members of the Senate Executive Committee.) Though it was agreed at the meeting that the original Class “C” resolution might have been appropriate after all, the decision now is to put forward a Class “B” resolution in the next academic year, 2001-2002.

Next meeting

This was the final FCUR meeting of the 2000-2001 academic year. The first meeting of the 2001-2002 academic year will be held in October 2001.

Brian Taylor
Recorder