



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

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Thursday, 4 December 1986
Fourth Meeting
Gold Room C. Oakland Center

MINUTES

Senators Present: Appleton, Barclay, Barnard, Barthel, Bingham, Boganey, Burke, Cardimen, Coffey, Copenhaver, Dahlgren, Downing, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein, Faber, Frankie, R. Gerulaitis, Hartman, Haskell, Herman, Hildebrand, Hough, Ketchum, Khapoya, Kleckner, Lindell, Pigott, Rozek, Russell, Srodawa, Stamps, Stinson, Straughen, Thomas, Swartz, Terry, Tripp, Wedekind, Willoughby, Witt.

Senators Absent: Blankenship, Blatt, Cass, Champagne, Chipman, Clatworthy, Diltz, Feeman, Garcia, L&, @Gerulaitis; # Horwitz, Liboff, Moore, Pettengill, Pillow, Pine, Reddy, Righter, Wilson.

Summary of Actions:

1. Minutes of 13 November 1986 (Burke; Willoughby). Approved.
2. Amendment to ethics motion (Barthel; R. Gerulaitis). Approved.
3. Motion recommending inclusion of an ethics component in undergraduate major programs (J. Eberwein; Burke). Approved as amended.
4. Motion to increase credit requirements for the B.S. in Computer Science (J. Eberwein; Wedekind). First Reading.
5. Motion to fill a vacancy on the General Education Committee (Hough; Willoughby). Approved.

Claiming discovery of a quorum, Mr. Kleckner called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m. and requested consideration of the minutes of 13 November. Approval having been moved and seconded by Messrs. Burke and Willoughby respectively, the minutes were approved without discussion.

This action left the floor open for the second reading of a proposal to include a component of ethical instruction in undergraduate major programs as introduced at the previous meeting by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (Ms. Eberwein; Mr. Burke). Mr. Ketchum launched the discussion by remarking that, after reading the 13 November minutes, he realized his position as a lone voice against the motion. Nonetheless, he still felt deep concern about the way in which we propose implementing the goals that we all share. He voiced particular unhappiness about the idea of the Senate's telling professors what to teach and cited an AAUP statement on academic freedom that warned specifically against an instructor's introducing controversial matters into the classroom when these are unrelated to the subject being taught. He proposed tabling the motion for reconsideration.

Mr. Burke responded by pointing out that the motion merely asks departments to consider whether there are matters legitimately within their disciplines that have ethical implications that ought to be drawn to the attention of students. Mr. Ketchum, however, maintained that the primary issue is whether the Senate should pass legislation that tells a professor what to teach. Ms. Eberwein identified departments as natural centers of discussion about the nature of a discipline and how to impart it. She reminded her colleagues of the University's motto that enjoins members of this community that we should "Sequir virtute e canoscenza." It seemed reasonable to Mr. Burke to believe that most disciplines have ethical aspects and responsible to ask departments to consider together what their members should be providing by way of instruction.

Mr. Hough, however, reassured Mr. Ketchum that his position might be less isolated than it had appeared in November. Since that meeting, he reported that he had heard a number of comments sympathetic to the dissenting position and echoing Mr. Ketchum's concerns. He himself, although committed to the idea that ethical issues should be introduced and debated in the classroom, wondered whether the Senate might not find itself more sympathetic to the idea of requiring an outright separate course in moral philosophy. He worried about the eventual implications for some academic units if the motion's "shall" were ever to be strictly enforced. He professed himself most interested in discerning the sense of the body for or against the suggestion of a required introductory course in ethics. Remembering from reports of the sponsoring committee that such a notion had been floated in the past and rejected, he suggested that the idea might now be revived. Mr. Burke's reaction was to indicate that the *ad hoc* Committee on Ethics had rejected the idea of a separate course as pedagogically undesirable in that it would be perceived as setting up an obstacle for students. His associates surmised that students would be more interested in ethics if connected to subjects they already cared about and related to their professional goals.

Mr. Kleckner then introduced a new issue. He had gathered from listening to Mr. Ketchum that it was possible to think in terms of teaching a course in a totally objective fashion without reference to moral values, thereby allowing persons in most disciplines to turn over responsibility for moral instruction to some one department. He objected to this position on the grounds that ethical reasoning cannot really be separated from subject matter. Mr. Willoughby thought there were three separable issues to consider, ranging from the desirability of including ethics in the curriculum to the best means of implementation. Having found it hard to deal effectively with issues like the current favorite problem of insider trading in the stock market when students have no grounding in ethics, he thought it best to combine the best of both options so far advanced: a required introductory course in ethics followed by a significant component of ethical study within the major program. He advocated doing this right--if at all.

