



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Fourth Meeting
Thursday, January 12, 1995

Minutes

Present: Andrews, Ari, Barclay, Benson, Bertocci, Berven, Bhatt, Bricker, Briggs-Bunting, Brown, Buffard-O'Shea, Cameron, Capps, Chipman, Christina, Cole, Dahlgren, Downing, Eberwein, Fish, Frankie, Gilroy, Hansen, Hildebrand, Hough, Hovanessian, Khattree, Kim, Mabee, Mittelstaedt, Liboff, Moran, Moudgil, Muir, Olson, Otto, Pipan, Polis, Reddy, Reynolds, Rozek, Rush, Russi, Schmitz, Schwartz, Schott-Baer, Selahowski, Sevilla, Shepherd, Simon, Speer, Stevens, Taam, Winter

Absent: Abiko, Gerulaitis, Kheir, Marks, Moore, Thomas, Wedekind

Summary of Actions:

1. Motion to table the Strategic Plan. (Liboff, Hansen) Not approved.
2. Motion to remove the Tactics from the document. (Schott-Baer, Briggs-Bunting) Ruled out of order
3. Motion to endorse the Strategic Plan for Oakland University, 1995-2005 (Chipman, Downing) Approved
4. Election of Mr. Christina to Senate Steering Committee.

Mr. Russi called the University Senate meeting of Jan. 12th to order at 3:15 and shifted the agenda to take care of a quick bit of business. He called on Mr. Brown and the Elections Committee to conduct an election to replace Ms. Zenas on the Senate Steering Committee for a 1 semester term. Mr. Brown and the committee proceeded to solicit nominations and to distribute and collect the ballots.

As the Elections Committee went off to count ballots, Mr. Russi then moved on to the main item of business, the second reading of the motion to endorse the Strategic Plan. He opened the discussion with a few comments of his own, noting that Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Task Forces were appointed to examine the future of Oakland University and that the document in hand represents a community effort and vision. There have been many opportunities for individuals to respond and provide input, a great deal of work, time and energy has been invested to express these ideas, notions, hopes and dreams for OU. As to the question of the new president, institutions who are discussing strategic plans when there's a vacancy in leadership have two options; either allow the new leader to provide the direction and focus for a strategic plan, or, have the community come together and express its own vision of a plan, a vision that becomes important in the selection of a new president. He encouraged the Senate to opt for the second, feeling that this community document would help guide us in selecting a new president. He remarked that he hoped that we can reach closure

today, that this process has been going on for months and months it is time to conclude the effort.

Mr. Chipman then took the floor and recapped briefly what has transpired so far. The endorsement motion asks the Senate to approve the document entitled, Strategic Plan for Oakland University, 1995-2005, the 1st attachment to the agenda, as Oakland University's governing planning document. This document is a cleaned-up version of the one considered at the November meeting where all the changes made in the document originally reviewed by the Senate in May were clearly noted. The 2d attachment, the specific tactics, are not part of the endorsement but are included as examples of actions that might be taken if the plan is approved. The Senate Planning Review Committee's contribution has been to provide the linkage between the documents in hand today and the one that was debated in the May Senate meeting. He referred to the first full paragraph on page 2 where that linkage is detailed. He also referred back to the November Senate minutes where he detailed how the university would proceed after endorsement of the document, emphasizing that all subsequent actions would go through normal university channels and that the SPRC would be keeping a close eye on the developments and would be reporting back to the Senate on a regular basis. After quoting from the SPRC May memo, "the document presents a sound and reasonable set of proposals for focussing OU efforts over the next decade.... The proposed Strategic Plan should be considered most seriously by the entire university community; he went on to report that the SPRC had met yesterday to review the document in the light of the new developments on campus, and saw no reason to change their support and endorsement of it.

Mr. Russi then called upon Ms. Frankie, chair of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. She summarized for the Senate exactly what they are being asked to endorse and what is not included. The plan includes a vision and 9 strategies. The crux of this plan is that the primary mission of OU has been and should continue to be providing quality undergraduate education, with an emphasis on a grounding in the sciences, mathematics, the arts and humanities. The plan advocates that we should increase enrollments, increase somewhat our emphasis on graduate education, that we should experiment with alternative modes of delivering courses, that we should be more selective in where we chose to concentrate our efforts, and that we should be more responsive to the external community. She emphasized her support for these principles and added that we are not being asked to approve all the tactics nor to worry now about where the dollars will come from. These are critical issues and will need to be addressed and resolved but first we need to agree on our vision, our goals and our priorities. Only then can we determine the tactics and resources needed to achieve these.

