Call to Order

Following social time beginning at 5:30 p.m., Regent Ayer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Dinner was provided for Regents and invited meeting participants.

Roll Call

The Secretary of the Board recorded the roll.

Invited presenters and others present: Interim President Cauce, Interim Provost Baldasty, Karin Nyrop, Rolf Johnson, and Norm Arkans. Terrence (Terry) MacTaggart, Senior Fellow, Association of Governing Boards, was present to lead the retreat preparation.

Topics for Discussion for Information Only

As the Board and guests were gathering for the meeting, approximately 100 protesters entered the meeting room, and began speaking loudly about various issues, primarily focused on wages and working conditions for certain University employees. The protesters initially offered public comment peacefully although the room was very crowded. At one point, the protesters circled the table where Board members and guests were sitting. Regent Ayer asked them to conclude their remarks. They refused to stop talking, and became louder and more agitated. Some protesters were standing in a large group and pressing closer to the Board and guests. President Cauce at one point stood up and asked them to be quiet but they refused. Eventually it was necessary to have five or six UW police stand between the protesters and the Board because the protesters pressed close enough to touch the backs of chairs board members and guests were sitting in. During this time, the protesters continued to shout and refused to leave. As Chair of the meeting, Regent Ayer attempted to restore order, and told the protestors they were disrupting the meeting. He repeatedly asked the protestors to return to their chairs, be quieter, and allow the meeting to proceed. They refused, and continued pressing forward. Regent Ayer repeated his request to them to remain quiet so the meeting could continue, or to leave the room. They refused. The Board tried to continue with the meeting, but it was impossible given the volume and proximity of the protesters. Because the protesters were so disruptive it was impossible to conduct an orderly meeting and order could not be restored, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting and reconvene in a different room of the building. After the Board moved to the new room the protesters walked around the side of the building to a patio located just outside the room. They then began yelling and banging on the windows. UW Police were on the patio as well and eventually the protesters disbursed.
At some point, Regent Ayer learned protestors related to the Animal Research and Care Facility (ARCF) were also present, but did not know whether they had been involved in the earlier disruptive protest. Although the Board meeting had been significantly disrupted and the situation had been unnerving due to the number of protesters and their close proximity to where the Board had been sitting, and because individuals with opinions about the ARCF did not have an opportunity to offer a public comment because others making public comments had become disruptive, the Board decided to allow a representative from that group to enter the room, make a public comment, and observe the remainder of the meeting.

Attachment: Reclaim UW Coalition demand letter

Introductions and Retreat Preparation

Terry MacTaggart began preparation for the Board retreat to be held on Thursday, April 9, by listing what he heard from individual Board members and President (then Provost) Cauce during recent phone meetings:

- Terry asked the right questions
- Regents share mutual respect for each other
- Regents are proud of the UW
- More policy discussion
- More strategy discussion
- Open meetings – Regents are “too careful”
- Finding the “right” university president

He described his game plan for the retreat:

- High performing governing Board
- Strategic and operational priorities
- Mutual expectations
- Identify leadership qualifications for University President
- Search process

For the dinner meeting Terry plans “easing” into the retreat and exploring “Governance in the Sunshine.”

He asked Regents to introduce themselves:

- Name;
- Profession/life work;
- Why they serve;
- Something about themselves that is not widely known.

Following introductions, Terry discussed “Governance in the Sunshine” (attached to these minutes) offering the options:

1. Hide in the shadows
2. Avoidance behavior – being too careful or talking “happy talk”
3. Embrace the sunshine
Terry encouraged making a friend of openness, with more robust debate, focused internal discussion, and leading a statewide conversation about the future of a great public research university, and offered advantages of a broader conversation:

1. Shape the dialogue
2. Hear more voices
3. Greater public support for choices
4. Greater ownership of UW’s future
5. Positions the Board
6. Develops staff
7. Aligns with Washington’s values

And he identified some downsides and realities:

1. Not a panacea
2. Some cost
3. Slower than small circle decisions
4. Controversy becomes very public
5. Too much input for crisp output
6. Disruptive conversations
7. Journalistic skepticism must be overcome

Terry introduced his pyramid of high performing governance, describing good, better and best Boards, concluding by saying the best Boards work with their presidents to build and sustain great universities.

He posed key questions about implementing Governance in the Sunshine:

1. Timing
2. Link with presidential search?
3. Architecture
4. Leadership – Board? President? Panel?
5. Evaluation
6. Alternatives

Attachment: Governance in the Sunshine: Tips for Discussing Policy Options in Open Meetings, Ellen Chaffee, AGB Senior Fellow and Terry MacTaggart, AGB Senior Fellow

Other Business for Discussion

There was no additional business for discussion.

