

Oakland University Senate Minutes

February 16, 2017

Members present: Aloï, Andrews, Arnold, Ball, Battles, Baxa, Berven, D., Berven, K., Cheng, Clark, Corso, Daniel, Debnath, Didion, Dulio, Edrisinha, Eis, Epstein, Estes, Folberg, Goldberg, Golinski, Grimm, Hansen, Harbin, Hranchook, Knox, Latcha, Leiberg, Lentini, Long, Marjerum-Leys, Mathieson, Megee, Polis, Reger, Roumani, Schartman, Thomas, Townsend, Weiter, Wells

Members absent: Awbrey, Chamra, Corcoran, Dallo, Dereski, Edwards, Giblin, Gooren, Groomes, Guessous, Howell, Keller, Kubicek, Lee, Mazzeo, Miller, Miree-Coppin, Parsons, Roth Thompson, Tracy, Williams

Provost Lentini called the meeting to order at 3:10 P.M.

Summary of Information and Action Items

INFORMATION ITEMS

Provost's Updates

Retention Update

ACTION ITEMS

OLD BUSINESS

EdD in Organizational Leadership Proposal

NEW BUSINESS

PR Major Proposal

Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy

A. INFORMATION ITEMS

Provost's Updates: Provost Lentini said that he had come to the meeting from the Great Lakes Regional Student Success Conference that was going on today in Detroit. He expressed his pride that Oakland University is the sponsor of this conference which has grown over the last few years to now having over 600 attendees from several states besides Michigan. He noted that student success is very important for the retention push, and he expressed his appreciation to all who were involved with the conference. He provided a brief update on the OU presidential search which is in full swing.

He updated the Senate on the OU parking plan which has been approved.

He noted that due to the absence of Joy Cunningham, the Bullying Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy information updates listed on the agenda would be deferred to another meeting.

Retention Update: Laura Schartman provided an update on her preparation of metrics for retention and graduation rates at OU. For example, she said that in 2015, 2588 full-time first year students enrolled at OU, but 647 of those (25%) did not return in the Fall of 2016. Among those, 39% of URM students did not return. She pointed out that after two years of looking for progress, we are now losing ground on retention, especially for URMs. She said there is a relationship between first-year retention and graduation rate in which if one goes down, the other goes down as well. Another factor which she

noted that plays into retention is sophomore status, and she said they are examining the reasons for this, which may be financial or academic or personal, for instance. She said that we are up to about 47% which she said is an improvement from years past and the highest on record in this category. She noted that the URM retention rate is highly variable. She stated that the Strategic Plan focuses on narrowing the gap and raising retention and graduate rates. Provost Lentini added that we need to expand our recruitment base because of the shrinking pool of high school graduates in Michigan, and he expressed his belief that there should be a better than 80% retention rate for 1st to 2nd year students, and better than 50% graduation rate overall. Mr. Dulio brought up a problem of one of his students who had lost his financial aid and therefore cannot buy books. He said that his department wanted to use departmental grant money, the Shelley Appleton grant, but were told by the university that they could not give this student a couple hundred dollars for books because he had lost his financial aid which he said was a bad situation. His anecdote was familiar to other Senators, to which their moans, groans and nodding heads attested. Ms. Berven said she would like to see a system in which students could donate books from their classes to be used by students with financial need in the upcoming semesters. Ms. Daniels said there is a list of books available in the library. Mr. Thomas said that faculty members seem to order expensive books, and he said there is an informational website about this. He said it is a big problem for students that books are so expensive. Mr. Margerum-Leys said that in his School, they have good retention numbers and also good advising ratios. He said he believes that there is a relationship between full-time tenure-track faculty members and retention rates. Ms. Wells said she was happy to see this conversation taking place, and said that simple solutions do not exist for complex problems. She continued that one factor affecting retention is anxiety, and we should not discount the emotional aspect of student life. She stated that this is what directed her interest in mindfulness work which makes one better able to deal with the level of resilience and optimism on the part of the students, and focus on what they bring to the campus. Mr. Lentini added that OTUS and the Athletics Program have amazing retention rates and we need to improve the rates across other areas as well. He observed that students get more individual attention in these programs than in the rest of the university.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of January 19, 2017

The minutes of January 19, 2017, were approved.

C. OLD BUSINESS

1. Motion from the Grad Council recommend approval for the EdD in Organizational Leadership in the School of Education and Human Services

***MOVED** that the Senate recommend to the President and Board of Trustees approval of the EdD in Organizational Leadership in the School of Education and Human Services.*

The motion was approved unanimously.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Motion from the Committee on Undergraduate Education to Recommend Approval for a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences.

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and Board of Trustees approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences. (Ms. Eis, Ms. Hranchook)

Mr. Gilbert (Director, Journalism Program) was present to answer questions, and to provide a power point presentation of the history, background and information for the B.A. in Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

2. Motion to Change Wording of the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy

MOVED that the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy be changed to reflect the changes indicated. (Eis, Daniel)

Mark Navin was present to explain the minor wording change regarding a major misconception in the present Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy that involves the amount of state funding that students get these days, as opposed to the days when the policy was originally written. His committee was proposing to change the first sentence in the current list of principles and practices currently in the Undergraduate Catalog under the heading of Academic Probation and Dismissal. The current verbiage states that *“The major share* of students’ educational expense is provided by the state of Michigan, and it is the responsibility of the university to see that these funds are properly used.”

The proposed change to this language is the following: *“A share* of students’ educational expense...”

After the hoots and guffaws died down over the old wording, there was a clear sense among Senators that the modified wording was good because it reflects today’s reality in which students get much less from the state than they used to. Mr. Thomas moved to waive the second reading. The motion to waive the second reading passed unanimously.

The motion was then passed unanimously.

E. GOOD AND WELFARE

Ms. Reger had sad news for the Senate concerning Tim Larrabee (Associate Professor in Teaching Development and Educational Studies), who passed away on February 14. She requested a moment of silence in his honor. Provost Lentini echoed her sympathy.

Ms. Piskulich said that the committee call for 2017-18 is now available and she observed that there is now a way to respond to the request on one’s phone which does not take more than a minute or two. She also said there is a call out for faculty advisors for the campus summer advising program.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dikka Berven, secretary