



# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

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Thursday, 12 May 1994  
Eighth Meeting  
*MINUTES*

Senators Present: Bhatt, Braunstein, Capps, Cole, Dahlgren, Dunphy, Eberwein, Fish, Frankie, Gerulaitis, Grossman, Hildebrand, Hough, Kheir, Mabee, Moore, Moran, Olson, Otto, Packard, Pipan, Polis, Reddy, Reynolds, Rickstad, Rooney, Rozek, Rush, Russi, Sevilla, Stevens, Taam.  
Senators Absent: Abiko, Andrews, Ari, Benson, Bertocci, Bricker, Briggs-Bunting, Brown, Buffard-O'Shea, Chipman, Christina, Downing, Garcia, Hansen, Hormozi, Hovanesian, Khattree, Liboff, Marks, Mittelstaedt, Muir, Pine, Reddy, Schmitz, Schwartz, Schott-Baer, Selahowski, Shepherd, Stano, Thomas, Urice, Wedekind, Zenas.

### Summary of Actions

#### 1. Discussion of proposed Strategic Plan

Mr. Russi called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m., indicating that the Senate had been convened to discuss the proposed Strategic Plan in a conversational rather than legislative mode. The idea was simply to elicit responses to the report recently circulated. He immediately called upon Dean Frankie, chair of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, to make a brief presentation on that group's behalf. She began by calling attention to another volume, containing six task force reports as circulated last fall, which serves as a complement to her committee's final report.

Stepping back from details to look at the overall picture of the Strategic Plan, she focused initial attention on the first page's list of key questions for a strategic plan to address and then indicated where in the document (generally in the Preamble) each question was answered. When considering the central question, "What should we be building toward?" she referred to the strategies detailed throughout the plan as well as to statements carried over from the 1990 Academic Policy and Planning Committee statement of Strategic Guidelines for Oakland University. In response to the question, "What is being proposed here that is so different from previously circulated plans?" she acknowledged that much of this is, as it should be, a reaffirmation of existing achievements and values of which this community is deservedly proud. What is new this time is directly stated aspiration toward national eminence in a few specific areas consistent with the Vision Statement from which this plan originated.

Following Ms. Frankie's presentation, Mr. Fish launched a sequence of questions by asking about the omission from the final report of programs that had been listed in the Graduate Programs Task Force report. Ms. Frankie responded that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee thought it inappropriate to include curricular ideas not yet developed to the point of being proposals already going through governance processes. Other program ideas had not

been neglected, however, but had been forwarded to the Graduate Council.

Ms. Rickstad declared herself in general very pleased with the Strategic Plan and reported that other students with whom she had consulted shared her enthusiasm. She wondered, however, how responsibilities assigned to particular departments would be monitored. Would the Strategic Plan Steering Committee itself see that these tasks were accomplished? Ms. Frankie quickly responded that her committee had finished its work; she expected the president and other university officers to see that tactics and strategies get carried out. To this assurance Mr. Russi added that the university's ongoing governance system plays a continuing role. He then called on Professor Joel Russell to speak for the Senate Planning Review Committee about that body's response to the Strategic Plan.

Regretting Mr. Chipman's absence, Mr. Russell indicated that he had been delegated to represent his committee's chair in presenting to the Senate the SPRC response, based on its paragraph-by-paragraph review of the document. He did so by reading the following statement into the record:

The document presents a sound and reasonable set of proposals for focusing Oakland University's efforts over the next decade. The values and aspirations they embody are well grounded in our past. The specific recommendations made reveal a high correlation with issues identified for future attention in the 1990 Strategic Guidelines. The proposed strategic plan should be considered most seriously by the entire university community.

Long range planning is a real need. Oakland University ought to take steps to make its own future rather than just be shaped by it. This is especially true with the present level of state funding and with tuition concerns. The current strategic planning process already represents an enormous institutional investment; hence it must provide an even more significant return than similar efforts of the past.

Given its charge, the SPRC expects to work with those responsible for the implementation of a final strategic plan for Oakland University. For complete success, it will be necessary to set priorities judiciously, review progress carefully, and when necessary, respond to new conditions wisely. The SPRC is ready to assist constructively in all of these activities.

Following this presentation, Mr. Bhatt then distributed a written statement of his concerns about the omission from Strategy 7 on p. 24 of any reference to the existing doctoral program in Systems Engineering. He questioned why this program, alone among the university's current Ph.D. programs, failed to meet whatever criteria had been established for designating programs of institutional excellence and distinction that offer prospects for attaining national eminence. Although personally supportive of the proposed doctoral program in Mathematics, he wondered why that should be given more prominence in the plan than the Systems Engineering Ph.D. that has already compiled a strong record through the achievements of its graduates (58 of them over the program's 16-year history). Omitting this program struck him as a serious oversight that greatly diminished the credibility of the whole Strategic Plan, and he called upon the Senate to correct that error lest the university send misleading signals to its external constituencies. Mr. Kheir supported his colleague's position, pointing to tactic 6.5 on p. 23, which declares that Oakland should "develop alliances with the Oakland Technology

Park." He was glad to see that goal added to the document but also hoped to see processes detailed to show how it would be met.

When Ms. Gerulaitis later asked for a response to Mr. Bhatt's concern from the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Professor Lizabeth Barclay, chair of the Task Force for University Excellence and Distinction, replied that her group began with the recognition that many Oakland University programs, both undergraduate and graduate, have already attained excellence; nonetheless, it was charged to identify a small number as having special potential for national eminence. Two subcommittees reviewed materials submitted by representatives of existing programs. Unfortunately, her group received less information on the Systems Engineering doctoral program than others and did not hear from any spokespersons for the School of Engineering and Computer Science when it held four public hearings. Its report, therefore, only communicated the best guess drawn from available information. Dean Polis then said that the impression he had drawn from Ms. Frankie was that the task forces made decisions based on detailed materials. Not having been here last year, he had no idea what had been sent, but he volunteered to furnish more information at this point. Ms. Barclay replied, however, that the task forces had adjourned in November. Mr. Bhatt, worried about how the program's omission would be interpreted outside the university, mentioned that he had replied extensively to various task force inquiries but did not know who had been consulted for data about the Systems Engineering Ph.D.

Ms. Frankie assured her colleagues that nobody should feel that omission from specific mention in the Strategic Plan means a judgment that a program lacks potential for excellence. Strategies have been provided for ongoing review, assessment, and future recognition. Mr. Kheir appreciated her encouragement but found no money targeted specifically for Engineering graduate programs. Neglecting these for a five-year span would have predictably unfortunate consequences. Mr. Sevilla, a member of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, then pointed out that the Ph.D. program in Biochemistry, with which he is himself associated, also failed to make the listing. He interpreted such omissions as meaning, not negative judgments on program quality, but rather a belief that special incremental allocations may not be needed in those areas. This did not mean that the university would not support such programs, only that new monies that might become available would be directed elsewhere.

Mr. Moran had a related, though seemingly opposite, question: He wondered how the figure of \$500,000 had been arrived at to represent the university's likely level of support for the extensive but exceedingly ambiguous set of goals for undergraduate education set forth in tactic 1.1. When Mr. Harris had difficulty finding detailed figures supporting this proposed allocation, Ms. Frankie acknowledged that this was the one item not furnished with the usual worksheet filled out by program administrators. As a result of non-parallel charges given to the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Task Forces, two very different sets of recommendations had emerged, with the undergraduate ones not oriented toward programs but rather toward instructional support, student recruitment, and cultural diversity. Recognizing such imbalance as a problem but thinking it unreasonable to go back to the Undergraduate Programs Task Force for information that group had not sought, the Steering Committee turned instead to the Senate's University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction and introduced this tactic based on UCUI's advice. It represents a global affirmation of support for undergraduate program development, but \$500,000 can only be considered a very raw estimate of what may be entailed. Cost estimates for other tactics, however, have been based on detailed worksheets. Mr. Moran responded that his only concern focused on the lack of detail for likely expenditures. Mr. McKay, speaking as an active member of the Senate Budget Review

