

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

The Faculty Council on University Relations met on Thursday, **November 12, 2004**, at 11:30 a.m. Chair Sarena Seifer presided.

PRESENT: **Professors** Seifer (chair), Fridley, Gill, Mayer, Odegaard and Poorkaj-Navas;
 Ex officio members Arkans, Hoard, Palacio, Parks and Whang;
 Guest Randy Hodgins, Director, Office of State Relations

ABSENT: **Professor** Odegaard, Okada and Parviz;
 Ex officio member de Tornyay.

Welcome and Introductions – Sarena Seifer, Chair

Seifer welcomed council members and the council’s guest, Randy Hodgins, Director, Office of State Relations, and asked members to introduce themselves and state their positions and home departments or administrative units.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of October 15, 2004 were approved as written.

Update from Norm Arkans, Executive Director, University Relations

Annual Visiting Committee and Advisory Board Day – December 3, 2004

Arkans reminded the council that the annual Visiting Committee and Advisory Board Day, overseen by the Office of University Relations, will be held on Friday, December 3rd. This event has been immensely successful each year it has been held. Council members are encouraged to attend.

Restructuring of University Relations

Arkans said organizational changes are being made in University Relations to support the strategic direction of President Emmert’s administration.

The position of Vice President for University Relations is being eliminated, and the University Relations unit is being reorganized to focus on media relations and university communications.

Arkans said he will be speaking with Ross Heath, chair of the Faculty Council, to see if FCUR is affected by the changes in University Relations.

Randy Hodgins, Director, Office of State Relations

It was first noted that Jamie Corning, ASUW Director of the Legislative Steering Committee, will be asked to join the council at a future meeting. Carl See, GPSS Vice President, and the GPSS representative in Olympia, will also be asked to visit.

Randy Hodgins, Director, Office of State Relations, pointed out that the state legislature will be controlled by the Democratic Party for the first time in three years. The state is starting slowly to come out of recession, Hodgins noted, but the prospects for the University, in its quest for legislative funding, could still be bleak. “All groups who depend on state funding have high expectations,” he said, “yet the revenue system won’t produce enough in the next two years to cover those expectations.” He said the deficit is very high, up to \$1.7 billion dollars, and could go even higher. Pensions and Health Care amount to one billion dollars in increased costs all by themselves.

“The legislature will probably have to look at some new revenue,” said Hodgins, “and if there is a Republican governor, that could prove problematic. Also, the new administration’s transition inevitably will be slow because of the as-yet undecided governor’s race. This means the legislative session could well go into June.”

Hodgins emphasized that “the access crisis is upon us; it is upon every public institution of higher learning in the state. At the University of Washington this year, 17,000 students applied for about 5,000 available spots. The University needs to address the access issue, and the issue of competitive funding. The University’s per student funding has steadily declined in the last 15 years; we’re now in the lower tier among our peer institutions. We need to draw legislative attention to our core funding issues.”

As for the upcoming session in Olympia, Hodgins said, “We’re waiting to see the committee structures, and who the chairs of the committees will be.” He stressed that the University “needs to sensitize the business community” to its issues. With respect to the Performance Contract, Hodgins said there is the perception that higher education is “too set in its ways”. Hopefully, the Performance Contract will change the perception of how the public perceives what the University does. Many legislators, said Hodgins, do not know how the University has changed in its approach to education and public service. They remember the University as it was in the 1960’s and 1970’s, when they were university students themselves. “We need to educate them as to what the University is now. If the legislature were to invest more in the University, it would see that the University is a good steward of the funding given to it. We’re performing at a high level now with insufficient funding. With better funding, we’ll perform even better.” It was suggested that the “conversation” with the legislature needed to be changed, that it has not worked well in the last 30 years.

Hodgins said that higher education is, habitually, “the last thing the legislature puts together.” Fridley said, “We can’t portray in the Performance Contract that we cannot perform at a sustainable level without funding. That’s what Randy Hodgins can portray to legislators.”

The point was made that the business community is chiefly interested in economic development; this is what people in that community look at. Ways must be found to convince them to make an enhanced commitment to four-year institutions. (Their commitment to community colleges and other two-year institutions is pronounced.) It is because of the collaborative spirit at the University that faculty can do more with less. But, that spirit notwithstanding, the University needs more funding. The University is making its case, and hopefully the legislature will find the money to fund the University better.

Hodgins said, “Faculty can go to their own legislators in their communities, and can send E-mails to legislators from their home computers (or anywhere else outside the University, and outside their position as an employee of the University). Legislators do listen to citizens who contact them.” It was observed, however, that, paradoxically, it is difficult to get faculty, and others in higher education, to become involved with their legislators, and with the legislative process. There is an inexplicable apathy among these citizens, and the legislature has been perplexed by this apathy for a very long time.

As for the growing problem of access, Hodgins said the University feels it cannot take on more students at present, despite the public’s desire for greater access. The issue is simply a lack of funding to enroll additional students. In the long run, students will hopefully be able to go to UW, Bothell and UW, Tacoma directly as freshmen, not only as juniors and seniors. Hodgins said the legislature is beginning to realize that the base [of higher education] must be broadened.

Fridley asked, “How can we [at the University] present ourselves as one united body?” Hodgins said, “By agreeing on the factors that *make* you united, that help get you on the same page. Competitive funding for the University is the primary message; that message needs to be repeated often.”

Mayer suggested that Hodgins find out, and advise the UW community about, what the main concerns of the legislature are: e.g., job creation, health care, and other concerns.

Seifer asked Hodgins if there is anything else the council can do to help his efforts, in addition to what he said earlier in response to Fridley's similar question. Hodgins replied: "Now, as we're vetting the Agenda for 2005, let us know if the faculty is behind our strategy. Do we have a common goal?"

Next meeting

The next FCUR meeting is set for Friday, December 10, 2004, at 11:30 a.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor
Recorder