



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Third Meeting
December 4, 2003

Minutes

Members Present: Andersen, Bard, Berven (D), Berven (K), Bhargava, Blume, Chapman, Cipielewski, Connery, Didier, Downing, Dunn, Eberwein, Eis, Fink, Goldberg, Goslin, Graves, Grossman, Hanna, Haskell, Hightower, Khapoya, Klemanski, Lepkowski, Licker, Machmut-Jhashi, Maines, McNair, Moore, Morrison, Moudgil, Nacy, Mukherji, Porter, Rowe, Russell, Savage, Schott-Baer, Schweitzer, Smith, Thompson, Tracy, Wagner, Wendell, Wood
Members Absent: Frick, Gardner, Giblin, Hansen, Keane, LeMarbe, Mabee, Otto, Schochetman, Sethi, Sevilla, Stamps, Williams, Willoughby

Summary of Actions

1. Informational Items:

- Cooley Law School Update ? Mr. Moudgil
- Academic Relations Committee ? Mr. Moudgil
- Academic Calendar ? Mr. Shablin, Registrar

2. Roll Call. Approval of October 2003 Minutes (Mr. Downing, Mr. Tracy).

3. Motion from Steering Committee to exempt second degree students from the undergraduate writing requirement (Mr. Tracy, Mr. Blume). Approved as amended: Moved that second degree students from a regionally accredited institution be exempt from Oakland University?s undergraduate writing requirement: RHT160.

4. Motion from Steering Committee to accept the proposal for the renewal of General Education at Oakland University from General Education Task Force II and to approve the new General Education program (Mr. Lepkowski, Mr. Downing). First reading.

5. Procedural motion from Steering Committee to appoint faculty representatives to represent the Senate at Board of Trustees meetings through summer, 2005 (Mr. Licker, Mr. Graves). Approved as amended: Moved that Senators Kathleen Moore and James Cipielewski be appointed to represent the Senate at the Board of Trustees meetings through summer term, 2005.

6. Procedural motion from Steering Committee to appoint replacement members on the General Education Committee. (Mr. Licker, Mr. Cipielewski). Approved.

Calling the meeting to order at 3:14, Mr. Moudgil welcomed senators to a significant meeting as a new General Education program is moving into clearer focus for Oakland University. Beginning with the information items, Mr. Moudgil reviewed for the Senate the current status of Oakland?s relationship with Cooley Law School. Three stages of development are required to establish a law school: the ?cohort? stage, which allows for first year classes to be taken on campus; the ?satellite? stage, which allows two years of classes; the third stage, which allows

completion of the full three year program. Last year, Oakland University became involved in the second stage, and is now a satellite program of Cooley. A team of site evaluators from the American Bar Association visited the OU campus on July 27, 2003, and filed a report that gave high praise to the relationship established between the two institutions. Mr. Moudgil mentioned two technical updates in conjunction with Cooley's presence on campus: classrooms moved from Elliott to 214 ODH and the opening of a student computer lab. Mr. Moudgil informed the Senate that while it is premature at this time to discuss the third stage of Cooley's development at Oakland, it is likely to be considered in the future. Another aspect of Cooley's relationship with Oakland is a proposal to move the law school's week-end program from its Lansing site to Oakland beginning Spring term, 2004. Oakland will receive 8% of gross revenue of an expected enrollment of 40 students, obviously a good situation given the economic climate. Mr. Moudgil then shared with the Senate a letter addressed to President Russi from James Cunningham, President of the Oakland County Bar Association. Cunningham expressed his pleasure at attending the ceremony opening the law library at Oakland and conveyed his optimism regarding the partnership with Cooley and its effect on the legal community in Oakland County.

The second informational item concerned the Academic Relations Committee. Mr. Moudgil explained that the genesis of the committee came about during the recent contract negotiations. Entertaining the possibility of an alternative to a faculty liaison to the Board of Trustees, both bargaining teams agreed that a faculty-based group charged with articulating concerns to the Provost, from the Provost to the President, and through him, to the Board, would be a useful undertaking. Mr. Moudgil believes this to be an effective path of communication from faculty to administration.