Ms Frankie said she has been impressed at our capacity to read the same words and yet develop different, contradictory ideas about the intent of the plan. She has been surprised at the fears expressed that decisions will be made that are completely in opposition to the values and objectives expressed in the plan. For example, she has heard that the plan will jeopardize undergraduate education, in spite of the clear and strong affirmation in the plan stating that undergraduate education is central to our mission; also, that essential programs not specifically mentioned will be neglected and downgraded in some way. She stated that, in fact, her fears are just the opposite--that she worries that these would be much more likely to happen in the absence of a plan. She concluded by stating that the plan fills a vacuum in which we have been operating too long, a vacuum that allowed decisions to be made that exacerbated our problems of focussing on our central mission and priorities, that we must have a plan that expresses our own voice when decisions are made concerning the future of the university. We need to speak with one voice and to go on record concerning our common values and

aspirations and to recruit a new president who will support the elements of the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Liboff asked for a point of clarification regarding the tactics, specifically that they are not part of the motion and are not being voted on today. Mr. Chipman confirmed that the endorse-endorsement is for the Strategic Plan only and does not include the tactics. However, if the plan is approved, appropriate offices on campus would be charged to develop specific plans for implementation and they would look then at the tactics which would be given first priority. Mr. Liboff replied, with all due regard, a set of tactics that are attached to a document that is being voted on can't be separated from that document. Mr. Chipman pointed out that the specific tactics would require review and certification by university governance bodies, including the Senate and perhaps the Board of Trustees, and so would undergo normal review processes.

Mr. Bertocci attempted to clarify the relationship between the two documents. The Senate is being asked to approve in principle the first document and the tactics would be guidelines for implementation of the plan. He added that in the absence of the tactics, the 1st part becomes very general and the tactics are needed to give substance to the first part. If, down the pike, we are going to be deviating radically from the tactics, the question is raised as to what we are doing here now approving the first part. Mr. Chipman commented that the SPRC's primary precedent in dealing with this plan was the University's CAMP report and the subsequent mission statement and associated series of recommendations. The Senate was asked to approve the mission statement. Subsequent actions went through normal university channels and, he added, that the planned treatment of the Strategic Plan is consistent with this earlier approach which worked well.

Ms. Eberwein then took the floor, commenting that her concern is not so much with what we are voting on, but why. As a university governance loyalist, she finds it rather painful to be standing in opposition to the Strategic Plan. She noted that she has been trying to rescue the plan and agonizing and struggling to find reasons to vote for it but, as she considers reasons to support the plan, they fall apart under analysis. The first reason is that the university needs a long range plan. Ms. Eberwein agrees a plan is needed as long as it is clear and simple and allows a great deal of flexibility--what is Oakland University and what do we want it to be in 10 years. Although the plan states that it is not a wish list, Ms. Eberwein sees the plan as just that, particularly the list of tactics and expressed the concern that lots of people will want to add wishes to the list. The nine strategies do not reflect any distinctive role for Oakland and could easily be applied to all 2/3 of all public institutions of higher education. She also is concerned because the plan provides no useful guidance in responding to unexpected challenges, such as the possible relocation of the Detroit College of Law.

She continued, there are those who see elements in the plan that will make OU stronger, more effective, even eminent on a national scale as another reason for supporting it and she hopes those things can be accomplished. However, she thinks the plan will encourage hopes of particular interest groups that will not be fulfilled because of limited resources. When she thinks of eminence and excellence, she would like to see those qualities applied to undergraduate education first, but when she asks what does this plan do for the undergraduate, the answer is usually the proposed recreation center, rather than educational improvement. The document mentions excellence and eminence in undergrad education in conjunction with small enrollment programs such as physical therapy but she would like to see them applied to the program offered all undergraduates, namely the general education component. She wondered what do we mean by national eminence? She thought it meant

small selective programs that could stand out at a national level but the plan lists the broad field of biomedical sciences--how can you do that without a medical school and a research hospital she asked. Another definition of eminence came forth in a Pickwickian sense as just being a little bit better than average. In that case, she commented, she would be ashamed of any program at OU that didn't aspire to be better than average. She shares Mr. Bricker's concern about trade offs and how resources will be allocated.

