

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

The Faculty Council on University Relations met on Monday, **October 18, 2000**. Chair Christina Emerick presided.

PRESENT: **Professors** Emerick (Chair) Crittenden, Dziwirek, Fridley, Hicks and Robertson;
Ex officio members Arkans, de Tornyay, Grover, Ludwig, Regnier and Sjavik;
Guests Jack Faris, Vice President for University Relations; Mary B. Coney, Chair,
Faculty Senate

ABSENT: **Professors** Ahmad, Goldblatt, Hauser and Palmer;
Ex officio members Chandler, Russell and Whitney.

Welcome to and introduction of new and returning members – Christina Emerick, Chair

New and returning members introduced themselves to one another and identified their disciplines.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of May 22, 2000 were approved as written.

FCUR mission – Christina Emerick

Emerick quoted the FCUR mission statement in the University Handbook: “The Faculty Council on University Relations shall be responsible for all matters of policy relating to University relations, including community affairs; government relations at the local, state, and federal levels; public service; University communications; and alumni relations.” It was pointed out that Government Relations is now separate from University Relations, and that other phrasing in the Handbook’s mission statement is in need of revision. Faculty Senate Chair Mary Coney, however, said the council may still wish to discuss some aspects of University Relations that cannot be neatly divorced from Government Relations, and should be able to do so. Thus, from the perspective of the Faculty Senate, the letter of the mission statement may need revising, but the spirit of the charge may still apply. Emerick said she and others have been grappling with the essence of the council’s mission, and with the goal of finding more effective ways for the council to assist University Relations.

New directions for University Relations – Jack Faris, Vice President for University Relations

Faris said he is “delighted” that such a group as FCUR exists. He welcomes constructive critical comments from the council, and will stay in close touch with the council through periodic visits and through his discussions with Norm Arkans.

Faris addressed “University Relations Strategic Communications.” He described three ways of conceptualizing the communications mission of University Relations. The first is to “get the message out.” He said a better job must be done of getting UW’s message out to the community. Secondly, a comprehensive communications plan is needed to manage an array of important issues. This comprehensive plan must accommodate a great diversity of targets: voters, legislators, legislative staff, minority communities, students, civic leaders, donors, parents, alumni and business leaders. Thirdly, a communications strategy must be developed that manages current issues *and* that helps enable the University of Washington to fulfill its potential for 2010. “This is an extraordinary place,” said Faris of UW, “but I can imagine an even *more* extraordinary place in ten years.” He noted that this third way of conceptualizing the communications mission of University Relations incorporates the first two ways.

Faris next addressed “Phase One of the 2010 Communications Strategy,” which identifies two distinct audiences. With respect to state and local audiences, he said the primary first stage objective of the Communications Strategy is to “get more people on our side.” Those people include the diversity of targets

named above: legislators, staff and constituents; donors and prospective donors; parents and students; alumni; prospective students (and their parents, teachers and counselors); business and civic leaders; and minority communities. Faris said, “We need to talk to everybody, including employers and prospective staff.”

With respect to D.C./national and international audiences, he said the chief targets are: alumni; federal research decision-makers and influencers; top-tier faculty at other institutions; prospective students (especially graduate students); donors and foundations; and significant opinion leaders (including key media). The primary objective of the first stage of the Communications Strategy with this audience base is to increase the visibility of the University of Washington as a premier research university and a leading innovator in higher education. Faris said the University is “farther ahead on the strategy targeting local and state audiences,” and it is on this strategy that he focused his attention in his talk today with the council.

He cited five elements in the strategy, regarding state and local audiences, to “get more people on our side.”