Mr. Copenhaver came to the defense of the original motion, saying that he could think of no weaker way of saying that students should somehow be confronted with ethical issues. On the assumption that any intellectual activity necessarily entails an ethical dimension, he argued that the Senate should support the proposal on the floor. Also sympathetic to the motion was Mr. Khapoya, who thought that much classroom activity already conformed to its requests. He worried, however, that many faculty members are untrained to teach ethics without simply preaching to the choir from their own biases. Confessing to know too much about how political scientists (and presumably faculty in comparable departments) think about various things, he advocated entrusting ethical instruction to persons specifically educated to provide it. Mr. Barthel agreed with several previous speakers: with Mr. Khapoya in his observation that

considerable ethical discussion already occurs in Oakland University classrooms and with Mr. Ketchum in his concern about telling faculty what to teach (although acknowledging some precedent for this in the field-group criteria that have been approved for general education courses). He disagreed, however, with Mr. Copenhaver's willingness to settle for a weak approach, thinking that the worst way to handle this problem.

Several options were proposed to relocate primary responsibility for such teaching. Mr. Barthel wondered why an ethical component could not be built into the general education courses, with departments then left to handle additional teaching in their own ways. Mr. Eberwein proposed another forum for ethical instruction: the Rhetoric program. Citing the example of a faculty colleague's frustration with the level of writing in business ethics papers, he pointed out that a strong connection exists between the ability to think critically and the study of ethics. What are we to do for students who are insufficiently grounded in logical thinking to deal with ethical questions? He thought that writing courses might be an appropriate locus for such instruction.

Mr. Copenhaver responded that the committee that produced this motion had met for five years in considering at great length all the ideas presented by his Senate colleagues. All options, however appealing, had eventually been rejected either for pedagogical or pragmatic reasons. He acknowledged the many fine ideas circulated by his colleagues but urged that matters of such substance not be settled on the Senate floor. He would prefer to see the motion remanded to committee for further work. Nonetheless, although preferring the sort of continuum of study envisaged by several speakers, he doubted that the University would be able to accomplish it and therefore still advocated passage of the weak motion already on the floor. Mr. Hough admitted that he had shared the view that a stronger proposal would assuredly fail but felt encouraged by Senate discussion to hope for passage of an actual degree requirement that would make a student take a separate course in moral philosophy unless a substantial component of ethical study existed in his or her major. Mr. Copenhaver reminded him that this idea had been considered and rejected on the basis of September's open hearing. Mr. Faber voiced a student perception that upper-level classes at the University already tend to include discussions of right and wrong. He objected to the notion of imposing an additional graduation requirement on students. The motion on the floor would be acceptable to him but not the imposition of a new general education requirement.

Mr. Barthel (seconded by Ms. Gerulaitis) then proposed to amend the wording of the motion in the following ways: 1. 3--Replace "see that" with "consider whether"; 1. 5--Add "ideally" after "should entail." These adjustments would respond to Mr. Ketchum's concerns while still sending a clear signal of intention to departments. Mr. Burke supported the first change as an expression of respect for departmental autonomy. He was not so pleased rhetorically with the conjunction of "ideally" and "at least." Mr. Copenhaver, recognizing the proposal as not really an ideal, suggested adding the phrase "when circumstances permit," before "instruction should." This modification satisfied the sponsors of the amendment, allowing the question to be called. The amendment passed with one dissent.

The question was then called on the perfected main motion, which carried unopposed. The Senate thereby ratified the following statement of policy:

MOVED that since the study of moral values and issues is a fundamental part of a liberal education, each department or school offering an undergraduate degree

should consider whether its majors are receiving adequate instruction in the analysis of moral issues relevant to its discipline. When circumstances permit, this instruction should entail at least a substantial component of a course (or the equivalent grouping of components of several courses) meeting one or more of the three criteria below, depending on nature of the discipline:

1. critical evaluation of the reasoning employed on moral issues, with the aim of finding the most rational resolution of the issue
2. historical or social-scientific analysis of moral dimensions of society, with the aim of showing how moral values arise and how they influence human behavior;
3. exploration of moral dimensions of the human condition through literature or the arts, with the aim of appreciating the variety and ambiguity of moral commitment in individual cases.

Where applicable, attention should be given within the departmental courses meeting this recommendation to the kinds of ethical decision graduates are likely to face in the professions they are preparing to enter. Faculty members teaching these courses should make presentations of material as objective as possible and represent to their students the general attitudes prevailing within their disciplines.

Encouraged by the passage of a motion from her committee, Ms. Eberwein proceeded to offer a second motion from the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, this one for its first reading. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wedekind:

MOVED that credit requirements for the B.S. degree in Computer Science be raised from 124 to 128 credits.

