

Oakland University Senate Minutes

November 17, 2016

Members present: Aloï, Andrews, Arnold, Awbrey, Ball, Baxa, Berven, K., Chandra, Cheng, Corcoran, Daniel, Debnath, Dereski, Didion, Dulio, Edrisinha, Edwards, Eis, Epstein, Estes, Folberg, Giblin, Goldberg, Golinski, Gooren, Grimm, Groomes, Guessous, Hansen, Harbin, Hay, Keller, Knox, Lee, Leibert, Lentini, Long, Margerum-Leys, Mazzeo, Miller, Parkash, Parsons, Reger, Rigstad, Roth, Roumani, Schartman, Sifonis, Thomas, Thompson, Tracy, Weiter, Wells, Williams

Members absent: Berven, D., Chopin, Dallo, Evans, Howell, Latcha, Mathieson, Polis, Ragheb, Townsend

Mr. Lentini called the meeting to order at 3:15 P.M. He announced that, in the absence of Ms. Berven, Mr. Andrews would act as secretary for this meeting.

Summary of Information and Action Items:

Information Items:

Program modification in the Doctor of Philosophy in Biological and Biomedical Sciences approved by the Graduate Council

New graduate policy on receiving master's degree during PhD studies

Program modification to the Social Studies Elementary Major and Social Studies Elementary Endorsement approved by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction

Program modification to the Mathematics Elementary Major, the Mathematics Elementary Minor and the Mathematics Elementary Endorsement approved by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction

Program modification to the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, the Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and the Bachelor of Science in Public Administration to participate in the 3+3 articulation agreement with the Wayne State University School of Law approved by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction

Program modification to the Cinema Studies Major adding a new specialization in film production approved by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction

Appointment by the Steering Committee of a new member of the Senate Elections Committee – Chaturi Edrisinha

Provost's Updates

Action Items:

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion from the Steering Committee to endorse the Oakland University Strategic Plan Strategies and Metrics. (Ms. Daniel, Mr. Andrews)

Motion from the Graduate Council and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction to approve a new Oakland University Grading Scale. (Ms. Daniel, Mr. Tracy)

Motion from the Graduate Council and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction to establish a new GPA rounding policy. (Ms. Eis, Ms. Williams)

Motion from the Library Committee to revise its charge and membership. (Ms. Eis, Ms. Daniel)

Motion from the Assessment Committee to revise its membership. (Mr. Andrews, Ms. Williams)

Motion from the General Education Committee to revise its charge and membership. (Mr. Tracy, Ms. Eis)

Procedural Motion to staff Senate Standing Committees. (Ms. Williams, Ms. Daniel)

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion of the first six information items. Mr. Lentini updated the Senate on the following matters:

- he reaffirmed the postelection message of the President and the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion as important values.
- he noted that since the Senate last met the presidential search committee had been fully formed and that information about the search process was available on the University web site.
- he reported that he and the President had just returned from the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), where student recruitment and retention in all its forms was a prominent topic.

ACTION ITEMS:

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Sept 15, 2016 meeting were approved without corrections.

NEW BUSINESS

Without objection the Strategic Plan motion was advanced to the beginning of new business.

1. Motion from the Steering Committee to endorse the Oakland University Strategic Plan Strategies and Metrics. (Ms. Daniel, Mr. Andrews)

MOVED that the Senate Endorse the Oakland University Strategic Plan Strategies and Metrics.

