

Oakland University Senate

Third meeting
November 14, 1996

Minutes

Members present: Alber, Andrews, Awbrey, Benson, Blume, Brieger, Briggs-Bunting, Buffard-O'Shea, Christina, Connellan, Dahlgren, Dillon, Frankie, Garfinkle, Gordon, Hahn, Haskell, Herold, Hildebrand, Kazarian, Keane, Liboff, Lilliston, Long, Mahamwal, Meuser, Miller, Moore, Moran, Nesbary, Olson, Pettengill, Polis, Reddy, Reynolds, Rozek, Russi, Schwartz, Sevilla, Speer, Talbert, Tower, Wharton, Witt

Members absent: Abiko, Bricker, Cole, Downing, Fliedner, Gardner, Gilroy, Hovanesian, Jarski, Kheir, Landsberg, Meehan, Otto, Purcell, Raiss, Rice, Riley, Sahu, Schochetman

Summary of actions:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Committee reports: Committee on Assessment (Mr. Goslin); Human Relations Committee (Ms. Gibson); Research Committee (Mr. Pisharodi); Senate Budget Review Committee (Mr. McKay); Academic Standing and Honors Committee (Ms. Crum); Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (Ms. Miller)
3. Information items.
4. Steering Committee Election to replace Mr. Dahlgren.
5. Motion to amend Honorary Degree Committee membership by adding a graduate student. (Mr. Landsberg, Ms. Briggs-Bunting) Approved.
6. Motion to establish the Honorary Degree Committee as amended. (Mr. Andrews, Mr. Bricker) Approved.
7. Motion to amend the charge to the proposed Senate Library Committee (Ms. Frankie, Mr. Tower) Approved.
8. Motion to establish a Senate Library Committee with an amended charge (Mr. Andrews, Ms. Gilroy) Approved.
9. Motion to approve the Library Constitution. (Ms. Frankie, Ms. Gilroy) Approved.
10. Motion to fill a vacancy on the Senate Planning Review Committee (Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Benson) Approved.
11. Motion to recommend approval of a Master of Arts degree in Biology (Mr. Dahlgren, Mr. Andrews) First reading
12. Resolution that the Senate desires to continue to be consulted on major programmatic changes and plans. (Mr. Dillon, Mr. Andrews); motion to dispense with a second reading (Mr. Liboff, Mr. Pettengill) Approved. Resolution also approved.

The minutes of the October 17 Senate meeting were approved as distributed.

Before beginning with committee reports, Mr. Connellan announced that full copies of the reports are available in his office. Mr. Goslin then led off with a list of accomplishments of the Assessment Committee. The Committee reviewed Oakland's assessment plan, revised the schedule of deadlines so as to stagger the report deadlines, worked with the Teaching and Learning Committee to increase awareness of assessment among faculty, worked on an alumni

survey, disseminated information about assessment to the campus, initiated general education assessment. He called attention specifically to writing and communications skills and ways they might be improved, e.g allocating additional resources to rhetoric classes, requiring more writing in courses and more emphasis on discipline centered writing. Mr. Gordon asked if there were any plans to make students pass a writing proficiency exam. Mr. Goslin replied no but that there should be something of that nature in the curriculum. Ms Briggs-Bunting commented that the College and Dept. of Rhetoric are exploring the possibility of an upper level writing course for the College. Also that they've looked at the Wayne State model and considered writing across the curriculum as a possible option.

Ms. Gibson, who along with Ms. Kulwicki, chaired the Human Relation Committee last year reported on the Committee's work. The Committee consulted with UCUI to determine how ethnic diversity issues are covered in classes, worked on plans for securing funding to recruit minority students and faculty, collaborated with the Office of Equity, and provided assistance in writing grants.

The Research Committee, reported Mr. Pisharodi, was busy last year with the evaluation of research proposals resulting in the awarding of 19 faculty research fellowships. In addition the Committee was involved with the sponsorship of the President's Colloquium Series, initiated the New Investigator Research Award and increased the faculty fellowship award to \$7500.

Mr. McKay listed the accomplishment of the Senate Budget Review Committee which reviewed and provided budgetary analysis and implications for three proposed graduate programs and worked on developing a standardized budget form for new programs. In past years, the Committee also reviewed budget requests; this year, because of the two year budget, this was not a major activity.

