

Oakland University Senate

Seventh meeting

April 16, 1998

Minutes

Members present: Alber, Barnett, Benson, Bertocci, Blume, Boddy, Connellan, Cronn, Dillon, Doane, Downing, Eberwein, Frankie, Gardner, Gilroy, Goslin, Grossman, Halsted, Hildebrand, Keane, Landau, Long, Longan, Moore, Patterson, Polis, Reynolds, Rozek, Rush, Schochetman, Sen, Sieloff, Simon, Speer, Sudol, Wood

Members absent: Berger, Blanks, Brieger, Haskell, Herold, Jarski, Johnson, Lilliston, Lombard, Mabee, Mahamwal, McNair, Miller, Moudgil, Mukherji, Olson, Otto, Papazian, Riley, H. Schwartz, R. Schwartz, Weng

Summary of actions:

1. Motion to approve the March 19, 1998 Senate meeting minutes (Ms. Eberwein, Ms. Gilroy) Approved.
2. Motion to amend Senate standing committee administrative appointments. (Mr. Grossman, Ms. Reynolds) Second reading. Postponed following approval of a motion to postpone (Mr. Keane, Mr. Long)
- 2A. Motion to amend the Senate standing committee administrative appointments to include two VPAA designees on the Library Committee. (Ms. Eberwein, Ms. Papazian) Postponed as part of the previous motion)
3. Motion to approve appointments to Senate standing committees as listed in the agenda except for the Academic Computing Committee. (Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Dillon) Approved.
4. Motion to amend general education requirements for students pursuing second undergraduate degrees (Mr. Grossman, Ms. Gilroy) First reading.
5. Motion to establish a policy for admission of home-schooled students to Oakland University (Ms. Alber, Ms. Eberwein) First reading.
6. Motion to change credit hour requirement for the Educational Specialist Program to 36 hours. (Mr. Keane, Mr. Downing) Approved following the approval of a motion to waive the second reading (Ms. Alber, Mr. Grossman)
7. Motion to approve authorize an additional senate meeting spring term. (Mr. Dillon, Ms. Alber) Approved.

After calling the meeting to order, the Provost entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19th meeting. Ms. Eberwein so moved, Ms. Gilroy seconded and the minutes were approved as distributed. The first item of old business, a motion to change administrative appointments on Senate standing committees, was opened for discussion. Beginning with the proposed amendment to add a second VPAA designee to the Library Committee, Ms. Eberwein emphasized the Library Committee's desire to restore the original representation, namely the Dean of the Library as an ex officio member and a VPAA representative as a voting member. She added that the Library Committee feels it would be injured by losing the contact with the Office of Academic Affairs. She reminded the group that, at one time, all Senate committees were chaired by members of the Senate and opined that if that were still true, the other committees would want to protect their administrative connections and would have similar amendments on the floor.

Mr. Keane noted that at the last meeting at least one Senate committee had not had an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes and he worried that, as committees do look at the ramifications, there may be a proliferation of amendments. He therefore moved that the main motion and the amendment be postponed to allow for further discussion and that the whole issue be referred back to the committees for due deliberation. Then, at a subsequent time, if it is brought back to the Senate, there will be more structured information about the responses of the committees to these changes. Mr. Long seconded the motion to postpone and the Senate concurred.

Ms. Reynolds moved the first item of new business, that the individuals listed on the agenda be appointed to staff or chair the various Senate standing committees. She added the following designations as chair: Ms. Theisen--Admissions and Financial Aid, Mr. Bello Oguno--Human Relations, winter 1999, Mr. Lipman and Mr. Moran--Budget Review, fall 1998 and winter 1999 respectively. Following Mr. Dillon's second, Ms. Sieloff nominated Mr. Moore to serve on the Academic Computing Committee. Since there were no vacancies on the roster this nomination raised the question as to whether or not one could have a contested election for a Senate committee seat. Mr. Grossman stated that the Senate has the right to approve Steering Committee nominations; also that one could propose an amendment to strike one of the Steering Committee nominees and replace that person by Mr. Moore. Ms. Hildebrand pointed out that volunteer forms were solicited from all faculty, that appointments were made based on these forms and that since Mr. Moore had not submitted one there was no way of knowing that he was interested in serving. Provost suggested that we proceed with the motion but exclude the Academic Computing Committee and deal with its appointments at a later meeting. Mr. Gardner asked whether or not there was a deadline and the Provost responded that there is no deadline for staffing Senate committees since we do it all year round but that there was a deadline for the volunteer forms to be submitted. Ms. Reynolds then revised the motion to approve the appointments except for Academic Computing, Mr. Dillon as seconder concurred and the motion was approved.

