



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, 26 September 1985
First Meeting 128-130
Oakland Center

MINUTES

Senators Present: Appleton, Barclay, Barthel, Blankenship, Boganey, Carbone, Cardimen, Cass, Chapman-Moore, Chipman, Diltz, Downing, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein, Edgerton, Feingold, Frankie, Garcia, Grossman, Hart-Gonzalez, Hartman, Herman, Hildebrand, Horwitz, Ketchum, Khapoya, Kleckner, Lindell, McCabe, Metzner, Rozek, Schimmelman, Srodawa, Strauss, Terry, Tripp, Willoughby, Wilson, Witt.

Senators Absent: Barnard, Bertocci, Burke, Champagne, Chatterjee, Copenhaver, Evarts, Hamilton, Hightower, Horwitz, Hough, Liboff, Moore, Pettengill, Pine, Reddy, Russell.

Summary of Actions:

1. Minutes of 11 April 1985 (Tripp; Hildebrand). Approved.
2. Steering Committee Election (Witt). Six new members elected.

Mr. Kleckner called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m., welcoming all members of the new 1985-87 Senate. He noted that the body begins the year with a clean slate, aside from the obligation to conclude the previous year's work by considering the minutes of the 11 April meeting. With approval of those minutes moved by Ms. Tripp and seconded by Ms. Hildebrand, no Senator offered judgment or corrections. The minutes were approved, therefore, as circulated last spring.

The only formal item of new business was the election of a new Steering Committee. Six persons were to be chosen from a roster of current Senators, with no more than two of these persons coming from any one academic unit. When Mr. Ketchum inquired whether Senators had yet been identified from the School of Human and Educational Services, Mr. Kleckner indicated that the SHES faculty intend to conduct that unit's election next Monday. Mr. Witt, chair of the Senate Elections Committee, presided over the election, ably assisted by Mr. Arnold. Nine names were placed in nomination and the election conducted by written ballot. The following persons were elected to serve for the two-year duration of this Senate: Ms. Chapman-Moore, Mr. Downing, Ms. Eberwein, Mr. Edgerton, Mr. Hough, and Ms. Wilson. Mr. Kleckner then thanked the Elections Committee and requested the new Steering Committee to assemble briefly after the meeting.

While Messrs. Witt and Arnold withdrew to count ballots, Mr. Kleckner made a number of announcements. He called attention to the schedule of Senate meetings that went out with the agenda, noting the variety of rooms in which the body will convene. He reported that Ms.

Eberwein had agreed to continue as Secretary and Mr. Khapoya to assume the post of Parliamentarian. He noted that a number of University people have been seriously ill or injured lately, and he expressed warm wishes for recovery to Messrs. Cutts, Bryant, Eliezer, and Evarts.

With the legislature back in session, the Senate can return to its familiar practice of conjecturing prospects for state support of Oakland University. Mr. Kleckner reported that the capital outlay bill passed by a joint House-Senate committee in June has yet to reach the legislature as a whole but enjoys broad bipartisan support and is likely to pass. This measure contains two chunks of money for our Library addition: a modest appropriation for planning and a substantial amount for construction. The plan is to raise the other half of construction costs through foundation funding and private gifts, with the Kresge Foundation a likely source of substantial assistance in the form of a challenge grant to help the University expand its range of donors. When Ms. Hart-Gonzalez inquired about plans for book acquisitions, Mr. Kleckner assured her that book and journal collection would be the logical next step although it is harder to coax private contributions for purchases generally regarded as the state's responsibility.

With Library funding all but attained in Lansing, plans for a new science building move ahead in priority. Mr. Kleckner suggested that we have a shot at the next round of state bonding, though for planning only?not yet for construction. In general, he anticipates kindly treatment for Michigan higher education, which continues to head Governor Blanchard's list of priorities. Diminished state revenues caused by the forthcoming tax rollback may lead to disappointments, however, particularly if the rollback schedule should be accelerated. He noted that there is still a great deal of fussing in legislative circles over the Research Excellence fund, with consequent uncertainty about its continuation.

