

To: Faculty Senate, 2010-2011
From: Maude Hines, Presiding Officer

October 4, 2010

Welcome, new and continuing senators, to our first meeting of the Faculty Senate, and to the 2010-2011 academic year. This is the first of the annual letters from the Presiding Officer recommended by the recently disbanded Ad Hoc Committee on Constitutional Change. Below I focus on plans and developments for the current year; for an understanding of the regular functions and procedures of the Senate and its committees, I urge you to consult this year's Faculty Governance Guide, which is available as a PDF file at <http://www.pdx.edu/faculty-senate/reference-documents>.

The Steering Committee held its first annual summer retreat on September 1, 2010, which was also attended by chairs of major Senate committees and facilitated by Alan Cabelly. Taking seriously the Ad Hoc Committee on Constitutional Change's recommendation that "the Senate... operate in a strategic fashion to address institution-wide issues as a working partner with the administration in shared governance," we discussed ways to make the Senate more proactive and efficient, and to improve lines of communication between the Senate, the faculty, the administration, and the union.

Our agenda priorities this year will reflect the current University context: among the issues we will be confronted with this year are the report of the Financial Futures Committee, the recommendations of the Governor's Reset Committee, and efforts toward OUS restructuring. The primary focus of our November meeting will be "student success," while the December meeting will focus on budget and finance. For the winter and spring quarters, we will also be guided by your priorities: the January meeting will be organized to solicit full senate participation in shaping the agenda for the rest of the year. We will give more details about this at the December meeting, but please begin talking to your colleagues now about what's important to them so that your participation will be informed by the concerns of your constituencies. Conversely, we urge you to report on pertinent Senate activities in your department meetings and other relevant forums.

To streamline the deliberative process, we are experimenting with some changes to the agenda. In the spirit of the much-celebrated "consent agenda" for curricular revision, the Steering Committee will ask for oral presentations only for those parts of committee reports we predict might be controversial or need further discussion. Because we want to recognize the hard work of the Senate's committees, we will ask committee members to stand for acknowledgment when they have submitted reports. Written reports will continue to be included with agendas. As with curricular changes, if there is a report about which you would like to ask questions or initiate discussion, please inform Sarah Andrews-Collier or me before the end of roll call (which will, this year, begin at promptly 3pm).

We on the Steering Committee look forward to a meaningful and productive year!

With warm regards,

Maude Hines
Presiding Officer