

Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes

March 1 2006

SCI 309

Attending: Robert Jackson, John Banks, Sam Chung, Linda Dawson, June Lowenberg, Yonn Dierwechter, Diane Kinder, Zoe Barsness, Steven DeTray, Donald Chinn, Janet Mobus, Karen Landenburger, Christine Stevens and Mythri Raj

Guest: Alan Wood

Bob Jackson called the meeting to order at 12.50

June Lowenberg jokingly moved that all those in attendance should be officially named UWT's "crème de la crème." A general cheer seconded the resolution.

Bob Jackson asked if anyone had any questions regarding the minutes from the previous meeting. There were no questions or clarifications. Zoe Barsness moved that the minutes be approved. Diane Kinder seconded. The motion passed by voice and hand vote.

Bob Jackson reminded everyone that leadership positions of both Chair and Vice-Chair for Faculty Assembly were still open. He encouraged anyone who might be interested in either of these positions to contact himself or Josh Tenenberg.

Bob Jackson then reported that Chancellor Patricia Spakes is looking for a couple of faculty members to be the on-going "budget people." Two faculty members will represent the faculty body over the next 3-4 years in campus wide budget issues. These positions likely require some training.

Bob Jackson then introduced and yielded the floor to Alan Wood.

Wood followed up on Jackson's comments regarding faculty representation in budget-making. He suggested faculty consider how they might best rotate positions and term lengths so that bi-annual cycles were well managed.

Jackson commented that Executive Council should take up this issue at their next meeting.

Wood then provided an overview of the history and organizational "culture" of budget making, especially as this has impacted UWT's institutional development over the years. He started with how budgetary decisions were made in the early days of the branch campuses, noting problems that attended the division of labor between Seattle and Tacoma. For example, faculty was hired for Tacoma and Bothell but budgetary issues were really finalized in Seattle. The early days were necessarily focused quite narrowly on "survival" in part because "UW-Seattle was hostile." Individuals did the best they could from Seattle but distance was a real problem.

When Vicky Carwein arrived she mainly focused on external funding and did a great job at this but she could not/did not really address the details and dynamics of internal budgeting issues. An institutional and cultural pattern had thus set in fairly deeply: top-down decision-making.

This deepened with the arrival of Nelson who was not “bottom up” in his style. Then we had the arrival of Steve Olswang, who decided where “to park the money.” However, strategic reserves have been drawn down over the past several years and this puts great pressure on current problems. An example is the inflated estimates of \$1.2m from the project managers on the Assembly Hall makeover.

With these sorts of financial problems, Wood emphasized the importance of changing “the culture of the budgetary process.” Several specific points were made in regard to this transformation:

- 1) Wood reported on Chancellor Spakes’ view that we have to live with the budget we have but we also want to start a budget-making process that deals with the upcoming session (especially as this involves capital costs)
- 2) We’re going to get additional FTE but we don’t know how much it’s going to be and that won’t be decided until March – perhaps at midnight.
- 3) We want an open “horse-trading” process – a process of giving and taking
- 4) Wood specifically says he wants to say to various programs: ‘here, this is your money, go forth and allocate as your program sees fit.’ But as this is done he will emphasize that each program develop strategic reserves, which unfortunately requires some belt-tightening.
- 5) The promise of a more open process is that faculty will understand campus-wide trade-offs. But getting “from here to there” won’t be easy because of the aforementioned cultural issues.
- 6) These cultural issues are not the result of anyone person so no one should be blamed. But please note that Chancellor Spakes is strongly committed to faculty governance, especially around the budget process.

Donald Chinn asked Wood if UW Bothell is facing similar issues. Wood responded that he did not really know.

June Lowenberg commented that over the past years some directors have had more access to funding but once the transparency is brought in they will struggle.

Wood agreed that change will be tough but reminded everyone of the Chinese proverb that reads: “One can conquer an empire on horseback, but one can’t run an empire on horseback.” In other words, the need for institutional evolution is clear in many fields. For example, entrepreneurial personalities may not always be the right people to manage an organization at a specific time because they want to run it themselves. Sometimes take-charge people need to move on; some do make the organizational transitions, but others do not. It’s no one’s fault, but very often new situations need “different folks.”

Wood also mentioned that “UW as a whole is changing, not just UWT.” But UW-Seattle really has no idea about start-ups (like UWT).

Steve DeTray then asked if Wood could foresee the future money situation on the campus.

Wood first responded that if we get the FTEs we get the funds and that is the core issue but then how we allocate these funds is the job of the budget committee. He went on to point out that if the past is any guide we’ll get less money in the future. Paradoxically, at the very moment when education is more important than ever we’re cutting, which will force us to raise tuition. That

makes it more difficult to reach lower and even middle class students. And the retirement of the baby-boomers is not that far off. They all vote and will want their entitlements.

Wood segued back to why, given this reality, faculty governance is so important. If the faculty members don't know why cuts are being made it could really be "explosive." The days when faculty could "do their own thing are over," he stated – "there really are tough times ahead, I think, and this will force all of us to decide upon our core values."

Janet Mobus pointed out that many institutions are looking for private sector money and this forces many issues, such as possible strings attached. She asked Wood what his position was on this issue – specifically, how far he would support the mantra of "go forth and get money."

Wood pointed out that this issue is actually a pretty old one, at least as this involves research money. Goes back at least to the 1950s. UW tapped into NFS and NIH money and that's "really how it got so big." But yes, there is the real danger you get dependent on streams of revenue – the danger of "corrupting influences."

Bob Jackson then shifted the meeting to the next agenda item, on research problems and support, yielding the floor to Buck.

Banks started by explaining how he, Bob Jackson and Cheryl Greengrove brainstormed on research support problems. His purpose was to present a list of preliminary recommendations and concerns for general reflection and discussion. They were:

- 1) It would good to have a grant and assistance person on campus. Low does a great job but we need to resource this up.
- 2) We urgently need a human subjects person here at UWT.
- 3) It's not clear how many people need to see something a faculty member proposes. We need to spell this out and stream line the process.
- 4) Some grants are internal or local, others are external. It's not really clear that we need the same pathways and vetting for these grants.
- 5) It would be nice to have accessible "boilerplate information" many funders require re: the kind of campus we are.
- 6) We need greater clarification on how we do collaborative processes, such as the relationships between PI, subcontractors, etc.
- 7) We need quantitative/statistical help here on campus
- 8) We need greater clarity on where overhead money goes and we also need to make sure it comes back to Tacoma.
- 9) Money and course buy-out formula also needs attention and greater clarification.
- 10) It would be nice to have a web page that highlights campus wide research.

June Lowenberg reported that 6 years ago the faculty fought to get a half-time position in support of research. She commented that these positive recommendations were now taking research support in campus to the next level. She also suggested we should consider Sondra Perdue as a half-time asset if possible.

Christine Stevens noted that she is on a HUD grant but that our campus does not have many people who understand overhead issues.

Bob Jackson observed that many of the problems and recommendations listed could be solved “without Seattle.” Accordingly, he encouraged the faculty to consider them and issue another invitation to Alan Wood in order to discuss how we might proceed.

The meeting then turned to Mythri Raj, who briefly presented a web page developed by Michael Kucher. This web page is a living history resource that seeks to capture the evolution of UWT, including reflections from faculty and staff.

Bob Jackson pointed out that this web page could contribute to our “emerging culture” and then asked if there were any other issues to discuss before adjourning the meeting.

Diane asked when the next meeting was so we could harass faculty to come.

Bob Jackson responded that everyone present should mention Faculty Assembly meetings in program/departmental meeting in order to remind people.

Steve DeTray and Karen Landenburger both mentioned the importance of getting new faculty involved early in their careers.

Bob Jackson announced that the next meeting would be April 18, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.50 pm.