Mr. Grossman then moved and Ms. Gilroy seconded a motion from the General Education Committee to revise the general education requirements for students pursuing second undergraduate degrees (U2s) to require no more than eight additional credits in general education. Mr. Grossman explained that this will put these students on the same level as students with associate degrees coming from community colleges which are part of the MACRAO agreement. Mr. Downing spoke against the motion, arguing that capping general education does not make sense. He noted that Oakland is aggressively portraying itself as an institution that combines professional and liberal education to prepare students for the 21st century and questioned the idea that our current policy is somehow broken and needs to be fixed. Ms. Gilroy pointed out that most students enrolling for a second undergraduate degree have already completed a general education component in their first degree which must be from a regionally accredited institution. Also, Oakland has modified its general education requirements several times over the years and even a former OU student coming back for a second degree might not meet OU's current general education requirements. She felt that the current requirement is having a negative effect and that students are opting to attend elsewhere. Mr. Downing averred that, rather than seeing the current requirement as a negative, he sees it as a positive.

Ms. Wood asked about the ethnic diversity requirement and how that requirement fits in with this change. Mr. Grossman explained that the ethnic diversity requirement is not a general education requirement and so would not be at all affected by this proposal. Mr. Goslin wondered if we can be assured that all U2 students have had general education classes as part of their first undergraduate degrees. Ms. Gilroy stated that she wasn't aware of any four year accredited school that does not have a general education requirement but that she doesn't know of any studies or information on this. The Provost added that general education is one of the requirements of the accrediting agencies. Speaking to the idea of capping general education requirements, Mr. Grossman pointed out that we already have a cap, namely eight courses. He felt that it might be a hardship for some students to take additional general

education classes, and used as an example a Harvard University graduate who would have to complete the general education component at Oakland as opposed to a community college student coming in under the MACRO plan who would not. It just seemed fair, he stated, to modify the policy.

Mr. Doane wanted to know how many such students there are, generally how many general education credits are needed and what would be the effect on Oakland's credit delivery. Ms. Gilroy responded that there are around 100 students working on second bachelor's degrees but that she didn't know how many general education credits are needed. She did indicate that the General Education Committee has dealt with a number of petitions from second degree students where students have taken courses elsewhere that do not match up with the classes specified by Oakland as meeting the general education requirements. For example, many colleges have poetry as a general education class, Oakland does not and it is hard to tell a student they have to take American literature since their poetry class can't be counted. Mr. Doane then asked what the other state universities do. Ms. Gilroy replied that it varies nationally, that there's a mix of exemptions and non-exemptions. She volunteered to survey the state institutions if it would be useful to have that information.

Mr. Landau asked, if the poetry course is a problem for U2 students, isn't it also a problem for transfers. Indeed it is, replied Ms. Gilroy and expressed her hope that the General Education Committee would deal with this issue in the coming year. Mr. Bertocci wondered if it might be a better idea to get the General Education Committee to change the requirements rather than requiring students to petition for special exceptions. He also noted that when counseling students concerning second undergraduate degrees, he often asks, "what for, pray?" and proposes that they consider pursuing a masters degree instead. And he suggested that a student returning after twenty years might benefit from taking the general education classes.

Ms. Wood stated that there is a mechanism in place to deal with courses that don't correspond directly with Oakland's gen. ed requirements but which meet the spirit of the requirement, specifically, a student may petition a department to evaluate the course. Ms. Gilroy clarified that it is not a petition of exception but actually an appeal; that students must contact and get the department's approval and that the Registrar's Office does keep track of those classes deemed acceptable as general education equivalents at OU. She commented that departments vary in their flexibility and that this results in some uneven handling of student requests. Mr. Downing pointed out that, in the College, advisors use the best fit profile when evaluating transcripts to see if requirements have been satisfied. When dealing with students with highly technical backgrounds he is concerned about the general education background these students will miss if the university decides to restrict the requirement to only two classes. He claimed that he still hasn't heard an argument that would convince him why a change is needed.

Based on concerns expressed by advisors, the General Education Committee did feel that a change was needed, stated Mr. Grossman. The proposed change is intended to alleviate the unfairness of the current policy which benefits two year students from MACRAO institutions and penalizes students who already have a degree. He felt that with the change there would in fact be more students taking general education classes at Oakland since those students who now go elsewhere because of this requirement, would instead finish their second degrees here. Also, one of our major second degree programs is the OU STEP program, a fifth year secondary teacher education program leading to certification. There is no reason a student in the STEP program needs a second degree but if we made it easier by relaxing this requirement, more of them might consider it and there would then be more students taking general education courses. He concluded that what was broken was the inherent unfairness, the concerns expressed by advisors about the impact of this requirement and the desire to make acquiring a second degree easier for returning students.

