



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Eighth Meeting
Thursday, April 16, 1981

Minutes

Senators Present: Beardman, Bertocci, Brown, Butterworth, Cameron, Champagne, Chipman, Christina, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein Edgerton, Evarts, Fullmer, Gardiner, L. Gerulaitis, R. Gerulaitis, Ghausi, Grossman, Hetenyi, Horwitz, Jaymes, Johnson, Karasch, Ketchum, Kingstrom, Kleckner Liboff, Matthews, Moeller, Otto, Ozinga, Pettengill, Rhadigan, Scherer, Schmidt, Shepherd, Somerville, Stevens, Strauss, Tower, Wilson

Senators Absent: Arnold, Bieryla, Boulos, Feeman, Frampton, Garcia, Hammerle, Heubel, Hitchingham, Jones, Lentz, McMahan, Miller, Mittra, Mourant, Obear, Pak, Pierson, Pine, Reischl, Riley, Schwartz

President Champagne called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m., deferring discussion of the budget report then circulating through the room until later in the meeting. Upon motion of Mr. Gerulaitis, seconded by Mr. Stevens, the Senate then approved the minutes of its April 9, 1981, meeting without discussion.

Attention focused at once on a resolution from the Admissions Committee (Moved, Mr. Strauss; Seconded, Mr. Arnold):

RESOLVED that the Senate requests the President to appoint a University Commission to study the desirability of a name change for Oakland University and to make a recommendation to the Senate by the Winter of 1982.

Mr. Tower initiated debate by proposing an amendment with substantial new wording to include some of the ideas generated at the previous Senate meeting (Moved, Mr. Tower; Seconded, Mr. Ozinga):

AMENDMENT: To replace the words "the feasibility of a name change for Oakland University and to make a recommendation to the Senate by the Winter of 1982" from the original motion with the following wording: ", with the aid of market research consultants, the image of the university in the various communities it serves, to make a recommendation on the desirability of a name change for OU, and to make other recommendations on methods to enhance the image of OU and to increase its attractiveness to potential students. These recommendations should be returned to the Senate by January of 1982. "

Mr. Liboff and Mr. Eberwein inquired about the probable expense for a study requiring the use

of external consultants. Mr. Tower acknowledged that his amendment might add substantially to the cost of the project but doubted that such a study could be properly conducted without the assistance of dispassionate outside persons. Subsequent discussion showed substantial difference of opinion about the role of such consultants and the point at which they should be brought into the image-review process.

Mr. Strauss objected to the amendment as going beyond his Committee's charge and essentially telling the President what he should be doing. He preferred an internal study of name-change possibilities before any external review as did Mr. Liboff, who suggested that the university-wide commission proposed in the original resolution might develop several name-change proposals and submit these possibilities to outside consultants. He expressed concern that turning over responsibility for university image to external marketing strategists might confuse academic issues. Both Mr. Horwitz and Mr. Ozinga advocated a broad marketing study of university image before name-change activities in order to focus issues and discover whether the problem is basically verbal. Supporting the amendment, Mr. Beardman cautioned that image changes could be misleading if not tied into academic programs. He embellished his argument that our marketing strategies should honestly represent what we actually do with the analogy of dung shaped and colored to resemble an apple: appealing but inedible. President Champagne asked Mr. Horwitz whether the School of Economics and Management has faculty capable of conducting such a study internally; Mr. Horwitz assured the Senate of such competence within his school, but thought Oakland University faculty unlikely to be so dispassionate as outsiders. Mr. Tower noted that there are market- research teams available with suitable academic experience and sensitivity.

The marketing aspects of such image research prompted Mr. Rhadigan to observe that, from a student perspective, the benefits of avoiding confusion with Oakland Community College would not justify increased tuition. Mr. Somerville replied that the university continues to attract students despite frequent tuition rises, though Mr. Tower observed that we still need to position ourselves to attract more new students to our classrooms. In response to Mr. Chipman's query about retitling of Engineering courses, he attributed increased Engineering enrollments to use of conventional, recognizable terminology describing curricula.

Mr. Champagne wondered about the parliamentary classification of Mr. Tower's proposal, observing that the new wording was so extensive as to seem a substitute motion rather than an amendment. Mr. Tower recognized the problem but called upon his background as parliamentarian to justify treating the measure as an amendment?especially at the final scheduled Senate meeting of the year.