Another informational item was brought to the Senate's attention involving university property under consideration for an "Antenna Range" research project, proposed by the School of Engineering and Computer Science. The Department of Electric and System Engineering has made a proposal for an on-campus antenna range that will be used for research. Funding to construct a building will be generated from external grants and partnerships; Oakland will not invest money directly into the project. A dome-shaped, moveable building to house the antenna range and tower is intended for an area near Adams and Butler Roads. Mr. Moudgil pointed out that this faculty-driven research project will open up educational opportunities for our students and will create new business partnerships. He assured senators that the amount of power generated will be less than a cellular tower; moreover, the design will focus power in one direction only, as opposed to power emanated in all directions by a cellular tower. Issues relating to safety, security, and public opinion have been discussed, and, in the opinion of Mr. Moudgil, the benefits to Oakland are substantial enough for approval. The project will not go forward until all issues relating funding have been settled. All appropriate bodies, including the Campus Development and Environment Committee, will be consulted as the project moves forward.

Mr. Moudgil then introduced Steve Shablin, Registrar, to share information regarding the final informational item, that of the revised campus calendar. Senate members received copies of the Oakland University calendar for 2004-2005 and drafts of the projected calendars for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Attached was a report titled "December Commencement at Oakland University," a report outlining the issues considered by an ad hoc committee established in 2002 to study the scheduling of fall commencement. Mr. Shablin began his address to the Senate by noting four significant modifications to the 2004-2005 calendar already approved by the BOT: 1) classes begin on 30 August 2004 rather than the traditional date after Labor Day 2)

the Fall study period for final exams is an entire day rather than the 5 hours allotted previously
3) Fall 2004 exams end December 14, which provides time for faculty submission of grades before fall commencement on December 18
4) Winter recess in Winter 2005 is scheduled for March 5-14, one week later than the previous calendar.

Mr. Shablin noted that proposed calendars for the following two years echo the 2004-2005 schedule with these exceptions: the start date in Winter 2006 is January 4, due to the date the university reopens after the holiday break; the start date in Winter 2007 is January 8. Mr. Shablin then gave an overview of the committee's report on the December commencement. He pointed out that the current December date makes the most academic sense, since it at least occurs after final examinations. In the two years with the December date, there has been no negative impact on attendance by friends and families of graduates, although in some areas faculty participation has been low. Virtually no complaints from students or families have been heard, which may explain a low response to a survey sent to December 2002 graduates. Mr. Shablin then noted logistical problems with a January date; namely, that closure of the university during the holidays would occur at the most critical time of the process and that students wanting to invite out-of-town guests to commencement would be at a disadvantage. Mr. Shablin concluded that there was no compelling reason to change the date to January, hence the recommendation of the committee to maintain the December commencement.

Next, questions were posed to Mr. Shablin regarding the calendar. Mr. Berven raised a question regarding the process by which the calendar was determined, suggesting that perhaps not enough discussion occurred earlier in the Senate. Mr. Shablin explained that the process involved taking a number of drafts to the President's cabinet, the academic council, the Senate, and Student Congress. The feedback obtained from these various constituencies indicated that the third Saturday in December was the most desirable date. To accommodate that date classes would need to begin before Labor Day.

Mr. Russell added that he believed an earlier discussion in the Senate generated significant objections to a pre-Labor Day start, but that those issues were not pursued. Mr. Shablin replied that he did not recall substantive discussion in this regard, to which Mr. Russell responded that he remembered Ms. Eberwein to have expressed concern over the disadvantages related to beginning the semester before Labor Day. Mr. Tracy added that there was virtual unanimity in UCUI that a pre-Labor Day start would create problems, particularly for advisers, who would have difficulty in meeting with students. Mr. Shablin pointed out that 12 of our 15 sister institutions in the state have pre-Labor Day starts (or will, as of fall 2004) and have had to deal with similar issues. Mr. Tracy indicated that perhaps our demographic of commuter students should be taken into account. Mr. Moudgil then asked about student opinion on the issue to which Mr. Shablin replied that when the matter resulted in minimal discussion at Student Congress, but overall it was positive. He noted that there was greater concern over the dates of winter recess. Mr. Moudgil noted for the record that at last year's council of Chairs from across the university there were no opposing views on the earlier start date.

