

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
FACULTY COUNCIL ON STUDENT AFFAIRS**

The Faculty Council on Student Affairs met at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, **March 5, 2002**, in 36 Gerberding Hall. Chair Lee Nelson presided.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of February 5, 2002 were approved as written.

**Discussion of student concerns – Will Rasmussen, ASUW Vice President**

ASUW Vice President Will Rasmussen delineated seven major student concerns:

1) *Cost of education.* Rasmussen said the projected increase in tuition is of paramount concern to undergraduate students at the UW. He stressed that students are aware that the University as a whole is undergoing drastic budget cuts, and that, additionally, tuition increase is a reality at a great many peer institutions throughout the country. It is simply that Seattle's high cost of living – the University District being no exception, especially as regards rent – forces many students to work more hours than they perhaps should with a full course load, and a tuition increase will only exacerbate this necessity. (Rasmussen guessed that at least 50% of the University's undergraduate students work at least part-time.)

2) *Diversity.* Rasmussen said minority students at the University do not see many other minority students on campus, and, no less disturbingly, do not see many minority faculty in their classrooms. He observed that minority students appreciate and benefit from the Ethnic Cultural Center. The Center ameliorates the difficulty minority students experience in finding a sense of community on campus (though this is hardly a problem peculiar to minority students, as has been noted in previous council discussions). Baker noted that underrepresented minority applications are up 24% this year over last year. Recruitment, the various pipeline programs, and the Diversity Scholarship Program are in part responsible for this increase. But Baker cautioned that this increase is one of applications; it remains to be seen how many of these admitted students will enroll in the fall.

3) *Ability to enroll in certain classes.* Rasmussen said many undergraduate students are not able to enroll in the very classes they most covet. These are often classes in their major that they must take in order to graduate.

4) *Shortage of long-term housing.* As Rasmussen already mentioned, the high cost of rent in the University District has a marked effect on students' lives both on and off campus. They often have to live in what are called "triples" (three renters in, more often than not, a space that allows little or no privacy to that many dwellers), or work far more than they should, with a full student course load, to be able to pay rent and other basic expenses. The cost of rent in most U-District apartments – often buildings that are dilapidated – is exorbitant. The University barely begins to offer the amount of long-term housing it needs to offer, given its student population. (This quite naturally is a problem for graduate students as well, just as affordable housing is a problem for many faculty.)

5) *Down economy.* Rasmussen said there is widespread anxiety among undergraduate students about job placement following graduation. Washington State has an unemployment rate above 7%, one of the highest in the nation. And with the continuing dissolution of dot.com companies in the area, the economy is steadily worsening. It is to this marketplace that many UW graduates will be going, or to marketplaces no more sanguine. Rasmussen said that most students are not aware of the Student Placement Services. This was a point he made at the last FCSA meeting: The availability of student services needs to be better communicated.

6) *Student-run radio station.* The University of Washington is the only PAC-10 university that does not have its own radio station. Rasmussen said that, with the ongoing budget crisis, the likelihood of a radio station being established anytime soon is slight.

7) *Allocation funds.* Rasmussen said there is a strong sense among undergraduate students that the Student Activities Fee (SAF) could have a much improved allocation process, one that more equitably serves students' needs. This has been a major concern of the ASUW for some time.

8) *Loss of "green space" on campus.* An ongoing concern of all undergraduate students (and many faculty and staff as well, as anyone who followed the efforts to save as much of Parrington Lawn as possible, as well as the "old growth" trees and plants that bordered Parrington Lawn, is well aware) is to prevent the permanent loss of "green space" on the campus. Unfortunately, the campus is rapidly being shorn of "green space" to accommodate new buildings, on both lower and upper campus.

Schwartz asked Rasmussen if he thought there was a "lack of communication" between the ASUW and the Administration. Rasmussen said, "If students knew more, and were better informed – and were informed earlier – they could better attack the issues of greatest concern to them." Obviously, he added, some issues are continuous, such as diversity, and must be confronted on a daily basis in every way imaginable. But other issues are often tied to specific events and specific agencies within the University, many of which students are not fully apprised of, or not apprised of in a timely manner.

Nelson said, "There are so many services that students don't know about. Every effort must be made to bridge that gap." Bennett said the summer orientation prior to Autumn Quarter for incoming freshmen and transfer students would be an excellent opportunity to inform students of important student services, agencies, and channels of campus communication they will want to know and use. Even though students will not absorb all this information, it will still be helpful to them to be made familiar with it. They could be given written material (and be referred to appropriate Web sites) that they will need when something pertinent arises.

Herwig noted that much of Rasmussen's "laundry list" could have been given 20 years ago; that it makes one realize how little the University has changed in certain respects. The major difference today, the rising dependency on computers and the Web, was not even mentioned by Rasmussen. Asked about computers, he said that student access to computers and to needed software certainly is a problem. Many students still do not have their own computers, and, notwithstanding the University's excellent computer labs and study spaces in the Odegaard Undergraduate Library and Mary Gates Hall, and the superb features of UWired, computer access and software availability can be problematic for certain students and in certain courses. Lewis said students can get computers as part of a low-interest student loan. "It's one way we combat the 'digital divide'."

Kravas said, "Just hearing about these services early will be helpful to students when they need them." Other council members agreed: Valuable seeds will have been planted. Kravas said, "The best resources that students have are other students. They need to communicate with each other, including older with younger students." Nelson said students need to know about career services much earlier than they do now, especially when the marketplace is so difficult.

Herwig said student advisors are key to successful student adaptation. "Good individual advisors save a department," he enthused. Nelson concurred: "Interacting with advisors and seeking out and finding good mentoring is vital to undergraduate students." Kravas suggested giving Rasmussen's "laundry list" of student concerns to advisors. Lewis (Director of Student Financial Aid in Student Affairs) said, "We do a lot of referral back and forth between our office, the Undergraduate Advising Center and others on

campus. We try to target only students who need the information on a particular issue, so as not to create unnecessary anxiety in other students.”

