



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Wednesday, 20 May 1987
Ninth Meeting

MINUTES

Senators Present: Barnard, Bertocci, Bingham, Blankenship, Champagne, Chatterjee, Chipman, Coffey, Copenhaver, Dahlgren, Desmond, Downing, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein, Hartman, Haskell, Kiwicz, Ketchum, Khapoya, Kleckner, Liboff, Moore, Rozek, Russell, Stinson, Taylor, Willoughby, Witt.

Senators Absent: Appleton, Barthel, Blatt, Burke, Cardimen, Clatworthy, Diltz, Frankie, Garcia, Gerulaitis, Hamilton, Hart-Gonzalez, Herman, Heubel, Higgins, Hightower, Hildebrand, Horwitz, Hough, Lindell, Pettengill, Pillow, Pine, Reddy, Righter, Riley, Schimmelman, Srodawa Stillman, Straughen, Swartz, Terry, Thomas, Tripp, Wilson.

Summary of Actions:

1. Sense-of-the-Senate resolution to form an ad hoc committee (Ketchum; Liboff). Approved.
2. Procedural motion to waive a second reading of the motion below (Liboff; Bertocci). Approved.
3. Motion revising dates on emeritus policy approved by the Senate in 1986 (Liboff; Willoughby). Approved.

Explaining that the Senate Constitution allows suspension of normal quorum rules during the spring and summer terms, Mr. Kleckner called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. The sole item of official business, as determined at the meeting of 27 April, involved discussion with President Champagne of the policy on *emeritus(a)* faculty rank that was adopted by the Senate last year but not yet brought before the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Champagne initiated the discussion by indicating that he had no profound problem with the 1986 policy that would recognize virtually all retired faculty members as *emeriti*; he noted that the Board has adopted a parallel policy for its own members. His real concern, however, concerned his desire to provide special recognition for those professors who have achieved exceptional distinction either for their services to the University or for their contributions to their fields. *Emeritus* rank is one way of accomplishing this purpose. Currently, it is the only available means at Oakland University; so he worries about diluting the title unless Oakland can find another way to salute exceptionally deserving professors. Should an alternative method of doing so emerge from this discussion, he stated that he would have no problem with recommending somewhat routine use of the *emeritus* title to the Board. He offered a suggestion to his Senate colleagues: that the University grant *emeritus* status with some sort of special distinction to a limited group of worthies--perhaps such a title as the Wilson Professor *Emeritus* for persons who have made professional contributions over and above what is

normally expected.

Mr. Liboff responded with a question about who would identify such honorees. Would there be a faculty committee for the purpose or would deans and other administrative officers make the decisions? Mr. Champagne sought Senate advise on this matter. He viewed all granting of professorial recognition (tenure, promotion, and such) as a peer-based process and assumed that this additional level of selection would follow that precedent. He disavowed any interest in initiating such decisions himself. He conjectured that the FRPC might take of this new duty or that some select Senate committee might be formed for the purpose. He reiterated that his concern was simply to provide the University with a means of providing special recognition to those among us whom we all (and our students as well) know to be outstanding.

Mr. Kleckner reported that he had discussed this issue with several individual faculty members and discovered a reluctance to add yet another formal review process at the end of a person's career. He wondered whether his conversations were representative of faculty sentiment. Mr. Khapoya thought that they were. If a process comparable to a promotion review were to be established, he predicted that many persons would refuse to be considered after lifetimes of service to this institution. He preferred that the honor be awarded without any extra burden and thought that the *emeritus* title should normally be given without any formal review although not without some sort of faculty input. He pointed out that a person's professional record is right there for people to see--both within the University and beyond it. Mr. Champagne professed himself untroubled by the process of departmental recommendation envisaged last year by the Senate but thought that a special nominating process could be developed for a few especially distinguished persons that would entail no special effort by the candidate.

Mr. Chipman inquired whether the honor intended by the President would be a public ceremonial acknowledgment by Oakland University--something on the order of a graduation award--or whether it would entail more substantial and lasting discrimination among classes of retirees. Noting that we have trouble being nice (or graceful) to one another at Oakland, he wondered whether some faculty might wind up stewing in retirement and what losses to the institution would result from perceived slights.

Mr. Bertocci suggested that existing models could be inspected, such things as the Distinguished Teaching Award and Distinguished Research Award. Proposing that the two aspects of this matter be uncoupled, he suggested that the President should send last year's Senate recommendation to the Board as is and that a committee be appointed to make recommendations on establishing a new distinguished faculty status and to report its findings to the Senate by January 1988. Mr. Champagne welcomed the suggestion, saying that he would be happy to bring the Senate motion to the Board so long as he could notify Board members that plans were underway to initiate a further level of honor.