1) *Change*: The University must be perceived as not being resistant to change, as not being static when compared to other institutions and sectors of society. 2) *Likeability*: The University “needs to fight the presumption of arrogance” that exists in many sectors of the larger community. Faris said this is an inescapable presumption, to some degree, that any intellectual institution must fight. “But if we don’t succeed in becoming more likeable,” he stressed, “some important publics may not listen to what we want them to know about us.” 3) *Research vs. teaching*: The assumption exists that the University is not balanced in the importance it attaches separately to research and to teaching. This assumption must be redressed. The University’s accomplishments in research must not be seen as having come at the expense of teaching. “We want to show that in fact the opportunity to be part of significant research is a major enhancement of the learning experience,” he said, “and that this is especially valuable in a time when the half-life of knowledge continues to shrink. 4) *Connectedness*: Many outside the community see the University as aloof and isolated, Faris observed. The University must show more clearly the vital connections it has with the larger community. 5) *Diversity*: “For many people, we are still seen as a place that’s primarily for middle-class white students,” said Faris. The University is working in a host of ways to enhance diversity in its faculty and student communities and to make better known the accomplishments of diversity in those communities.

Faris said students are at the heart of the Strategic Communications strategy. “First and foremost, students are inherently likeable. Students can speak out with spontaneous credibility better than faculty can.” He then said emphatically, “We need to put learning at the center of our strategy,” and noted that student participation in the strategic campaign can be most effective, and is most appropriate. He showed the council a 30-second Husky Sports PSA in which a vibrant Asian-American student, shown at work in her laboratory and then addressing the viewer, speaks enthusiastically about her opportunity to help do something positive in the fight against the HIV virus and AIDS in her educational experience at UW. Faris said this spot has had exceptionally good feedback, and other PSA’s and videos using UW students, as well as statewide radio spots featuring students, are being considered as key vehicles in the campaign. Other vehicles under consideration are: presentations, publications, the Web, print public service advertising, UWTV, posters for on and off campus, and internet demos.

Faris shared with the council an example of a student, Dave Trippett (a senior majoring in geology, and a member of the Clallam tribe), writing about the opportunity the University of Washington afforded him to gain an educational experience that will give him direction for the rest of his life: a career in exploration geology. “All the faculty are inspirational,” he says in his comments. “I can give back, and that’s how I can give thanks to the people who have helped make my education possible. Before coming to the University of Washington, I had no sense of that.” This is another way, said Faris, “to deliver fresh and likeable perspectives on what the University of Washington is today, and where it is headed, through the voices of students.”

The campaign theme of the Communications Strategy is “*Learning @ the Leading Edge.*”

Accountability is an important factor in the campaign, Faris said. “We need to measure results of the campaign; for example, the percentage of alumni making contributions. And we need to track measures of likeability.”

Asked about the consistency of impressions made by various students used in the campaign, Faris said he is wary of too neat a consistency, especially of any consistency that might be reducible to slogans. “We want a cumulative view, but with a variety of student voices,” he emphasized. The campaign theme mentioned above, “*Learning @ the Leading Edge*” should serve well as a logo, if such is needed. Emerick agreed that it is salutary to use various student voices, and said a greater inclusiveness is shown in doing so.

Faris said he wants the campaign “eventually to be more broad-based, representing faculty, staff and the administration, in addition to representing students.” Emerick said ACCESS students would make good participants in the campaign; Faris concurred. One goal inherent in the use of students for the campaign, he added, is that “we want to show that UW is the top choice of students in Washington State.”

Faris said University Relations will work with Government Relations and with the Office of Development as the campaign proceeds. Robertson said, “We need to firm up relations with UW faculty.” He pointed out that this is a crucial internal audience for University Relations. Faris said this was a point well made.

Asked what rôle FCUR can play in the campaign, or in helping University Relations in other ways, Faris said, “I welcome your thoughts and comments any time,” and said he would appreciate recommendations council members might have on students who could participate in the campaign. Arkans added, “We would like anecdotal feedback from the council” on any aspect of accountability. “Is the campaign getting out there?” Is the Communications Strategy communicating? How could it do so more effectively?

Faris said, “I’m interested in incorporating the liberal arts educational virtues in the campaign strategy; and in nourishing the notion of education as an end in itself.” He mentioned the example of a science major who expresses excitement over discovering the poetry of Virgil.

He also said, “We’ll try to integrate what we’re doing in Strategic Communications with existing UW outreach programs. We want to develop more of these programs.”

Ultimately, Faris said, the communications mission of University Relations confronts the question, “Where do we want to get people *to*?” And the answer? “We want people to think, ‘The University of Washington is changing in exciting and good ways.’” He said, “We want to *show* this change, and not just preach it. We want to show the University of Washington as an exciting university extending its learning horizons.” Ludwig, echoing others in the room, said to Faris, “I think you’re off on the right foot. I’m delighted!”

Faculty Senate Chair Mary Coney

Faculty Senate Chair Mary Coney introduced herself to the council and to Jack Faris. She thanked new and returning members for participating in faculty governance, and stressed to Faris that *this* is the best faculty council or committee he will consult regarding issues pertinent to University Relations. Faris said this was his own understanding. He said he will tap the resources of the Strategic Communications Council (which also is culled from all sectors of the campus), but FCUR will be his chief faculty advisory group.

Coney said the Faculty Senate is going to consign important work to FCUR. She said she feels strongly that there have been faculty committees formed by the administration that, however inadvertently, undercut the work of this council, and that this deleterious effect will be rectified. “This is the obvious faculty group to consult on issues such as Honorary Degrees,” she said, referring to an issue that FCUR is being asked to take up beginning with today’s meeting. Coney pointed out that “the most important pieces of legislation come from – or are brought to – the faculty councils.” Coney added that faculty councils can establish their own agendas, and are to a very significant degree autonomous bodies. Proposed legislation brought by faculty council chairs to the Senate Executive Committee – whether Class “A,” which amends the *Faculty Code*, or Class “B,” which amends sections of the *University Handbook* - may or may not be approved by SEC, and forwarded to the Faculty Senate. (Class “C” actions are on-legislative actions, including passage

of resolutions, appointment of committees, approval or disapproval of committee reports, receipt of reports or information, and determination of Senate by-laws.) But it is important for faculty councils to realize the degree to which they are autonomous and self-directed.

Faculty Field Tour – Norm Arkans

Arkans said the third annual Faculty Field Tour was once again an unqualified success.

The Faculty Field Tour – a five-day statewide tour with destinations as varied as the Port of Seattle, the Grand Coulee Dam, the Colville Indian Nation, the Washington State Penitentiary, a panel discussion with high tech companies, the Central Washington Family Practice, the Maryhill Museum of Art, Mount St. Helens, and the Boeing Composites Plant – began in 1998 as a means of acquainting new faculty with the diversity of the geography, culture and economy of Washington state.

New faculty hired within the preceding two years are eligible for the Faculty Field Tour, which is led by UW President Richard McCormick, and accommodates 35 faculty members. Arkans and Faculty Senate Chair-elect Mary Coney also participated in the tour this year, described by Arkans as an “intensive, wonderful week” for all concerned. The tour takes place following Commencement exercises in June.

Arkans said it has become clear by now that the 35 new faculty members, whose disciplines cover the gamut of the University, not only bond on the field tour but sustain these relationships in the years to come. Occasionally, such relationships have even resulted in professional collaborative efforts.

The University covers the cost of transportation, lodging and meals for participating faculty, who receive an extensive field guidebook to complement their experiences.

Arkans said if FCUR members know of new faculty who would be good choices for the Faculty Field Tour, they should let him know. Faculty who have participated have been expressly grateful for the experience.

Honorary Degrees – Norm Arkans

Arkans distributed to the council “A Proposal for Granting of Honorary Degrees from the University of Washington” released by University Relations.

