



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Third Meeting
Thursday, 17 November 1994

Minutes

Senators present: Abiko, Andrews, Benson, Bertocci, Bhatt, Bricker, Capps, Chipman, Christina, Downing, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein, Fish, Frankie, Gerulaitis, Gilroy, Hansen, Hildebrand, Hough, Hovanesian, Kheir, Mittelstaedt, Moran, Moudgil, Olson, Packard, Pipan, Polis, Reynolds, Rickstad, Rooney, Rozek, Rush, Russi, Schott-Baer, Selahowski, Sevilla, Silk, Stano, Winter

Senators absent: Ari, Berven, Braunstein, Briggs-Bunting, Brown, Buffard-O'Shea, Dahlgren, Garcia, Hormozi, Khattree, Liboff, Marks, Muir, Otto, Reddy, Schmitz, Schwartz, Shepherd, Stevens, Taam, Thomas, Wedekind, Zenas

Summary of actions:

1. Assessment Committee report (Mr. Goslin)
2. Motion to endorse the Oakland University Strategic Plan (Mr. Chipman, Mr. Bricker) First reading
3. Motion to transfer the Honors College from the College of Arts and Sciences to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Mr. Chipman, Mr. Downing) Second reading. Approved.

Mr. Russi called the meeting to order at 3:14 and asked the Senate's indulgence in shaking up the agenda a bit to accommodate the schedules of several individuals. He then proceeded to introduce Mr. Goslin, chair of the Assessment Committee.

Assessment Committee report

Mr. Gosling began with an overview of the purpose of assessment, namely, to evaluate student academic achievement and to use this information to improve the equality of the educational experience at Oakland at all levels. He itemized the benefits of assessment: 1) it will significantly enhance our ability to continually improve the quality of education at Oakland; 2) we will attract better students and enhance our local, regional and national reputation for excellence; 3) we will meet professional and university accreditation requirements and address the issue of accountability; 4) most of all, as faculty, we will know that we are engaged in a continuous process of review and refinement to enable the delivery of the best possible education to our students.

He distributed a copy of the OU Assessment Plan and described its development. The faculty in each academic unit developed an assessment plan for each major program. These plans needed to be credible, individualized and faculty-owned and were derived from OU goals, from

unit goals and from specific unit objectives. Each plan needed to have objective multiple measures and an indication of who would be responsible for their implementation. Finally each plan needed to be able to be used for program review/improvement. Once approved by the Assessment Committee each academic unit will proceed with the implementation of their assessment plan and, beginning in 1995, each academic unit will prepare an annual report to the dean and the Assessment Committee. This report will contain their findings regarding student academic achievement, their proposed changes to academic programs based on assessment and any proposed changes to the assessment plan. He added that within the next couple of weeks academic units will receive specific guidelines for the format of this report. Two interim reports will be requested, one early in the Winter term and one in April. The Assessment Committee then will inform the Deans and the VPAA of the AC's appraisal of the academic units' assessment programs. It will be important for the Administration to explore issues pertaining to inter-program, inter-unit and whole university concerns. Finally the Assessment Committee will report to the University Senate on a regular basis.

Mr. Goslin reported further on progress to date. All academic units have submitted approved assessment plans and many of them have already been implemented. The Office of Institutional Research has broadened its scope and is now known as the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Laura Schartman is currently the acting director and a search is underway to identify a full time director. A North Central Accreditation site visit team reviewed the OU assessment plan in April and pronounced the plan complete and effective. They encouraged immediate implementation and recommended administrative budgetary and personnel support for the assessment effort at OU. One change as a result of their visit was the broadening of the scope of the Office of Institutional Research to include assessment and the appointment of Laura to that position.

This fall the Assessment Committee has been working on implementation issues. Committee members are designing annual report content and format, there is a group working on developing alumni and employer surveys and, starting next week, there will be a series of faculty orientation and training sessions on assessment issues. The Committee has initiated the development of a resource center to be housed in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment with the materials to be available to the academic community. The Assessment Committee will continue their education through attendance at several assessment conferences. The committee is also concerned with budget and funding issues related to assessment. He concluded by stating that they have been inventing this part of the wheel as they go along and it's been fun. The first seminar on assessment will be this coming Tuesday, Nov. 22, at noon in 128 OC and he urged his colleagues to attend. Mr. Christina asked whether this plan had been before the Senate before and Mr. Goslin replied no, this was the first time and then it was presented as an information item.