When a voice vote failed to identify a majority, a show of hands demonstrated twenty negative votes on the amendment to fifteen positive votes. Discussion shifted, therefore, to the original resolution.

Mr. Grossman wished to amend the resolution to substitute the word desirability for feasibility. The Secretary noted, however, that the Steering Committee had already accomplished this change on the agenda. Mr. Strauss had accepted Mr. Liboff's proposed rewording at the previous meeting as a stylistic amendment.

Mr. Beardman argued against forming a commission to play with funny names he worried about confusing language with purpose. Also opposed to the resolution, Mr. Liboff dismissed

the Engineering example as a relevant argument for retitling; he attributed enrollment growth in that school to internal program developments and national enrollment trends. He considered the OCC confusion a relatively minor concern in view of the university's long uphill battle for national visibility. Mr. Rhadigan saw no advantage to calling the university Oakland State, as the word Oakland is itself the source of local image confusion.

Justifying the resolution, Mr. Strauss noted that the Admissions Committee had found the name issue inseparable from overall institutional image, and he called attention to his Committee's recommendations to the President earlier this semester to strengthen the university's identification with Meadow Brook cultural events. Mr. Edgerton, however, suspected that the Admissions Committee had a distorted perspective on institutional image, given its inevitable interest in admissions interests as distinct from research and other university values.

Following this extended discussion, a show of hands revealed a substantial majority opposed to the resolution. The second item of old business was a motion from the Graduate Council (Moved, Mr. Johnson; Seconded, Mr. Ozinga):

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board establishment of a program in Medical Physics leading to the Ph.D. degree, the start of the program to occur as soon as the program's financial needs can be met.

Mr. Johnson initiated discussion with a pertinent anecdote about legislative support for this Medical Physics program. He praised it as the best conceived, most promising, and most exciting graduate proposal he has brought to the Senate. Other Senators who had served on previous review groups examining the proposal expressed great enthusiasm for the program and argued for approval despite concerns with funding. Mr. Horwitz communicated the good will of the Graduate Council and Mr. Bertocci the support of the Arts and Sciences Assembly. Mr. DeMent reported APPC support, now strengthened by Dean Moeller's highly favorable response to Committee inquiries. Both Mr. Edgerton and Mr. Ozinga stressed the national reputations of the hospital research persons included in the report and emphasized the strong commitment of area hospitals to this program.

Following such acclamations, the motion won unanimous Senate approval.

The third item of new business was a motion from the Academic Policy and Planning Committee to establish an academic unit in theatre (Moved, Mr. Kleckner; Seconded, Mr. Stevens):

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and to the Board of Trustees the establishment of an academic unit in theatre. The unit shall have the authority to appoint faculty, offer courses, and conduct professional degree programs in theatre.

The motion carried, without discussion or dissent. Heartened by its success in advancing the previous resolution on behalf of the arts, the Academic Policy and Planning Committee offered a resolution to initiate a degree program in dance (Moved, Mr. Kleckner; Seconded, Mr. Hetenyi):

MOVED that the School of Performing Arts be authorized to initiate a program leading to the BFA degree in Dance.

Despite Mr. Hetenyi's offer to share with the Senate the massive documentation he had assembled on this proposal, the motion elicited no discussion. It passed with unanimous support as the final flourish of the Senate's legislative year.

In the absence of new business, President Champagne moved directly to the Good and Welfare section of the agenda. There were no private resolutions as such, but Mr. Stevens raised a question on behalf of his colleagues in Communication Arts who are concerned about the effect on their department of the proposed merger with Rhetoric and who wonder whether the Senate has any role in deliberation on such mergers. Ms. Scherer inquired what the Senate's function should be as such questions arise in these times of retrenchment. Speaking for the Journalism faculty in Communication Arts, Ms. Briggs-Bunting articulated their uncertainty about the university-wide implications of departmental mergers, including potential contractual difficulties. She wondered about threats to the Journalism program and to students enrolled in that curriculum. Mr. Rhadigan inquired what would happen to a student's major, if Rhetoric and Communication Arts combine; Mr. Stevens assured him that present major programs would remain intact. Mr. Ketchum forecast contractual difficulties, as individuals are classified within specifically designated groups.