Standing in for the chair of the Academic Standing and Honors Committee, Ms. Crum briefly outlined the Committee's work which consisted mainly of hearing appeals from students who had been dismissed. In addition they considered the probation and dismissal policy, reviewed the Honorary Degree guidelines and ultimately determined that honorary degrees were not in the committee's purview.

The last committee report, Admissions and Financial Aid, was presented by Karen Miller. While the written report details frustrations experienced by last year's committee, she reported that this year's group seems to be working much better. Areas of interest of the committee are minority recruitment and retention and the committee is looking at programs that work and ways of expanding them.

Information items.

Mr. Connellan reported on a number of items:

-- enrollment is up 2.6% this fall, the headcount is 13,956, we have more than 10,000 FYES;

---37 faculty positions for recruitment have been authorized, some represent new positions, some replacements;

---he expressed his appreciation to Mr. Dahlgren for his many years of service on the Senate, thanked him and wished him well on behalf of the senate;

---the athletic report is expected on Nov. 15 and will be made available to the university community by the end of next week. Mr. Russi expects to consult widely with the various constituencies before he makes a recommendation to the board of trustees.

The Senate Elections Committee, ably represented by Mr. Doane and Mr. Botsas, then took the floor. After explaining the restrictions, namely that no one from the College was eligible to serve, he opened the floor for nominations. And there were none. At least not until Ms. Briggs-Bunting nominated Ms. Hildebrand, who, given the fact that she already has to attend the Steering Committee meetings, indicated that she could indeed serve as an official member. No further nominations were forthcoming, nominations were closed and Ms. Hildebrand's election was approved.

Mr. Connellan then opened the floor for discussion of the proposed Honorary Degree Committee and guidelines, turning the Senate's attention first to the amendment to add a graduate student to the membership. With no discussion forthcoming, the Senate approved first the amendment and then the main motion. He called for volunteers for the committee, noting that it is ready for action, and also asked the Senators to forward any nominations for honorary degrees to him.

Attention then turned to the second item of old business, the establishment of a Senate Library Committee and discussion focussed on the amendment to revise item 2 of the charge. Ms. Frankie affirmed that the Library supports the creation of a Senate Library Committee. However, she argued in favor of the amendment which would give the committee an advisory role. She reiterated the reasons for proposing the change, namely, issues relating to the self governance of the library faculty, the limitations on any committee to perform as suggested in the original motion, and the appropriateness of aligning the role and responsibilities of this committee with other Senate committees. She amplified the Library's reasons for proposing the change in wording. Although the charge "to participate equally" has been in the constitution for a number of years, she asserted that this kind of a relationship between the Library Council and the Library has not existed. Both the Library and Council have struggled with the interpretation of the language in the charge to the council, for example, it is not clear what is meant by "participate equally" or "broad general library policy". Over the years, neither the Library nor any Council has sought to enforce a literal interpretation of the charge. It simply isn't feasible, she pointed out, given that the Council meets only a few times a year, members serve only two year terms, and the demands in terms of the time and expertise to carry out this charge would be excessive.

Rather, the Library and Council determined that the Council's most effective contributions center on Council consideration of specific issues of interest to the university community with Council members serving as liaisons between the Library and its constituencies in the university. She listed a number of examples where the Library Council participated in in-depth discussions on various library matters and provided valuable input. The model of the Library initiating discussion of important issues with the Council and then broadening the discussion to involve others who would be affected has worked effectively over the years. But, she

cautioned, such a model cannot be construed as the Council participating equally with the Library in the formulation of library policies. Because the language has been so misleading and confusing, the Library Council itself voted in 1995 to amend its charge to more accurately reflect the advisory role it has served over the years. She emphasized that the amendment does not change the relationship which has existed between the Library and the various Library Councils but rather clarifies and reaffirms the important role of the Councils. Finally, she pointed out that issues relating to Library autonomy and accountability can be addressed by the Senate's involvement in this committee through its appointments and the regular reporting structure.