The third reason she has been given for supporting it is that the plan represents a community effort and has involved many people in its development. Ms. Eberwein is nonetheless still bothered by the way the task force charges were phrased, specifically the non-parallel charges given to the graduate and undergraduate task forces which resulted in a structural disaster. The Task Forces had only around 1/2 of a winter semester to complete their work and since then we've been trying to fix it. Opening up the process brought forth a wish list mentality--something good for a time of growth but not for a time of limited resources. She stated that she wants the university administration to provide a simpler plan and bring it to us. She expressed her great respect for all those involved in the process and added that, if she were to vote yes on the plan, it would be as a way of saying thank you to all the individuals involved.

But, she concluded, that's not a good enough reason to support the plan. One must trust to prudent implementation and she would feel better if we weren't in a state of interim leadership. She noted that no one has made a convincing case to her that OU would be a more exciting or better place if the plan were approved and implemented. She has decided to vote against the plan and asked her colleagues to consider it carefully and not to vote for it out of inertia or skeptical resignation or because one thinks it can't do any harm.

Mr. Liboff stated that, since we are in a period of adjustment and awaiting the appointment of a new president, it might be wise to table the plan and leave it for examination by incoming candidates. If we were to approve it, we might have a document the new president does not agree with. Mr. Russi agreed that an argument could be made to wait but he thought that since the plan represents a community effort and represents the values of Oakland, that this document would be important and useful for presidential candidates and would help them to understand the community and its plans and goals.

Mr. Bricker referenced a memo held circulated explaining his concerns and why he believes it is not a good idea to support the plan at this time. He expressed his deep appreciation to all those who worked on it and stated that, after 29 years here, he finds the position of not supporting the work of his colleagues very unusual. However, he thinks the document needs radical pruning and then should be presented to the Senate. The estimated 32 million dollars required for implementation is daunting and he feels we must be very careful of new initiatives and, in fact, thinks it unlikely that we would be able to implement many of the tactics. The balance between our aspirations and outside reality is lacking and balance is badly needed. If we do it piecemeal it won't be the rational implementation of a coherent plan but a piece here and there and we'll end up with something like Swiss cheese. Oakland is not resource rich he reminded everyone. If the nine strategies are separated from the tactics he isn't sure of what we are approving and feels almost anything could be done; how much it would cost and where the money would come from is unknown. He also felt that the strategies are boilerplate and do not give us any idea of what we distinctively are and makes us vulnerable to expenditures we aren't prepared to make. He argued in favor of a radical pruning of the plan to commit the institution to 5-10 million dollars of new money over a 5 year period and asked his colleagues to please consider it carefully--that it may be a damaging commitment to the institution.

Mr. Olson preceded his remarks with a theatrical flourish, intended, he pronounced, to emphasize his enthusiastic support of this document. He remarked that he participated in the APCC planning last time around and watched that plan get watered down. He reminded the Senate that the Board of Trustees wanted a Strategic Plan in order to help them make decisions and that the process to develop the current document was with a great deal of community input. If a document were created from the top down everyone would argue against it as well. This document provides a rationale for change and as an administrator, he sees ways of marrying the plan and the tactics. He concluded by reiterating his enthusiastic support for the plan.

Mr. Hough said he would like to focus on three facets. For 25 years Oakland has been an political institution that has had administrative committees making decisions. The desire for greater faculty input in the planning and decision processes resulted in the creation of the Senate Planning Review Committee and the Senate Budget Review Committee. In addition, the new president was open to involving faculty and opened up the budget hearings so any interested persons could go and hear the proposals. He emphasized that any changes or developments resulting from the plan would have to go through the normal Senate review committees with faculty representatives (SPRC, SBRC and any others). We are in a time of change and this is addressed in the Strategic Plan. He argued against throwing away the oars and sails and rudders represented by the plan, noting that the alternative is to go back to a world run by individuals in cabals. The community has participated in developing the plan, the implementation will be over-seen by the planning and budget committees and he feels it is time to go forward.

