

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

The Faculty Council on University Relations met on Wednesday, **April 3, 2002**, at 2:30 p.m. Chair Christina Emerick presided.

PRESENT: **Professors** Emerick (Chair), Hicks, Regnier, Robertson, Seifer and Thorud;
 Ex officio members Arkans, Whang and Whitney.
 Guests Jack Faris, Vice President for University Relations; Kate O’Neill, Associate Professor, School of Law.

ABSENT: **Professors** Crittenden, Dziwirek, Fridley, Goldblatt and Kozuki;
 Ex officio members *Anderson, Doherty, de Tornyay, Ludwig, Russell and Sjavik.*

Approval of minutes

The minutes of February 27, 2002 were approved as written.

Update on Desmond Tutu convocation – Christina Emerick

Emerick said, “Everyone is excited about Desmond Tutu’s visit to the University of Washington on May 7 to receive an Honorary Degree, a Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D).” He will attend two events on the campus: a forum entitled “World Health and Children” in Hogness Auditorium at 1:00-2:30 p.m., and an academic convocation in Meany Hall at 3:30-5:00 p.m., during which he will be awarded his Honorary Degree.

Arkans said faculty who wish to march in the procession at the convocation are welcome to do so, but will need to furnish their own regalia and robes. Tickets will be issued to students via a special student lottery, with a separate lottery being held for faculty and staff.

Faculty dialogue on the University of Washington mission and message – Christina Emerick

Emerick said that faculty dialogue on the University of Washington’s mission and message reveals a sentiment that the University’s value as an intellectual center and its importance as an economic source for communities throughout the state are not conveyed as clearly or explicitly as they ought to be.

Emerick said that some of this sentiment among the faculty may be attributed to the University’s having geared its “mission and message” more outwardly (to the community at large) than inwardly (to faculty and others in the University community). Emerick and other faculty members on the council said that faculty would like to be more involved in the community, but are unsure as to how that involvement might best come about.

Emerick said FCUR would like to help in this process. She distributed to the council a “Primary list of information resources regarding UW public relations.” She is trying to locate a “Report to the President from the Committee on Communication , Constituency-Building and Outreach” that may be a valuable resource for the council and other faculty members.

Under “Press releases” in the list is the suggestion that faculty can “submit ideas for stories they would like to see going out to the local press.” Under “UW Speakers Bureau” (depts.washington.edu/speakers) one can find out who is available to speak to public groups, organizations and schools; search by department, topic or person; and sign up to be a speaker oneself. A list of awards “given by the University to honor, encourage and raise awareness of excellence,” is at www.washington.edu/president/uwawards.htm on the Web, but does not yet include Honorary Degrees.

Council discussion revealed that some faculty feel that the larger community throughout the state is not as aware as it might be of the “hard services” offered by the University: the various clinics and outreach

programs developed by many different departments and reaching every corner of the state. Also, as Seifer pointed out, it would be most helpful, both to faculty and to the University as a whole, if faculty community service and community scholarship were given the kind of recognition they are not given at present. This could take the form “of a parallel effort to the ongoing gathering of information regarding faculty activities in the larger community,” said Seifer. With respect to such activity, it was emphasized that more faculty are needed to participate in speakers’ bureaus and other communal forums.

It was stressed by several council members that the larger community does not correctly perceive the budgetary impact on the University resulting from very limited state funding in recent legislative sessions.

Results of surveys: Valuing higher education – Jack Faris: Vice President for University Relations

Faris distributed the results of a survey on the valuing of higher education in the state of Washington, and specifically as the survey applies to the University of Washington.

Introducing the survey, Faris said, “We conducted a tracking study of Washington State residents’ perceptions on whether or not the University is seen as contributing to the well-being of the state as a whole.” Some 600 residents were involved in the survey, sampling a geographic, ethnic and economic cross-section of Washington state residents.

