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Remarks at January 31, 2008 Faculty Senate Meeting

Welcome. We have an interesting agenda with at least 2 items that may generate comments and questions, that is, the Legislative Report and the Senate Restructuring proposal. I would like to make a few remarks about an issue that arose after the agenda was sent out, that is, the series of articles, *Victory and Ruins*, published this week in the Seattle Times about the UW football program or more specifically, the Husky Rose Bowl team of the 2000 season. President Emmert will also have something to say about this in his report.

I respect the role journalism plays in the writing of the public record, but the Times series seemed to have a particularly singular and harsh point of view. It did describe a sorry chapter in the history of the UW, a chapter characterized by brutish and criminal behavior by some players on the 2000 football team. The university's response was not sufficiently corrective or of a standard worthy of this institution. The aggressive legal pursuit of a rape victim who sued the university was particularly unfortunate. It would have been far better for the university to settle the lawsuit uncontested along with a letter of apology.

Given that these articles described what happened 5 to 8 years ago, I think the question we should now ask is, "Do the same problems still exist today?" The answer is largely "no." We have entirely new leadership at the top—a new president, Mark Emmert; a new football coach, Tyrone Willingham; and a new athletic director, Todd Turner. Their combined leadership and their demands for accountability have turned the situation around and they deserve credit for doing so. While all three would surely like to see more wins on the football field, they respect the integrity of the university and recognize the importance of academic values. I think it was the correct decision to allow Coach Willingham to complete the terms of his contract. On the other hand, I find it regrettable that today is Todd Turner's last day as athletic director. The scandalous state of affairs described in the Times' articles dramatically highlights the difficulties faced by Emmert, Willingham and Turner when they came here.

Part of the improvements in oversight of the athletic program has involved the Faculty Senate. Closer ties between the athletic program and faculty governance were established in 2004 when the Faculty Athletic Representative, who is Pat Dobel, and the Faculty Senate signed an agreement stipulating that a quarterly report will be given to the Senate Executive Committee by the Faculty Athletic Representative and together with the Athletic Director, they will address the Faculty Senate at least annually on the state of the Intercollegiate Athletic Department. This agreement includes a requirement that both of them be open to questions about issues of concern to the faculty. They have fulfilled these obligations over the past 3 years.

Also, the Faculty Council on Academic Standards and the Faculty Council on Instructional Quality have formed an *ad hoc Committee on Academic Quality and Rigor* to review the academic rigor of selected courses, including some of those popular with the athletes.

Shortly after Todd Turner was hired in 2004, The Seattle Times published an article entitled *Turner is the right man for Huskies right now*. As stated in the article, his clear message then was that rules would not be compromised for the sake of winning. He did not deviate from that message. The hiring of a new Athletic Director with a proven commitment to academics and integrity is once again critical for the university. Or, as Todd Turner expressed it, it is important for an Athletic Director to have values that are in line with what the institution is about.

Please hold your comments and questions until after the next agenda item, that is, the Report of the President. President Mark Emmert will give this report.