Committee, which is charged with advising the Senate on fiscal implications before programs are adopted, assumed that the SBRC would be afforded opportunity to advise the Senate. Such is the case. Both Ms. Frankie and Mr. Harris reminded senators that cost figures in the Strategic Plan are meant to provide ballpark indications of magnitude of projected institutional support; they are very rough indicators rather than budgets.

When Ms. Gerulaitis changed the subject to respond to the plan's goal of increasing foreign student enrollment by asking what thought had been given to making this a more livable and attractive campus for such students, Mr. Russi hoped that a task force currently at work would offer useful proposals for improving conditions. Ms. Mabee asked about plans indicated on p. 24 for implementing a Center for Global Studies "to coordinate the international activities of the university." Her inquiry as to whether faculty members with international connections would be encouraged to recommend faculty exchanges met with a positive response from Ms. Frankie. Also with regard to international alliances, Mr. Pipan asked about the relationship projected among tactics related to the university's global engagement, wondering whether Process 7.4.5 on p. 25 could be linked to goals stated elsewhere for international education and the Center for Global Studies. He hoped for broader university coordination of all such programs. Mr. Fish endorsed that statement, and Mr. Russi responded that the document was intended to embrace all the university's international programs.

Ms. Cole then directed attention to a different sort of diversity to which the university aspires, wondering why the Women's Studies program had been ignored in that context, given its capacity to attract and serve women students, particularly older women returning to college. Ms. Frankie mentioned that representatives of several concentrations had spoken at hearings on various stages of the Strategic Plan, although the Undergraduate Programs Task Force chose to make no reference to specific programs. When Ms. Cole rejoined that the Honors College had been mentioned, Ms. Frankie assured her that statements regarding concentrations had become part of the public record. Mr. Moran, who had served on the relevant task force, argued that some distinctions had to be made in the planning process rather than demanding that every program be mentioned as a center of emphasis; although sympathetic to concerns expressed by various speakers, he shared Mr. Sevilla's attitude, remaining proud of his own department's graduate program, for example, even though it is never mentioned in the final report. Ms. Cole found the omission of Women's Studies a glaring one, however, in terms of concerns for gender equity and diversity. She found Strategy 1.2, to which Mr. Moran directed attention, an inadequate response. Ms. Rooney mentioned that Women's Studies fulfills community outreach goals also, and Ms. Mabee suggested that the program's transitional status as it attempts to advance from concentration to major justifies special attention within the actual Strategic Plan. Ms. Cole agreed with that position, noting that Women's Studies has a special opportunity to serve returning women students. She suggested that recently awarded office space for Women's Studies serves as a kind of metaphor for the program's treatment on campus. Mr. Sevilla responded that if any program can be directed to advance more general institutional goals, then it should be adapted for that purpose--with university funding. The published plan really does not leave existing but unmentioned programs out in the cold. They can still apply for support and fund-raising help. He maintained that there is enough in the plan to satisfy everyone active in any of our programs.

Mr. McKay then drew the discussion to a close by asking what role the Senate would play in dealing with this Strategic Plan. Mr. Russi replied that the Senate Steering Committee had examined that issue, recommending that this document be forwarded to President Packard so