Adjourn

Hearing no other business to come before the Board, Regent Ayer adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.
Dear UW Board of Regents,

Allow us to introduce ourselves – we are Reclaim UW, a coalition of student and worker organizations from across the UW campuses. Our coalition is dedicated to eliminating rising inequality that has taken hold of the University of Washington and reclaiming democratic control for students and workers of a university that has become increasingly dominated by corporate interests. We are here today to issue a set of demands that will reclaim UW as the institution we know it can be – an institution that reflects its core values of diversity, integrity, and respect.

When we say we want to eliminate inequality at UW, we mean inequality in the broadest sense. We mean racial inequality in which only 3% of students and 1.7% of faculty identify as Black; economic inequality in which 12,000 campus workers sustain themselves on less than $15/hr, while over 1,700 UW employees make above $150,000 per year; and structural inequality in which binding power and authority at UW rests with a Board of Regents, most of whom are current and former business executives. Students and workers have written the following demands to bring equity and fairness to the UW.

Within the current 2014-2015 academic year, we demand that the University of Washington enact the following measures:

• Freeze or reduce the cost of tuition/fees, as well as rent at Housing and Food Service facilities, for all UW undergraduate and graduate students (including resident, out-of-state, international, and fee-based program students), while maintaining or increasing full-time equivalent (FTE) levels for custodial staff, trades workers, classified staff, and other UW workers paid less than $100,000 annually and not cutting student services.
• Restore all UW custodian positions that have been eliminated since 2008.
• Waive tuition payment requirements for all academically-mandated internships and/or practicums.
• Establish a Racial Equity Fund to allocate a pool of money to programs, activities and research that will provide services of specific interest to minority communities, so as to entice minority faculty and students to seek employment and education at the University of Washington.
• Pay all campus workers – including student workers and Social Work practicum workers – at least $15/hr, phased in on the City of Seattle minimum wage ordinance schedule.
• Acknowledge and enact #blacklivesmatter demands delivered on February 25, 2015.
• Agree to a fair contract with UAW Local 4121, the academic student workers at UW.

Beyond these short-term demands, we recognize there are broader reforms at the UW that are necessary to address structural inequality on campus. Therefore, we demand that the UW enact the following structural demands:

• Provide budget transparency, including internet-accessible electronic copies of:
  o Administrator salaries, bonuses, and gifts
Past and current UW Salary Stratification Reports
Corporate investments and sponsorships
Fiscal year budgets for all university departments and units
Carryover funds by departments

- Establish a Racial Equity Fund to allocate a pool of money to hire minority faculty after I-200 is repealed.
- Expand the direct, binding decision-making power of students and non-administrative staff—including academic workers, custodians, classified staff, and others—in determining the allocation of university funds.
- Commission a third-party audit of UW unpaid internships to determine adherence to Department of Labor standards for all labor sectors (public, for-profit, and nonprofit).
- Address the rise of precarious and contingent groups of workers at UW, including adjunct professors, by providing equal pay for equal work and long term employment contracts.
- Grant equal voting power to faculty, students, local communities, and administrators on the search and hiring committee for the new UW president.
- Create a long-term strategic plan to reduce UW tuition/fees and rent costs while maintaining or increasing full-time equivalent (FTE) levels for custodial staff, trades workers, classified staff, and other UW workers paid less than $100,000 annually and not cutting student services.
- Provide sliding scale, affordable, and accessible childcare for all university staff, faculty, and students during work hours, class hours, and university events, as well as meaningful parental decision-making power over building design and scheduling.

It is the hope of our coalition and thousands of students and workers across campus that enactment of these demands will bring us closer to restoring respect, dignity, and democratic governance at UW.

Please contact our coalition at reclaimuw@gmail.com with a response to these demands. We look forward to your response by April 22nd.

Sincerely,

Reclaim UW Coalition:

Academic Workers for a Democratic University (AWDU)
African Student Association (ASA)
Asian Coalition for Equity (ACE)
Confronting Climate Change (Divest UW)
Fourth Wave Feminists (FWF)
Health Equity Circle (HEC)
International Socialist Organization (ISO)
Outside Agitators 206
Scholars Against Systemic Racism (SASR)
Social Worker Student Union (SWSU)
Somali Student Association (SSA)
Students for a National Health Program (SNaHP)
Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights (SUPER)
United Auto Workers (UAW) 4121
United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)
UW Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A)
UW Real Food Challenge (RFC)
UW Students for Farmworker Justice
Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Local 1488
Governance in the Sunshine: 
Tips for Discussing Policy Options in Open Meetings

Introduction

Open meeting and open records laws are intended to increase transparency in the deliberations of government sponsored or regulated institutions, including public colleges, universities and systems. Transparency is a critically important value in a democracy. However, if trustees and presidents allow themselves to be intimidated by the presence of stakeholders and journalists, the result leads to transparency deprived of meaning. At worst, the failure to find legitimate ways of discussing policy options in the sunshine is a fiduciary failure. If difficult strategic issues remain unaddressed or minimally discussed, it is more the fault of the discussants than the sunshine requirements. The suggestions below offer ways to engage in serious policy dialogue in the public arena. A more comprehensive approach to governing in the sunshine is to invite the public to participate in the conversation, a topic for another time.

