



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Fifth Meeting
18 March 2004

Minutes

Members Present: Aigbedo, Bard, Berven (D), Berven (K), Bhargava, Blume, Bryant-Friedrich, Cipielewski, Didier, Dunn, Eis, Fink, Gardner, Goldberg, Grossman, Hightower, Howell, Kidger, Khapoya, Klemanski, LeMarbe, Lepkowski, Licker, Mabee, Machmut-Jhashi, Moore, Nancy, Oakley, Rowe, Russell, Savage, Schott-Baer, Schweitzer, Sethi, Stamps, Stano, Sudol, Thompson, Tracy, Wendell, Williams

Members Absent: Andersen, Downing, Frick, Giblin, Goslin, Graves, Hansen, Haskell, Keane, Latcha, Maines, McNair, Mosby, Otto, Papazian, Polis, Porter, Schochetman, Wood

Summary of Actions

1. Informational Item: Calendar Update ? Mr. Moudgil
2. Roll Call. Approval of February 2004 Minutes (Ms. Williams, Ms. Didier)
3. Motion from Steering Committee to approve the new General Education program. (Mr. Lepkowski, Ms. Moore). Approved.
4. Motion from the Library to approve a revised constitution. (Ms. Didier, Mr. Lepkowski) Approved.
5. Motion for recommending procedures for constructing academic calendars (Mr. Russell, Mr. Stamps). Approved as amended (see 5b, 5c)
 - 5a. Motion to amend the procedural guidelines for constructing academic calendars by replacing item 2 with the following: ?Fall commencement held the Saturday following the Saturday after the Thanksgiving recess.? (Mr. Goslin, Mr. Cipielewski) Defeated.
 - 5b. Motion to amend the procedural guidelines to reflect that the will of the Senate is that there is no need for a consistent starting date before or after Labor Day. (Mr. Tracy, Mr. Stano). Approved. (22 yes, 17 no, 1 abstention)
 - 5c. Motion to amend the procedural guidelines, revising item 2 to read: Fall commencement held after final exams. (Mr. Russell, Ms. Howell) Approved.
6. Motion to waive the second reading of the Motion from the Steering Committee to expand the membership of the General Education Committee. (Mr. Cipielewski, Ms. Moore). Approved.
- 6a. Motion from the Steering Committee to expand the membership of the General Education Committee from six to nine faculty members. (Mr. Licker, Mr. Russell). Approved.

Calling the meeting to order at 3:10, Mr. Moudgil began with the only informational item on the agenda, an update on the calendar issue. He informed senators that discussions continue with Kevin Grimm and Scott Barns of the AAUP. Time is needed to continue the dialogue and further developments will be brought to the Senate as they become known.

The Secretary proceeded with the roll, after which it was determined that a quorum of members was present. The [Minutes](#) of the Meeting of February 19, 2004 were then approved. (Ms. Williams, Ms. Didier)

Old Business

Mr. Moudgil directed the Senate's attention to the first item of old business ? the motion to approve the new General Education program.

MOVED that A [Proposal](#) for the Renewal of General Education at Oakland University? from General Education Task Force II be accepted and that the new General Education program be approved. (Mr. Lepkowski, Ms. Moore)

He reminded Senators that a second reading had already taken place at the previous meeting, but that voting was deferred so that General Education Task Force II could incorporate the changes to the Proposal recommended by the four Senate Committees. After noting that this is an historic occasion for the General Education program, Mr. Moudgil opened the floor for discussion. With no discussion forthcoming, Mr. Moudgil called for a vote on the motion. Senators applauded after its unanimous approval. Mr. Moudgil then warmly thanked all those involved in the long process of creating the new program, those who devoted countless hours to the arduous task of bringing the proposal to completion. He extended congratulations to all and expressed his appreciation to the Senate.

The next item involved a second reading on the motion to approve a revised Library constitution.

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees approval of the revised [Constitution](#) for the Library. (Ms. Didier, Mr. Lepkowski)

Mr. Moudgil offered the following comment: The Library faculty revised the Constitution in light of the Senate discussion during the first reading: Article V, Section ii now eliminates LCAP service during a year a person is up for tenure and/or promotion. With no discussion on the issue, the Senate voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Next addressing the calendar issue, Mr. Moudgil reminded Senators that the motion from the Steering Committee involves recommending procedures for creating academic calendars and not the approval of a specific calendar.

