

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

Faculty Assembly

Monday, March 09, 2009

Milgard Assembly Hall - W. Philip Hall

Meeting called to order at 12:37 p.m.

In Attendance: Michael Forman, Chair; Johann Reusch, Vice Chair; Elizabeth Alexander, John Banks, Katie Baird, Nicole Blair, Kathleen Beaudoin, Greg Benner, Erin Casey, Siân Davies-Vollum, Joyce Dinglasan-Panlilio, Thomas Diehm, Charles Emlet, Jerry Finn, Kelly Forrest, Sharon Fought, Richard Furman, Michelle Garner, Jim Gawel, Cheryl Greengrove, Teresa Holt, Michael Honey, Robert Howard, Emily Ignacio, Linda Ishem, Mike Kalton, Diane Kinder, William Kunz, Beth Kalikoff, Turan Kayaoğlu, Janice Laakso, Rachel May, Amos Nascimento, Julie Nicoletta, Jennifer Quinn, Deirdre Raynor, Johann Reusch, Rommel Salvador, Josh Tenenberg, Ankur Teredesai, Carolyn West, Charles Williams, Daniel Zimmerman

Synopsis:

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of minutes from January 6, 2009
3. Chancellor Patricia Spakes: Budget Reduction Philosophy and Priorities.
4. Faculty Salary suspension.
5. Adjournment.

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of minutes from January 6, 2009

3. Chancellor Patricia Spakes, Budget Reduction Philosophy and Priorities:

The original state budget cuts were \$8 billion and could approach a \$9 billion shortfall. UW Tacoma is now looking at a 20% reduction scenario.

Unknown impacts:

- Undergraduate tuition increases which are capped at 7% now are modeled to be closer to 10 and 15% increases.
- On March 26, 2009 the Senate budget will be released and could reach cuts up to 10%.
- Much of the federal stimulus money, which is temporary funds anyway, could go to K-12 grades.

Enrollment:

- Legislators have made it clear that UW Tacoma must remain committed to increasing enrollment.

Priorities:

- UW Tacoma is committed to the core functions of instruction
- The Office of Advancement recently hired a Vice Chancellor for Advancement.
- Bridge Funding. Recently there was a meeting to encourage community support for this endowment.

Travel Funds:

- Beth Rushing advised that a letter will go out to the faculty regarding the suspension of travel funds.

Chancellor Spakes advised that layoffs are being considered since most of the operating costs are in salaries. Johann Reusch asked how enrollments will be affected. Rushing noted that enrollments correlate with 25 FTE.

Spakes discussed the development and the forwarding of new programs to the Higher Education Committee Board (HECB). For example, with the new Criminal Justice program, fifty new students will generate a net of \$150,000.00. This could save approximately three jobs. In terms of higher FTE, there is trade off.

Forman asked whether there is an existing policy for auxiliary funds and if so, could this be used to absorb cuts. Spakes explained that auxiliaries will be used to support academics. Rushing will be inquiring into Summer School revenues and how these can help to absorb cuts. Spakes explained that revenue from real estate can only be used for building projects. The convenience store does not bring in large amounts of revenue. Other options to offset the cuts might be through grants and to get federal stimulus money.

Trinidad explained that reductions have been offset with auxiliaries. For example, some the state funds have been replaced with funds from parking fees. Trinidad clarified that Summer School is viewed as self sustaining, which is like an auxiliary.

Jim Gawel suggested that another option could be consolidating administrator roles. Spakes responded that the options are based on functionalities. Gawel suggested that parking fees could be used to reduce the cost of transit passes. Trinidad explained that Finance has considered increasing parking fees to buy down fees for bus passes. Spakes added that UW Seattle has agreed to work with Tacoma on this.

Carry forward funds:

Forman asked about the philosophy for carry forward funds.

Spakes explained that Administration does not have an existing policy, but carry forwards can be used in emergencies. The argument against this option is that in emergencies the money saved within units could help to soften the cuts.

Sharing resources may be an incentive.