Commenting that Churchill had lots of plans but that he was not good at delivering on them, Mr. Moran added that he wasn't sure how he felt about the plan and is disturbed by the separation of the strategies from the tactics, noting that the lack of specificity is anticlimactic. He went on to say that he does not believe in stasis, believes university needs to get bigger and tougher and better and sees room for improvement. He is a strong supporter of some things but not others in the document and has concluded that the plan is structurally and conceptually flawed. He proposed that we wait to act on the plan or use it as a working document, and concluded by recommending that the Senate vote against it.

Mr. Liboff reiterated his concern about the plan and tactics and worried that statements made in the open hearings were not incorporated into the documents. He wondered how one would go about amending the tactics. Mr. Chipman responded to that concern, stating that as the tactics were implemented they would go through the normal approval processes and would they would be subject to modification at that time. Mr. Liboff responded with a specific concern,, that in the graduate programs listed on p. 17 of the tactics, he had objected to the ranking of the programs and had expected to see it adjusted. Mr. Chipman replied that he would assume that the VPAA would delegate this to the Dean of Graduate Studies and any concerns about the implementation of this tactic should be directed to people on committees (Graduate Council, SPRC, SBRC) who advise the VPAA and President on university resource allocation. Mr. Chipman added that anyone can volunteer to serve on these or any Senate committees.

Mr. Downing noted that as he listens to his colleagues he finds he shares some of their concerns. However, he wanted to point out that what we are looking at is a proposed framework--the strategic plan provides the context and the tactics were developed by

university committees to form the content. His support of the plan is based on the centrality of undergraduate education with a liberal education core, the involvement in the greater community and the fact that growth would be carefully determined in selected areas.

Mr. Christina, referring to Mr. Liboff's previous comments, explained that the listing of programs on p. 17 was a decision of the Task Force on Graduate Education, made after considering all the statements made at the open hearings. He sympathized with Mr. Liboff's disagreement with the results, noting that people don't always agree with him either.

Ms. Briggs-Bunting reminisced about sitting in this room and interviewing presidential candidates. The candidates viewed strategic planning as a grass roots process, building consensus from the ground up. Had that process occurred, she felt, we wouldn't be having this discussion here and our endorsement of the plan would be virtually unanimous. She remarked that job is partially done, that we are learning how to do it and that it needs to be looked at in the context of flat resources or a downturn of resources. She concluded that this kind of dissent means it doesn't have consensus. Mr. Sevilla responded that no matter what plan we have, there will always be dissent, that dissent is a natural part of an academic institution. As to the criticism that the plan could be applied to other institutions, he felt that characterization is a compliment. It says that the strategies define a typical academic institution and he sees in this plan also those aspects unique to OU, such as research. He expressed his support for the plan, adding that it represents a typical academic institution and one that he would like to be at.

Mr. Hough reminded the Senate that the plan is the product of a large number of people, many of whom are not in the room today. One of the remarkable aspects of the endeavor was the diversity of view and the inclusion of groups not normally part of the planning process which brought strengths and vision to the plan. Ms. Rosen expressed her neutrality but wanted to remind the Senate that it is a plan and that sometimes you have to make changes and adjust to new situations. She compared it to building a house, you start with a blueprint but have to be prepared to make changes. This plan is not written in stone and voting in favor of it does not mean that changes can't be made. Mr. Moudgil agreed with Ms. Rosen, noting that the plan was prepared by our colleagues and that there were many opportunities to provide comments and to respond to the draft versions. He added that no plan is worse than a bad plan because then we have no idea of where we are going. When Nehru was in jail he wrote a plan for India even though he had no idea when British rule would end; it is because of this vision that India is a large industrial nation today. He argued that we need to have a plan and to work with it, using the resources we have, adding that the effectiveness of the plan is up to the faculty. And he pointed out that, as for national prominence, OU already has programs and faculty that are outstanding.

Mr. McCrimmon stated that he's had the misfortune to have been at three institutions who have been through this and it's not the plan but the process that's important. When he came here four years ago there was a decided lack of identity and a great deal of tension and frustration because of the perception that things were being handed down from the top. The community turned around and developed this plan and the thought that it would be tabled or abandoned is disturbing because of what has gone on recently and what went on in constructing the plan. Would we have the energy to go back and reconstruct this thing? He concluded that, for him, the idea of having top down decision-making re-define this plan is an anathema.

