



# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, January 14, 1982  
Fifth Meeting

### *MINUTES*

Senators Present: Akers, Appleton, Arnold, Boulos, Brown, Champagne, Chipman, Christina, Copenhaver, Coppola, Dawson, Eberwein, Eklund, Eliezer, Feeman, Frampton, Gerulaitis, Ghausi, Gregory, Grossman, Hammerle, Hetenyi, Heubel, Hildebrand, Horwitz, Howes, Ketchum, Kleckner, Lambric, Lindell, Mallett, Miller, Moeller, Pino, Rhadigan, Sakai, Scherer, Schwartz, Sevilla, Somerville, Stamps, Strauss, Stokes, Swartz, Tripp, Wilson, Witt  
Senators Absent; Bieryla, Briggs-Bunting, Burdick, Cowlshaw, Downing, Gardiner, Hershey, Hightower, Kurzman, Otto, Pak, Pine, Russell, Stanovich.

President Champagne called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m., calling for approval of the minutes of the December 10, 1981, meeting. Upon the motion of Mr. Arnold, seconded by Ms. Tripp, the minutes were approved by voice vote.

The initial item of old business was a motion from the Steering Committee (Moved, Mr. Dawson; Seconded, Mr. Hetenyi):

**MOVED** that the University Senate recommend to the President and the Board that the Performing Arts Faculty Council be dissolved, with thanks to those persons who have served on that body during the formative stage of the School of Performing Arts.

The motion met with unanimous approval, thereby directing Senate attention to more controversial agenda items.

The second item of old business was a motion from the Academic Standing and Honors Committee to extend the period of granting the W grade to nine weeks in fall and winter semesters and five weeks in spring and summer sessions (Moved, Mr. Miller; Seconded, Ms. Briggs-Bunting). As Messrs. Appleton and Gerulaitis had proposed an amendment at the previous meeting, deliberation began on the merit of adding the sentence, "During the first semester of enrollment at Oakland University, undergraduate students may be granted a W grade until one week prior to the beginning of the final examination period." Mr. Appleton surprised his colleagues, however, by withdrawing his proposed amendment because consultation with the Registrar's Office had convinced him that this modification would be difficult to implement. Mr. Somerville then filled the gap in the agenda by proposing a similar amendment which would apply to all undergraduates, not just to first-semester students. He

proposed to extend the period of granting the W grade until the fourteenth week of fall and winter semesters (Seconded, Mr. Appleton). When Mr. Feeman objected that fourteen weeks could go into the final examination period, Mr. Somerville restated his amendment:

Undergraduate students may be granted a W grade until one week prior to the beginning of the final examination period.

Mr. Miller initiated debate by inquiring whether this amendment would not have the same consequences for the academic standing of weak students as the current WN grade, which faced abolition if the subsequent motion from Academic Standing and Honors should carry; an extended withdrawal period would also allow a student to complete a course while evading a grade. Mr. Hetenyi maintained that the amendment would certainly have that effect and therefore declared his opposition. Mr. Witt wished the record to specify whether a student withdrew early or late in the semester, although Mr. Appleton argued that there is a real difference between allowing a student to withdraw late in the term and forcing her or him to complete a course. He pointed out that students cannot always project their status accurately even by the ninth week. Ms. Schwartz inquired when it becomes legal to grant an I grade and learned that the instructor has that option only in the final week of each term. When Mr. Rhadigan asked whether this amendment would face the problems of implementation Mr. Appleton had foreseen for his original proposal, Mr. Somerville assured him that it would not; and the Senate found the Associate Registrar's judgment persuasive. Mr. Somerville explained that he offered this amendment out of concern that, if the N-grade motion should pass, the many hundreds of students who have been withdrawing from classes each semester for health reasons or other decisive factors would be seriously disadvantaged. A voice vote on the amendment produced unclear results; the subsequent show of hands revealed eighteen supporters and fifteen objectors. Attention turned, therefore, to the main motion as amended.