Further discussion on the issue included Ms. Eberwein's observation that the ritual events of the student convocation (thus starting classes after 5:00 p.m. Tuesday) and the December commencement have been the catalysts for the changes. Mr. Hanna commented that there are schools on the chart supplied by Mr. Shablin that manage to have post-Labor Day starts and commencement by December 15. Mr. Downing suggested that the issue could be one of locating the commencement date prior to the last day of examinations. Mr. Shablin responded that the idea of holding commencement during exams was discussed but did not meet with

enthusiasm. Then Mr. Russell asked, if students are not certified anyway at the time of graduation, what, then, would prevent an earlier date in December? He believes that the senate needs to discuss whether the university wants to reconsider its policy of graduating students who have not been certified by the registrar. Since, he observed, certification is not completed by the third Saturday of the month, then it would not make any significant difference if commencement took place earlier. If the university wants to change the policy regarding certification, then the only other option is January. Mr. Ciplewski added that problems arose when the commencement ceremony left the Meadow Brook Festival grounds. He expressed concern that the university is perhaps following the lead of other institutions at the expense of respecting what is unique to our community.

Mr. Moudgil thanked Mr. Shablin for presenting his material to the Senate and suggested that he will continue dialogue to find the right course of action.

The secretary proceeded with the roll call after which the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting of October 16, 2003 were approved. (Moved Mr. Downing, seconded Mr. Tracy).

Old Business

Mr. Moudgil turned the Senate's attention to the Motion from the Steering Committee to exempt second degree students from Oakland University's undergraduate writing requirement, which had its first reading at the October 4 meeting. He noted a correction in wording to reflect "...students from a regionally accredited institution...." Before inviting discussion on the motion, Mr. Moudgil stated that the proposal has been endorsed by the Rhetoric program and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction.

Ms. Cheryl Sullivan, from the Arts and Sciences advising office, remarked that the motion is strongly supported by the Professional Advisers Council. Mr. Grossman asked for clarification on the writing requirement itself, whether the motion pertains to RH160 only OR the writing requirement indicated under the new General Education program (if approved), which consists of three components: completion of RHT160, intensive writing demonstrated in a general education course, and an intensive writing course in the major. Ms. Awbrey remarked that the motion refers only to RHT 160. Mr. Grossman suggested that these be made explicit, and the language was so amended to reflect that RHT160 is the requirement in question.

Ms. Awbrey then introduced Ms. Alice Horning, who was invited to speak to the Senate in behalf of the Rhetoric program. Ms. Horning explained that only a small number of students come to Oakland with fewer than 6 credits in writing, and that those individuals have either tested out or were exempted in another manner that demonstrated satisfactory writing at their previous institutions. She believes that students who have earned degrees at accredited institutions have had sufficient work in writing to make this a moot issue and should be so treated.

With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved as amended:

MOVED that second degree students from a regionally accredited institution be exempt from Oakland University's undergraduate writing requirement: RHT160.

New Business

The first motion concerned the approval of 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. (Moved Mr. Lepkowski, seconded Ms. Moore)

Mr. Moudgil read the following comment:

During the past four years, over thirty faculty and staff have worked as members of General Task Forces I and II to create a plan for renewing Oakland University's general education program. At its April 2003 meeting, the University Senate accepted the conceptual framework presented in the report of General Education Task Force II and directed the Task Force to ?develop a proposal for a revised General Education program by December 15, 2003? based on the approved framework. That proposal, now being presented, is the culmination of the work of many faculty members who have provided input and consultation during the process of creating this program.

Ms. Awbrey was invited to address the Senate with general comments on General Education. She first expressed pleasure at the Task Force being able to meet its charge and bring a full program to the Senate, then urged the Senate to review the document carefully given its impact on the university. Acknowledging especially the herculean efforts of Michele Piskulich, she then thanked several other members of the task force, who were asked to stand and be recognized: Dagmar Cronn, Jenny Gilroy, Paul Graves, Madelyn Kissock, Frank Lepkowski, Charles McGlothlin, Barbara Mabee, Jean Ann Miller, Mary Beth Snyder, Loren Smith, Robbie Stewart, Ron Tracy, Chris Wagner, and Bob Wiggins.