Mr. Liboff explained that his point is that there is no way of amending the specifics and that the Senate is being asked to approve something that needs changing. Ms. Speer introduced herself and commented that she has come from an institution that has gone through strategic planning for 10 years and, in looking over the strategies, she can't believe that there is anyone who would disagree with the principles. Although they do not tell the university exactly what to do in the next 5 or so years they represent principles that focus on the future. The plan says planning and resources need to be increased and time and energy need to be spent on this, that education needs to be accountable to the public, that the institution needs to increase research activity and creativity and then to recognize it in promotion and tenure, that community outreach is important and service needs to be recognized in the operational policies and procedures. She sees it as a opportunity to empower employees to make decisions. She thinks that the university is ready for a matrix organization and the strategies are there to guide the dream. What comes next are objectives and the faculty will be involved in developing these objectives. Strategic plans change--she doesn't think we need to worry about how they will be placed in operation. Speaking with her university hat on, rather than a nursing hat, she stated that the faculty need to have their university hats on too, that we need to think what's best for the university, that principles in the Strategic Plan are needed to guide us, even if they are not perfect.

Mr. Andrews was of the opinion that the process had been a good experience in that it involved many people in the planning, both on campus and people from off campus who normally are not involved. An alumnus served on his Task Force and he worries about the negative message that would be sent if the plan were not approved. Mr. Christina took the opportunity to remind the Senate that the plan is amendable and if there are no amendments, we should vote on it. Mr. Liboff stated that the best thing would be to table the plan since we can't amend the tactics and so moved. Ms. Hanson seconded the motion which was then defeated.

Ms. Schott Baer commented that the problem seems to be more with the tactics and not the strategies. She expressed concern that a number of the tactics might be implemented without the VPAA or other administrative bodies consulting with the Budget Committee. She expressed her own support for the strategies but not the tactics, adding that we would be hamstringing a new president with these very specific tactics. Mr. Chipman quoted from p. 2 of the document where it states that "these offices will develop these initial plans from the strategies and recommendations contained in the document. . . They will also provide for the review, possible modification and implementation of such recommendations using existing university governance and administrative procedures. In succeeding years progress in implementing the entire strategic plan will be monitored and reported upon by the office of the President and the Senate Planning Review Committee." He wondered how that language could not allay the concerns being expressed.

Although the process will allow for modification of the tactics, Ms. Schott-Baer was still troubled by their attachment to the Plan and moved that the tactics be removed. Ms. Briggs-Bunting seconded the motion. Mr. Andrews spoke in opposition to the motion, stating that the tactics are an important reflection of the Task Forces' work and we would lose many months of work, many hours spent gathering and examining data and coming up with the best ideas. The specific is always subject to modification as it moves through the governance process and to divorce the tactics from the plan would leave us with generalities. The tactics represent areas for our first efforts and priorities in implementing the Strategies. As for hamstringing the future president, since the normal governance process would apply, that seems a moot concern. If one is concerned with how the committees perform, they certainly may volunteer

to serve on the committees and, since committee meetings are open, anyone can attend. The committees and senate serve as forums for faculty input and he counseled the senators to have faith in their colleagues.

Mr. Downing broke in at this point, speaking as acting parliamentarian- , and ruled the motion out of order since the tactics are not part of the original motion.

Mr. Bertocci used his personal interest in international studies as an example in trying to describe the relationship between the plan and the tactics. He considers international studies an important component of what makes OU undergraduate experience unique and contributes to its eminence. He is going to be working towards establishing a Global Studies Center as a tactic in support of Strategy 1. He commented that as we proceed we may come up with a better idea and will need to change that specific tactic but we will still achieve the goal. He reminded the Senate that the ERI was not the product of planning but faculty entrepreneurship. He felt that without the tactics, too much would be left to chance.

Mr. Capps proceeded to call the question and the Senate approved his move to proceed to a vote. Mr. Bricker moved, seconded by Mr. Olson, that the vote be done by secret ballot, a procedural motion quickly approved. Mr. Brown and the Senate Elections Committee were prepared for such a contingency and proceeded to distribute, collect and count the ballots. A question was raised concerning proxy votes; the answer is that the Senate does not permit them. Mr. Brown returned with the results--32 votes in favor of the motion, 17 against, and 1 abstention. Mr. Russi formally declared the motion passed. Mr. Brown also took the opportunity to announce that Mr. Christina was elected to the Senate Steering Committee.

The motion to adjourn was made and the Senate dispersed at 4:54 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda L. Hildebrand
Secretary to the University Senate

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