Ms. Eberwein wondered which general education requirement is most often petitioned and opined that

the least likely one is the international studies category. She added that OU should be proud to have had this requirement from the beginning and that she would be sorry if that were the requirement most often dropped. Mr. Grossman pointed out that the motion doesn't specify that any area requirement will be dropped, just that students will only have to complete two out of the eight areas and the choice of classes would be determined with the help of an advisor. Speaking from the School of Business perspective, Mr. Gardner stated that some of their students who want to get second degrees come from highly technical backgrounds and lack a basic liberal arts education. With emphasis now on the global economy, he felt it would be a mistake to cap the requirement at two classes. Mr. Landau stated that he'd be more comfortable with additional information, that OU's general education requirements are not that unusual and he finds it hard to believe that very many students with undergraduate degrees are missing that many of Oakland's requirements.

Mr. Connellan asked if the problem is the number of courses that are missing from a graduate's transcript or departmental strictness in not granting equivalencies. Ms. Gilroy replied that both come into play. When the last general education requirement was implemented, it took general education out of the hands of individual academic units and made it a university-wide requirement. The General Education Committee reviews petitions and many U2s want areas waived due to previously completed course work. Mr. Blume asked don't we, in fact, have a number of community college transfers and a policy of granting exceptions to them. Ms. Gilroy replied yes, that under MACRAO, students must only take two general education classes. Transfer students make up approximately 51% of the student body commented the Provost and a large number of them are from MACRAO institutions. Mr. Connellan stated that with MACRAO students, we know what general education components their studies have included, with second undergraduate degree students we don't, so he doesn't see the parallel. Mr. Downing added that MACRAO is only relevant to those transfer students who come here with an associates degrees. Ms. Gilroy pointed out that the MACRAO agreement was changed a about five years ago and now the students don't have to have complete an associates degree. Under the current MACRAO plan, community college students now have six of the general education areas waived based on no matches with OU's requirements. She added that there should be more weight given to a four year degree than a two year degree or a student without any degree.

Mr. Polis ventured a motion to waive the second reading and Ms. Reynolds seconded it. Mr. Grossman argued against waiving the second reading, stating that there were enough concerns raised to warrant further thought and discussion. The motion to waive was then voted upon and defeated. The Provost noted that this motion would then proceed to second reading at the next meeting of the Senate.

Ms. Alber then moved, and Ms. Eberwein seconded a motion from the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee to establish the admissions policy for home-schooled students as presented in the agenda. In response to Mr. Polis's query about age discrimination, Ms. Alber answered that there was concern about the maturity of the students and noted that the policy was developed by taking into account advisory agencies' recommendations as well as other schools' policies. Mr. Goslin wondered if the agencies' criteria included age or just test scores. Mr. Connery, chair of the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, replied that age was not part of the agencies' recommendations but that the committee was concerned that adjustment to campus life might be difficult for a young student who had not had any experience in a traditional school setting. Ms. Speer asked if there had been problems with admitting home-schooled students and the Provost responded that Oakland doesn't have a policy to allow home-schooled students to be admitted, that the current admissions policy requires a high school diploma. Mr. Polis wondered if there was a definition of a home schooled student. Mr. Connery noted that parents can apply to home school their children but added that privacy issues add a complicating factor. A wide variety of home schooling situations exists, including those in which parents work with schools or other agencies and those who don't. The ACT or GED would help substantiate a student's preparedness for college level work.

Ms. Speer thought that there was a home school curriculum but was advised that's not true in Michigan. Pursuing the age limitation, Mr. Gardner asked if a 14 year old student with a high school diploma applies, would we deny them admission. He added that he has had some experience with home schooled students and found them very good. If we don't have an age requirement for those students with high school diplomas, we shouldn't have one for home-schooled students he argued. In reply to Ms. Alber's query about the legality of the age limit, Mr. Connery stated that the legal office had not been consulted. He added, however, that legally the university will be better off with a policy rather than without one.

Mr. Landau expressed concern that students would be admitted based on their ACT scores adding that we don't know about what coursework they completed. He felt that there is more to getting a high school diploma than simply getting an acceptable ACT score. Mr. Doane wondered how other universities handle home schooled students, how can you compare ACT scores of students with diplomas and those without. What about two students, both with ACT scores of 20. One has a high school diploma and a low GPA and one doesn't. Ms. Gilroy reported that dealing with home-schooled students has been a hot topic on the registrars' listserv and that there is a wide variance in home schooling and how it is monitored.