MOVED that the University Senate recommend the following criteria when establishing calendars for fall semesters: (1) Fourteen weeks of classes for each class module; (2) Fall commencement held on the Saturday after final exams; (3) One or more study days between the end of classes and the start of final; (4) New student convocation held on the day that classes start in the evening. (Mr. Russell, Mr. Stamps)

Thanking Mr. Russell for his work in compiling information related to the calendar, Mr. Moudgil invited discussion. Ms. Williams introduced an amendment from Mr. Goslin (absent):

MOVED to amend item 2 to read: Fall commencement held the Saturday following the Saturday after the Thanksgiving recess. (Mr. Goslin, Mr. Cipielewski)

Ms. Williams then read the following rationale provided by Mr. Goslin: (1) Regardless when, in December, commencement is held, it always occurs before final decisions are taken on whether students have completed graduation requirements. (2) Many student and their families, staff members, and faculty have holiday travel plans which are negatively affecting by the timing of commencement when it occurs on the weekend following examinations. More people would willingly participate in commencement if it were held in early December. (3) Holding commencement in early December would not interfere with students preparing for final examinations. Mr. Cipielewski's offered a second to the motion.

Mr. Grossman asked for clarification regarding which Saturday is being proposed, whether it is two weeks from the Saturday during Thanksgiving recess. Ms. Williams confirmed that this is correct, and that it is her understanding that for most years this would be the Saturday between the end of classes and final exams. Mr. Russell remarked that the Saturday that Mr. Goslin proposed would be the last Saturday before the end of classes (with classes ending on Monday or Tuesday). He then added that if the aim is to avoid exams altogether the first Saturday of December would make a better choice. Mr. Moudgil then reminded Senators that holding commencement before finals would create an undesirable situation for students preparing for exams, noting that students would need to take time to entertain relatives and guests ? time that should be devoted to exams. In his opinion, commencement should be enjoyed after final exams are completed. Mr. Sudol remarked on the work of the *ad hoc* committee, formed at the request of the Provost, to examine the issue of fall commencement. The committee found that the Saturday after finals is the best time to hold commencement, and that contrary to Mr. Goslin's remarks, this date has proven extremely popular with students and their families. In fact, attendance has been standing-room-only. His opinion was that the amendment should be defeated. Ms. Rammel added her concern about doctoral defense dates. Because doctoral candidates are not hooded until after their defense, this issue would need to be looked at. Ms. Howell then raised the issue of Saturday itself being the official day for commencement ceremonies, wondering whether Sunday could be an option so that various religious traditions could be accommodated.

With no further discussion, Mr. Moudgil's call for a vote yielded only two votes for the amendment (Ms. Williams, Mr. Cipielewski); the motion was defeated.

Returning to the original motion, Mr. Russell summarized discussions regarding the start date of fall semester that took place a few days earlier at an AAUP meeting. To fulfill all four of the guidelines put forth in the motion, a Monday (before Labor Day) start would be required. The BOT has already approved the 2004 calendar; however, for 2005, this start date would be in violation of the contract. The AAUP has decided it would not grant a contract exception for the 2005 calendar. Asked by Mr. Moudgil to elaborate on the AAUP's position, Mr. Russell explained that in the recent contract negotiations, the AAUP agreed not to challenge the already-approved calendar of 2004, but that it wished to put calendars for subsequent years in future contracts. The AAUP was assured by the administration that this was not necessary as a pre-Labor Day start would be rare, occurring approximately once in six years. When the AAUP learned last week that the administrations planned to start all fall calendars before Labor Day, members of the negotiating team thought this was inconsistent with what was negotiated.

Mr. Cipielewski expressed disappointment in the original decision to move commencement to

December, which the AAUP was generally not in favor of at the time. As a member of the AAUP then, Mr. Cipielewski recalled a member of the administration informing the AAUP of what the change would be and of being told that they (the AAUP) should consider that they had been consulted. His added that his views on the current matter have been colored by that episode.

Mr. Moudgil asserted that he fully intends to work with the AAUP in ironing out difficulties to come to a workable solution. Mr. Tracy asserted that the registrar seems to have a strong preference for the calendar to be consistent each year. He then made a motion for an amendment.

MOVED that it is the will of the Senate that there is no need to have a consistent starting date before or after Labor Day. (Mr. Tracy, Mr. Stano)

Mr. Sudol remarked that among that professional group (of registrars) it is important to have a consistent calendar, which is the case in 11 of the 15 universities in Michigan, whose starting date is the Monday prior to Labor Day. Mr. Tracy argued that the intent of his amendment is to allow flexibility, so that a post-Labor Day start can occur if possible.