Spakes advised that carry forward policy will not be drafted until after March 26, 2009. If the legislature decides on low tuition, then UW Tacoma's policy will be less flexible. Administration is thinking about a 50-50 split, where half goes to handle emergencies.

Forman asked whether it was better to use carry forward funds or to save them for next year. Spakes advised that units should work with their Vice Chancellor. Communication is the best way to determine unit needs.

Cheryl Greengrove noted that failures or obsolescence of computers required for instruction are impacting the classroom. Would this be a case where units can use these funds? It makes sense to have some existing infrastructure in place. These are important basic needs to serve us in the long run.

Spakes explained that decisions should be made at the institutional level. Administration must manage these funds.

Forman suggested managing classroom scheduling, "Could there be ways to manage the classroom assignments?" Rushing responded, "Yes."

Spakes explained that Rushing and Trinidad can help with issues and guiding principles to deploy resources for units.

Out of state travel:

Nicoletta asked about out of state travel. Is there any way to address this cut? Rushing confirmed that a letter would go out saying that we have had to reduce travel. Nicole Blair asked about being reimbursed for the first part of the trip. Spakes explained that there is a waiver form available for those who are impacted by the policy change.

Quality of instruction:

Mike Kalton asked about the top priorities concerning instruction and its quality. How will student-faculty ratios impact quality of instruction? Spakes explained that Beth Rushing is working on this.

Spakes added that there would most likely be fewer faculty next year. Administration is looking to maximize the number of students. Rushing confirmed, “Without a doubt class sizes will be larger. If we maximize classes appropriately, we will reduce the negative impact on students.”

Kalton suggested that the change in class size should be recognized from the beginning as an overload situation. This would help to protect against the eventuality that these class sizes become the norm in the future, once the crisis has passed.

Rushing responded that Administration has used the traditional 20-1 ratio as the norm. Only two units meet this ratio; one is IAS and the other is Business. Administration cannot discriminate enrollments for only two units.

Greengrove noted that 80% of the campus FTE are in IAS and Business, so the campus is already at 20-1.

Junior faculty:

Gawel addressed the possible situations for junior faculty. Workload will impact the scholarly productivity for this particular faculty. Faculty need to address how this significantly impacts junior faculty over the next two years.

Alternatives to Blackboard:

Janice Laakso asked about alternatives to Blackboard. Rushing confirmed that Administration is investigating alternatives, the faculty will be involved, but this won't happen until next year.

Spakes explained that the budget conversations indicate this unique economic situation for UW and the nation. Spakes suggested that nation is experiencing an economic reset UWT will consider differently how Bothell and Tacoma will be built. For example, right now, “30 out of the 36 endowments are under water.” This impacts UWTs ability to give out scholarships.

Capital Funding:

Thom Diehm asked about the Joy building. Spakes advised that Capital funds for the Joy building look likely. Symbolically, this is a good sign that the Washington state legislature is interested in capital funds for UWT.

Learning and Outcomes:

Josh Tenenberg asked about learning and learning outcomes. Spakes clarified that locally this is not a top state concern. But, at the federal level, Pell Grants are being discussed in terms of learning outcomes. The Secretary of Education, who spoke in Seattle recently, indicated this as well.

Greengrove asked whether carryovers could be carried over more than last year. Spakes and Trinidad confirmed that this would not be addressed until

after March 26, 2009.

Spakes suggested that budget conversations should continue by emailing the Chancellor's office and Beth Rushing.

4. Faculty salary increase suspension:

Forman explained it was almost certain that the traditional 2.5% merit raises would not happen this year. In the Handbook, chapter 24 establishes the Faculty Merit Review process. Merit raises are not mandated directly mandated. Rather, (presidential) Executive Order 64, is the document which mandates merit raises.

The legislature and Governor are against faculty receiving raises. It is certain that the President Emmet will follow this policy. The draft of an amended Executive order 64, class A, would suspend the policy over the biennium. Senate leadership have been involved in the drafting of this policy out of concern for protecting the process and the Code. In the wake of the 2006 Storti case which resulted in the University granting retroactive merit pay increases, at least some members of the Board of Regents have expressed dissatisfaction with the relevant parts of the Code. In principle, the Regents could revoke any part of the Code.

