

**Dan Luchtel, Chair
University of Washington Faculty Senate
Remarks at September 20, 2007 Board of Regents**

Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the faculty's perspective to the Board of Regents. Earlier in today's meeting of the Board of Regents, I was gratified to hear the statements by the Regents in support of increasing faculty salaries and the need for better childcare. With regard to the latter, I fully support Regent Cole's remarks as I too have the majority responsibility for supporting and raising a child.

I would like to begin by acknowledging two noteworthy accomplishments. First, I would like to thank President Emmert for strongly supporting faculty in the Dept. of Pediatrics who published a study that concluded that exposure to DVDs and videos for babies could be associated with poorer language development. This study was disputed by the Walt Disney Company and their CEO, Robert Iger, demanded a retraction of a press release describing the study. President Emmert defended the work and rejected Disney's call for a retraction of the press release. This event was described in news commentaries in both of the world's best science journals, *Science* and *Nature*, and both commentaries were strongly supportive of President Emmert and the study published in the *J. of Pediatrics*.

Second, I would like to acknowledge a milestone in university funding; that is, passing the \$1 billion mark in grant and contract funding during fiscal year 2007. This is a remarkable accomplishment by our faculty, staff and students. If one divides that sum by the number of faculty, it works out to approximately \$200,000 per faculty member—a number that compares very favorably with \$64,000, the amount the average U.S. worker, the world's most productive worker, contributes to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But even the \$1 billion underestimates faculty productivity as patient revenue contributes approximately another \$500 million to total UW operating funds.

Since academic year has not yet begun, I don't have any new business to report from the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Councils.

To step back for a moment, let me say that at the present time I don't see any major issues causing general unrest among the faculty. There are, of course, dissatisfied faculty here and there on campus and issues that could flare up but overall, the mood of the faculty seems to be one of optimism that things are getting better under the leadership of President Emmert and Provost Wise. Evidence in support of this occurred during my conversations with the chairs of the Faculty Councils as I met individually with each of them to review last year's progress and to see what issues are on the table for this coming academic year. Without any prompting from me, three of the Chairs mentioned to me that in their dealings with various administrators in doing the work of their Councils last year, they were happy with recent administrative appointments made by President Emmert because these administrators were better than previous administrators at facilitating their work—the very definition of a good administrator. To be clear, the administrators I am talking about are the so-called presidential designees, usually at the Vice President or Vice Provost level, who work with the Faculty Councils.

You will recall that there are 14 Councils, each with own issues. I will be reporting back to you about their work during the year.

I would like to conclude my remarks by saying a few words about 'academic values'. As members of the Board of Regents, your world, usually in business or law, is different from my world, academia. It is sometimes difficult for each of us to understand the other's culture.

In the interests of facilitating understanding, let me briefly talk about three academic values that I, along with many members of the faculty, hold dear. These are:

- “Education is a process, an experiment, a journey, an exploration, not a commodity or product.” “A process, not a product.”
- “Students are learners, not customers.” “Learners, not customers.”
- “Professors, facilities and classmates are part of the educational process, but it is the engagement (the engagement) of the individual student that distinguished education as a transformative process (a transformative process).” It is such engagement that we, as faculty, seek to facilitate in our students.

My education has meant everything to me and is the basis of my respect for this institution. My education was a transformative process for me. My life would have been completely different without my education. I grew up on a farm in Iowa, similar in circumstance to Cullen White, last year’s ASUW president, who grew up in a small town in Nebraska. My mother had a high school education while my dad had an education only through the 3rd grade. I was the first in my extended family to go to college.

As an undergraduate, I majored in biology and had the good fortune to work with, not one, but two, professors who were there to facilitate my transformative process. I discovered that real education is more a matter of asking the right questions, not knowing the right answers. I talked with my professors and classmates about the ‘big questions’—the meaning of life, of what one should care about and why, and what living is for. The questions became narrower in scope, more specialized, in graduate school but the transformation became more robust, reaching the point of being able to make my own independent assessment about the nature of reality—based on evidence, not authority. I would also like to speak to a point that Gail Stygall, last year’s Chair of the Faculty Senate, made several times. That is, it is the resource-starved humanities that usually provide the core disciplines that address the big questions.

So I hope these brief remarks help you understand where I’m coming from as a member of the faculty. But please understand that, like you, I want to do what is best for this institution, an institution that has transformed the Pacific Northwest. Can you imagine what Seattle and the State of Washington would look like without the University of Washington? Can you imagine Seattle without our world-class medical facilities, without our innovative computer and biotechnology companies, without our high-powered law firms, without the culture and wealth generated by the University? It would be difficult to imagine, but for sure, Seattle would not be anything like what it is today.