Except briefly in the late Nineteenth Century, the University of Washington “has typically not awarded honorary degrees, neither to deserving individuals as part of its annual commencement ceremonies, nor to special visiting dignitaries. Nor did the University award an honorary degree to Nelson Mandela when he visited the UW this past spring.” As the proposal states, “part of the reason for this may be historical. Going back well into the 1950s until as recently as 1990, the University’s featured speaker at commencement was its president. Guest speakers were not part of our commencement exercises until 1990.” Beginning in 1998, the commencement ceremony was moved to Husky Stadium for a single ceremony for the entire University. (It had previously been held in Hec Edmundson Pavilion, which necessitated holding two ceremonies on the same day, and which necessitated a full day’s commitment on the part of the commencement speaker, and a willingness to give the commencement speech at both ceremonies.)

With the move to Husky Stadium, and with a single ceremony, it became possible to invite guest speakers to commencement exercises, and to consider “individuals with even greater national or international prominence than was heretofore possible.” The question has arisen “as to whether it would enhance the University’s efforts to secure such speakers if the University were able to honor their presence on our campus by awarding an honorary degree. Part of the reasoning goes, if this person has agreed to help the University honor its graduates on this special day, should the University reciprocally extend an honor to our guest and award an honorary degree?”

The proposal is being made “because those of us who have been involved with commencement over the years believe it is appropriate and time for the University of Washington to begin to honor publicly

individuals who come to campus to help the University celebrate a special occasion, be it commencement, or a visit such as Mr. Mandela's, when it might have been highly appropriate for the University of Washington to honor this great man by awarding him an honorary degree."

The Board of Regents has the authority to grant honorary degrees, "but in keeping with the faculty prerogative in recommending candidates to the Board for degrees, there needs to be a mechanism by which a recommendation to award an honorary degree would be forthcoming from an appropriate faculty body to the Board of Regents. Given the honorific nature of the degree, and the fact that the Office of the Vice President for University Relations is responsible for commencement and other formal public exercises, it would make sense for the Faculty Council on University Relations to formulate a recommendation for awarding an honorary degree. Another possibility could be the Committee on Public Exercises, a faculty, student, and administrative committee appointed by the president to oversee the University's public exercises. This committee includes the chair of the Senate and the chair of the Faculty Council on University Relations, as well as the ASUW and GPSS presidents and faculty who serve as marshals for the commencement ceremony."

Asked what meaning an honorary degree might have for someone receiving it – especially someone who already has received honorary degrees elsewhere – Arkans said it naturally depends on who that person is, but almost invariably the honoree is highly appreciative. Few persons receive so many honorary degrees as to become jaded. And more importantly, the granting of an honorary degree has a positive effect on the university conferring the honor. It also serves to "raise the profile" of the university.

Arkans said the process of finding a guest commencement speaker includes forming a list of all desired candidates by the Committee on Public Exercises; eliminating those candidates who are discovered to be unavailable or too expensive; making the best possible short list; and, finally, choosing and securing the best available candidate on the short list.

Arkans said a formal response from the Faculty Council on University Relations regarding the granting of honorary degrees by the University of Washington would be most welcome.

FCUR MOTION IN SUPPORT OF UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON HONORARY DEGREES

Robertson MOTIONED that the Faculty Council on University Relations recommend to the Faculty Senate that the Committee on Public Exercises be charged with the selection of appropriate honorees of University of Washington Honorary Degrees. The MOTION was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED by all voting members present. Chair Emerick will communicate this APPROVED FCUR MOTION to the Senate Executive Committee at its next meeting.

Both Class "B" and Class "C" legislation were considered. Class "B" legislation amends sections of the *University Handbook* other than the Faculty Code. Class "C" actions are on-legislative actions, including passage of resolutions.

De Tornay asked whether ex-officio members hold voting rights in faculty councils. Emerick responded that the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) voted this Fall to extend voting rights to research faculty sitting on all faculty councils, and that voting rights may be extended to retired faculty representatives and librarians at the discretion of the individual councils. The first order of business at the next FCUR meeting will be to address this.

Next meeting

The next FCUR meeting is set for Wednesday, November 15, 2000, at 2:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor
Recorder