Oakland University held the line on tuition again this year in response to pressures from the capitol. With 1986 an election year, a possibility exists that similar self-control may be required yet again. Mr. Kleckner noted that the University of Michigan has exacerbated legislative ill will by levying a new computer fee for all students and indicated that other state universities will take an interest in the effect of this action on appropriations.

With the Steering Committee election completed, the chair called for private resolutions for the good of the order. None were proposed. He moved, therefore, to the major information item: announcement of the revised fall semester calendar. Describing the issue of calendar extension in the wake of the three-day faculty strike as "one of the thorniest we've had to deal with," Mr. Kleckner acknowledged immediately that no adaptation of the calendar can satisfy everyone. His hope has been to inconvenience as few persons as possible while accomplishing the University's principal goals. To that end, he has been consulting over the past few weeks with a number of campus groups: the University Congress, the APPC, the AAUP, and representatives of administrative offices whose work would be modified in a substantial way by changes in end-of-semester timing.

Among the multiple solutions suggested, three options received serious attention: to add three days at the end of the semester, with consequent extension of the examination schedule; to make up lost time on Saturdays; and to leave the calendar as before, asking faculty to catch up with instruction as adequately as possible. Mr. Kleckner identified academic Integrity as his chief concern in estimating the impact of recommended adjustments. He maintained that the

University must attempt to provide the fullest instruction possible, particularly in view of our already truncated thirteen-and-a-half week fall semester. Nonetheless, he was eager to minimize inconvenience as much as possible with respect to such matters as athletic schedules and pressure on various offices (chiefly Registration, Student Services, the Mail Room, and Computer Services). He has also kept in mind the costs of keeping residence halls open, paying overtime wages, and heating buildings during what would normally be vacation time.

Consultation, he reported, had led to mixed advice and no decisive recommendation. The APPC ruled out several unacceptable plans but Identified the three outlined above as variously acceptable. With all kinds of votes ending in ties, the committee found itself unable to advocate one calendar adjustment over another except to report that the Saturday option was the only alternative not actually unacceptable to anybody on the APPC. The University Congress, understandably troubled about interference with plans students had already made for the period after December 14, advocated voluntary Saturday sessions as preferable to extension at the end of the semester. Many students were on record, however, as preferring that the calendar not be extended at all on the grounds that students should not be doubly victimized by the faculty's decision to withhold services. AAUP consultations added another, decisive, twist related to discussions that occurred between the two chief negotiators in the last stages of the strike. Although recalling some sort of talk about calendar extension, neither principal participant could summon to memory any specific commitments agreed upon at that time. The Factfinder, however, had been present at those talks, and his tapes were expected to clarify understandings. The tapes, alas, seemed to have been recorded by Rosemary Woods: the crucial section proved missing. The Factfinder's notes, on the other hand, indicated that discussions one sleepless night had culminated in a decision to extend the academic calendar, and he interpreted "extension" to mean addition of extra days in December. This interpretation now appears In his written report as an agreement between the two chief negotiators, Messrs. Connellan and Tombouliau.

Acknowledging that the Administration's predilection had been to opt for Saturday extension until the Factfinder's report made such a choice contingent on reopening the bargaining process, Mr. Kleckner reported AAUP unwillingness to reopen the question. The matter, therefore, turns out to have been decided within the bargaining framework rather than as a result of consultations thereafter. The prevailing decision is to add three class days at the end of the originally scheduled semester, with consequent extension of the examination period and the time needed to distribute grades and inform students of their academic status. If the Factfinder thinks we have an agreement, the Provost maintained, then we do have one and will live up to it. He then apologized for delays caused by hearing from so many affected parties. He called for sensitivity and flexibility on the part of instructors who may be asked to accommodate themselves to the needs of students caught in hardship situations. Some relaxation of the Senate rule against examinations during the last week of classes may be needed this semester so that students can compete for the University in athletic events and otherwise carry out their prior plans.