**MOVED** that the period of granting the W grade will be extended. Undergraduate students may be granted a W grade until one week prior to the beginning of the final examination period.

Mr. Ketchum inquired whether the same withdrawal privileges would be extended to graduate students. Mr. Somerville replied that the current motion applies only to undergraduates although he would prefer it to be all-inclusive. Ms. Tripp wondered whether any limit exists to the number of Ws a student could accumulate but discovered through Mr. Kleckner that no such limit has been established. Mr. Kleckner suggested that the Senate might be attacking the wrong end of the beast; if the issue here were delayed information to students about their status in particular courses, he thought it more useful to require all instructors to provide grade feedback by the end of the seventh week. Mr. Miller (Seconded, Mr. Chipman) then moved to table the motion until the N-grade issue should be resolved, and the Senate approved the motion to table by voice vote. The withdrawal issue will be reconsidered whenever the related issue may be settled, however long that process takes.

President Champagne then turned over the chair to Mr. Kleckner, happily delegating to the Provost responsibility for guiding debate on the controversial and complex N-grade issue. Mr. Kleckner reviewed for the Senate its Parliamentarian's assessment of the parliamentary labyrinth discoverable from the agenda. Mr. Heubel advised his fellow Senators that the second substitute motion should more properly be labeled a motion to refer to committee with instructions; the suggested order of consideration still held. Thus encouraged to proceed, Mr.

Akers then proposed the following motion to refer to committee on behalf of the Steering Committee (Seconded Ms. Tripp):

**MOVED** that the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction be instructed to develop for Senate consideration on or before April 1, 1982,

a grading system for undergraduate students which is: a. internally consistent, b. readily understood by all users: faculty, students, and external evaluators, and c. readily implemented on the University's administrative systems.

In preparing its recommendation, the UCUI should consult broadly with all academic units, the Academic Standing and Honors Committee, the Academic and Career Advising Committee, and relevant administrative officers. The report to the Senate should include discussion of the implications of any proposed new grading system for student retention and dismissal policies.

Mr. Akers explained the reasoning of the Steering Committee which had been influenced by the Senate's recent venting of long-suppressed unhappiness with the current grad: system and by the President's encouragement to simplify it. He did not anticipate that an issue so complex could be worked out on the Senate floor.

Mr. Grossman inquired how long the Academic Standing and Honors Committee had worked on its proposal and wondered why a second committee should now undertake a parallel study. Mr. Kleckner thought that Academic Standing and Honors members had worked for several years on this issue. Mr. Hetenyi, however, suggested that the original committee had felt constrained to work within the existing grade-scale framework and would not have felt free to investigate major alternatives; he felt that the Steering Committee's motion offered the possibility of *de novo* inquiry. Mr. Feeman agreed, noting that the old Academic Policy Committee had traditionally dealt with the grad: system in general whereas the Academic Standing and Honors Committee necessarily focuses attention on failing grades and dismissal policies. When Mr. Ketchum inquired what would happen to the graduate grading system, Mr. Kleckner responded that it was not involved in this motion and that two separate grading systems could continue to exist. Mr. Christina noted that the Steering Committee had included item c. in its motion to encourage attention to such articulation. He pointed out that the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction is well constituted to examine the grading system as it includes a member from each school's committee on instruction. Mr. Kleckner added that UCUI is a subcommittee of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee, which has representation from the Graduate Council. After this discussion the motion to refer to committee with instructions was approved by voice vote, then obviating debate on the Gerulaitis/Hetenyi substitute motion and the main motion with its amendment.

President Champagne then resumed the chair to preside over debate on new business. The one such item was a procedural motion from the Steering Committee to elect Ms. Helen Schwartz to the seat on the Research Committee which was vacated by Mr. J. Christopher Maloney, who is on leave (Moved, Ms. Boulos; Seconded, Mr. Miller). Mr. Horwitz objected that the School of Economics and Management still has no representation on the Research Committee. Ms. Schwartz was elected by voice vote.