Discussion began with a request from Mr. Russell for clarification regarding whether all the items listed on page 9 of the committee report must be met for a student to graduate. Ms. Awbrey explained that the document does not suggest that scenario; rather, it says that we will have learning outcomes, and that we will assess those outcomes and the program. Mr. Moudgil added that the visiting accreditation teams emphasized the learning outcomes and assessment as the most critical issues, even in the presence of strong research and other educational components, etc. What the accreditation team was most concerned with is whether our students are learning what we think we're teaching them ? thus, the assessment of learning outcomes was a more important issue than the delivery of information. Ms. McNair stated that it is necessary to read the document in its entirety to understand all the components in context, and urged all senators to read the material thoroughly.

Mr. Grossman remarked that there is confusion related with the learning outcomes, and offered as an example the foreign language and culture area. It is stated in the document that students will demonstrate knowledge of a foreign language and culture, but, as he suggested, it appears we don't actually mean it. Mr. Tracy then responded by saying that he thinks we do mean it, but that it is not a graduation requirement, and that we will assess the percentage of our students meeting those learning outcomes in the various areas and if some courses are not achieving those outcomes, then those classes will be assessed. Mr. Russell expressed concern regarding learning outcomes for science and technology, specifically the language pertaining to a ?limited number? of laboratory experiences and whether those could be achieved through ? virtual laboratories.? Mr. Grossman asked Ms. Awbrey whether the relevant committees have commented on the report, such as the Budget Review Committee, Planning Review Committee, UCUI, and General Education Committee. She indicated that they had not, that it is perhaps up

to the Senate to refer the issue to those committees. Mr. Moudgil then stated that he would formally ask those committees to participate in the dialogue with their own reports on the proposal.

Ms. McNair added that should any Senators wish to know more about learning outcomes, there is information available on the North Central Accreditation website.

The next item under New Business was a procedural motion from the Steering Committee.

MOVED that Senators Kathleen Moore (Chemistry) and James Ciplewski (Education) be appointed as Senate representatives to attend Board of Trustees meetings through summer term, 2005. (Mr. Licker, Ms. Wood)

Several senators expressed confusion over the specific language of the motion, indicating that the wording had changed from what was agreed upon at the steering committee meeting. Mr. Russell remarked that he believed the word "represent" was used instead of "attend" but that he did not take notes at the meeting. Mr. Sudol, who did take notes, indicated that he thought the wording accurately reflected the language used at the meeting, and that it was the same language used when the motion was passed last time in the Senate. Mr. Russell responded by saying the steering committee recommended a differently worded motion.

Ms. McNair agreed that the language was indeed different, and that what was discussed at the meeting was the issue that the Senate members not just attend the BOT meetings but that they represent the Senate – in effect, stronger language. Mr. Russell added that his suggestion of the word "liaison" was abandoned. Mr. Lepkowski, who was present at the steering committee meeting, stated that the conclusion reached was that the term "representative" itself was deemed strong enough, stronger even than "liaison." Ms. McNair recalled that the committee considered the phrase "be appointed as senate representatives at the BOT meetings" and that "to attend the meetings" was eliminated. Mr. Moudgil noted a legality issue lurking here, that the language "appointed to the BOT" implies an agreement with the BOT for official representation from the Senate, which is not the case. For the benefit of new Senate members, Ms. McNair explained the history of Senate representation at the BOT meetings that was established last year. Mr. Tracy mentioned that wording such as "attend and communicate" could be adopted to convey the idea that these two Senate representatives are charged with that duty. Mr. Moudgil found that this was a redundant gesture, as anyone has the right to attend BOT meetings and communicate their opinions. Mr. Moudgil stressed that the issue of wording should not cause further difficulty or complexity for us, so there should be care taken with the phrases: "appointed to the BOT" and "represent the Senate at the BOT meetings." With Mr. Graves's comment that this issue had been exhausted, he requested to make an amendment, which Ms. Andersen then offered to further refine. She read the revised wording for the benefit of the secretary:

MOVED that Senators Kathleen Moore (Chemistry) and James Ciplewski (Education) be appointed to represent the Senate at the Board of Trustees meetings through the summer term, 2005.