Mr. Andrews reiterated his opposition to the amendment and pointed out that Ms. Frankie's objection to the phrase "broad general policy" is inconsistent, since that the phrase is also used in the amendment. If it was problematic before, it is still a problem. He submitted that the activities in the charge do fit well with the Library Committee; that participate equally doesn't mean that this committee will create policy. He expects that the Library will create the policies and bring them to this committee for consideration. He argued that the use of the term 'advise' would result in a marginalization of the role of the committee, that one of the reasons the Steering Committee has difficulty in getting people to serve on committees is that faculty feel their input is not taken into account. Mr. Brieger, trying to get to the nub of the issue, pointed out that the only time a problem would arise would be the unlikely event when the library is on one side of an issue and the Library Committee on the other. In that case, both points of view would be brought to the attention of the appropriate academic office. Mr. Liboff, noting that some people have suggested that there won't be libraries in 20 years and admitting he still mourns the demise of the card catalog, argued that the concept of a library will change as the electronic age matures. He feels that the Senate needs to be closely tied the developing electronic information field and that the Library Committee would provide useful assistance to the Library in dealing with these matters. Mr. Moran also spoke against the amendment; everyone has an interest in the library he claimed and he doesn't want to see the language weakened in any way.

Ms. Eberwein introduced herself as the invisible woman since she is on sabbatical. She is also a member of the Library Council and its former chair. She stated that the Senate can accomplish something very useful in the establishment of the Senate Library Committee and that she appreciates people's concern that the Library get advice and that the advice have some strength behind it. The Senate is being asked to chose between two alternatives, to advise or to share equally, and she commented that she has lived with both. When the Library Council itself was faced with this option, the Council members overwhelmingly chose the advisory function. She noted that the phrase to 'share equally' was both ambiguous and manifestly untrue. She pointed out that when the Steering Committee had the choice between the old charge and the one most recently approved by the Library Council, it chose the older one. However, this was not, by any means, a matter of returning to the roots. She quoted from the pre 1970 Senate Library Committee's charge which was to serve in an advisory capacity and to consult with the university librarian. The phrase to share equally was introduced by the Library faculty themselves, and she hypothesized, it was intended at that time to alleviate discomfort about the librarians having recently received faculty status. She added that the Steering Committee did not go back and did not look at the charges of other committees. No other senate committee shares equally with a specific academic unit in the development of that unit's policies. There would be great outrage if that were to happen, and she argued, it would establish a dangerous precedent . In order to involve the Senate more closely with library matters, she proposed adding the phrase "and the university Senate" to the amendment, stating that this would

continue what is currently the status quo. If there is a problem, an impasse, or if the Library Committee's advice were to fall on deaf ears, the Committee could then bring its concerns to the Senate. Ms. Briggs-Bunting was willing to sponsor this amendment to the amendment; Ms. Frankie accepted it as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Christina countered with the argument that if its not broken, don't fix it. Mr. Andrews averred that other senate committees don't share power, in fact, they act superior to academic units in that their policies are binding on all. He argued that the Library is getting a better deal; that the presence of 5 librarians on the committee and the fact that decisions are not binding on the library are a plus. Mr. Dillon also spoke against the amendment, noting that, although there has in the past been a spirit of cooperation between the Library Council and the Library, there is no guaranteed that this cooperation would always exist. He remarked that academic units have such a vested interest in the library that the idea of equal participation would ensure their interests and concerns are met. Ms. Buffard-O'Shea agreed that the cooperative spirit needs to be maintained.

Ms. Speer wondered about the stipulation that the committee meet at least once a semester. Mr. Andrews replied that this is a minimum, that, as with all senate committees, the committee would devise its own meeting schedule based on the work of the committee. The phrase 'to participate equally' had Mr. Mahamwal wondering how one would measure this and whether it was enforceable. Mr. Andrews replied that, although these are not items that are easily measured, there are many committees that deal with policy development and policy changes. Mr. Christina again pointed out that this language has been in effect for over 20 years. Mr. Brieger felt that approval of the original motion, with the 'participate equally' charge, would bring the Library closer to surveillance by the Senate and Steering Committee; and, he pointed out, if it doesn't work, we can change it. Mr. Liboff did not see it as surveillance or a watchdog function, but a chance to involve academic units more closely with developing library and information policies. Mr. Garfinkle found the change to the amendment proposed by Ms. Eberwein and Briggs-Bunting unclear. Amazingly discussion then fell off and the amendment was approved by a narrow margin. Some faculty members were fussed about the ratio of faculty vs. administrators in how the vote went; Ms. Briggs-Bunting took issue with the allegation that only administrators had voted for the amendment and expressed the opinion that decision to stay with the old language was a power grab by some members of the Steering Committee. Playing peacemaker, Mr. Sevilla reminded everyone that this is a 'university' Senate and warned against any attempts to factionalize the body.