Rachel May suggested suspending merit review in light of suspension of the merit increase. Nicoletta clarified that the merit increase suspension could last for two years. Forman added that there would be a two year suspension because budgets are established biennially. May noted that this might impact retention.

Thom Diehm asked how this impacts junior faculty and faculty to full professors.

Deirdre Raynor mentioned that in the past faculty went through the merit review process. Although the budget did not allow for raises, faculty voted on whether or not a faculty member was meritorious and a note was filed in the event that funding became available for future for raises or merit increases.

Greengrove explained that faculty would not get a raise, but would undergo a peer review.

May suggested that this review should be called something else. May added that the problem with viewing the 2.5 % a merit increase suggests that the raise is larger than a cost of living increase, "which it is clearly not. To call this a merit review is a problem." If merit reviews start three years from now this should be considered as retroactive. "Faculty should point out that this is not about merit."

Rushing suggested that these conversations and decisions to go on record.

Forman noted that it was likely that the Code requires faculty merit reviews every year. The actual amount of the raises following from the merit review process are a matter of presidential executive order.

Ignacio asked whether other benefits, such as 401k benefits could be suspended. Forman said that he thought these issues were governed by Washington State law. At the level of the UW there is no choice.

Greengrove asked whether WSU has a merit raise policy.

Forman asked if the status for faculty raises was different where there was a union contract. It seemed unlikely as the State could renegotiate raise provisions in existing union contracts and it was in fact doing so with a number of unions.

Honey noted the increased level of inequality. Honey agreed that May's point is good. Faculty should change the nomenclature. Faculty need to make a clear statement that we are aware of what is happening.

Forman clarified the summary of the Merit Review discussion, "the annual process is called a 'merit review'. The money that follows is called a 'merit raise.' With that said, there is likely to be freeze on all annual increases." Every university across the country is in the same or worse situation.

Rushing clarified that UWT is responsible for its own retention funds.

May asked about whether there were funds for tenure and promotion salary. Forman responded that there were no plans at this point to stop tenure and promotion processes.

Michael Honey commented, "Considering that this is happening everywhere, does anyone know about how unionized faculty compare in the budget cuts?" Forman noted that he welcomes faculty to look into comparisons of UW faculty with their colleagues across the state who are represented by unions.

Ignacio referenced a similar situation at her former university. In that case the faculty proactively asserted a statement, "We told Administration that we would not allow our code to be messed around with." Faculty in that situation clearly stated that the suspension of faculty raises would have to be made up later.

Resuch explained that in the UW lawsuit the faculty were beneficiaries. Resuch agreed that the nomenclature should be changed to a *cost of living* increase. Resuch added that at CUNY faculty had a built in 3.5% increase.

The 2.5 % is a cost of living increase.

Nascimento clarified what had been discussed in terms of merit raises. There are generally four different ways of understanding this budget crisis and faculty salaries. First, that the faculty voluntarily gives up certain prerogatives given by the Code; second, that the Faculty Senate act as representative of faculty and works on a diplomatic statement (for political purposes) supporting the President's executive order; third, that the President signs an "executive order," top down, or finally, that the UW Regents could simply "revoke" the Code. In addition, Nascimento added that the negotiations might be different if the faculty were represented by a Union but that doesn't seem to be the case at UW. It seemed to me that the best, perhaps only way to go way to go is the second approach. Nascimento asked the Assembly if he was correct in his interpretation.

Forman noted that the President has been reluctant to suspend everything. The declaration of emergency would affect UW's ability to borrow. At this point it is not likely. For the President to have flexibility would be for the Regents to say that they have this flexibility. Faculty leadership took the position to facilitate the President and suspend part of the code so that someone else doesn't to do this. Nascimento asked if the Faculty Assembly can do this. Forman responded "no."

5. The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.