Principles First

1. Most matters that come to boards have been thoroughly processed and carefully vetted. With competent leadership and board-CEO alignment, most votes are for approval. Nevertheless, you may well have significant questions or concerns that should be discussed by the full board. The best results come from civil discourse in which no one comes to feel defensive. One approach that helps is to say to yourself “if the best interests of the university will be served by this action, my job is to say ‘yes.’ If in good conscience I cannot say ‘yes,’ my job is to ask questions that will reveal whether my concerns are justified . . . and to keep asking those questions until we determine whether my concerns are warranted and cannot/will not be addressed before the vote.”

Broad Interests should Trump Tight Positions

2. “Reporters are fight promoters,” according to David Broder, the late and highly regarded Washington Post columnist. Try to frame issues in terms of the interests (plural) that pertain, which encourages thinking in terms of problem-solution rather than a predetermined and specific policy outcome. An interest might be to increase access for low income students. A position might read “No tuition increase come hell or high water.” Focusing on broad interests allows participants to seek options and to work as partners exploring for the best alternative. Honestly, interest-talk is pretty boring from the outside. However, it is more productive for resolving problems and may reduce chances of being misquoted or misinterpreted in order to keep the controversy alive.
Avoid Lines in the Sand

3. Frame issues in terms of broad goals (why we want to do X, what background values are at stake) rather than in terms of rigid absolutes. To be sure, some votes are very specific—a vote to increase tuition by a specific percentage, for example. However, even that vote is the specification of a broader policy or operational objective. Lines in the sand invite clash, which are dramatic, a magnet for dissent, and often inflame some of the interested parties. Forcefully expressed rigidity also makes good press, but not from the university’s point of view. Dissent is what will get reported and positions will often be exaggerated to enhance the drama of the clash.

Conversational Tone

4. Although board discussions often involve serious matters, aim for a conversational tone most of the time. Feel free to draw out any quiet board members so that the group can benefit from their perspectives, too. Asking someone whose views tend to be different from your own can go a long way toward building a culture of respect for diverse points of view.

Questions are Your Friends

5. Questions are your friends when meeting in public. They allow you to make what may be an unpopular but important point without having to take the role of spoil-sport. When you have a concern that may raise hackles or red flags in the room, consider phrasing it as a question instead of a statement. For example, instead of, “We’ll lose a lot of students if we do that” try, “How would that decision impact enrollment by high-need students?” Questions that include your reason for asking allow you to keep the focus on what’s important to you. To confine the response to the terrain you want covered, say something like, “Can you share X, which will help me understand Y?”

Why, Not

6. Avoid “why?” questions. They can make the other party defensive and come off as accusatory as in, “Why did you …?” Instead, “What were the reasons for...?” gets at the same thing in a less confrontational way, and helps the other person and the group by channeling a response to a specific point.

Chair as Narrator
7. The chair can control the narrative and connect the dots for observers and reporters by linking contributions to outcomes or consequences. A good chair does this in part by summarizing what has been said and reaffirming where the board is in its deliberations. The chair wants to control the narrative in terms of the institution's interests and advance those interests through problem-solution discourse. Related to this, talk about policies should focus on expected outcomes. What is to be done as a result of the information presented?

Frame Again and Again

8. Don’t assume what is said is perfectly clear and understood by those attending the meeting. Context is the frame for meaning. Board members have much more context than observers and members of the press. Board members have history with the issues, the staff, and each other that allow them to communicate and to be understood in ways that outsiders do not necessarily grasp. Outsiders, meanwhile, have their own contexts that they use to interpret meaning. Therefore, speakers need to seize opportunities for redundancy. Link contributions to points already made, repeat important and related points.

The chair also needs to help here by offering summaries as signposts: "We seem to be agreed that . . ." “We seem to have brought the focus of the problem to this……” The board needs to hammer away at making clear what it is saying. And they need to help each other out in this respect—including those with whom they disagree—to help prevent misinterpretation, downplay clash, and play up partnership as the board’s public face.

Ellen Chaffee
AGB Senior Fellow

Terry MacTaggart
AGB Senior Fellow