Ms. Eberwein called attention to the agenda commentary explaining the reasons for this proposal and mentioned that UCUI members had been most persuaded by the truth-in-advertising notion that a degree that almost uniformly requires more than 124 credits for completion ought to be represented as such. For the vast majority of students, the free elective represented in this motion would probably turn out to be Rhetoric. She then yielded the floor to Mr. Wedekind, who elaborated on three points that had concerned the faculty in the School of Engineering and Computer Science. They were troubled to find that, in the process of working out the implications of new accreditation requirements that specified more courses within the Computer Science program, they had deprived the students of previously existing free electives. He concurred with Ms. Eberwein's observation that few students now complete the degree requirements with only 124 credits. Mr. Russell then inquired how many actually complete the program even with 128 credits. Ms. Bingham cited a report that 60% graduated in the recent past with 128 or more. She wondered whether that was still the case. It was difficult for Senators from SECS to respond to that question, given that graduates even through last year were still following the previous system. Mr. Haskell pointed out however, that the tendency to accrue credits beyond the published standard often reflects the influence of forces outside his unit's control: transfers; double majors, and such. He thought it likely that the majority of candidates could do it in 128 credits, and noted that other majors within the school already impose that requirement. Mr. Burke then asked whether a student who needed both PM 100 and 101 would not wind up automatically with a minimum of 132 credits, but Mr. Witt

said the tally would come to 128. This discussion prompted Mr. Burke to call attention to an existing lapse in truthfulness involving all those programs that now represent their curricula in the catalog with the assumption that little or no composition is likely to be needed. Mr. Faber wondered whether the proposed motion would actually punish a student who did manage to complete program requirements and other academic obligations with 124 credits. Mr. Wedekind acknowledged the possibility of describing that situation in such terms but preferred to reason that the student would receive a better education and a degree of greater value as a consequence of pursuing an authentically free elective. When Mr. Bingham asked whether extra credits are required for accreditation, Mr. Wedekind reported that they are not directly demanded by the accrediting group but that this motion represents his school's effort to beef up its program to meet published standards that call for electives. Mr. Willoughby concluded that that was the real issue. On that note,, the Senate deferred additional debate on this issue until the January meeting.

Only one item of new business then claimed attention: a motion from the Steering Committee to name David Boddy to Jerrold Grossman's seat on the General Education Committee for the winter 1986 semester. Mr. Hough initiated this motion, seconded by Mr. Willoughby. Mr. Kleckner explained that Mr. Boddy's name had been omitted from the agenda because that document had had to be distributed before the nominee was identified. No discussion ensued, and the candidate was duly elected.

With no proposals offered for the good of the order, Mr. Kleckner then took the floor to report on items of general interest. First among these was information about building plans. Discoveries are still being made about additional needs and costs for the library addition, but he hoped that 'the circle is now converging. After the next few weeks, it will be impossible to make changes except at great monetary peril, so this stage of planning will soon terminate. He expected that the legislature would soon release a quarter-million dollars for planning of the expected new science building. He also reported that the Board of Trustees. is interviewing firms about the process of updating the campus master plan. A 30-year plan is envisaged to allow for orderly growth in terms of buildings and roads.

He then called attention to matters of academic development. circumstances to not encourage proliferation of new programs these days, but some are in progress. Contract details are now being worked out for inauguration of the Perfusion Technology program, will be a ground-breaking step in University cooperation with an outside firm. Meanwhile, the college of Arts and Sciences is working to restore majors in Theatre and Dance and is developing a program in Human and Industrial Relations that will soon come before the Senate. The School of Health Sciences is preparing a new B.S. program in Health Behavioral Sciences and is also at work launching a new M.S. program. another proposal making its way through the governance system is a one to bring back secondary education in a new form, coupled with the B.A. degree. A student would complete a four-year B.A. in a subject area before embarking on a fifth year program that would lead to certification. The academic content of the undergraduate majors would be identical with those of other liberal arts degrees in the students' fields. He admitted that he had not been encouraging new program development, largely because he still hears too much about the needs of existing program.

Upon the completion of this report, Ms. Bingham raised a serious question: Was it true that the library had run out of money for book acquisitions? Alas, yes. Mr. Kleckner explained that the library spent all its gift money last year on new periodicals. Its general fund support rose

somewhat this year but not enough to offset the loss of gift income. When Ms. Bingham then inquired whether it is usual for libraries to rely on gift funds for basic purchases, Mr. Kleckner replied that it was. Plans for the library expansion, however, include an endowment fund for acquisitions, some of which may get swallowed up in extra construction costs since the University cannot at this point return to Lansing for more money without jeopardizing the hoped-for science building. Ms. Frankie elaborated on the situation, calling it quite serious. She predicted that library coordinators would get a notice of this problem shortly after the holidays. No more books are to be ordered this budget year, mainly because of the astounding inflation rates for foreign journals. Ms. Tripp express concern that the inability for order further books would cause grave problems for History and other bookish departments. She wondered whether any secret kitty could be relied upon to help out those units most dependent on library resources. Mr. Thomas asked how the library budget is set up: whether a separate line item exists for acquisitions. Mr. Kleckner confirmed that such a line item exists but noted that the library determines just how that funding is spent. On that grim note, the Senate adjourned at 4:16 p.m. at the prompting of its presiding officer.

Respectfully submitted
Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate