

Faculty of Arts and Sciences
22 November 2013 Meeting

The meeting came to order at 4:01 with Dean Barbara Schaal presiding.

Motions to approve the April and October 2013 meeting minutes passed.

Dean Jennifer Smith moved to approve the list of December degree candidates. The motion passed.

Presentation from Chancellor Wrighton, Provost Thorp, and Vice-Chancellor Berg

Dean Schaal turned the floor over to Chancellor Mark Wrighton, who began his presentation on increasing socioeconomic diversity of the student body by recalling objectives related to financial aid and student diversity set during the planning process begun in 2006 and culminating in 2009. Chancellor Wrighton stated that the University's objectives in undergraduate admission included quality, diversity, and affordability, in the sense that Washington U. should be accessible and affordable, and all admitted students should feel that they have the resources to attend. Concurrently, the University must maintain its ability to afford quality and diversity.

The Chancellor acknowledged the criticism of the *New York Times* regarding the number of students with Pell Grants, but urged people to look beyond this number in order to envision a strengthened engagement with a socio-economic diverse community. He cited the College's improvements to its graduation rate, and the expansion of its student body that means it now serves more students.

Provost Holden Thorp declared that improving diversity was among the things he had come to Washington U. to do. He affirmed the University's commitment to taking care of admitted students in terms of financial aid. The University Council has agreed to plan to raise the number of students on Pell Grants in successive years. Provost Thorp noted that each 1 percent increase in the number of these students will cost \$3 million from the budget of the Danforth Campus, a budget of approximately \$600 million per year.

John Berg, Vice-Chancellor for Admissions, spoke of measures undertaken in previous years to reach groups under-represented in the applicant pool, citing search efforts but also "special outreach efforts" focused on high schools in cities with higher percentage of lower-income families. The Admissions Office has also cultivated special relations with programs for low-income high school students, e.g., Target Hope in Chicago and the Say Yes Foundation in New York.

A faculty member asked Berg about a Brookings Institution report saying that most schools tend to recruit low-income students from the same group of urban high schools; the faculty member wondered if Washington U. recruited from rural and small-town schools. Berg said that the

University had experimented with sending recruiters to more remote areas, with hit or miss results.

Professor Christine Johnson asked what resources or support networks served low-income students once they were on campus. Dean Jennifer Smith said that low-income, first-generation, or disabled students were eligible for Trio support, mentoring, cultural experiences, etc. Johnson proposed incorporating the rest of the student body into this effort.

Chancellor Wrighton stated that various socio-economic groups of the student population were graduating at the same rate, 94 percent.

Provost Thorp announced a “Diversity Center” to open next year.

Professor Linda Nicholson asked for clarification on the definition of need-blind admissions. Chancellor Wrighton said that the University does not have such a policy. Student’s financial need comes into consideration late in process of admission. The University presently needs a certain number of full-tuition students; if it could expand the endowment for financial aid, it could come closer to implementing need-blind admissions. A scholarship fund-raising initiative has already begun, raising \$220 million so far, of a (raised) goal of \$330 million. Wrighton stated that completely need-blind admission is an ideal, but it remains unclear that any institution actually achieves this.

Berg said that the first reading of every applicant’s dossier is need-blind. Admission recommendations go to the financial aid people, who compare the cost of the proposed class to the financial aid budget. Since aid costs for the proposed class exceed the budget, the University must then make some decisions that are “need-aware.” Berg argued that even if another school’s admissions committee were strictly blind to need, its financial aid budget would have to balance nonetheless, and the awards it made might therefore prove insufficient even at institutions that declare that their initial decisions about whether to admit a student at all are need-blind. Berg stated that in fact, Washington U. is as need-blind as any institution manages to be in practice.

Chancellor Wrighton pointed out that \$3 million per year in new spending on financial aid would require a \$60 million increase in the endowment.

A faculty member asked how many students initially recommended for admission get removed from the pool once financial aid becomes a consideration. Berg responded that every year is different. In its worst year, the University has had to remove 100 students from the proposed pool; more often, the number varies between 5 and 15.

Chancellor Wrighton said that 25 percent of scholarships support derives from current gifts or spendable portions of the endowment, while the rest comes from tuition discounts. Some other schools with bigger financial aid endowments can fund almost all their financial aid budget from the endowment. In rough terms, the University would need \$500 to \$600 million in order to meet most of its financial aid costs from the endowment.

Provost Thorp said that the appropriate number to track is the number of students from different socio-economic groups. The University is now at the low end of its peer group, and will move up. Thorp stated that this is more important than announcing need-blindness.

Professor Joe Lowenstein said that faculty would like more complete information about admissions numbers and adjustments in financial aid, and asked for a coherent report that would help make sense of relevant trends. Thorp replied that Barbara Feiner, Vice Chancellor for Finance, shared a good deal of data at an information session for students held in the second week of November.

A faculty member asked if admissions gives preference in financial aid to students from St. Louis or the rest of Missouri. Berg said no, adding that the University sets no limit on the number admitted from any particular high school, city, or state. Berg said that recruiters visit more schools in this area, and that some designated scholarships benefit this area specifically.

Professor Mark Pegg asked if we would be having this discussion were it not for the *New York Times* article this summer. Chancellor Wrighton said that we have this discussion every year. Professor Pegg asked why it took two decades to come to this priority, and whether the endowment should be better directed toward the schools. Wrighton replied that of seven schools sharing the endowment, only four offer undergraduate degrees. The Medical School enjoys the large fraction of the endowment. The University does not have legal authority to redirect donations marked for purposes, and relatively few gifts come unrestricted. Wrighton noted that money for scholarships has been an important priority of both fund raising campaigns undertaken recently. Wrighton asserted the University's aspiration to have the student body reflect the face of America, and noted that faculty engagement pays handsome rewards in students.

Dean Schaal thanked Wrighton, Thorp, and Berg, hoped they would return, and announced the rest of the meeting's agenda.

Report from the Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee

Professors Himadri Pakrasi, Gillian Russell, and Denise Head gave the reports for their respective branches of the Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee (AAMC). The Humanities section found good awareness of AAMC requirements among department chairs, and reviewed searches that hired six women and five men. The Natural Sciences section reviewed 18 searches; five offers went to women and none to under-represented minorities. Eight candidates accepted offers. The Social Sciences section reviewed nine searches, which produced five offers to women, all of whom accepted. The social science searches recruited one minority faculty member. Dean Schaal noted that the University's National Council has proposed ideas on recruiting minority faculty.

Report from the Curriculum Committee

Professor Chalker delivered the Curriculum Committee's report, moving to approve the circulated list of new classes. The motion passed. He reported that the Curriculum Committee was reviewing Semester Online and solicited faculty questions, so that it can know what faculty

would want in a report on the subject. He also asked faculty to consider how they would want to assign credit for these courses.

Discussion of Semester Online

Dean Schaal noted efforts by the Faculty Council on the subject of Semester Online, and turned leadership of the discussion to Professor Andrea Friedman of the Council.

Friedman alluded to a report mailed to faculty, and noted remaining questions:

--The Master Service Agreement between 2U (the commercial partner) and the Semester Online Consortium will be available for faculty to read upon signing a confidentiality agreement.

--The process of making curricular decisions remains uncertain. Should faculty have a broader role in determining which courses may be offered on line? What role does the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee play *vis à vis* the consortium's, which includes no faculty?

--Intellectual property rights still require clarification. Faculty members teaching SON courses receive a one-time fee for creating the asynchronous part of the courses. They receive no royalties for future iterations of their courses, regardless of whether they participate in these. The University and 2U may continue to offer these courses if the consortium agrees, even if the faculty members who created them do not participate. If the University leaves the consortium, the faculty member regains the right to distribute the content.

--Preparation remains to be done in advance of the faculty's vote in spring 2014 on continuing the SON experiment for a further two years. How should this vote be conducted, and what information should faculty have before voting?

Friedman announced another meeting for faculty to discuss these issues in the spring, and solicited questions.

Professor Macias stated that the Semester Online Curriculum Committee does in fact include several faculty members (i.e., from Emory, Notre Dame, and Northwestern).

Professor Erin McGlothlin asked if any courses next semester employ TAs or discussion leaders, and where course designers have found these people. Macias said that none employed graduate TAs. The second version of Professor Lowry's class will use a postdoc. The assistant in Professor Wyession's spring course on line is herself a professor at another school. In each case, the lead faculty member chooses his or her assistants. Macias said there was no intent at this point to use graduate student TAs.

Macias addressed a question of whether courses would continue without the participation of the originating professor. He said that this would be a University decision and not a 2U decision, and that "we'd work something out with [the originator of the course]."

Professor Corinne Johnson said she wished faculty had all this information before, and that faculty were concerned that the University's name was being used in marketing effort without faculty involvement. Dean Schaal replied that she called a faculty meeting as soon as she heard of SON. Johnson said that faculty involvement had been largely in reactive capacity, and wished to get out ahead of developments. Schaal acknowledged that faculty need to be more involved, and asked for suggestions. Professor Chalker added that the Curriculum Committee became involved earlier than the faculty as a whole.

Professor Johnson asked why SON proposed that faculty teach its courses as overloads.

Professor Friedman said that the Faculty Council has tried to gather suggestions of what information faculty needed in order to make good decisions.

Professor Pegg pointed out that Washington U. already deals well with students who are sick or away from campus, and should not be admitting students who want to attend the University of Phoenix. He also asked what Macias's position was at the University following his resignation as Provost. Macias replied that the Chancellor and Provost had appointed him to represent Washington U to 2U, and that he remained a professor of chemistry. Holden Thorp represents the University on the consortium board.

Professor Eric Brown said that faculty would like to have a discussion about why the University should do online education at all.

Professor Daniel Bornstein said that the consortium's ideal would allow access to courses Washington U does not offer, and asked why SON course offerings in fact consisted of basic classes we already offer in face-to-face instruction. He asked if Macias saw any prospective enrichment of the courses offered. Macias answered that everyone wanted to enhance the SON curriculum, but that it had up to now simply been taking whatever courses it could get. He suggested that the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee should recommend some courses for offering in SON. He also evoked the possibility of a different mode of SON course: more synchronous than asynchronous content, in a form more akin to a seminar than the present SON format.

Professor Lowenstein said that to get courses the University does not offer, the faculty will have to wait through three or four years of experimentation in the program, and expressed his fear that by then a system about which faculty already have misgivings will have become entrenched and difficult to change or eliminate. Macias responded that it would not take three years to find a good stock of classes, and acknowledged that the experiment could be stopped next semester. In addition, he doubted it would become entrenched after three years, given the small size of the program. He disclaimed any intention to allow SON offerings to grow hugely. Finally, he offered to take the faculty's wishes for courses to the consortium.

A faculty member pointed out that Professor Macias was mediating between Washington U faculty and 2U, who were backed by venture capitalists, and that this leads to mistrust. He inquired about 2U's long-term plan.

The meeting moved to adjourn at 5.35 pm.

Seth Graebner
Assoc. Prof. of French
Secretary to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences