



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, 8 November 1990
Third Meeting

MINUTES

Senators Present: Appleton, Arshagouni, Bertocci, Berven, Braunstein, Briggs-Bunting, Burke, Cass, Coffey, Dahlgren, Dillon, Eberwein, Eckart, Eliezer, Fish, Frankie, Grossman, Hamilton, Hartman, Herman, Horwitz, Hovanesian, Kazarian, Landry, Lederer, Long, Mabee, Meehan, Mili, S. Miller, Mittelstaedt, Pettengill, Pine, Salomon, Schieber, Schwartz, Theisen, Tracy, Tripp, Wedekind Weng, Winkler, Wood.

Senators Absent: Beehler, Cardimen, Champagne, Chipman, Gerulaitis, Griggs, Kleckner, Liboff, D. Miller, Murphy, Olson, Reddy, Rosen, Schimmelman, Urice, Walter, Williams, Williamson, Witt, Zenas.

Summary of Actions:

1. Minutes of 18 October 1990 (Schieber; Berven). Approved.
2. Motion from the School of Nursing to approve a new graduate program in Nurse Anesthesia (Cass; Pettengill). Approved.
3. Motion from UCUI to modify policy with regard to evaluation of Advanced Placement examinations (Appleton; Pettengill). First Reading.
4. Resolution instructing the Steering Committee to make recommendations to the Senate concerning academic implications of a possible conference center (Appleton; Bertocci). Approved.

Discerning a quorum, Mr. Dahlgren called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m., advancing at once to consideration of the minutes of 18 October 1990. These, having been duly moved by Mr. Schieber and seconded by Mr. Berven, were approved -- with Ms. Briggs-Bunting declaring that they merited publication. Applause followed her statement. With the record of recent business ratified, Mr. Dahlgren apologized for the Provost's absence. Mr. Kleckner, he reported, was not trying to evade the Senate and even entertained hope of getting back from Lansing in time to join in this meeting at some point. Mr. Berven then asked about the whereabouts of Senate minutes from the final meetings of the 1989-90 academic year, which document important business that belongs on the final record. Ms. Eberwein said that these were in the hands of the Provost and should be circulated shortly.

Mr. Dahlgren then directed attention to the second reading of a motion introduced by the School of Nursing (Moved, Ms. Cass; seconded, Mr. Pettengill):

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board approval of a

new track in the Master of Science in Nursing program, a specialization in Nurse Anesthesia to be offered in partnership with the William Beaumont Hospital.

Mr. Horwitz wholeheartedly endorsed the need for such a program. As one involved in health care interests and active in the governance of one of Beaumont's major competitors, he corroborated the importance of educating nurse anesthetists. Yet, having missed the previous meeting, he found himself confused about a dialogue recorded in the minutes that had been prompted by Mr. Olson's inquiry about the status of two part-time faculty members needed to conduct this program. He wondered about the budget implications if those slots should ever be converted to full-time, tenure-track faculty positions (perhaps in compliance with accreditation requirements). Ms. Cass referred her colleagues to the budget page of the proposal, where it appears that both the track director and assistant track director for the program would be Beaumont staff members, with only the two part-time positions funded by Oakland University (through tuition). She did not anticipate any likelihood of these becoming full-time positions. Mr. Tracy recalled that, when the proposal first reached the Academic Policy and Planning Committee, the positions had been designated as tenure-track ones, which had seemed vulnerable in case of program termination. Since they are now presented as visiting positions, he wanted to make sure that the School of Nursing had considered the time limitations imposed on visiting appointments. Ms. Cass assured him that her colleagues had considered it to be the appropriate status. The persons identified to fill these slots neither hold the Ph.D. nor expect to pursue it; they do not aspire to tenured faculty rank. On the other hand, they show eagerness to engage in the committee work necessary to establish the program and are very much needed for committee service. For the first years of the program, it makes sense to appoint them as visitors; later the positions will probably be converted to lectureships. Mr. Burke suggested that the special instructor title might be appropriate.

Mr. Winkler expressed disbelief at the stringent standards established for the program and wondered whether requirements could be made more realistic. Was it necessary, he wondered, to limit University Senate Minutes 8 November 1990 Page 3 admission only to persons who have earned grades of B or better in four specific, very demanding courses? He hoped there was room for flexibility, especially in the case of persons who had been out of school and active in their profession for many years. He also speculated, in general, why (if a program like this is so important to the university) we do not see fit to staff it with regularly appointed faculty members holding traditional ranks. Beyond that, he inquired whether 50 credits constituted a normal program load for the MSN and whether students should be expected to work such prodigious hours each week. Ms. Cass replied that the admission requirements have been set to meet accreditation standards. Many persons currently in the candidate pool have successfully met even these challenging criteria. She admitted that it is a highly selective program. If a nurse-practitioner had at some point in the past earned less than a B in one of the four designated courses, that person would have to repeat the course with a better grade to qualify for admission. Credit requirements vary in MSN programs, with the average generalist program nationally demanding about 36 credits (as do our generalist tracks) and the average specialist track demanding substantially more. She thought 50 credits to be about the mean because specialized programs call for extensive experience. She expected students to be in class about four hours a day, with the rest of their program taken up in clinical activity. When Mr. Winkler asked whether her colleagues really intended to demand a full 40-hour-a-week program of these students beyond requisite time for study and other responsibilities, Ms. Cass said that they did. This left Mr. Winkler exclaiming that it was a "tough program, putting it mildly." Mr. Schwartz inquired whether it was the thinking of the School of Nursing that they needed one specialist track in the program. Ms. Cass replied that her colleagues were happy to be able to

add one in circumstances like this where Oakland University is not called upon to provide funding beyond tuition abatement. Mr. Bertocci, noting a significant number of specialized new courses proposed for this curriculum, asked how they would be staffed and with what support. Ms. Cass indicated that instructors would be selected by the School of Nursing in consultation with persons at Beaumont Hospital. They would be hired by her school and paid through tuition. No additional questions being raised from the floor, Mr. Dahlgren called for a vote, and the motion passed without dissent.

Next on the agenda came a piece of new business, a motion from the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (Moved, Mr. Appleton; seconded, Mr. Pettengill):

MOVED that credit toward graduation will be granted to students who present evidence of satisfactory completion in high school of examinations offered by the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board. Credits and appropriate course or other exemptions will be granted for grades of "3", "4", or "5" in these examinations, except that individual academic departments may deny credit to those earning scores of "3" by filing a clear and comprehensive statement of the policy they propose to follow -- and a rationale for this policy -- with the office of the Registrar and the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction.

Mr. Appleton professed himself genuinely sorry for the Senate's sake and even more for his own that Laura Schartman could not attend this meeting, though he anticipated with relief her availability when this proposal receives its second reading in December. He called attention to detailed tables she had provided to document Oakland University practice in crediting Advanced Placement examinations over a period of years along with the practices of other Michigan institutions. He pointed out that only grades of "3" would be influenced by the policy change under consideration, since those of "4" and "5" routinely receive credit and/or course exemption. Very few persons would be affected each year. If adopted, this policy would bring Oakland University's practice into line with other institutions -- most of which have one stated rule with respect to AP tests while we hold to departmental autonomy. Two problems have emerged as a result of Oakland's somewhat idiosyncratic stance: high school students in AP programs have been discouraged from applying here since they are less confident of receiving credit at Oakland than at competing institutions, and advisers and students find themselves guessing about how departments will evaluate test performance and therefore delay making decisions about which courses to elect. There is also a problem of inconsistent behavior within individual departments, presumably depending on which faculty member takes on the chore of appraising test booklets each year. He pointed out that a default option is provided by this motion to preserve the freedom of departments that want to make a reasoned case for handling "3's" in their own ways and prefer to read each test book individually. Still, he wondered how much faculty time may now be wasted because faculty members feel burdened with the task of reading these tests even though so few cases turn out to be problematic. No questions arose. Mr. Winkler thought the motion sounded like a good idea, and Mr. Dahlgren looked forward to the second reading in December.

When Mr. Dahlgren then asked whether there was any new business to bring before the Senate, several persons brought forward concerns for the good of the order. Mr. Winkler lamented the way attendance gets recorded in the minutes. As one often out of town but sufficiently loyal to this body that he routinely calls in apologies for his absences to the Provost's Office, he suggested that there should be a category of Excused Absences to

supplement lists of Senators Present and Absent. The secretary explained that such a category would complicate her efforts. To her way of thinking, there is no punitive intention in recording a member as absent. The lists simply provide a public record of which members participated in any decision. Should it turn out, years hence, that some Senate action proved mistaken, Senator Winkler could point to the minutes as evidence that he had not been implicated in the folly. Mr. Tracy wondered what had happened to the Strategic Guidelines presented to the Provost by the APPC last spring. Had they been sent to the Board? Mr. Dahlgren promised to report back at the next Senate meeting. Mr. Grossman noticed increased cut-through traffic on campus as local drivers try to dodge rush-hour traffic jams. He wondered whether this was enough of a problem to require action. Mr. Winkler announced that he would only be concerned if the interlopers attempted to park.

Mr. Dahlgren then called upon Mr. Braunstein to speak for the Steering Committee regarding the Senate's role in discussions about a possible conference center on campus. Mr. Braunstein asked the guidance of the Senate on how it wished to proceed. In particular, he inquired whether his colleagues would like the Steering Committee to propose guidelines regarding the relationship of academic units to such a facility, with those guidelines to be subjected to Senate scrutiny before being offered to the Board to assist in the approval process. He wondered whether it would be worthwhile for the Steering Committee to spend any time on this matter.

Ms. Theisen, speaking as a newly appointed member of the Campus Development and Environment Committee that has not yet met this year, admitted some perplexity about that body's role in reviewing any proposal for a conference center. She assumed it must be more than advisory. She also remembered the Senate's voting last April (at one of those meetings not yet reported in circulated minutes) on motions presented by that committee concerning land use. She wondered whether those actions had yet reached the Board. Mr. Braunstein passed on the provost's assurance that, if a conference center is built, it will be on the East Campus rather than on land the Campus Development and Environment Committee wished to guard for other uses. Yet Ms. Theisen understood that her committee had not yet been contacted about land development for such a purpose. Ms. Eberwein declared on behalf of the Steering Committee that the Senate's Campus Development and Environment Committee must have its say on any land-use issue. She was not convinced, however, that studying the academic implications of a conference center (as distinct from its placement) would normally be the responsibility of that committee. The Steering Committee, trying to figure out just which Senate-related group ought to examine such matters, had considered both the Campus Development and Environment Committee and the Academic Policy and Planning Committee before concluding that neither was the appropriate agency. The Steering Committee now offers its own services, if the Senate wishes it to take on this chore. Mr. Fish thought that the academic implications of a structure ought to be included in the review powers of the Campus Development and Environment Committee, even though Messieurs Dahlgren and Herman (himself a veteran of that group) pointed out that it never had been confronted with that set of duties. Although it considered the physical site for the new Science Building, for example, there were other faculty groups giving thought to academic uses. Mr. Burke wondered whether the Campus Development and Environment Committee had yet been consulted on the related issue of a second golf course, certainly a matter within its purview. So far as the conference center was concerned, Mr. Fish still judged it the proper concern of the Campus Development and Environment Committee, while Ms. Hamilton suggested forming an ad hoc study group. Mr. Tracy advised referring the matter to the Steering Committee, specifically because of its capacity to refer pieces of the issue to appropriate standing committees.

Ms. Tripp asked a wide hypothetical question: Assuming that the Senate, after receiving reports from who-knows-where, expressed itself in unanimous opposition to Oakland University's involvement in a conference center, what difference would its opposition make? Mr. Dahlgren assured her that the Senate's judgment would carry some weight; it would have an impact although not necessarily a decisive one. When Ms. Tripp pressed the point to find out whether the Senate actually had to approve the idea, Mr. Dahlgren said that it did not but perhaps should. He thought that the Steering Committee's proposal offered an opportunity to build some academic good sense into any proposal. the Steering Committee, he observed, was looking for a way to voice Senate opinion while providing helpful advice.

As member of an academic unit likely to make some academic use of a conference center. M. Braunstein pointed out that he would hate having to beg for access. He thought guidelines should be built into any proposal for the protection of academic interests. Mr. Bertocci, who had gathered from Mr. Cardinem's October presentation that the Senate had no direct policy role with respect to a conference center, shared Mr. Braunstein's concern. He thought it a sensible idea for the Steering Committee to bring recommendations to the Senate on academic concerns related to this potential development and announced himself prepared to offer a resolution authorizing the Steering Committee to bring appropriate recommendations to the Senate. Mr. Appleton, pointing to clear language in the Senate constitution that establishes its rights both to make recommendations on all matters of academic importance and to be consulted on any matters of general concern to the university, then proposed a resolution (seconded by Mr. Bertocci) charging the Steering Committee to study the academic implications of a conference center and bring back recommendations to the Senate. He judged it more useful for the Senate to bring forward faculty concerns early in the planning process than to react at some later point. The resolution carried by voice vote, with Ms. Briggs-Bunting dissenting.

In the aftermath of this discussion, Mr. Winkler thought it unfortunate that members of the university community tend to adopt almost adversarial positions on such matters as a conference center. He trusted that advocates of such a facility realized that possibilities for cooperation rather than opposition exist. Ms. Tripp hoped that she had not been misunderstood as suggesting that the Senate's position would be hostile. She simply wanted to clarify questions about this group's powers. Mr. Fish then inquired where decision-making authority actually lies on this matter. Mr. Dahlgren explained that the Board would make the decision, with advice from the president. The Board, he assured his colleagues, shows an open mind about the idea of a conference center. Although its members are willing to look at a proposal, no decision has been made that commits the university to such a project. Mr. Fish, unable to imagine the president making such a decision in a vacuum, supposed that the deans and vice presidents would be advising him. Mr. Dahlgren said that they would, if a proposal should eventually emerge.

Changing the subject, Mr. Schieber then inquired about the impact of Tuesday's election on appointments to our Board. Mr. Horwitz pointed out that Governor Blanchard still has it in his power to fill two vacancies, with those appointed serving eight-year terms. He might also defer to Governor-elect Engler. Mr. Appleton brought up the issue of timing. If Governor Blanchard nominates Board members more than thirty days before Mr. Engler takes office, the State Senate will have to vote on his appointments. Mr. Engler, of course, still serves as Senate majority leader. Should the governor wait until closer to the end of his term, the Senate could simply delay action until the new governor takes office. He suggested that this matter would be a good dissertation topic in Political Science. On that note, Mr. Dahlgren suggested

adjournment. Mr. Fish complied with his invitation to move that action, and the Senate concluded its business at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

Back to
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
S E N A T E
Home Page