Strategic Plan

Mr. Russi thanked Mr. Goslin and his Committee for their fine work and, once again, shifting agenda items to new business, recognized Mr. Chipman. Mr. Chipman moved, seconded by Mr. Bricker,

that the Senate endorse the Oakland University Strategic Plan: 1995-2005 as Oakland University's governing planning document for the next decade. It recommends that the President proceed with its implementation and encourages all members of the university community to assist in accomplishing its goals.

Mr. Chipman elaborated on the comments and the role of the SPRC, noting that the SPRC is responsible for getting matters before the Senate, assisting in orderly and informed debate and informing the Senate of the Committee's position. He recapped the process involved in developing the plan and noted that, while we are not on the exact timeline originally envisioned, we are following the process and it is time to bring it to closure. The draft plan has been discussed by the Senate and the Board of Trustees and now appears in a revised version for Senate consideration today. Senators should have the following items for their consideration: 1) The Oakland University Strategic Plan: 1995-2005, the document that the Senate is being asked to endorse; 2) a copy of the detailed Strategic Plan and 3) the May 1994 statement of the SPRC.

The document under consideration today consists of an edited version of the preamble of the Strategic Plan and includes all the changes, additions and deletions that were made to the original so that the changes are clear. He emphasized the links between the Strategic Plan and the specific tactics and recommendations in the Detailed Strategic Plan. It is presumed that the tactics and recommendations included in the Detailed Strategic Plan would be given precedence as specific steps to achieve the goals of the University over the next decade. Also that the implementation of any recommendations would be subject to traditional review and approval procedures and that the SPRC would keep the Senate apprised of the implementation and progress of various aspects of the plan. He concluded by reaffirming the SPRC's support for the plan.

Ms. Hansen asked who made the changes in the revised version. Mr. Chipman replied Mrs. Packard, taking into consideration the previous Senate discussion and input from the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Packard then summarized the changes made, some being simply grammatical or typing corrections or changes to update data. Other changes were made based on Board review of the document and dealt with issues of service to students and the possibility of graduate professional education such as a law school. She commented that she didn't think any of the changes affected the intent of the document. The change in the ordering of items was simply to list what it is we want to accomplish and then list the processes to be used. Also she added there was no intent to emphasize teaching over scholarship over service but rather the order in the document reflects the order in the Mission Statement of the university.

Ms. Packard also reported that she has been meeting with key constituents (alumni, donors, members of OU Foundation, Board of Trustee members) for breakfast and asking them what they think of the plan. In general, people have been very supportive and positive, although some have noted that the document is a bit wordy. She remarked on how we need outside backing for funding and, by getting these individuals involved at an early stage, we hope they'll be helpful in implementing the plan. The Senate will have a final clean version of the plan for its deliberations in December and if approved, the plan would go to the Board of Trustees in February. After Board of Trustees approval the various areas of the university will begin planning for implementation. Since implementation of all the tactics would require around \$17 million dollars in new money, many of the tactics will be phased in and priorities will have to be assigned.

Ms. Hansen wondered about the relationship between the tactics listed in the Detailed Strategic Plan and the more general document under review. If we approve this are we approving the tactics and therefore the enhancement of specific programs such as the counseling program listed on p.17. Ms. Frankie, chair of the Strategic Planning Steering

Committee, responded that the tactics and recommendations are to be used as an initial framework but that it would be up to the units and university administration to determine the order of implementation. Mr. Eberwein noted that, thanks to Mr. Chipman's wise counsel, one of the strong parts of the document and its implementation is the role of the SPRC in the process. He added that the Planning Review Committee will continue to do what it is charged to do and will be involved in the development of implementation plans. In fact, the SPRC will be in the center of activities at all points and he counseled the Senate to have confidence in them.