After unanimous approval of the amendment, and Mr. Moudgil's call for a vote, the amended motion finally passed. As Mr. Licker introduced the final motion of the agenda, he noted with great relief that neither the word "represent" nor "attend" was part of the language.

MOVED that the following faculty members be appointed to the General Education Committee: Tomas Giberson (Education) 2003-2005 (replacing Sherman Folland) and Andrea Eis (Art History) winter 2004 (replacing Stacey Hahn). (Mr. Licker, Mr. Cipielewski)

With no discussion on the matter, the motion was approved unanimously.

Good and Welfare

Mr. Russell distributed copies of the following motion:

Be it resolved that the University Senate requests the Provost not to make a recommendation to the President and Board of Trustees on the dates for the 2005-2006 academic calendar until receiving the Senate's recommendation on guidelines for establishing calendars. The Senate will propose such guidelines as early as possible in the winter 2004 semester after reviewing the results of web-surveys of recent graduates and full-time faculty and consulting faculty on a policy concerning qualifications for student participation in commencements.

On the reverse of the hand-out Mr. Russell had crafted a survey poll of recent graduates on the timing of commencement, and a survey of full-time faculty on attendance. Mr. Moudgil recommended that the Senate should have time before voting on such a document. Mr. Russell restated his earlier assertion that there is no compelling reason not to hold commencement earlier in December since students technically graduate before certification anyway. For clarification, Ms. Klemanski noted that costs associated with a mass mailing to graduates could reach \$3000.00.

Mr. Moudgil reminded the Senate that the commencement ceremony is for our students, for their celebration of achievement, and faculty interests should not play a dominant role in this decision. Current students should be consulted for their preference, rather than rely on the opinions of those who have already graduated. Ms. Snyder cautioned that students need a bigger picture than just a few questions that appear on a survey. To thoughtfully respond, she claimed, they would need to know, for example, how final exam study days or how the start days of the term would be affected. Ms. Didier suggested that a random sample survey may cut down on costs. Mr. Cipielewski wondered whether an *ad hoc* committee should be appointed to study the matter of a random survey. Mr. Shablin indicated that a committee was formed some time ago, and that several faculty, including Ms. Eberwein, were involved in those discussions.

Mr. Porter, the student Congress representative, suggested that one effective way to gather information among this year's seniors would be by administering a survey at the time a student submits the paperwork to apply for graduation. Mr. Downing reiterated the importance of Mr. Russell's concern regarding qualifications for commencement, and to the best of his knowledge he believes that the previous committee did not address that particular issue. Ms. Klemanski pointed out that no one officially graduates until the Board of Trustees renders its approval in March.

Mr. Graves observed that faculty still need time to grade exams and final papers, and that he perceives a difference between holding commencement before the students finish their work and after. Since the commencement is devoid of legal content and is purely ceremonial, offered Mr. Licker, there is no real need to hold the commencement later in the month.

Mr. Shablin advised the Senate that the 2005-2006 calendar is still in draft format and will be an agenda item on the March and April BOT meetings. Mr. Tracy said that in the past the calendar issue was decided by the Board as late as their June meeting so that there is still time to debate and discuss the issue. In reply, Mr. Shablin urged that earlier consideration is necessary because of the impact the calendar has on a myriad of campus activities and events. Then Mr. Tracy asked why this matter hadn't been brought to the Senate earlier this year so that proper time could be allotted to working through a decision that many people have strong feelings about. He supports Mr. Russell's attempt to gather as much information as possible.

Mr. Shablin recounted the four options available on the previous survey: commencement before final exams, during final exams, after exams (current date), and a January date. Mr. Moudgil offered to continue the discussion in January, after more information is gathered and digested. He then referred the draft of Mr. Russell's motion to the steering committee for their input, advice, and information gathering, and for their report back to the Senate in January. With general consent to that plan of action, Mr. Tracy's motion to adjourn was duly seconded by Mr. Porter and the meeting ended at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Machmut-Jhashi
Secretary to the University Senate
1/6/04

Back to

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

S E N A T E

Home Page