When the Senate failed to produce any private resolutions for the good of the order and the Steering Committee to turn up any information items. President Champagne informed the

group of the view from the oblong office. He divided his remarks into three major categories, starting with announcement of a University Convocation on February 18 to acknowledge and install Provost Kleckner. The President intends to discuss the role of the Provost on that occasion, and Mr. Kleckner will deliver an address. Mr. Champagne then reviewed for the Senate the distinction he had earlier made to the Board of Trustees between presidential and provostial functions. He sees the President's responsibilities as defining institutional mission, seeing that the mission remains viable, and providing general coordination at the top administrative level, and he views the Provost's role as managing the programs of the University. Mr. Champagne intends to delegate to Mr. Kleckner great authority to operate the University's programs and to hold him responsible for the day-to-day operation of the institution.

Now that a new Provost has been appointed. President Champagne announced that he would like to modify Senate meetings in much the same way he has modified the Board's. He feels a conflict of interest in presiding over a meeting while bringing recommendation to it (Board) or receiving recommendations from it (Senate). Consequently, he has given Board members more control over their own meetings and wishes to do the same for the Senate. As the Steering Committee prepares the agenda and the Provost chair the Steering Committee, he would like to have Mr. Kleckner chair Senate meetings. He assured the Senate that he means to be present at its meetings and to give his report perhaps he would open and close meetings. He would prefer to have the officer of the University chiefly responsible for academic affairs, however, serve as presiding officer. He therefore asked the Steering Committee to advise him on the possible ramifications of such a change and on ways of instituting it. He urged Senators - to share their thoughts on this matter with the Steering Committee.

The third item of the presidential report also hinged on the appointment of the Provost. President Champagne spoke of his desire to become better acquainted with the faculty and to improve communication, particularly at this time when we are all looking closely at the University from every angle. In order to accomplish these goals he and Mr. Kleckner mean to institute a monthly series of presidential-provost round-table lunches with semi-randomly selected faculty groups to discuss whatever issues the people invited choose to raise. They will attempt to meet the faculty in general but will have regard for class schedules. He mentioned that he has already established monthly lunches with APs after each Board meeting and that he regularly attends University Congress meetings to listen to discussion and answer any question.

Several Senators then raised questions for President Champagne. In response to Mr. Strauss's inquiry about a newspaper account of audit disputes between the University and the state, the President explained that state auditors made sixty-three recommendations on the basis of last year's audit. Messrs. Champagne and McGarry reviewed each item and responded at the exit interview in Lansing, and the public record of that discussion has been picked up by the press. Oakland has concurred with most recommendations, is making adjustments in some other areas, and still disagrees on a few. He gave examples of issues under consideration and assured the Senate that he is no longer even remotely concerned about any of the recommendations; he is completely satisfied that the University's financial affairs are in good order.

Mr. Gregory wondered whether there was any budget news and was told that Lansing now advises universities to set aside four percent of the budget for a possible cut ever though the governor denies any present intention of calling back funds. When Ms. Schwartz asked

whether this year's budget was at stake, the President replied that the cuts might possibly occur in the spring, thereby reaching into next year's funds. A cut of this magnitude would completely wipe out this year's budget increase. Mr. Gregory indicated that he and Mr. Christina had visited Lansing for the Committee on Academic Mission and Priorities and returned with the impression that another cut is quite probable within ninety days. President Champagne agreed and noted that this faculty visit was well regarded in Lansing, being the first of the kind from any university.

In response to Mr. Grossman's question about a report from the Council of President; reputed in the press to contain plans for program cuts in state universities, President Champagne responded that the report lists last year's cuts. Others may soon be announced as various institutions adjust to fiscal restrictions. Upon the motion of Mr. Hetenyi, seconded by Ms. Schwartz, the Senate adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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

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