Mr. Bricker then took the floor, explaining that he had prepared remarks assuming that the Senate would have already dealt with the Honors College transfer. Taken aback somewhat by the change in the agenda order, he queried, did we pass it? He also expressed concern over the late delivery of the agenda and supporting documentation, noting that a document as important as this one deserves careful study and if senators are to make wise decisions on matters of great import, they must have pertinent information in a timely fashion. With respect to the substance of the plan, he worries that the additional revenue that likely will be available to this university in the next decade will support implementation of only a few of the worthwhile objectives in the plan. As an example he noted that the university has been having difficulty finding additional resources to bolster its Honors College and its Center for International Programs. Both are cited in the Strategic Plan. However, the Detailed Strategic Plan lists 56 tactics of which the Honors College and Center are just 2. If we are having trouble funding these two, realistically how many of the other 54 will be funded? In the attempt to provide additional services, programs, scholarship and grants he cautioned that we should not lose sight of preserving the quality of what we do now. Should an above average but underfunded regional university like OU commit itself to the 56 tactics of a strategic plan when the time and talent of its faculty and staff are currently being absorbed by the responsibilities it already has? He added that it seems to him that there is little surplus on this campus right now to do anything new and he worries that in our efforts to implement the plan we will harm the quality of what we are already doing. He concluded by stating that he believes strategic planning needs to be done and appreciates the difficulty of it but finds the current plan naive.

Mrs. Eberwein mused that she was struggling as to whether or she could support the plan. She feels it is important to have a plan but realistically with this plan she wonders what will OU look like in 10 years. If we do what is represented here, it isn't clear that it will be better in terms of its primary mission. The primary constituents are the undergraduates and although the percentage of undergraduates may be less in coming years she truly believes that it is primarily an undergrad institution. One of her concerns dates back to the basic design and charges to the task forces which resulted in very different and non-parallel charges to the undergraduate and graduate task forces. The undergraduate task force was not asked to look at programs or curriculum but at diversity and retention and the environment in which learning takes place. Emphasis on undergraduate education in Strategy I was added later and she added, without that statement, she would be unable to support the plan. With that crucial statement, if it is seriously regarded as central to the plan, she probably will be able to support the plan. However, she feels that considerable resources and money will be needed to support, improve and perhaps even rescue undergraduate programs. Right now general education, international studies, writing proficiency, math capabilities, computer skills, the fine and performing arts all need resources to improve and strengthen what is here. We have long prided ourselves as having the best undergrad education in Michigan and she fears we may be slipping, especially if undergraduate instruction is increasingly confined to part time instructors. Two months ago she recalled a number of her colleagues were carrying signs

"excellence costs"; she added that, in the long mediocrity costs a lot more.

Ms. Packard commented that the agenda was changed to accommodate her schedule since she has another meeting to attend and also apologized for the late distribution of the plan. She added that the entire planning process was carefully done by a lot of people but ultimately she will be responsible for its implementation. We all have aspirations to do more and to do it better but it is clear we can't do everything at once. We will have to set priorities and the planning will be an ongoing process. She added that the 9 strategies reaffirm many of OU's strengths and also speak to some growth areas and areas needing remediation. As she excused herself she posed the question, are these the goals we want to work towards and, were we to accomplish them, would it be the kind of University we want to have in 10 years?

Mr. Bricker expressed his appreciation for the comments of Ms. Packard and Ms. Eberwein but added that over the last decade he has witnessed erosion of undergraduate education in areas of concern to him. He wants OU undergraduates to get the best education possible and he has some concerns that that is not now the case. He feels we need to monitor the health of the undergraduate experience and be prepared to put on hold any of the 56 tactics if there's an immediate and urgent need regarding undergraduate education. He stated that he doesn't want to trade the quality of undergrad education for new programs. New is wonderful but we need to be attentive to our past and what we do uncommonly well at the regional university level. The previous North Central report was very complimentary about undergraduate education and he wants the 1999 NC report to be as positive or more so.

Mr. Downing stated that he shares many of the same concerns but sees in the plan very encouraging signs of support and commitment to address those concerns. He noted that it is reassuring to hear of the collective appreciation of the strong liberal education core and he applauds the move to build on this core which is an historic strength of the university. He added that the faculty of the College, the chairs and Dean's Office remain committed to providing a foundation that is traditionally strong and yet one which is also dynamic in responding to the needs of an increasingly technical and information conscious world. He sees in the plan the implicit commitment to maintain the integrity of that strong foundation and recognizes it would be shortsighted to weaken the foundation by removing components to build an additional floor.