Mr. Lentini gave a presentation that began by summarizing the development of the Strategic Plan over the past two years. Since the Senate last considered the Plan in January 2015, the task forces and goal committees have submitted their final reports in July 2016. Much additional work has been done since then in refining strategies, devising appropriate metrics and developing action steps. This work has involved many groups on campus, including the Senate Planning Review Committee and the Senate Steering Committee. The general approach has been, whenever possible, to match strategies with metrics already in existence. This has been easier to do with the first two goals involving student success and research and scholarly environment than with the third goal involving community engagement. The current version of the Plan (dated October 2016) contains a new paragraph which describes the next steps in the implementation plan. These include identification of specific areas and individuals responsible for carrying out each strategy. Some action steps are already underway. It is expected that further work will have to be done to refine strategies and develop metrics and action steps in such areas as alumni connections and business and community partnerships. The plan currently contains many references to sources for its proposed metrics. Mr. Lentini said that he did not intend to give a line-by-line presentation of the Plan at this meeting but instead would highlight some selected items and encourage Senators to read the complete plan for further details. In the area of student success he mentioned the differentiation in retention and graduation rates between overall and URM FTIAC, making the student-faculty ratio more competitive with peer institutions, the need for more advisors in the College, and the desire to increase the number of international students and endowed scholarships. In all these areas additional resources are needed to remain competitive. In the area of research and scholarly environment, he pointed out that the University is currently (as of January 2015) classified as a Carnegie Doctoral-Moderate Research Activity University (R3) but is on the cusp of achieving Carnegie Doctoral-Higher Research Activity University (R2) status. Achieving this latter status would have negative implications in the short term for state appropriations. Increasing research space and the number of grant holders is important but support for scholarly activities is not limited to grant holders. An institution can also distinguish itself by increasing undergraduate research activity. In the area of community engagement there is much work that is currently being done that is not being tracked. APLU and peer institutions are heavily involved in community engagement. Service learning and community engagement is not something that can be incorporated into every course or faculty member's activities but incentives to develop and reward such activities should be created. Increasing credit enrollments at off-campus locations and increasing PACE enrollments are strategic priorities. It is also a goal of the Plan to apply for and obtain the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which several public and private institutions in Michigan have already obtained.

Mr. Thomas appreciated the focus in the Plan on student retention but asked if there were plans to extend it beyond the first year. Mr. Lentini responded that such efforts would extend to all levels. Mr. Thomas asked if there would be additional efforts to involve faculty with CETL. Mr. Lentini said that he did not envision mandatory faculty participation in CETL but that a task force currently underway was studying ways of improving teaching effectiveness. Student surveys were an important factor in that process but not the only one. Ms. Guessous appreciated the inclusion of recruitment of URM as part of

the Plan but she would have been more heartened if the goal had been formulated in a way that took discipline history into account. Mr. Lentini indicated that this was the kind of refinement that would be considered as action steps are developed in the implementation of the Plan. Mr. Grimm expressed concern that the current version of the Plan only focused on the work of the goal committees and that the task forces were only mentioned in a single paragraph. Nothing in this document shows any of the steps to address the issues and actions recommended by the task forces. He thought that the Plan would fail if the issues that were responsible for the creation of the task forces were not addressed. Mr. Lentini replied that the reports of the task forces were not easily translated into strategies and metrics in a robust way but the issues raised were important and would be addressed in the implementation plan.

President Hynd thanked everyone who had been involved in the development of the Plan over the past two years. He said that the implementation plan was a living document that would evolve over time and that adjustments would be made as needed. The progress of implementation would be charted on the university's website and things would look different a year from now as data on implementation was accumulated. He said that the goal committees and task forces needed to remain engaged in the process and that charting progress was a wonderful way to keep the plan on the front burner. He once again thanked all the participants for their hard work.

In the absence of further discussion, the first reading of the motion concluded.

2. Motion from the Graduate Council and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction to approve a new Oakland University Grading Scale. (Ms. Daniel, Mr. Tracy)

MOVED that the Senate approve a new Oakland University Grading Scale.

Ms. Awbrey gave a presentation that described the development of this proposal. Currently, the grading conversions used at most other institutions to compute student GPA's disadvantage Oakland University students in admissions decisions to graduate and professional schools. Although the University indicates on undergraduate transcripts how its grades should be converted, these conversions are not always followed. In response to a request from Student Congress, a task force was formed to investigate grading scales used at other universities and to make suggestions on possible changes. The task force found that Oakland is one of only two state institutions to assign numerical grades and the only one to assign numerical grades using a tenths scale. The letter scale that is being recommended as a replacement is in common use at other institutions. The task force asked OIRA to assess the impact of this change on student GPA's. Assistant Director Reuben Ternes of OIRA reported that a strict conversion would have a minimal change not only on the entire student body but also on commonly considered subgroups of students. He also explored different models for changes that might occur in assigning grades when letters rather numbers are used. These results suggest larger but still minimal changes. Mr. Berven asked if the impact on students applying to professional or graduate school had