A number of questions and statements followed his announcement, principally directed by students. One Inquired how the University would absorb the \$50,000-\$80,000 expense it would incur in keeping the residence halls open for additional time without charging students. Mr. Kleckner replied that he didn't know what the money would otherwise have been spent on but that students would definitely not be charged. Mr. Carbone later asked about cost estimates on projected losses including possible reimbursement to commuter students for gasoline used in unproductive travel. The Provost estimated expenses as high as ^100,000, without counting

such reimbursements, which he thought might be demanded by many persons in addition to students. His attitude was that all have to bear the burden somehow. When a student visitor asked about the Factfinder (who he was, how and by whom he was employed, and by what right he made such a momentous decision), Mr. Kleckner identified him as an officer of the state whose role in the bargaining process had been agreed upon by both sides toward the end of negotiations; this person did not actually render a decision but reported his understanding of the agreement reached by the chief negotiators. Another student inquired about the projected impact of the strike on admissions and retention? Important matters that are hard to estimate.

Mr. Carbone, President of the University Congress, made a statement on behalf of that assembly. Noting that students felt inconvenienced by the mysteries and frustrations of the first three days of this semester, he reported that their petitions revealed widespread opposition to any means of extending the semester. He felt that this student inconvenience should be seriously considered in arriving at any calendar changes. Testifying to his great respect for Oakland University faculty, Mr. Carbone indicated that many professors had already brought their classes up to date; he trusted that faculty members would somehow honor their obligation to instruct students even without additional sessions. Seeing no need even for Saturday sessions and certainly not for an extra week in December, he urged faculty members who might disagree with their union's stand in favor of extension to talk with him about their concerns. Calling particular attention to the problems of special groups? those on sports teams with previously arranged competition schedules, for instance, and those whose classes did actually meet, he deplored a second period of inconvenience to students. Mr. Kleckner, while acknowledging the appeal of these arguments, mentioned again that there is no universally agreeable solution to the scheduling conundrum. He maintained that the University had done the best it could under trying circumstances.

Other questions came from faculty Senators. When Mr. Appleton inquired whether the days to be added in December corresponded to the days of the week lost in September, he found that they did. He then wondered about problems that might be encountered in scheduling extension sites for an additional week. Mr. Kleckner foresaw no problem, given the likelihood that the school buildings used off campus would still be in regular use at that time, but promised that each site's availability would be checked. In response to Ms. Chapman-Moore's question about whether the University would provide extra funds to pay for additional use of such sites, the Provost assured her that all costs would be met. When asked what would be done about classes that began meeting as scheduled on September 3, he suggested that the faculty and students in affected courses survey the calendar and choose a day or days not to meet. In reply to another query, he promised a revised examination schedule early the next week.

Ms. Blankenship's inquiry about federal regulations that might require an extended term brought no definite answer from Mr. Kleckner. He knew of Veterans' Administration requirements governing class length but not duration of term. Mr. Carbone indicated that the agency requires a particular number of minutes in order for students to receive full benefits but noted that the University's declaration that it was open had sufficed to protect affected students. This interchange then prompted Ms. Hart-Gonzalez to wonder whether state regulations requiring 180 class days in secondary schools might apply to higher education also, but Mr. Kleckner knew of no such limits. He preferred not to conjecture at what point abbreviation of a semester might bring curtailment of state funding.

With no further questions or comments arising from the group, therefore, the Senate's presiding officer concluded the discussion by reminding his colleagues that the decision to extend the semester rested basically on concerns for academic integrity. Recognizing that some classes cannot catch up on work so readily as others (laboratory courses, for example, and skill-development classes that call for extensive drill), he argued that truncation of the semester to thirteen weeks would levy a heavy academic penalty on many students, especially those in once-a-week classes. He thought that the calendar extension, although painful for many persons, served a necessary purpose in terms of teaching and learning. With that thorny matter resolved, therefore, and a new Steering Committee in place, the Senate adjourned at 4:15 p.m. upon the motion of Mr. Cardimen.

Respectfully submitted, Jane D. Eberwein Secretary to the University Senate

Back to

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

S E N A T E

Home Page