As for “Feelings Toward the University of Washington,” 48.5% had “Very Favorable” feelings; 35.4% had “Somewhat Favorable” feelings; and 11.5% had “Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable” feelings. The 83.9% of residents who had either “Very Favorable” or “Somewhat Favorable” feelings surprised many council members. But then, it was pointed out, faculty tend to be the “hardest graders” of the University’s overall performance.

Given the statement, “The University of Washington Benefits All Citizens,” 42.1% “strongly agree”; 43.9% “somewhat agree”; and 6.6% “Neither Agree or Disagree.” Thus 86% either “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Strongly” agree, again, a high percentage to many in the council.

As to whether they would “Recommend Attending the University of Washington,” 58.4% “Strongly Recommend Attending”; 26.4% “Somewhat Strongly Recommend Attending”; and 7.3% have “No Recommendation Either Way.” The combined 84.8% of those who “Strongly Recommend” or “Somewhat Strongly Recommend,” if less surprising than the previous percentages, nonetheless struck the council as higher than what they would have surmised.

Interestingly, only 13.1% said they had a “Child Attending or Planning to Attend the University of Washington,” and 86.9% said they had “No Child Attending or Planning to Attend” the University.

Hicks said, “We don’t see the support here of all of this.” Faris said, “Those who voted against funding of higher education were not always aware of doing so.” They were often more concerned with other issues targeted by specific initiatives, and did not realize the deleterious effects these initiatives would have on higher education.

Faris said, “I would not have projected an 80%+ approval on all these issues of perception. The survey definitely showed a stronger positive response than I would have predicted.”

He said, “These are not our blatant messages to the larger community. People must come to the conclusion on their own that higher education is worth supporting, and the University of Washington in particular. They must decide that the UW is a good place to send their sons and daughters. Again, despite all one hears about – community complaints about the size of classes and other issues at the UW – over 80% of those surveyed would ‘strongly recommend’ or ‘somewhat strongly recommend’ attending the University.”

Faris said that, as for getting out the mission and message of the University to the larger community, the strongest, and most successful, program conducted in the past year has been the radio advertising that highlighted UW students speaking enthusiastically about meaningful contributions to the community they

are able to make while fulfilling their academic and research goals at the University. These radio spots “reached more than half of the state’s population more than 15 times,” said Faris.

“Are we pleased with this?” he asked. “Yes. But we still have much work to do.” He noted that “K-12 and transportation are higher priorities on most people’s minds, partly because people believe that higher education is doing all right.” Arkans said a particular challenge for the University is to translate this “good perception” into budgetary and real support.

Kate O’Neill (Associate Professor, School of Law) said there is considerable frustration among faculty “with our apparent inability to make the link between perception and support, on the one hand, and people disinvesting in, but still praising, the University on the other hand.

Thorud asked, “How do you take the next step [given that, as Faris said, the results of the surveys, sanguine as they are, are not to be taken as laurels to be rested on]?” Faris said, “We’re developing a game plan, a strategy to pursue a positive outcome in the next state legislature in 2003.” He said certain of the “messages” sent out by the University “show what we do: such as the student spots on radio referred to earlier.”

Faris mentioned five aspects of the game plan:

- 1) The University will organize business and civic leaders to “condition the climate” for the next state legislative session: particularly people in the business and civic communities who are associated in some way with higher education. The University will work with Washington State University on this strategy.
- 2) Alumni: Government Relations and the Alumni association are working hard to develop “workable actions” such as personal phone calls and actual visits to people considered strong potential supporters of the University. (The “personal” touch has been found to be far more effective than such indirect communications as E-mail messages and letters.)
- 3) A University-generated strategic communications will, among other features, showcase the active role of the University in making aid available to its students. Also emphasized will be the accessibility of the University to students transferring from community colleges. (There is some misperception in the larger community about the University’s accessibility which the University wants to redress.)
- 4) The University will showcase its improvements in broad-based communications and technological resources, showcasing the “Technology Alliance.”
- 5) The University will fine-tune its budget request for the next legislative session.