that she might consult with various constituencies before bringing it back for the Senate's official endorsement. When Mr. McKay inquired whether that endorsement would be sought at the next week's meeting, Mr. Russi said it would not. Ms. Packard then stated that, whenever the Strategic Plan Steering Committee should sign off on its report as having done what it could (the stage of planning history that has apparently now been reached), she intends to seek feedback from the Senate and other campus groups. She expected the Senate to have ample opportunity to discuss the plan and provide comment, which she will then share over the summer months with the Board of Trustees. Based on Board and Senate feedback, she may try to make some adjustments to the document now under review. She expected to bring a revised Strategic Plan before the Senate for its endorsement before presenting it for Board action. Currently, what she seeks is comment from any group with an interest in the plan. Although she cannot promise to include all suggestions in the final document, she pledged to add statements of any concerns to the public record. When Mr. McKay ventured to assume that the Senate, simply by reviewing the Strategic Plan, was not actually being asked to authorize programs being proposed in it, Ms. Packard replied that proposals must still go through all appropriate governance processes, just as items with dollar costs attached must still be subjected to normal budgeting processes and fund-raising methods. Mr. Russi then concluded the discussion by acknowledging and thanking Dean Frankie, asking her to identify all members of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee then present. Ms. Frankie did so graciously, reporting that one of the great rewards of working on this challenging task had been the privilege of collaborating with so many admirable and highly motivated persons.

With opportunity provided to introduce Good and Welfare presentations, Ms. Dunphy rose to invite faculty members and students to participate in the upcoming Alumni Academy, which will be held during our next Homecoming Weekend. As relationships with faculty are among the strongest inducements for graduates to return to campus, an Alumni Academy is being introduced this fall. She invited proposals of various sorts, indicating that there will probably be two or three concurrent one-hour Saturday afternoon sessions. The Friday before Homecoming will again be a "Wear O.U. Day," during which everyone is encouraged to dress in black and gold finery. She also encouraged departments to sponsor late-afternoon social activities following the Alumni Academy. Another festive occasion will be the first annual Alumni Awards Banquet at which three new awards will be presented. She encouraged Senate colleagues to watch for more information about all these activities, urging everyone to get involved.

Ms. Gerulaitis then took advantage of the Senate's opportunity for rumor control by saying that she had heard that Oakland University's stature in the academic world had taken some sort of a beating. She wondered if that were true, and--if so--why? President Packard immediately stepped forward to explain that a recent issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education had published a list of colleges and universities grouped according to new Carnegie classifications. Surprisingly, Oakland continued to be listed as a Comprehensive Master's institution rather than being advanced to the Ph.D. II status we think we now merit on the basis of numbers of doctoral graduates and range of Ph.D. programs. Classifications were based on data from 1989-91, a period when Oakland University--on average--fell short of the requisite numbers even though it has since experienced better times and ought to qualify for higher ranking. Normally, continuing in a category we think we have outgrown would have been nothing worse than a disappointment. This year, however, Carnegie rankings may have greater impact because there is sentiment among some Michigan legislators for integrating them into a formula for differential funding of state universities. Qualifying as a Doctoral II institution, therefore, could increase next year's budget allocation significantly--perhaps even doubling this year's increase.

Responding to this challenge, therefore, President Packard initiated communication with Dr. Eugene Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation and received from him a carefully worded letter saying that, based on current data, Oakland University would be classified among Doctoral II institutions. Question exists as to whether his letter actually reclassifies us, but it certainly provides useful evidence if the legislature chooses to act on such a formula. Given legislative interest in establishing some sort of funding formula, she thought it important for us to take overall enrollments into consideration and doctoral enrollments in particular as we proceed with our plans. She reported that she has shared all this information with deans, department chairs, and doctoral program directors, urging them to be sure we do not slip in doctoral graduations. She concluded by mentioning that, with Mr. DeCarlo's retirement, the university has retained the services of an excellent lobbying firm to represent our interests in Lansing.

Mr. Fish then congratulated Mr. Russi on persuading the Senate secretary to emerge from retirement, though Ms. Eberwein reiterated that her resignation takes effect at the end of this Senate year. Volunteers for the position may apply to this body's presiding officer.

Respectfully submitted  
Jane D. Eberwein  
Secretary to the University Senate

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