Finally turning its attention to the main motion, to establish a Senate Library Committee with an amended charge, Mr. Tornopilsky wondered why the number of students on the committee was lowered from three to two. Mr. Andrews stated that he consulted with the Dean of the Library and had been informed that in the past, generally only two students were appointed and only one would show up. However, Mr. Andrews was amenable to increasing the number of student representatives to three, he so moved, Mr. Pettengill provided a second, and the motion was approved as was shortly thereafter, the main motion.

The next item, the revised Library Constitution, was approved with no discussion.

The Senate approved the motion to confirm Peter Bertocci to replace Robert Eberwein on the Senate Planning Review Committee for the winter term, moved by Ms Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Benson.

Mr. Dahlgren then moved and Mr. Andrews seconded a motion to recommend to the President and Board the approval of a Master of Arts degree in Biology. Mr. Dahlgren commented briefly that the proposal had the unanimous support of the Graduate Council. There was no discussion, so Mr. Connellan announced that it would be advanced to second reading at the December meeting.

The final item of business, a resolution from the Steering Committee stating that "the Senate wishes to affirm its desire to continue to be consulted through its governance structure in a timely manner on all major programmatic plans and changes" was moved and seconded by Mr. Dillon and Mr. Andrews, respectively. Ms. Speer asked what is meant by changes and wondered how specific was the intent, for example, would a change in curriculum need to be reviewed by the Senate. Mr. Moran explained that the concern arose because of a feeling that the traditional consultative process has been truncated in recent decisions. Mr. Dillon pointed to the possible changes in the athletic program as an example; although the Senate is advisory it nevertheless should play a part in and provide advice when these kind of changes are under consideration. Mr. Liboff moved to waive the second, reading, Mr. Pettengill seconded the motion which was approved. Following up on Ms. Speer's query, Mr. Olson asked about changes in degree programs and Mr. Dillon pointed out that these changes already go to a committee of the Senate and are thus part of the regular governance structure. Mr. Russi asked for clarification of 'major programmatic plans and changes'; he understands that academic matters should come before the senate but wonders about the non-academic areas such as the Oakland Center. Mr. Liboff attempted to clarify by explaining that the statement provides for consultation with the Senate on far reaching changes, changes such as charter schools, the athletic program, those changes that have the potential for affecting the university in a major way. The resolution was approved with a few dissenting nays.

In the good and welfare portion of the meeting Mr. Mahamwal and Mr. Tornopilsky provided an update on the Student Congress sponsored course evaluation project. Sample forms were distributed and a history and outline of the development of the form was provided. Mr. Mahamwal pointed out the questionnaire reflects items of interest to students and that it takes about 6 minutes on the average for a student to fill one out. Various suggestions were forthcoming to improve the form. Ms. Buffard-O'Shea opined that expectations do not evaluate the course and suggested rephrasing of that question. Mr. Dillon proposed distributing the evaluation form to faculty and asking for input. Mr. Liboff felt there should be a question about how demanding or challenging the course was. Mr. Garfinkle thought there should be a question asking the students if they learned anything. A query asking the students if they did their best was Ms. Talbert's contribution. Mr. Andrews noted that a number of the questions have multiple responses possible. Mr. Tornopilsky explained that the group developing the form was operating on the assumption that students will learn something in a course; that the forms are meant to be informational, not judgmental; that some of the data will be skewed and that careful interpretation will be necessary. He added, however, from a marketing perspective, that the institution is offering a product and that this is one of the means of communicating that product to the students, the customers.

The faithful few folk remaining at 5:15 were happy to entertain and act upon Mr. Connellan's call for a motion to adjourn.

Submitted by
Linda L. Hildebrand

Secretary to the University Senate

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