

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Student Affairs
Tuesday, June 7, 2011
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
36 Gerberding

Meeting Synopsis:

- 1) Sodexo protests
 - 2) Approval of minutes from the May 3 meeting
 - 3) ASUW/GPSS report.
 - 4) Report from the chair
 - 5) Adjournment
-

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM.

1) Sodexo Protests

Two undergraduate students, Katie Lundgren and Morgan Currier, members of the UW United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and the UW Kick Out Sodexo Coalition, joined the council to discuss recent protests and arrests on campus.

Currier gave a brief history of the issue: Sodexo is the company that runs concessions at Husky Stadium. A number of human rights monitoring organizations have found Sodexo to have human rights violations and workers violations in the US and around the world, including a Human Rights Watch report, a TransAfrica Forum report, a Commission of Inquiry report concerning the labor practices of Sodexo in Colombia, and the National Labor Relations board¹. Additionally, Currier has herself taken a trip to the Dominican Republic to talk to Sodexo workers. Based on these reports and sources, the Kick Out Sodexo coalition feels that UW should terminate its contract with Sodexo, as collective contract cuts can be one of the most effective ways to change corporate behavior.

In October, the coalition started to approach Interim President Wise. In January, Wise wrote to the CEO of Sodexo, who wrote a 3-page response. The coalition felt it did not address the concerns raised in the letters, however, Wise found no basis for the termination of a contract. Now there is a coalition of 20 student groups and endorsements from ASUW, GPSS, and the AAUP asking that she reevaluate her

¹ The guests presented the following documents to the council:

- the TransAfrica Forum report, <http://transafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Soxedo%20Report%20Final%20with%20graphics%20Jan%202011.pdf>
- the Commission of Inquiry Concerning the Labor Practices of Sodexo in Colombia report, http://kickoutsodexo.usas.org/files/2011/04/20110413_commission_of_inquiry_report_concerning_the_labor_practices_of_sodexo_in_colombia_10_31_10_1.pdf
- the Human Rights Watch report, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/09/02/strange-case-0>
- an ASUW resolution, <http://senate.asuw.org/resources/showleg.php?session=17&legtype=R&legnumber=36>
- a draft letter from faculty to President Wise.

statement and reverse her decision. The coalition has met with Sodexo executives in an on-campus meeting, in which it did not achieve commitments to any of its desired changes. There have also been protests resulting in the arrests of 55 students. Currier and Lundgren expressed to the council that cutting the contract with Sodexo is best for the university, and asked the council to sign on to a letter and become part of the coalition, or otherwise get the ear of the administration.

In response to a question about the circumstances of the arrests, the guests explained that there were three separate peaceful sit-ins. The first was in Gerberding Hall, in which students sat for 6-7 hours before students were arrested for criminal trespassing after the building had closed. The next was in Athletic Director Scott Woodward's office, where 13 students were arrested. The third was in the Office of Admissions, and included concerns about not only Sodexo but also the student voice in governance issues at the university, particularly in light of tuition setting authority being delegated to the university.

Godfrey said that in all three cases, the students came into offices that were doing business and made it clear they weren't going to leave until the contract was severed. In all three cases, when the building was closed it was indicated that they would be removed from the building. Three reasons were cited: the students' continued presence was disrupting operations, the buildings were closed to the public, and police officers were present making students were OK and secure instead of being out on patrol. Each student was asked to leave individually, and arrests were orderly and non-confrontational. Lundgren added that the students made a point that the demonstrations were peaceful and that they didn't intend to damage property, and that the police were very respectful.

Godfrey added that his experience and history with the issue goes back about a month. He said it's true that Wise and other senior leaders came to a place where they didn't feel the information provided to them was compelling. Over the last month, however, it's fair to say that the president has moved to a place where she wants more information and research into the allegations. Students have been informed that the administration now has doubts and wants to know more. Senior Vice President V'ella Warren has asked the controller to put together a small group that would include students appointed by ASUW and GPSS to dig deep and look at the allegations, the documentation, and dig elsewhere to see if there's more to be learned. They will hire a law student to help with research, as well as a faculty member from the business school. This group will report back to several people, including the president. If the evidence is compelling that the contract should be cut, it will be cut. If it's something else, further talks will resume. One thing remaining unchanged is that the president is unwilling to sever the contract without knowing more, as there would be implications not only with one company and contract, but hundreds of other contracts the university has.

In response to questions, the guests explained that the current Sodexo contract is a 5-year contract, expiring in July 2012, to provide concessions at all events at UW athletic facilities. The contract has a no-cause termination clause that would allow for early termination with 90 days notice. The coalition is asking for early termination and also hopes for and expects the contract to not be renewed. There has also been talk of a code of conduct in the implementation of a new contract. Alternatives include other companies and a potential bid from Housing and Food Services.

The council briefly discussed whether a precedent would, and should, be set that would compel the university to do in-depth investigations of any company it was entering into a contract with. One suggestion was for the committee being formed to investigate Sodexo allegations to become a standing one that could do research if there were questions before or after entering a contract. Other points

were clarified, including that the RFP process for the next contract has been put on hold, and that the research group should be done with its work before the beginning of the next academic year.

Currier said that the coalition understands the image of the university as a business partner, but that the university is also a leader that sets a standard. She suggested the council sign on to a faculty letter to President Wise and the administration.

Fabien said he would talk to Secretary of the Faculty Marcia Killien and Senate Chair JW Harrington to find out what they were thinking on the issue and where they were in the process. He said one potential outcome could be the council submitting a resolution to the Faculty Senate.

2) Approval of minutes

The minutes of the May 3, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

3) ASUW/GPSS report

GPSS – Martin said the incoming GPSS officers have been elected. GPSS, which has worked hard on student-parent issues this year, recently heard great news that efforts to sustain a childcare matching grant of \$75,000 have succeeded. The Services and Activities Fee committee has set their recommendations, which will be going to the Regents. The student fee would be raised by a dollar.

ASUW – Bradley said the organization is wrapping up the year, and Evan Smith will be his successor.

4) Report from the chair

Fabien said the student conduct code revisions are moving along nicely, with very productive meetings. The group is trying to create a document that anticipates and answers questions that readers might have. Consequences of conduct will be an important part of the new code. A couple parts of the new document say that students should not prevent the operation of the university; they can protest but not obstruct operation. There is some concern that the new code will be a shock to the system, as it will be so different from the current version. The process of implementation will take some delicacy. The original timeline was for January 2012, which could still be done. This would mean a lot of intense dialogue in the Faculty Senate in the Fall.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 2:14 p.m.

Minutes by Craig Bosman, Faculty Council Support Analyst. cbosman@uw.edu

Present: Faculty: Fabien (Chair), Burke, Berninger, LeVeque
President's Designee: Godfrey
Ex-Officio Reps: Bradley, Perrin, McKinstry, Martin
Guests: Morgan Currier, Katie Lundgren

Absent: Faculty: Schwartz, Poovendran, Bailkin