

CFR Meeting Minutes
8 November 2024
VCLS 14 & Zoom
9:15 – 10:45AM

Representatives Attending:

Bonamy, Drapela, Fortin, Grigar (Chair), He, Olson, Pascoe, Reisz, Schimelpfenig, Welchel

Ex-officio members in attendance:

Dimitrov (Senator, TT), Sekhar (Past Chair)

Guest: Steve Bollens (WSU Faculty Legislative Representative)

Recording Secretary: Paul Bonamy

The meeting began with discussion of the 10/25 minutes. Olson motioned to approve and Drapela seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

It was also noted that the Faculty Senate has approved the creation of a Faculty Compensation Committee, for which Drapela has been nominated.

The meeting then launched into *a conversation with Steve Bollens, WSU Faculty Legislative Representative*. Discussion included:

- *A summary of the process for state budgetary requests.* The WSU President, in conjunction his with close advisors, draws up budget requests that are sent to the Governor's office at the end of August / early September. The Governor then considers requests from throughout the state and submits a proposed budget to the legislature in December.
The legislature follows a biennial cycle, meeting in January. In odd numbered years (like 2025), it meets for 105 days, figures out the biennial budget, and deals with policy bills. In even years (like 2026) it meets for a shorter 60 days, mostly dealing with new high priority matters and budget adjustments. The legislature's budget goes to the Governor in late spring to be signed.
Policy issues – some of which may affect higher education – happen in parallel with budgetary considerations.
- *The President put forward five budget requests this year.* This includes on the order of \$26 million for faculty and staff salaries, and an additional \$10 million to cover academic student employees. At present we're waiting to see the Governor's budget, after which things will get busy in January when the legislature convenes.
- Bollens was elected by the Senate Steering Committee and *works as an advocate and liaison for the faculty*. He works with legislators, their staff, and other interest groups to try to influence budget and policy decisions on a part-time basis. He also feeds information from the legislature back to the Faculty Senate for consideration.

Bollens enjoys a good working relationship with Chris Mulick (Senior Director of State Relations) and his team, who work full-time in Olympia. They coordinate their efforts when faculty and administrative interests are aligned, though they will take different positions on some matters. He also works with his counterparts at the other public four-year institutions via the Council of Faculty, allowing all of us to work together on some issues.

- Regarding the election, results at the state level are generally positive for higher education. Initiatives that would have cut into the state budget did not pass, so while the budget is likely to remain tight, it's not as bad as it could have been. At the federal level, things are much less clear.
- There was a question regarding the significant increase in Kaiser healthcare premiums in a past benefits cycle. This change affected all State agencies, not just WSU or the four-year schools. *Mulick and President Schulz are the primary point people for HCA-related issues, and Bollens is confident they are monitoring the situation as much as they can be.*
- Bollens closed his remarks with comments on three issues:
 - The legislature is not the only decision-maker when it comes to pay raises. The legislature provides some of the funding but does not determine faculty compensation. The legislature uses a “fund split” [sic] model where they provide some funding for a proposed raise but expect the University to use other revenue sources to match or fully fund the increases. Once the legislature approves funding, it appears in the University's general fund at which point *the President and the President alone decides what the new pay rates will be.*
 - *The legislature wants to increase the number of 4-year degrees earned in WA and sees the community colleges as an inexpensive and broadly distributed way to accomplish this goal.* This approach puts traditional four-year schools into a strange situation of both depending on the community colleges for transfer students and competing with them in offering degrees.
 - *The legislature is also interested in “college in high school” programs, where universities partner with high schools to offer students college-level level courses and credit.* Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, and UW all participate in these programs. WSU does not.

The meeting then turned to reports:

Faculty members Sue Peabody and Desiree Hellegers have volunteered to join the ad-hoc committee on the event planning guide. Fortin has been investigating the relevant Clark County regulations, and the committee has been asked to start working on their own proposed revisions to the guide.

The unscheduled meeting with Provost Riley-Tillman included some interesting information. The Provost commented repeatedly that the growth of the WSU system is on the Vancouver campus, both because Pullman campus is physically out of space and

because of our proximity to industry in Portland and Seattle. He is also of the opinion that our campus would be an excellent place for undergraduate research to grow. It is not clear at this time whether that growth is envisioned as in addition to, or in lieu of, graduate research.

The bylaws committee has produced a first draft of the new revisions and need feedback. The inclusion of adjuncts in the Faculty Assembly requires discussion by the group, along with how to handle administrative positions that are exactly half faculty, half admin. A broader discussion has been proposed for the next CFR meeting.

Through an unclear process, the CFR has been awarded \$1,000 for a “goods and services” budget. The money cannot be used for appliances for the faculty space, though Chancellor Netzhammer has donated a microwave that will arrive on Tuesday. VCAA Christopher is also donating a refrigerator. When the Faculty Office was first established, the CFR requested a bid from Michael Stamper (Campus Chief Information Officer) to improve Zoom capabilities in the space. Dimitrov motioned, and Reisz seconded, that *\$350 of the CFR budget be spend on Zoom facilities for the Faculty Office.* The motion passed unanimously.

The last Laptop Lunch of the semester is scheduled for November 13. *Grigar has started to collect information for the Spring series of Laptop Lunches, which will be offered in a hybrid format.* She wants to spend at least some time on the governing documents for the university, including EP 43, AP 60, and the faculty manual.

Dimitrov reports that the Senate continues to discuss Rule 60. It appears to be the case that *the Senate is planning to suspend AP 60 for spring semester, as well as strengthening and clarifying the rule.* Strengthening will include reporting requirements and hopefully an enforcement mechanism that doesn’t rely on holds.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Bonamy, Recording Secretary