



# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

## Oakland University Senate

March 26, 1968

### *MINUTES*

PRESENT: Miss Attwood, Messrs. S. Appleton, Burdick, Burke, Butler, Cherno Davis, Galloway, Gerulaitis, Hahn, Harding, Hetenyi, Heubel, Hoopes, Hough, Howes, Iodice, Johnson, Miss Juth, Messrs. Kleckner, Linsalata, Lowy, Matthews, McKay, O'Dowd, Pino, Richter, Righter, Shank, Simmons, Stoutenburg, Susskind, Swanson, Tombouljian, Torch, Varner, Williamson, Mrs. White.

ABSENT: Messrs. Atkinson, Cafone, Dutton, Fernald, Gibson, Hammerle, Kent, Langer, Lyons, Norris.

GUEST: Mr. Marz.

Chancellor Varner called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Mr. Linsalata described the problem of a student whose petition to waive the university language requirement had been refused. According to Mr. Linsalata the student has made a sincere effort to meet the requirement but his inability to learn a foreign language has repeatedly led to failure. Mr. Linsalata who has supported the student's petition asked what could be done to solve this situation short of passing the student with a 0.5 in order to permit the student to graduate. Mr. Matthews stated that the Committee on Instruction was currently reviewing all earlier decisions made this year because of the guidelines used and this case would certainly be reconsidered.

Chancellor Varner reported on the budget situation but admitted that there was not really much that was new.

\*Mr. Johnson moved to accept the minutes of February 20. Seconded by Mr. Hetenyi.

Mr. Johnson asked that the reference to his January 16 amendment on page 6 be changed so that it does not appear that he was present at the February 20 meeting which he was not. Also, he asked that the heading to the minutes be changed from "Academic Senate" to "University Senate" in line with the official name of the body. The secretary indicated the changes would be made. The minutes were then adopted.

### Old Business

Mr. Burke restated his original motion of February 20, previously seconded by Mr. Righter, regarding changes for the catalog (now on page 54) describing the Freshmen Exploratory requirement.

It was stated that Mr. Hetenyi's amendment did not require a vote if the committee was willing to incorporate it into the motion. The committee indicated they would accept the amendment as a part of the motion.

\* Following a lengthy discussion of the Hammerle amendment of February 20, Mr. Hetenyi called the question. Seconded by Mr. Righter. Adopted.

\* Mr. Hammerle's amendment was then adopted. (Vote?yes 24, no 10).

It was stated for purposes of clarification that the spring semester is not to be considered the third semester in light of the statement, "Any student who has not satisfactorily completed two exploratories in his first three semesters, etc."

Mr. Gerulaitis suggested that to assist the advisor and the student, the exploratories could be printed on the enrollment slip which would enable the advisor to keep track of the student's progress.

\* Mr. Burke's motion with Mr. Hammerle's amendment and the incorporation of Mr. Hetenyi's wording was adopted.

"EACH STUDENT, UNLESS HE HAS TRANSFERRED EQUIVALENT CREDITS FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION, SHOULD TAKE ONE AND ONLY ONE FRESHMAN EXPLORATORY IN EACH OF HIS FIRST TWO SEMESTERS, CHOSEN FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS ( NO TWO MAY BE CHOSEN FROM THE SAME GROUP): LITERATURE, WESTERN INSTITUTIONS, FINE ARTS, MAN AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, NON-WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND NATURAL SCIENCE. ANY STUDENT WHO HAS NOT SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED TWO EXPLORATORIES IN HIS FIRST THREE SEMESTERS MAY BE DECLARED INELIGIBLE TO CONTINUE AS AN ENROLLED STUDENT BY ACTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF TWO EXPLORATORIES SATISFIED THE UNIVERSITY WRITING COMPETENCY REQUIREMENT. NO STUDENT MAY RECEIVE CREDIT FOR MORE THAN TWO EXPLORATORIES, INCLUDING EQUIVALENT CREDITS FOR COURSES TAKEN AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS."

Note: In order to keep our use of words consistent, the word "take" in sentence 1 of paragraph #1 on p. 23 of the catalog should be changed to "complete."

Mr. Tomboulian restated his original motion of February 20, previously seconded by Mr. Hetenyi, regarding relabeling the M.A.T. concentrations.

\* The motion was adopted.

THE M.A.T. IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WITH CONCENTRATION IN CLASSROOM TEACHING AND READING INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE RELABELED: 1) M.A.T.?ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, AND 2) M.A.T.?READING INSTRUCTION.

New Business

Mr. Johnson moved the recommendation of the *ad hoc* Committee on the University Calendar urging the adoption of the following six points to take effect in the spring semester period of 1969.

- a. That fall and winter semesters be scheduled in essentially the same fashion as in recent years.
- b. That the examination periods for the fall semester and for the winter semester each be lengthened to five days.
- c. That the spring semester be replaced by a spring and a summer session of about eight weeks each. Programs for these sessions should be developed by the Faculties with clearly conceived clienteles and course sequences in mind. At least initially, the spring session should operate primarily for Oakland undergraduates and the summer session primarily for graduate students and students from outside the University Community. The spring session would then be closely tied perforce to the undergraduate program of the academic year, while the summer session could develop to be substantially independent of the other terms and so as to free much of the faculty from duties during that period. A course in either session would ordinarily involve as many contact hours as in the regular semester. Undergraduate courses running through both sessions would ordinarily not be permitted.
- d. That the following guidelines for spring or summer session teaching be used:
  - 1) An instructor will ordinarily teach a single course during a session; and
  - 2) Determination of the frequency a given instructor may teach in these sessions will be left to deans and chairmen, subject to the Provost's approval, and not governed by any rule such as one proscribing more than five consecutive semesters of teaching.
- e. That indications to the student or to the prospective student that he may graduate in significantly less than four years disappear from our literature (see page 6 of the present catalog for an example).
- f. That the sentence "This calendar is subject to revision." appear at the bottom of each published calendar.

