



# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

## Oakland University Senate

18 October 2007

### *Minutes*

Members present: Andersen, Berven (D), Berven (K), Bhargava, Brown, Connery, Debnath, Doane, Dulio, Dvir, Eberly-Lewis, Goslin, Hawley, Hightower, Ingram, Larrabee, Lee, LeMarbe, Lombardo, Machmut-Jhashi, Meehan, Mitton, Moore, Moudgil, Murphy, Otto, Pelfrey, Penprase, Preisinger, Rammel, Rigstad, Russell, Sangeorzan, Severson, Shablin, Spagnuolo, Spedoske, Sudol, Townsend, Voelck, Wharton, Williams, Wood, Zou

Members absent: Condic, Downing, Eis, Frick, Giblin, Graetz, Khattree, Kissock, Mittelstaedt, Nixon, Polis, Tanniru, Thompson, Wiggins

#### Summary of Actions:

##### 1. Informational Items:

- a. Update on NCA review -- Ms. Awbrey
- b. Bachelor of General Studies name change -- Mr. Crabill
- c. New Program Review -- Mr. Severson

2. Approval of amended minutes of 20 September (Ms. Goslin, Ms. Andersen)

3. Motion to approve changes in membership of UCUI (Mr. Meehan, Mr. Russell). First reading.

4. Motion to approve Excused Absence Policy (Ms. Williams, Mr. Russell). First reading.

5. Motion to staff Senate standing committees (Ms. Bhargava, Ms. Eberly). Approved.

Calling the meeting to order at 3:15, Mr. Moudgil invited Ms. Awbrey to address the Senate on the first informational item, an update on the NCA review. Ms. Awbrey gave a thorough synopsis of the process, noting that this year OU will undergo a full comprehensive review that differs in some ways from the last one, and also differs from the focus visit in 2004 that examined general education and assessment. Five criteria and twenty-one core components will be examined. The criteria are: 1) mission and integrity; 2) preparing for the future; 3) student learning and effective teaching; 4) acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge; 5) engagement and service. A 27-member steering committee has been established that includes representatives from faculty and administration. Three subcommittees have been created, chaired by Diane Norris, Robby Stewart, and Tamara Machmut-Jhashi, to gather evidence and support materials. An academic profile on each unit will also be solicited in the near future. In addition, a website will be dedicated to the review, as a primary goal is to make the process as transparent as possible. Mr. Moudgil voiced support for Ms. Awbrey's effort in

this enormous undertaking and urged all members of the Senate to cooperate with any requests from the subcommittees.

The next informational item dealt with a name change for the Bachelor of General Studies, which has been approved by UCUI. Mr. Crabill, program director, informed the Senate that the new name, Bachelor of Integrative Studies, will better reflect the mission of the program and the accomplishments of its students. Mr. Crabill then outlined a brief history of the BGS program, and stated that there are currently 351 students enrolled. From 2000 to 2007 698 students have graduated with the BGS degree, with 70% of those completing minors, with the greatest numbers of minors in areas such as Exercise Science, Health and Wellness, Human Resources Development, Communication, and Business. Thus, the interests of these non-traditional students cut across all units and schools in the university. The admission process requires careful and thoughtful planning on the part of the student, with applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The committee looks for breadth and depth in the students' rationales, as well as an academic coherence in their plans of study. The change in terminology, from "general" to "integrative" thus is more in line with what is actually accomplished. In addition, the name change is consistent with a national organization, the Association for Integrative Studies, and will align OU's program on a national level.

Ms. Horning, identifying herself as the chair of the BGS faculty council, spoke in support of the name change. She believes that the new title more truly captures what is being done by students, and reflects the integration of course work from diverse areas of study. Mr. Berven inquired whether there is actual integration from all schools and the college, to which Mr. Crabill replied that in fact major/minor combinations do come from different units; for example, a student will take a professional major with a minor in communications.

Mr. Meehan asked whether there are FTIACs in the program. Mr. Crabill replied that there are none. He added that the median age of students is 28, with a range from 19-60, and that the goal of the advisors is to help students choose a major, not choose for them. In addition, he noted that when students reach more than 24 credits in one area of study, they are directed to declare a major in that area.

The final informational item was discussed by Mr. Severson, who informed the senate that an *ad hoc* committee will be formed by the Senate Steering committee to address the process for new program proposal and review. The committee will examine the current guidelines and recommend changes that could streamline the process without sacrificing the necessary oversight.

The secretary then proceeded with the roll call, after which the amended [minutes](#) from September 20 were approved (Goslin, Andersen).

With no items of new business, the first item of new business was moved by Mr. Meehan and seconded by Mr. Russell.

**MOVED** that the membership of UCUI consist of the following:

One faculty member from each organized faculty, with the exception of the College of Arts and Sciences, which shall include a total of four members, representing the arts and humanities, languages, natural sciences, and social sciences, appointed to

staggered three-year terms by the Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee, each of whom shall represent UCUI to the Committee on Instruction or equivalent group in her/his academic unit; the Director of General Studies; two undergraduate students designated by the University Student Congress; the above to be voting members. In addition the following shall serve *ex-officio* and non-voting: the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education as chair; the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee); a representative appointed by the Academic Advising Council; and the Registrar (or designee).

Mr. Moudgil observed that the result of this motion would increase the number of representatives from CAS on UCUI from one to four, drawn from the following areas: arts and humanities, languages, natural sciences, and social sciences. Mr. Meehan added that these four distinct areas are consistent with governance in the College. Mr. Goslin stated that he was against the motion, asserting that a diversity of disciplines exists to the same extent within other units as well, and that having a preponderance of representation on UCUI from one unit would put other units at a disadvantage in case that unit decided to vote as a block.