Ms. Hansen was reassured by Mr. Downing's comments but noted that the plan could also be used to cut back in some areas in order to free up resources for new ventures, even to the extent of cutting back on some of the general education program. Mr. Downing responded that if it weren't central to the university's mission that is a possibility, but he feels the plan reaffirms the importance of these components.

Mr. Moran noted that in the original document specific areas of excellence were listed and in the current version there is only a general statement. Given that a long process of identifying areas of excellence has already been done, he wondered what would happen to that list. Would we be starting all over again?

Mr. Chipman responded by calling his attention to paragraph 2 on page two of the agenda--if the Senate endorses the current document, various offices on campus would be charged with developing plans for implementation. It is expected that the planners will take into consideration the lists previously developed and the specific recommendations in the Detailed

Strategic Plan. The SPRC would be monitoring the implementation of the plan and would report back to the Senate on what was happening. Mr. Eberwein referenced the last paragraph in the May 6, 1994 memo, listing the SPRC's expectations and emphasizing that the committee will review the progress carefully and when necessary, respond to new conditions wisely.

Mr. Christina asked what will happen after the Board approves the Strategic Plan. Mr. Chipman responded that Plan establishes the priorities and after that, the process of implementing them would be the usual one. Appropriate individuals would be responsible for developing plans and the plans would go through the normal procedure of committee and Senate approval where appropriate. The SPRC would monitor what is going on. Mr. Christina asked who is in charge of setting priorities. Mr. Chipman replied that it would be the normal decision-making personnel of the university.

Mr. Downing raised a question about the fifth strategy dealing with community outreach. He wondered -given the success of the Public Affairs Research Laboratory in reaching out to the area social service agencies and local governments, -given the outstanding and growing programs in the Performing Arts which have attracted local and national attention, -given the College's pivotal involvement in the AmeriCorps program and other internship programs, -given a long history of collaborative programs with local business and industry such as the Dept. of Mathematical Sciences' Corporate Statistics Program which has been in place for over a decade and has drawn national attention and praise and the Department of Physics' Medical Physics program which is another paradigm for a collaborative academic program and, -given the initiatives of the Institute for Biochemistry and Biotechnology to provide a springboard for businesses in biotechnical areas, why we are assuming that the 'professional schools would be expected to take a leadership role in this critical area?

Mr. Capps then spoke up, also championing the cause of undergraduate education, and stated that the plan doesn't reflect the importance of undergraduate education at OU. He noted that given the competition, OU has a unique position with regard to class size, student/faculty ratios and the fact that most OU classes are taught by faculty and not TAs. He felt the primary focus should be improving undergraduate education rather than on professional and graduate programs.

Mr. Russi thanked the Senators for their comments and assured them that their input would be delivered to Ms. Packard who will create a clean document for the second reading. Mr. Eberwein asked if the comments from the breakfasts are also being noted and Mr. Russi replied yes.

Honors College

The next item of new business, the Library Constitution, was withdrawn from the agenda by Ms. Frankie and so the Senate finally turned to the one item of old business, the transfer of the Honors College. Mr. Chipman pointed out that the current motion includes the friendly amendments made at the October Senate meeting. He made one correction to the text of the motion as printed in the agenda: the word 'faculty' was inadvertently dropped from the following phrase--the Director of the Honors College and its faculty members be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Russi thanked the Senate for their support and stated that he looks forward to working with the Director of the Honors College to bring a university-wide perspective to the program.

Good and Welfare.

Ms. Eberwein took this opportunity to issue an invitation on behalf of the Library Council to several hearings relating to a formula for allocating library resources among departments and schools. One of the activities the Library Council has been working on is developing an equitable and workable formula. A subcommittee made up of J. Krompart, R. Tracy and S. Wright has developed a prototype which they want to share with the university community and get responses and feedback. One hearing will be on Nov. 30, 3:00 in 126 OC and one on Dec. 5, noon, in 203 ODH. She expressed the hope that all departments will send representatives to these hearings and she added students may also be interested in how these monies are allocated. Mr. Fish asked if it would be possible to circulate how allocations are currently done and Ms. Frankie responded that the library could provide that information.

Mr. Russi then welcomed Mr. Fish's motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda L. Hildebrand

Back to
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
SENATE
Home Page