Seconded by Mr. Righter.

Mr. Heubel asked what the major reasons were for the recommended changes. Mr. Johnson said the primary reasons were economics and more important the University was unable to offer a satisfactory number of courses that made good pedagogical sense.

Final action on this motion to be taken at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Burke reported on the discussions of the Academic Policy Committee regarding the grading system.

On November 3, 1966, the Steering Committee asked the Academic Policy Committee to investigate reports that the grades above 4.0 were being misinterpreted by some graduate schools, and to consider whether they should be dropped, and whether more extensive revisions in the system might be warranted as well. Last year's Committee ascertained that a few graduate schools, notably Wayne State and the University of Wisconsin, were indeed systematically lowering the GPA's of our applicants; Wayne by subtracting 0.3 throughout and Wisconsin by rounding each course grade down to the nearest integer and recalculating the GPA. The Committee recommended dropping all grades above 4.0, but since this would undoubtedly result in our giving more grades below 4.0, the Senate was asked to indicate whether the whole system should be replaced. A straw vote was indecisive: some wanted no change at all, some to drop only grades above 4.0, some to change to a 5-point scale (4, 3, 2, 1, 0), some to 0-100. Various compromises were suggested, some even more esoteric than our present system. The whole question was sent back to the Committee just as the school year was ending.

After due consideration, including some fact-finding, this year's Committee has decided to recommend change in our present system while issuing another plea to the faculty to consult the official guidelines on how to use it, published by the Committee on Instruction on March 1, 1965. Copies of these guidelines have already been distributed to all faculty in the past, but we will send everyone another copy (with a few small modifications, such as inclusion of average grades in various categories at Oakland) and have it sent out again every September until it is familiar. The Registrar, Mr. Atkinson, now believes that the problem of explaining our system to graduate schools has been largely overcome, and that through use of a stamp saying:

"4.3 = HIGHEST GRADE, AWARDED ONLY FOR EXTRAORDINARY ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT"

prominently affixed to the transcript of any student receiving above 4.0 in one or more courses, the problem should gradually disappear.

The results of the questionnaire distributed to the faculty a few weeks ago showed that last year's Senate was a truly representative body. With 112 returns counted out of 171 in residence, more are opposed to our present system than in favor of it; but many are indifferent and, more important, each of the three suggested alternative systems also had more "opposed" than "in favor"; There were strongly worded arguments on both sides of every aspect of the question. Among those using letter grades during the semester and converting to the 4.3 scale at the end, there is some inconsistency in equivalences, but this group has now dwindled remarkably (only 20 out of 112 admit to doing this) and any attempt to adopt an official scale of equivalences, no matter what it is, leads to worse difficulties. A similar questionnaire distributed to about 700 selected students indicated clear support for our present system.

Average grades by classes (freshmen, etc.) can now be predicted within 0.05, indicating that we have achieved overall stability. Grades no longer "peak" at 4.0, 3.0, etc., indicating that most faculty are now using the entire scale. There are still inequities, but probably not so many as a more discrete system would produce, especially in large classes. Our sister campus in East Lansing currently is considering adopting a system something like ours: In short, all signs seem to indicate that we should not change our grading system at this time.

The following guidelines are revised operational descriptions to expand the official definition of

the grades. These guidelines will be distributed to faculty members at least once each year.

4.0 - 4.3 Demonstrating extraordinary academic accomplishment; P student maintaining this level of performance throughout his undergraduate career would qualify for the most prestigious fellowships.

3.5 - 3.9 Worthy of high honors; a GPA in this range would qualify the student for the better graduate or professional schools.

B;3.0 - 3.4 Scholarly performance; many graduate schools require a GPA above 3.0 for admission.

2.5 - 2.9 Average performance; most O.U. scholarships require a GPA of 2.5 or better.

2.0 - 2.4 Work acceptable for graduation, but of marginal quality; to be in good standing a student must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or better. Students should do better than this in their major field.

1.2 - 1.9 Penalty grades indicating weak performance; a student with a GPA in this range is on probation and cannot graduate unless he raises it above 2.0.

0.5 - 1.1 Severe penalty grades; a student with a GPA in this range is eligible for dismissal. A grade of 0.5 receives credit but is very damaging to the student's GPA.

0.0 Performance of such poor quality that no credit can be given.

Considerable debate followed involving many senators - some speaking for the present system and some speaking against. The discussion ranged from a lack of uniform interpretation of what a specific grade meant to a desire for a return to the original A, B, C, D, F system to the results of a survey which indicated the present system most acceptable.

Mr. Hetenyi moved, "that this report be accepted and no changes in the grading system be instituted." Seconded by Mr. Simmons.

Chancellor Varner asked Parliamentarian Appleton if this motion could be voted on today. Mr. Appleton ruled that Mr. Hetenyi's motion is a substantive motion and cannot be voted on at this meeting. The chair ruled to support Mr. Appleton's ruling.

Mr. Linsalata moved to overrule the chair's ruling on the decision not to vote today on Mr. Hetenyi's motion.

Seconded by Mr. Gerulaitis. Motion not adopted.

Upon motion by Mr. Simmons the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

\*Motions and amendments adopted at this meeting.

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