Mr. Matthews thought it premature to talk about a Communication Arts- Rhetoric merger in the Senate this month, as no such formal proposal has yet been made. He expected such proposals to start in the fall through normal governance channels: the Arts and Sciences Assembly, the APPC, and the Senate. He felt confident that the Provost would attend seriously to contractual issues. In response to Mr. Ozinga's question about how faculty could be sure there would be no unilateral decision on a topic so sensitive, Mr. Matthews assured the Senate that the Provost is not out of his mind. He reminded his colleagues that actual placement of academic units within the university is a managerial prerogative but recognized that curricular issues remain Senate responsibilities. Mr. Moeller responded to Ms. Briggs-Bunting's apprehensions that the matter might be decided by April 30 by indicating that a meeting is scheduled for that date to consider possible action. President Champagne pledged that no govern- mental process will be short-circuited in responding to this issue.

The President then called upon Mr. Bezdek to report to the Senate for the Committee on Academic Standing and Honors about a change in university readmissions policy which that Committee has deliberated and approved and which it now brings to the attention of the Senate in conformity with precedent. The new policy extends from one to six years the period during which a student who withdrew in good standing may apply for readmission without going through a new application process. Mr. Bezdek cited enrollment problems at extension sites as incentives for change and stressed his committee's concern that good students applying for readmission not be disadvantaged by comparison with completely new applicants. There was no objection to the six-year automatic readmission policy, although Mr. Horwitz hoped that the university would not encourage students to register several weeks into the term nor imagine itself to be doing them a favor by admitting them late. Mr. Beardman also noted frequent differences between admissions practices and academic needs. Mr. Bezdek concurred but felt that these matters lay outside his Committee's purview. Mr. Kleckner pointed out that the goal of the new readmission policy is simply to achieve identical policies for new and returning students. He expected admissions to close henceforth before registration.

Having allowed Senators to peruse the budget report in the course of the meeting. President Champagne devoted the rest of the session to discussion of the recommendations presented to him by the Executive Budget Committee. He hoped for general understanding of these proposals within the university community and promised careful consideration of the responses gradually building up in his reading file. He invited questions, directed to him or to Messrs. Kleckner and Swanson. Both Ms. Scherer and Mr. Liboff expressed gratified surprise at this unprecedented opportunity for Senate discussion of the budget. They hoped for another opportunity to respond after an interval of reflection.

Several Senators offered minor suggestions for possible cost-savings or new revenues. Mr. Liboff recommended rental increases for rooms at Meadow Brook Hall. Mr. Ozinga urged exploration of lower-rate service from Detroit Edison to allow for air conditioning except at peak hours; President Champagne reported that he has asked Mr. Catton to investigate various alternatives to protect both budget and comfort. Attention is being given to special energy problems associated with the computer and with O'Dowd Hall. Mr. Chipman urged reconsideration of tuition refund policies which make it both cheap and convenient for students to drop courses upon encountering challenges. Mr. Champagne had no information about refund policies but noted the probability that Oakland University will retain its approximate place in the cost-hierarchy of educational institutions even if tuition rises as much as twenty percent.

Mr. Grossman wondered about the disparity between the budget report and the expenditure base. Mr. Swanson explained that the expenditure base includes revenues from the residence halls, the golf course, and Meadow Brook facilities as well as the General Fund represented by budget reports. Mr. Liboff inquired about the proposed merger of the Graduate School and Research Services, wondering what cost reductions would occur. He hoped there would be no loss of effectiveness for these important offices and no diminishment of their impact on the university. Mr. Kleckner explained that the proposal attempts to achieve administrative economies by consolidating staff but entails no limitation of functions. He anticipated some loss of efficiency, however. Mr. Edgerton worried about the energy conservation aspects of the budget and thought there should be contingency plans adopted to withstand the effects of natural gas price deregulation. President Champagne indicated his own concern with this issue and that of the Board. He is studying the contingency estimates in this budget.

Upon motion by Mr. Hetenyi, seconded by Mr. Horwitz, the Senate adjourned at 4:20 p.m., having concluded its agenda for the academic year.

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

Back to
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
SENATE
Home Page