As regards student orientation, it seems now to be heading towards mandatory status. As is clear from this discussion, the price of students not knowing in advance about student services and channels of communication, both practically and emotionally, can be dear. Meetings are scheduled in which a decision will be reached on whether orientation is recommended or required.

Asked his impressions of the discussion of his list of student issues, Rasmussen said, “It’s good to hear that faculty and administration are working on these issues, but students still do not know *where* the support is. I think most students talk to their advisors once in a while, and once in a while with faculty. And that is the extent of their communication with non-students.”

Nelson noted that “carrots are not offered” for working on “lifeline efforts at the UW.” Students can, for a fee, take a career test and receive an interpretation of that test. But that’s “so meager an availability of career-oriented assistance,” said Nelson.

When it was observed of Rasmussen that he seemed to possess a successful sense of purpose and identity at the University, he said he came to the UW from out of state and found his sense of community in the fraternity he joined, especially early on before he was able to meet students and faculty in other associations and through activities and interests he developed and nurtured. So in his case he “felt a sense of fraternity and then felt a sense of community.” He said he got most of his advice “from other friends in *ad hoc* situations,” and surmised that most students got their advice and information in the same way.

Rasmussen said, “We promote our events on campus first through Registered Student Organizations (RSO); then through smaller groups. We get information to the most active students; they in turn disseminate that information to their friends and to the organizations of which they are members. The negative is that the same students are invariably targeted. In my own case, I found community through the Greek system, but there are many ways to find community on campus. There are, for instance, some academic interest groups that offer a sense of community.” Baker said, “One thing students have done is to represent the University as tutors and mentors in visits to schools in the Greater Seattle community. This has proved a definite success.”

Kravas said the students having the greatest difficulty establishing a sense of community are those from Issaquah and other outlying cities who, for obvious reasons, are not able to participate in campus activities and attend many campus-related events. Rasmussen said, “We’ve not been successful in getting commuter students really involved. Not even list procs seem to help.” And yet, he noted, commuter students have “the same concerns as other students at the University.”

Rasmussen said the fact that so many students have to work at sizeable part-time jobs is a further reason why a sense of community is difficult to nurture on campus. “Obviously, public support of higher education is not as prevalent as it once was,” he said. “Thus, universities need to charge higher tuitions, and students must work more to meet their expenses.” He said it would be immensely helpful to students if they knew *what* the raise in tuition was going to be. They would be in a much better position to plan their university expenses. Unfortunately, they do not have this knowledge.

Lewis said, “There has been a noticeable gap between what we would like to offer in grants, and what we *can* offer. The University receives a percentage of the state need grant program (which is based on the amount of tuition) that goes to institutions throughout the state, including community colleges. Lewis said she would be glad to discuss the status of Financial Aid at the UW at a future meeting.

Kravas said that, after the excellent presentation on student health care services by Elaine Jong, Director of the Student Health Center, questions remain about health care for UW undergraduates. “We are left with a challenge: How will health care be delivered?” said Kravas. Rasmussen said, “A couple of students I know who went to the Hall Health Primary Care Center did not receive good services.” He said students do want a facility such as the Hall Health Center, “but many other student services need funding, too.” Rasmussen said he got “a different perspective from Elaine Jong; I realized how hard it is to provide these services. It would be very helpful if Director Jong could speak to student groups. The ASUW will invite her to do so.”

Nelson said Minority Student Concerns and Student Financial Aid will be the major topics of discussion at the next two council meetings on April 9 and May 7. Vice President of Minority Affairs Rusty Barcelo will visit the council on April 9. S. Kay Lewis, Director of Student Financial Aid, will speak with the council on May 7, by which time much more will be known about the University’s budget and tuition increase.

### **Proposal for council revisions – Lee Nelson**

Nelson said that one question being asked in the Senate Executive Committee subcommittee on possible council reorganization is whether or not there are too many councils. No consensus has been reached by the subcommittee to this point. Several different proposals are on the table. One proposal calls for fewer faculty councils. One proposed council that would affect FCSA would be called the Faculty Council for Academic and Student Affairs, in which student advisors would be asked to participate.

Nelson asked if the council thought it was a good idea “to aggregate some of the existing faculty councils.” Herwig said the idea of merging FCSA with another council “sounds too broad.” Many other council members concurred with Herwig. Kravas said, “*This* council is about students. When we depart from this kind of focused council, we can no longer weigh in as we can now. The specific agendas of students would get lost in a council merging FCSA with another council.” Nelson said, “I share that fear. I have concerns about this reorganization.” Bennett said, “Student affairs will get lost in such a reorganization.”

Rasmussen said, “Students appreciate this council, but for some time they did not know that the council existed.” He said that, now that he has participated in the council, he sees its importance more clearly. Nelson said, “There is definite value in remaining intact as a council. It would help to establish our mission and goals: to delineate an ongoing process.” It was decided that council members would send their suggestions to Nelson of an FCSA statement on remaining intact as a council.

Schwartz said he would represent the council at the meetings of the SEC subcommittee.

### **Next meeting**

The next FCSA meeting is set for Tuesday, April 9, 2002, at 8:30 a.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor  
Recorder

**PRESENT:** *Professors* Nelson (chair), Herwig and Schwartz;  
*Ex officio members* Baker, Bennett, Feetham, Kravas, Lewis and Rasmussen;  
*Guest* Jeanne Holm, Assistant Vice President, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

**ABSENT:** *Professors* Karmy-Jones, Lehman, Nicholson, O’Neill and Williams;  
*ex officio members* Clark and Hatlen.