Mr. Connery noted that Oakland has a minimal admissions procedure compared to Stanford or Harvard who get more home schooled students. At those schools students write personal essays, they interview with recruiters and thus those institutions can take into account more factors than are available to Oakland. If Oakland were to require home-schooled students to write a personal essay, one runs into the equity problem. He reported that Northern Michigan University, which has a large population of home schooled students, generally uses ACT scores. Mr. Landau stated that OU's current policy is that no one gets admitted without a high school diploma which means that home schooled student wouldn't be admitted. Mr. Connery indicated that some home schooled students have been admitted as exceptions to the policy.

Mr. Gardner averred that home schooled students in his experience have followed a standard curriculum and actually had the equivalent of a high school degree but added that some differentiation is needed between various forms of home schooling. Michigan home schooling requirements changed a few years ago, Mr. Blume reported and the state basically announced that it had no mechanism for controlling it. Therefore there will be a number of students in the applicant pools coming from a variety of home schooling backgrounds. Given that we know nothing about their potential for handling college work, can we say that the high school graduate is better prepared than a home schooled student, asked Mr. Blume. He added that he hasn't seen high school students do all that will and so wonders if these students can do any worse. In reply to Mr. Polis's query about selecting 20 as the minimum ACT score, Mr. Connery noted that the OU average is 21 which means a substantial number of students scored below 20. The Committee did not want to set the standard higher for home-schooled students than it was for high school graduates.

Mr. Gardner thought we need a way to differentiate home-schooled students. Mr. Doane agreed; students in high school have been reviewed by a variety of instructors he noted and if students don't have a diploma, he doesn't think it is out of line to ask for additional evidence. Stating that he's most troubled by the age limit, Mr. Connellan moved to amend the motion by striking "1. "Students must be at least 16 years of age". Mr. Long seconded the motion and then moved to table the discussion. The motion to table was ruled out of order. Ms. Alber felt that we really need to get a legal opinion about this and Ms. Wood wanted to know how many students OU has had who were under 16 years of age. A small number replied Ms. Gilroy. Mr. Keane stated that under current school law, high school students can take classes without having matriculated. His question, how many have matriculated, was answered by Ms. Gilroy who thought there was one student under 16 a few years ago.

Hearing no further discussion, the Provost set the motion aside until the next meeting and turned to the next item of new business. Mr. Keane moved and Mr. Downing seconded that the number of credits required for the Education Specialist program be changed to 36. Mr. Keane explained that Oakland had the higher credit requirement because under previous state rules it was necessary to have 40 credits beyond the masters degree to be certified as superintendent. Administrative certification was eliminated in 1996 and there is now no reason to continue with the higher credit requirement. In addition to bringing the requirements in line with other programs, the change will also permit students to acquire 30 credits toward a Ph.D. and the changes planned will allow for better coordination of classes. Mr. Gardner wanted to know what would be dropped. Mr. Keane responded that several of the classes were consolidated, one course was reduced from 4 to 2 credits. He also advised that the research base and mentor part of the program was enhanced. A motion to waive the second reading, moved by Ms. Alber, seconded by Mr. Grossman was approved by the Senate which then proceeded to approve the motion.

Before introducing the final motion to add an additional Senate meeting to this year's schedule, Mr. Dillon asked if the Senate or the committees bringing the motions above for first reading felt an urgent need to complete the business. Mr. Connery replied that sooner is better and explained that by fall, the composition of the committees will have changed and a certain amount of continuity will be lost. Hearing that, Mr. Dillon moved that the Senate remain in session during the Spring 1998 term to deal with the following items: the staffing of Senate committees including Academic Computing, the motion concerning general education requirements for second degree students, and the motion regarding an admissions policy for home schooled students. Mr. Doane wondered if a quorum would be available at a late April meeting and Ms. Hildebrand noted that the quorum requirement is suspended during spring and summer terms. Subsequent to Ms. Alber's second, the Senate approved the motion.

One good and welfare item was raised. Ms. Eberwein expressed concern about the sign now on the corner of Adams and University where it appears that Oakland is now a subsidiary of Pepsi Co. She asked was this approved by the Campus Development and Environment Committee, under what circumstances was it erected and how soon can it be removed. The Provost stated that the query will be referred to the CD & E committee. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:25.

Submitted by
Linda L. Hildebrand
Secretary to the University Senate

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