



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

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Second Meeting
Thursday, 30 September 1993

MINUTES

Senators Present: Abiko, Awbrey, Bertocci, Bhatt, Braunstein, Bricker, Briggs-Bunting, Chipman, Christina, Dahlgren, Downing, Dunphy, Eberwein, Frankie, Gerulaitis, Grossman, Hansen, Hildebrand, Hough, Khattree, Mabee Mittelstaedt, Moore, Packard, Pine, Pipan, Polis, Rickstad, Rozek, Rush, Russi, Schmitz, Schwartz, Schott-Baer, Sevilla, Thomas, Wedekind.

Senators Absent: Ari, Benson, Brown, Cole, Hormozi, Hovanesian, Kheir, Liboff, Marks, Moran, Muir, Olson, Reddy, Reynolds, Rooney, Selahowski, Shepherd, Stano, Stevens, Taam, Urice, Zenas.

Summary of Actions:

1. Reports from Senate Committees: Academic Standing and Honors (H. Zohdy); Campus Development and Environment (G. Brieger); Academic Computing (J. Dow); Academic and Career Advising (B. Mabee; R. Stern); Academic Conduct (F. Lepkowski)
2. Report on the Status of Women at Oakland University (V. Allen)
3. Statement on "Diversity at Oakland University" (M. Pierson)
4. Procedural motion from the Steering Committee to fill a vacancy on the Senate Assessment Committee (Grossman; Rush). Approved.

When Mr. Russi called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m., he indicated that he would like to rearrange the agenda in order to accommodate teaching schedules of three committee chairs who had agreed to make reports. Hearing no objections, he then proceeded to acknowledge Professor Hoda Abdel Aty- Zohdy, who continues to chair the Academic Standing and Honors Committee.

Ms. Zohdy reported that the principal new business undertaken by that committee over the past two years has been formulation of plans for a university-wide undergraduate Dean's List. Students who achieved exceptionally high grades while taking 12 or more credits during any given semester would be honored by having their names posted. Dean's List standing would also be recorded on their transcripts. If any students wished to protect their privacy, they could request that their names be omitted from the public listing. The Dean's List could be generated easily with the ISIS system. After consulting with the Senate Steering Committee about their proposal, her committee has been soliciting community views and expects to run an item in the student newspaper inviting student response to this idea. Meanwhile, the Academic Standing and Honors Committee carries on its cyclic responsibility for responding to appeals at the end of each semester or term from students who have been dismissed from the university as a

result of poor academic performance. Some of these meetings run very long, the most extended last year having run for eight hours! Reporting that her committee reviews hundreds of dismissal appeals after each grading period, Ms. Zohdy provided a statistical breakdown on Winter 1993 actions for the Senate's information. When Ms. Gerulaitis asked whether there were any plans for Oakland University to send out news releases on Dean's List recognition to each honored student's home-town newspaper, as many other colleges do, Ms. Zohdy replied that no such plans exist yet though it might be a good idea (always allowing students the right to preserve their privacy).

Professor Gottfried Brieger then reported for the Campus Development and Environment Committee, which engaged last year in a variety of tasks related to its complex mission. The committee discussed two issues related to roads-- both the projected widening of Adams Road and the expected paving of Butler Road. It also made recommendations to Kiichi Usui on displays of artwork on campus and set up a subcommittee on art and aesthetics. Other issues to which they responded included parking problems, plans for new signage, and plans for the new Science Building--both its actual siting and possible relocations and new functions for the buildings already located on that land. Upon President Packard's request transmitted through the Steering Committee, the Campus Development and Environment Committee also reexamined the university's smoking policy and recommended changes that the Senate approved. The task on which they are now engaged that is most likely to come before the Senate this year concerns recycling. In response to a question about possible cooperative recycling efforts in alliance with area institutions, he indicated that his committee would look into that.

Professor James Dow provided a brief overview of the Academic Computing Committee's lengthy written report, which may be obtained from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology office. The committee's attention focused intently last year on the departure of the university's Director of the Office of Computer and information Services, and its members met with the acting Vice President for Academic Affairs to discuss their role in contributing to such decisions as well as the best administrative organization for campus computing. They recommended to Mr. Horwitz that the director's successor should report directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The committee also developed a progress report on academic computing at Oakland University, discovering that we compare favorably with other Michigan universities and are actually envied by others on several scores. Nonetheless, problems remain--many of them likely to be resolved through an improved administrative reporting arrangement. When the Academic Computing Committee looked into projections for a new phone switch arrangement, its members were "not enthusiastic." They are concerned that the university's fiber optic network has not yet been extended into all buildings nor work stations for faculty research adequately serviced through this technology, perhaps because funding fell short of expectations. The committee has also made recommendations to-alleviate problems-encountered with scheduling of computer laboratories for student use. Declaring that supercomputing turns out to be less of a problem now than had been expected, Mr. Dow indicated that computing power has already been improved and more is being accomplished. With respect to distance learning, his committee recommended aggressive movement into that area, both in terms of multimedia instruction and remote classrooms. When Mr. Hough asked about the current status of the telephone switch proposal, Mr. Dow turned to Mr. Russi, who said that the issue is being considered in terms of the university's overall computing power rather than by itself. Mr. Christina then inquired about staffing and learned from Mr. Russi that one position has been opened after the hiring freeze. The computing office is looking for a systems person right now. He expected that a decision would be made within thirty days about

how to replace the director. With his report concluded, Mr. Dow then returned to the class he claimed to have left "on auto-pilot."

The fourth committee report of the day came from Professors Barbara Mabee and Robert Stern, outgoing and incoming chairs of the Academic and Career Advising Committee. Ms. Mabee indicated that the group had been very busy, with much of its energy devoted to a two-year study of career-advising services on campus and recommendations for improvement. Reminding her fellow senators that there are four different campus offices with career-advisory roles, she reported her committee's concern about poor coordination among their services and difficulties experienced by students seeking guidance. Last year, her committee met with Vice Presidents Bledsoe and Horwitz to advocate better coordination of services. Although no money was available to hire a coordinator, conditions are likely to improve as a result of student service offices now being relocated to North Foundation Hall. Encouraged by Mr. Horwitz to survey student appraisals of existing career-advisory services, Mr. Stern had chaired a subcommittee that conducted such a study. Mr. Stern then took the floor to report on that group's work and their findings. They administered a questionnaire to some large classes offered by each school and college, attempting to pinpoint populations of upperclassmen. He was delighted to find that their efforts succeeded in reaching just the demographic group they needed: mostly seniors with a fair number of juniors. Respondents reported that most of them had used one or more of the university's career services. The committee is now massaging the data gained through this survey and expects to make recommendations based on their discoveries. This year's other major project for the Academic and Career Advising Committee will be developing and distributing a university-wide advising manual that will be provided to all advisers. When Mr. Bertocci inquired when work on the survey would be completed, Mr. Stern thought the first of the year a likely date. At the conclusion of this report, Ms. Allen took occasion to let everyone know that the National Academic Advising Association will be meeting soon in Detroit; persons seeking more information about that prestigious gathering may contact her office or any adviser in their schools.

The last committee report came from Professor Frank Lepkowski, chair of the Academic Conduct Committee. Unfortunately, that group too had experienced an unusually busy year, tying its previous record of 26 cases and capping a three-year trend of rising accusations. Noting that 85% of the cases brought forward last year resulted in guilty verdicts for one or more of those suspected and that 64% of the students brought before the committee had been found guilty, he interpreted that evidence to demonstrate that faculty members are bringing well formed cases for adjudication. They are doing so from all around the university, not just a few departments. Sanctions imposed by the Academic Conduct Committee last year included reprimands, probations, and suspensions (one suspension for two years in the case of a repeat offender); there were no actual expulsions. Mr. Lepkowski also reported that the Senate Steering Committee had revised its statement of procedures on hearing appeals of Academic Conduct Committee decisions; it had consulted the committee about those changes. The committee is pleased that the Steering Committee has consistently upheld its decisions. Although evidence suggests that the committee is accomplishing its work successfully, he indicated dismay about an Oakland Post article last year reporting that many students acknowledge they have cheated at some point in their Oakland University careers and indicating that some kinds of malfeasance are of a sort never brought before the committee, which still responds mainly to familiar accusations of test cheating, plagiarism, and computer programming misbehavior. All in all, he concluded, "I think we had a fairly productive year in a rather grim business."

Mr. Russi then called upon Virginia Allen to report findings of the task force she chaired on the status of women at Oakland University. Ms. Allen prefaced her remarks by stating that the full March 1993 document delivered to the President could be obtained at the Academic Affairs office. Her task force conducted several questionnaire surveys of women throughout the university community--administrative professionals, faculty, other employee groups, and students. Review of the faculty survey identified questions for further study with respect to the experiences of that group. The survey of AP women uncovered considerable concern about the "glass ceiling" problem. As a result the task force made several recommendations about ways of moving women to level 17 and beyond, reviewing the impact of the merit system, and making more effective use of exit interviews. The study of AFSCME employees showed that no mechanism currently exists for advancement of women into employment opportunities outside the groups to which they were originally assigned. Ms. Allen indicated that her task force had made some recommendations based on their student survey but felt the need to review that data more thoroughly. Among issues needing attention were child-care and health-care needs. She also urged examination of student employment practices to find out whether it is appropriate for some jobs to be dominated by a single sex. Following this report, President Packard filled in information about developments since the spring. An AP committee now at work on revisions to the AP manual is looking into the workings of the current merit system. She anticipated that those investigators would consider its possible differential impact by gender. She also announced that her office would soon be inviting interested individuals to enter into administrative internships on campus and is looking for additional ways to give people a sense of what it would be like to work elsewhere within this institution. Additional surveys recommended by the task force are temporarily on hold while the Office of Institutional Research undergoes reorganization. She invited anyone with suggestions about the status of women at Oakland University to share them with her or Ms. Allen.

Next on the agenda came a report from Dr. Manuel Pierson: "Diversity at Oakland University: Meeting the Challenge." After thanking the Senate for this opportunity to speak, Mr. Pierson began by sharing findings from the recent study he had conducted for President Packard as well as from his twenty seven years of service to this community. He stressed the importance of recognizing diversity and encouraging respect for different cultures, traditions, and viewpoints within Oakland University as well as in the broader society. Advocating development of attitudes and institutional structures that create "in an ever changing way, an open and accepting environment where all our students can study and become productive, democratic, and contributing citizens," he pointed to language in the Strategic Guidelines document presented in 1990 by the Academic Policy and Planning Committee to the Senate as evidence of institutional commitment to diversity. He urged every person to accept responsibility for fostering a tolerant, loving environment that resists societal racism and bigotry from which no community can wholly protect itself. In particular, he asked realistic understanding of ethnic groups' tendency to seek reassurance in sticking together, reminding his colleagues that "establishment of an ethnic community in the midst of an integrated society does not necessarily condone nor seek to establish a segregated existence." Mr. Pierson contrasted two distinct ways in which minority groups may relate to a broader society: by pluralistic promotion of individual ethnic groups--each pursuing its own self-interest while benefiting from learning opportunities shared with other groups or by multicultural assimilation of all groups in common institutional activities. While seeing the latter pattern as the ultimate goal of education, he argued that African- American students, like those of other minority groups, often need the sheltering "bridge" of pluralism to help them make the connection between their home environments and the multiculturalism of the university. From that perspective, he reasoned that "there should be no shame in such recognition, nor should the self-establishment

of ethnic communities (pluralism) be a threat in such recognition for those who are not included." Consequently, the study he presented last winter to President Packard, advocated construction of a "bridge" within the university to ease adjustment of minority students when critical numbers of any affected group exist. Hoping to make such bridging practical and acceptable within this community, he advocated establishment of a new Office of Minority Equity to help forge a non-threatening living and learning environment for students who would otherwise be uncomfortable here while acquainting the university community with the heritages and cultures of those minorities. The long-term goal is to increase dramatically the graduation rate of targeted groups so that our minority alumni may live more effectively as citizens of external communities while maintaining loyalty to Oakland University.

Dr. Pierson then announced goals and objectives he had identified to the president as steps to be undertaken on both short-range and long-range bases. "All," he emphasized, "will require the involvement of faculty." Inviting Senate engagement in this work, he identified specific issues he hoped to see considered first by appropriate Senate committees and eventually by this body itself. He suggested revising the Senate's charge to its Human Relations Committee to give it policy oversight responsibility for the Office of Minority Equity; adding the director of that office to the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, which should focus attention on selection of minority students from across the state; charging committees on instruction to recommend teaching strategies likely to enhance minority graduation rates; calling upon each academic department to establish an equity focus; directing each school or college to review its internal admissions criteria for entrance into the major; charging the Teaching and Learning Committee to consider establishing a center for teaching excellence with a focus on diversity; encouraging each academic unit to find ways of celebrating the history and culture of minority groups--not just during September's national observance of Hispanic cultures or February's Black Awareness Month but throughout the year and across the curriculum; making the Steering Committee responsible for appointing an ad hoc committee to consider the merit of establishing an ethnically oriented inner college; and directing the Vice President for Academic Affairs to review recommendations for a faculty fellowship program in the Office of Minority Equity as well as for graduate assistantships. Mentioning that other recommendations must also be considered, he asked the Senate Steering Committee to make sure each received fitting attention.

Dr. Pierson then concluded his remarks by calling upon the whole community to become involved in this agenda and to provide effective support to the Office of Minority Equity. He stressed that the new office will not be replicating any existing services, nor will it compete with organizations like the Association of Black Students or RAICES; rather it is designed to promote change in the university and provide assistance to students as they advance toward graduation. He ended on a note of combined thanks and hopefulness, telling senators to expect a university-wide thrust "to assist minority students who are targeted to attain success." After reading his prepared statement, Mr. Pierson reminded his listeners that the whole community needs to commit itself to this effort rather than leaving everything to whatever person is appointed Director of the Office of Minority Equity. After consulting with many persons across the campus, with former students who left the university short of graduation, and with minority alumni and their families, he had concluded that the goals he held forth could really be achieved. When Mr. Bertocci asked whether copies of the report were available, Mr. Pierson said that he had prepared copies for chairs of committees that would be involved in this work. The full report remains in the President's Office.

With reports concluded for the day, Mr. Russi called upon Mr. Grossman to introduce the

single piece of new action introduced by the Steering Committee. Mr. Grossman indicated that circumstances precluded his offering more than half the original motion from the agenda. Nonetheless, he (seconded by Ms. Rush) did what he could to keep Senate committees functioning smoothly by proposing that Bhushan Bhatt be elected to represent the School of Engineering and Computer Science on the Senate Assessment Committee for a two-year term. The Senate rapidly approved that procedural motion.

When Mr. Russi opened the floor to private resolutions, none came forward for the good of the order. That silence cleared the way for a few brief information items. With respect to the reports just presented, Mr. Russi stated that Steering Committee members were already engaged in a process of reviewing last year's reports from Senate standing and ad hoc committees to identify any needs for Senate or Steering Committee action or for interaction with other Senate committees. Thanking all committee members for their fine work, he promised careful follow-through on their recommendations.

Anticipating important work yet to be done by the Senate, Mr. Russi announced that the Steering Committee has scheduled the second reading of the 23 September motion on school consolidation for the 14 November meeting. This date accords with advice from the Senate Planning Review Committee as that group organizes the studies needed for its members to make a knowledgeable recommendation. They will provide an interim report at the October Senate meeting.

Although enrollments were still being calculated, Mr. Russi reported a Fall 1993 headcount of 12,895 students--down about 173 from the previous fall. Enrollments dropped in the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education and Human Services, and the School of Business Administration while rising somewhat in the School of Engineering and Computer Science, the School of Nursing, and the School of Health Sciences. When enrollment figures are broken up into categories of full-time and part-time students, it emerges that full-time enrollment has actually risen so that losses concentrate among part-timers. He pledged to break out the figures more fully before the next meeting to consider implications of such shifts. When Mr. Christina asked whether any of these shifts looked significant, Mr. Russi doubted they had much statistical importance unless a multi-year trend is discovered. He promised to try to establish a context for interpreting this semester's statistics. In response to Mr. Downing's hunch that an increase in full-time students might have a positive bearing on FYES figures, Mr. Russi acknowledged that those are up slightly. On that encouraging note, he accepted Ms. Dunphy's motion for adjournment at 4:26.

Respectfully submitted
Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

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