Faris also distributed a print-out of a Web page entitled “UW in your Community,” the goal of which is to highlight UW programs and activities in all parts of the state. Examples for Southwestern Washington include: the Pacific Northwest Agricultural safety and Health Center (PNASH); the Pacific Northwest Regional Medical Library (PNRML) which offers information to health care providers and consumers throughout Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington; and the Rural Technology Initiative (RTI), a partnership between UW and WSU to deliver “a rural forest technology network and service system.”

“UW in your Community” also includes “The Pipeline Project,” which offers several different educational and service opportunities through which undergraduate UW students can become involved in both tutoring and mentoring younger students of different ages and backgrounds,” and the “Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program (R/UOP), which is designed “to encourage medical students to begin considering careers in rural and inner city practices early on in their medical school years by giving the students first-hand experience.”

Faris said a link could be established to connect the council to the “UW in your Community” Web page. Faris said this is one example of the kinds of programs the University is engaged in that the larger community is insufficiently aware of. Arkans said of the “UW in your Community” Web page, “Once we

get this up, people will want to use it. And it will help them greatly.” Emerick suggested that the University’s “Service Award” could be attached to this Web site. Seifer said, “A lot of this is not service but applied research, integral to faculty work.” Emerick said it is, in certain respects, both service and applied research.

O’Neill said it would be helpful if someone could get word of this to department chairs, and emphasize the importance of seeing faculty service and faculty research as complementary contributions; that faculty service should count for more than it does in most departments. It is, after all, placed alongside teaching and scholarship in the Faculty Code as a significant factor in promotion and tenure. O’Neill noted that it is hard to find many faculty who are disposed to do public relations work. “But there are usually one or two faculty in every department who will want to do this kind of work,” she added.

Faris said, with respect to external orientation, “It is not just public relations, but more like a ‘User’s Guide to your University’. We want to be delivering value. We want to go beyond public relations, and actually showcase our resources and our value.”

Emerick asked, “What kind of incentive would get people going?” Hicks said, corroborating O’Neill, “I would target department chairs, and get them to participate, if possible.” Robertson recommended highlighting “lifelong learning: push this aspect of the University’s contribution.” Faris approvingly related this to “EIL: Extend Invitation to Learn.”

Seifer said, “Are we asking questions that people really care about? Do they *care* about the size of classes, and the like, at the University of Washington?” Faris said, “That’s a good point.”

Arkans said he would like to see, as an offshoot of this broad-based effort, an increasing acknowledgement that faculty could play a greater role in helping to show the citizens of the state what the University is doing and accomplishing. He stressed that faculty could, for instance, encourage people to enter activities and programs in the “University of Washington in your Community” Web site. The suggestion was also made that, when the site is up, it will “self-propagate,” that once people begin to make entries, other people will follow suit.

O’Neill suggested “targeting people who are already predisposed to do something at the grass-roots level. Other may then jump aboard.”

Faris said University Relations would like FCUR to help his office inform and motivate faculty to take a proactive role in making the larger community more aware of the University’s relationship to, and involvement in, concerns of that community in every corner of the state.

“We have a difficult task,” said Faris. “Tuition increases will help, but we need stable core funding.” O’Neill said, “Your philosophy is ‘Show; don’t tell.’ But, if some members of the faculty hit the op-ed pages, that would be *telling*, in a way. They would be saying, in effect, ‘We need a bigger pie of state funding.’” Faris said, “That would be challenging, because it would be perceived as having a vested interest.” Thorud said, “The message has to be carefully crafted. We could easily be seen as self-serving.”

Hicks suggested that faculty “do like to be asked for their ideas.” And she added that she does not think the University of Washington is in direct competition with social services, as some people believe. In fact, she said, “We (both faculty and students) contribute to their work.”

Next meeting

The next FCUR meeting is set for Wednesday, May 1, 2002, at 2:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor
Recorder