Mr. Sudol asked whether there is an academic reason *not* to start before Labor Day. Mr. Tracy raised the issues of student attendance and advising, asserting that both would be problematic with an early start. Mr. Moudgil wondered whether these potential problems are fact, or, indeed, fiction. Mr. Shablin, Registrar, then offered his comments. In his conversations with colleagues from other institutions, the pre-Labor Day start is essentially a non-issue. Attendance is normal, just like any other week of class. The only concern Mr. Shablin expressed was that a Wednesday start date may pose the greatest danger for attendance, particularly if classes begin at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Another issue with a mid-week start is that the tuition cancellation policy after the first week (after the deadline for a 100% refund) will be jeopardized. Ms. Awbrey offered the perspective of UCUI, whose members felt strongly that a Monday start was the better option. Ms. Williams noted that OU serves a campus of 80% commuter students, and such students may not attend class that week, contrary to their peers at neighboring institutions such as MSU, where students are residing on campus. Mr. Berven asked whether student opinion has been solicited; Mr. Sudol referred him to the Minutes of the previous meeting where it is noted that the student representative to the Senate, Mr. Porter, as well as the Student Congress President, Mr. Parks, indicated that this issue is not perceived to be a problem by the students they have consulted. Ms. Howell raised the issue of women with children and how they may be affected by the calendar; she posited that their interests are probably not reflected in Student Congress.

Voting on Mr. Tracy's amendment required a roll call. 22 voted yes, 17 no, 1 abstention. The following senators voted no: Bard, Bryant-Friedrich, Didier, Eis, Gardner, Kidger, Klemanski, LeMarbe, Lepkowski, Licker, Mabee, Moore, Nancy, Rowe, Schott-Baer, Sudol, Wendell. Abstention: Sethi. The motion passed. Mr. Russell then offered another amendment, duly seconded by Ms. Howell.

MOVED that the procedural guidelines for constructing academic calendars replace item 2 to read: Fall commencement held after final exams. (Mr. Russell, Ms. Howell)

Ms. Williams began discussion on the issue by suggesting that commencement could be held

on a weeknight instead of the weekend. Mr. Gardner noted that there are three graduation ceremonies at Oakland, and that work schedules could prohibit many people from attending during the week. Ms. Klemanski also mentioned a cost factor, noting that it would be expensive for three-day rentals for chairs, staging, and other equipment. Ms. Howell brought up the university's commitment to diversity, and wondered if more flexibility in scheduling isn't desirable, regardless of cost. Ms. Didier asked Mr. Shablin to comment on commencement scheduling at other institutions; Mr. Shablin noted that he was aware of MSU being the only institution in the state in which commencement ceremonies are held over a two-day period (Friday night and Saturday). Mr. Stano urged consideration of the Saturday/Sunday issue to be extended to spring commencement as well. Ms. Klemanski reminded senators that alternating Saturday/Sunday had been the policy for fall commencement for many years.

Mr. Shablin expressed concern that a post-Labor Day start would require scheduling commencement after final exams, which would put us back into the predicament of holding graduation as late as December 23rd or 24th. Mr. Russell asserted that this issue is not a Board policy, and that it will be negotiated. With no further discussion, the Senate voted unanimously to approve the amendment.

Returning the original motion, Mr. Berven asked whether there is particular order of priority in the four guidelines. Mr. Russell responded that no order was implied when the guidelines were written. Mr. Cipielewski offered his response to the earlier question of whether the timing of commencement was for convenience or for academic reasons. He stated that the original reasons for moving commencement from fall to winter were not academic in nature, and that he takes offense at the suggestion that to not support a late commencement implies personal preferences being put ahead of academic considerations.

The motion to approve the amended procedural guidelines in constructing the academic calendar was put to a vote, and met with unanimous approval.

New Business

MOVED that the number of faculty members on the General Education Committee be increased from six to nine. (Mr. Licker, Mr. Russell)

Mr. Grossman asked if this expansion was intended to balance the academic areas; Mr. Russell affirmed that it was the intent. Mr. Cipielewski moved to waive the second reading of the motion. Duly seconded by Ms. Moore, the motion to waive the second reading was approved. The Senate then voted unanimously to approve the motion from the Steering Committee.

Good and Welfare

With no items for good and welfare, the Provost's call for adjournment met with general approval and the meeting concluded at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Machmut-Jhashi
Secretary to the University Senate

4/13/04

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