been examined. Mr. Ternes said that was difficult to assess since different disciplines employ different conversion scales. Mr. Folberg affirmed that medical schools would round Oakland grades down and spoke in favor of the motion as did Mr. Thomas. Mr. Tracy also spoke in favor, though he opined that C students would be disadvantaged by it. At this point Mr. Dulio said that the proposal had been worked on for some time and moved to waive second reading. This motion, seconded by Mr. Cheng, passed unanimously. Mr. Berven then suggested that a grading scale that expressed equivalence between letters and percentages would give more guidance to faculty. Ms. Awbrey said that the proposal deliberately refrained from expressing such an equivalence since it is the role of the faculty currently to decide what percentage corresponds to a particular grade and that a change to a letter grading scale is not intended to change that role. Mr. Andrews asked if the impact of the change would be felt more externally than internally. Ms. Awbrey affirmed that the goal was to assign grades that would be fairly converted by external entities. Mr. Arnold indicated that Moodle can assist in the assigning of letter grades and that faculty could contact him for assistance. He also asked when the new scale would come into effect. Ms. Awbrey replied that the software difficulties involved in making such a change make Fall 2018 the likely implementation date.

In the absence of further discussion, Mr. Lentini called the question, which passed unanimously.

3. Motion from the Graduate Council and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction to establish a new GPA rounding policy. (Ms. Eis, Ms. Williams)

MOVED that the Senate approve a new GPA rounding policy.

Ms. Awbrey indicated that the current practice of truncating GPA's rather than rounding was dictated by the capabilities of the version of Banner originally purchased by the University. Mr. Tracy, seconded by Ms. Didion, moved to waive second reading. This motion and the main motion then passed unanimously. Mr. Corcoran then asked if this change in practice would also apply to GPA computation of incoming students for such matters as scholarship awards. Ms. Awbrey said that this was a separate process that would require separate consideration. Mr. Andrews asked when this change would be implemented. Ms. Awbrey said that it was convenient to do both the grading scale change and the rounding change at the same time and so both would be done in Fall 2018.

4. Motion from the Library Committee to revise its charge and membership. (Ms. Eis, Ms. Daniel)

MOVED that the Senate revise the charge and membership of the Library Committee as described.

Ms. Eis, seconded by Mr. Tracy, moved to waive second reading. This motion passed, with a single dissent (Mr. Grimm). Mr. Grimm indicated that he could not find the tracked changes in the espace

documents. Mr. Weiter stated that the changes were the addition of one graduate student member and one medical librarian member. The main motion then passed unanimously.

5. Motion from the Assessment Committee to revise its membership. (Mr. Andrews, Ms. Williams)

MOVED that the Senate revise the membership of the Assessment Committee as described.

Ms. Schartman, seconded by Mr. Tracy, moved to waive second reading. This motion passed unanimously, as did the main motion.

6. Motion from the General Education Committee to revise its charge and membership. (Mr. Tracy, Ms. Eis)

MOVED that the Senate revise the charge and membership of the General Education Committee as described.

Ms. Eis, seconded by Ms. Schartman, moved to waive second reading. This motion passed unanimously, as did the main motion.

7. Procedural Motion to staff Senate Standing Committees. (Ms. Williams, Ms. Daniel)

MOVED that persons listed be appointed to the committees or positions designated:

Research Committee

Eddie Cheng (CAS) 2016-2017 replacing Zissimos Mourelatos (SECS) 2015-2017)

Planning Review Committee

Harris, Meghan (SON) Fall 2016 replacing Anne Mitchell (SON) 2016-2019

The motion passed unanimously.

B. GOOD AND WELFARE

Ms. Hansen said that she was having some difficulty accessing Senate agenda materials on espace. Associate Provost Piskulich said that anybody having difficulties should email her and that steps were being taken to grant access to Senate materials to all those logging in from an oakland.edu address. Mr. Leibert expressed some concerns about tracking changes in Senate agenda items. Mr. Arnold indicated

that the AP Assembly would be contacting Senate Committees on monthly basis to find out what items they were working on.

C. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mr. Lentini declared the meeting adjourned at 4:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin T. Andrews, secretary pro tem