Another approach to the problem characterized Mr. Ketchum's response to this suggestion. He thought it more sensible to increase the number of professorial chairs on campus so that retirees from such lofty posts would automatically hold especially honorific titles, having already enjoyed the benefits of their acknowledged distinction during their teaching careers. Mr. Champagne noted that the contract includes the rank of Distinguished University Professor; he thought that the title could be used for such a purpose if the contract were modified to allow the title to continue into retirement. Mr. Bertocci pointed out, however, that

chairs usually come with their own endowments and that they customarily honor scholarship as such--not university service. Mr. Ketchum suggested that a Distinguished University Professorship might prove a more broadly applicable title and noted that it could provide recognition without the financial reward associated with a chair. When Mr. Bertocci inquired what might be done to acknowledge special service apart from scholarship, Mr. Champagne suggested that the University could institute some special graduation awards. He saw the Distinguished University Professor title as honoring scholarship, although Mr. Kleckner thought it an appropriate reward for teaching excellence as well. Mr. Willoughby shared Mr. Khapoya's concerns about a final burdensome review but voiced his discomfort with the departmentally-based process established by the Senate motion. Pointing out that a University honor is under consideration and envisaging the Distinguished University Professorship as a "Wayne Gretzky title" for academic superstars, he argued that recipients should be identified by a university-wide process. For this purpose, he saw the necessity of decoupling the *emeritus* title from this other level of honor.

Having served on last year's *ad hoc* Committee on *Emeritus* Faculty Rank, Mr. Liboff recognized the complexity of the issues under discussion. He proposed that a special committee should study the matter rather than expecting the Senate to arrive promptly at a decision. The President felt comfortable with that suggestion. Mr. Ketchum, concerned with general goodwill within the community, urged that the University move ahead quickly with adoption of the 1986 *emeritus* policy and not hold up action on that matter while waiting for another mechanism to be worked out. This suggestion satisfied Mr. Champagne, who volunteered to send the current motion to the Board so long as he was assured of the Senate's disposition to develop an additional mechanism to honor persons who have achieved an unusual level of distinction. He indicated that he would welcome a motion to that effect. Messrs. Ketchum and Liboff obliged with a sense-of-the-Senate resolution to instruct the Steering Committee to move ahead with formation of a committee to report to the Senate next January with a proposal to establish a means for honoring especially distinguished members of the faculty. The resolution was approved with no further discussion. Mr. Kleckner then asked members of the Steering Committee to linger after the meeting to initiate work on this charge. He pointed out that the Constitution empowers the Steering Committee to create *ad hoc* committees.

Mr. Liboff then raised the technical matter of redating the grandfather clause in last year's motion. To make the language of the motion consistent both with the original intent and with where we are now, he proposed changing the terminal date of the Special Provision from 30 June 1987 to 31 December 1987 and extending the period included within this special provision from 14 August 1981--14 August 1985 to 14 August 1981--14 August 1987. Mr. Kleckner thought this motion a reasonable one in parliamentary terms and was reinforced in his conviction by the assent of the Senate Parliamentarian, Mr. Khapoya. Ms. Eberwein noted that a procedural motion would be needed to waive a second reading unless the Senate wished to assemble yet again. Messrs. Liboff and Bertocci then introduced a motion to waive the usual second reading. Having approved that procedural motion without debate, the Senate then approved the Liboff-Willoughby motion to modify the dates in last year's motion.

With the principal business of the day thereby dispatched and no private resolutions introduced for the good of the order, Senators turned their attention to several information items. The first came from Mr. Champagne, who reported legislative approval of preliminary work on the anticipated science building. An architect may now be selected, and funds will be released to begin preliminary schematics. There is still a long way to go before ground-

breaking, but this is a good sign that the state has acknowledged our need for such a structure. This time, Oakland is asking the state for full funding for this project rather than the partial funding requested for the library expansion. The President envisaged the new structure as having a substantial domino effect on campus space, freeing up room for enterprises outside the science departments that would actually occupy it.

Mr. Champagne reported himself cautiously optimistic about the likelihood of the Legislature's recognizing in this year's budget the equity in funding issue that we have been raising for years. Last year, Senator Sederburg put in a \$3-million appropriation for equity needs statewide, of which Oakland received nearly \$400,000. This year he has announced his commitment to increase the equity package five-fold and his intention to support all state institutions of higher education at the same rate since he sees no logical or ethical justification for maintaining differences in levels of funding. In the House, Representative Hood has indicated publicly that he would recognize the equity issue in his report. What will actually emerge from legislative deliberations remains uncertain at this point, and the President suspects that we may face an unusually long budget process this year.

On that cautiously hopeful note, Mr. Kleckner called upon Mr. Barnard for a report from the *ad hoc* Committee on Presidential Review. That committee had held its first meeting with the appropriate Board subcommittee the previous week, with three of the four members of the Board group present on that occasion. Mr. Barnard appraised the meeting as a constructive one, noting that it resulted in approval of a three-stage process proposed by the Senate's *ad hoc* Committee. First, the committee will hear statements from any faculty members who wish to address it. It will also conduct a survey of the faculty as a whole. Finally, it will make a report to the Board. Committee members see that report as an opportunity to transmit faculty responses rather than to make a specific recommendation. Board members promised to read the report with great attention and care and indicated that its impact would depend upon its quality. Mr. Barnard stated that, if authorized to move ahead at this point, his committee would like to begin the review process immediately with the expectation of concluding its work by the end of the fall semester.

With Mr. Barnard's report concluding the meeting, Mr. Kleckner then thanked his fellow-Senators for their two years of service and looked forward to working again with many of them and their newly-elected colleagues in the fall. On that note the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jane D. Eberwein

Secretary to the University Senate

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