

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Student Affairs
Tuesday, 14 March 2006
36 Gerberding Hall

Clark Pace called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Meeting Synopsis:

1. Approval of the minutes
2. ASUW Report – Jonathan Lee, ASUW Representative
3. GPSS Report – Richard Nobles, GPSS Representative
4. Faculty Undergraduate Report – Clark Pace
5. University Park Neighborhood – Jeffrey Schwartz
6. Directions?

1. Approval of the Minutes

Carrie Perrin will draft alternate wording for the third paragraph under item #3 (Advising) of the February 14, 2006, minutes. With that revision (and the correction of 3 typos) the minutes were approved as revised.

2. ASUW Report

Textbooks:

Jonathan Lee introduced Melissa Aar who spoke to the Council about textbooks. Both the ASUW and GPSS have recently approved resolutions calling for action and attention on the issue of affordable textbooks. The unnecessary increase in textbook prices by publishers is getting some long-overdue attention. Recent Washington State House and Senate bills have also been approved that advise UW Regents to address the problem by promoting textbook buy-back programs and by setting policy that would provide lower-cost textbooks to students.

Pace raised the question of whether there is a significant range of prices for textbooks on a given subject. It's quite possible that textbook publishers are very aware of the cost of the competition and will join their colleagues in asking the highest price they feel they can extract from the student population. He suggested researching the difference in price of the ten most popular calculus books, on the assumption that the difference may not be significant. One cannot force competition in the marketplace if the competitors conspire to keep their prices about the same. The problem involves only a handful of publishers who produce the majority of textbooks – maybe 20-25 – and for the most part, the extremely expensive textbooks are those used in under-division classes.

One way to reduce costs is to discontinue the sale of bundled book sets. Too often one or more items in the bundle are of no use to the student. It may be possible to request that the University Bookstore establish a policy not to sell bundled books.

There is a history of large University systems (such as the University of California) putting pressure on publishers to lower prices, but it's unlikely that one University acting independently could have that much influence on the textbook market.

Melissa noted that her contact that day with the Faculty Council on Student Affairs was the first formal contact she had had with faculty on this issue. **She will obtain a copy of the State legislation for distribution to Council members.**

Elements of the discussion included:

- Faculty members are not happy about the textbook situation either. They are given review copies of textbooks, but are not informed of the prices of books they are asked to review.
- The cost and complexity involved in producing textbooks varies enormously from one field to another.
- Publishers assume the need for color photos and graphics that increase the cost of a publication.
- It may make sense to talk to departments that typically require textbooks that cost the most. Faculty might approach publishers at meetings of academic societies and express their dissatisfaction with the price of textbooks.
- New editions of textbooks can be the occasion for raising the price 10-40%.
- Bryan Pearce (University Bookstore) may be able to supply information, including the rate of mark-up on textbooks and how best to get information from publishers.
- Reasons for the high cost of textbooks may include that students now have other means of finding and purchasing books; bookstores are reluctant to over-order because of the freight expense involved in returning unused books; publishers are reluctant to over-produce books because they are now taxed every year on unused inventory.
- Could the UW partner with the other four-year institutions in the state – or with larger University systems, such as California and Texas to put pressure on textbook publishers? Apparently, PIRGs are currently attempting to do this. If the Washington, California, Texas, Minnesota, Michigan and New York University systems could join in protest over the cost of textbooks, the publishers might well be forced to respond.
- Libraries have the same problem with the increasing costs of journals.

Pace asked Melissa to keep the Council informed on how it can help as the ASUW continues to address this issue.

General Updates:

Jonathan Lee reviewed plans for the Spring Fling and the Senior Send-Off. He also updated the Council on the current plans for resolving the recent Pappy Boyington controversy. A memorial honoring *all* UW alumni who have received the Medal of Honor has been proposed. He also mentioned an ASUW resolution honoring Gordon Hirabayashi, discussions regarding military recruiters, advising, and the new North of 45th Committee.

Lee then joined with Gus Kravas in a discussion of the processes involved in administering the Student Conduct Code. In reviewing those processes, **Kravas is**

interested in hearing from Council members at the next FCAS meeting about what they feel has worked well and what has not worked well and should be revised.

The process can be seen by looking up FROG (the Faculty Resource on Grading) on the web. He will also be soliciting this feedback from various student groups, in addition to other faculty groups. The Faculty Councils on Academic Standards, Instructional Quality and Educational Technology are also dealing with issues of academic integrity.

3. GPSS Report

Discussion deferred.

4. Faculty Undergraduate Report

Pace asked Council members to bring their thoughts and ideas to the next Council meeting regarding the three current reports addressing the Undergraduate Experience, including the recent “UW Faculty Senate Report of the ad hoc Committee on Undergraduate Education” (distributed at the meeting). He is particularly interested in discovering whether there are undergraduate issues that were not addressed by any of the three – for example a lack of sufficient counseling to enable students to get into the majors of their choice.

The purpose of these reports was to advise the Provost in the prospective reorganization of the offices of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education. Pace stated that the Faculty Senate Report’s primary contribution toward that effort is pointing out that the UW has an atypical student body (but perhaps one that is increasingly more typical of large universities everywhere). Over 80% of upper division students are working at least 16 hours per week. The student body includes many transfer students and commuter students who come to campus only for their classes and leave immediately after. The question the Provost should be considering is whether there really is a significant number of students who are even looking for an out-of-classroom experience at the UW.

5. University Park Neighborhood

Jeffrey Schwartz reported that the North of 45th Committee has met two times so far and is approaching the issues involved methodically – beginning with defining what the problems are as well as the causes of the problems.

Elements of the discussion included:

- The difference between nuisances and crimes in the neighborhood.
- Should this group be addressing issues on the Ave? (The city would like to avoid addressing the Ave – police state that they are stretched in handling the current workload.)
- Solutions other urban universities have found include buying up property surrounding the University and leasing the houses to faculty members.
- Rooming houses might be prohibited from advertising in the *Daily* or with the Student Housing Office, but Craig’s list is increasingly becoming the first place for students to look for housing.

- How best to educate students about their rights and responsibilities as good neighbors.

6. Directions?

The next meeting's agenda will include continued discussions on the Faculty Undergraduate Report, student conduct processes and the treatment of off-campus student issues at other universities.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. *Minutes by Susan Folk, Staff Assistant, Office of Regional Affairs, 1-4183, sfolk@u.washington.edu*

Present: **Faculty Members:** Fearn-Banks, Pace, Rasmussen, Schwartz, Stoelinga
 President's Designee: Kravas
 Ex-officio Members: Lee, Perrin, Winans

Absent: **Faculty Members:** Almgren, Antony, Brock, Leady
 Ex-officio Members: McKinstry and Nobles

Guests: Melissa Aar, ASUW and Susan Folk, Note-taker