Mr. Russell inquired about the number of voting members, and it was clarified that the motion calls for four CAS faculty out of ten voting members. Mr. Dvir noted that the size and complexity of the units within CAS warrant the additional members. Mr. Goslin pointed out that UCUI can draw upon any faculty to speak on issues. Mr. Sudol then stated that the discussion had gone too far in the direction of voting and representation, and that the quality of discourse within UCUI is the paramount issue. He maintained that the role of the increased representation on UCUI is to assure that that discourse is appropriate in important matters related to curriculum. Ms. Townsend queried whether there was a potential for a tie-breaking vote. Ms. Awbrey replied that UCUI is a committee of consensus and that a tie-breaking scenario is unlikely. She also noted that department chairs and associate deans are always called upon to speak to UCUI about new or reviewed programs, and that the representative on UCUI from that particular unit is not responsible for presenting the new program to the committee. After a few more thoughts were expressed regarding voting blocks as well as the notion of a democratic process in regard to committee representation across the university, Mr. Moudgil reminded Senators that this was a first reading.

Ms. Williams moved the second item of new business, which met with Mr. Russell's second.

**MOVED** that the Senate approve an [Excused Absence Policy](#).

As a member of the Student Academic Support Committee that drafted the policy, Mr. Russell explained the parameters of the policy, and highlighted key points, such as student and faculty responsibilities. He noted that in some courses make-up work will be difficult to accommodate, for example, in required lab work. Mr. Moudgil observed that OU athletes actually have better g.p.a.s than other students on campus. Moreover, he noted that this policy is directed to more than student athletes; it pertains to students who represent Oakland at performances, musical and artistic events, conferences, and other events such as the ethics bowl.

Ms. Andersen then spoke to the problems that this policy would pose for the Rhetoric program. She expressed that she is uncomfortable about establishing a university-wide policy for certain things and not others, setting up situations that are unfair for students who are absent for work reasons or religious reasons. Rhetoric classes involve in-class workshops that can't be missed.

The policy indicates that instructors are to provide an equitable way to make-up work. Difficult enough to do in a workshop setting, she also observed that the policy would put particular strain on part-time instructors. Ms. Andersen asked that her concerns be addressed by the SASC before the policy is returned to the Senate for second reading.

Mr. Stewart noted that in his position as chair of the Athletics Committee, he has witnessed instructors penalize students who have represented the university by presenting their work at national conferences ? deducting points from their grade, for example. Ms. Berven remarked that it seems reasonable to excuse students for such occasions, and that if a policy has become necessary, then it must be the case that unreasonable faculty are the problem. Perhaps, she suggested, it is more prudent to address individual faculty who are being unreasonable and to convey to student athletes, performers, artists, and researchers that courses taught by those faculty should be avoided. Mr. Stewart commented that it is not just one or two faculty members involved but entire departments and one could not counsel students to avoid coursework in whole departments. Mr. Moudgil observed that faculty have opportunities to attend conferences and so forth, and reminded senators that students make faculty salaries possible. He urged faculty to be considerate of student needs as students are the reason that we have jobs.

Ms. Wood said that students are encouraged to go above and beyond the call of class work to participate in events in which they represent the university. As chair of the Undergraduate Distinguished Achievement Award committee, she gave her support to students who pursue such opportunities.

Ms. Horning spoke in opposition to the motion on behalf of her colleagues in Rhetoric. She raised the issue of accreditation and the integrity of the program and of the university. In her view, the policy already in place in Rhetoric whereby students are allowed one week's absence before they are penalized, functions well. She believes that the policy under consideration is inappropriate and compromises the integrity of a university education. Students in rhetoric classes are part of a community of writers, and therefore need to be in class. There is no way to replicate that experience. In conclusion, Ms. Horning supports Ms. Andersen's suggestion to revisit the policy.

Mr. Mitton noted that any policy will make someone unhappy. Students should be able to petition or request in a formal way for time off in their units, and perhaps this would allow more fairness in the process. He observed that in his own experience as a student-athlete, there were formal policies in place at his institution. Ms. Williams commented that no sport goes on for twelve months. Student-athletes should be advised not to take Rhetoric courses in the semesters that require their time in sporting events. She stated that the policy accommodates for that and allows a faculty member to advise students to drop a course if it becomes untenable.

Ms. Horning asked whether anyone bothered to look at attendance policies elsewhere, and also characterized past attempts to work with the athletic department as difficult. Ms. Andersen stated that MSU's policy was not only looked at, but considered a good model. Mr. Connery remarked that the policy's flexibility is overstated. While a faculty member could advise a student to withdraw from a class, there will inevitably be unexpected events, such as play-offs or other unforeseen circumstances.

Mr. Russell affirmed that several policies from peer institutions were considered and reviewed by the Student Academic Support Committee. Mr. Berven remarked that the flexibility clause in the policy will allow the unreasonable faculty to remain as unreasonable as ever. Ms. Andersen made one more plea for the SASC to revisit the issue.

The final item of new business was a motion to staff standing committees, moved by Ms. Bhargava, seconded by Ms. Eberly-Lewis, and approved.

**MOVED** that the persons listed below be appointed to the committee designated:

SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE  
Tom Pedroni (SEHS) -- Fall 2007

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE  
Sadi Bazaz (SBA) -- Winter 2008-2009  
Austin Murphy (SBA) -- Fall 2007

Mr. Moudgil then addressed the current state of the budget, noting that the uncertainties in the state's budget should be worked out by next month, and that faculty position allocations cannot be determined until then.

Lastly, Mr. Moudgil recognized the student representative on the Senate, Mr. Spedoske, who received a round of applause.

Without items for good and welfare, Mr. Moudgil thanked Senators for staying through a long afternoon, and adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

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

posted 11/13/2007

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