



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, 10 December 1992
Third Meeting

MINUTES

Senators Present: Abiko, Andersen, Appleton, Benson, Chipman, Cowlshaw, Dahlgren, Downing, Dunphy, Eberwein, Eckart, Edgerton, Fish, Frankie, Gamboa, L. Gerulaitis, R. Gerulaitis, Grossman, Halsted, Hamilton, Haworth Hoepfner, Horwitz, Hough, Kevern, Mabee, Masters, McKay, Mittelstaedt, Moore, Olson, Otto, Packard, Peterson, Pierson, Pipan, Rush, Schultz, Stamps, Urice, Witt, Wood, Yates, Zenas.

Senators Absent: Bennett, Braunstein, Burdick, Cramer, Goslin, Hansen-Smith, Hartzler, Hormozi, Hovanesian, Jackson, Kheir, Kim, Pine, Porter, Reddy, Shepherd, Stano, Stevens, Wilczynski.

Summary of Actions

1. Minutes of 15 October 1992. Approved.
2. Procedural motion to fill vacancies on Senate standing committees (Rush; Chipman). Approved.
3. Procedural motion to elect faculty members of the Police Oversight Committee (Rush; Kevern). Approved.
4. Special resolution urging open meetings of Board committees (Stamps; R. Gerulaitis). Approved.

Mr. Horwitz called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m., apologizing for late delivery of the agenda. Henceforth (or, realistically, after January's meeting) he promised to convene the Steering Committee to set the agenda two weeks rather than one in advance so that members receive earlier notification of impending business. He then called attention to the minutes of 15 October and asked if there were any corrections or omissions; finding nobody with nerve to challenge the secretary, he declared the minutes approved.

Without old business to complete, the Senate turned its attention to the first new item: a procedural motion from the Steering Committee to fill vacancies on standing committees (Moved, Ms. Rush; seconded, Mr. Chipman). Nominees were Jon Yates to replace Diane Wilson for the winter semester on the Academic and Career Advising Committee, Geraldine Graham to replace Iris Johnson for virtually a full term on the Committee on Human Relations (1992-95), Linda Benson to fill in for Janice Schimmelman this winter on the Research Committee, and Joseph Hovanesian to take the unfilled 1992-93 seat on the Senate Planning Review Committee. When Mr. Stamps inquired how the Steering Committee selects committee nominees, Ms. Eberwein responded that she and her Steering Committee colleagues rely

heavily on the volunteer sheets faculty members fill out each March. They also consult with committee chairs to find out about special needs that call for particular experience or talents. Both one-semester sabbatical replacements on the current slate, for example, are recent veterans of those committees who have been summoned back into action because of their familiarity with business and procedures. In some cases, the Senate has established special membership requirements: UCUI, for example, must have one representative from each school. The Committee on Human Relations, all of whose members must be endorsed by the Senate, includes three persons named by the Steering Committee, three named by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and three named by the Vice President for Student Affairs. Ms. Bledsoe nominated Ms. Graham. In staffing the Research Committee, the Steering Committee has been influenced by its outgoing chair's appeal to the Senate last winter that membership be divided fairly evenly among natural scientists, social scientists, and humanists and that efforts be made to include women. When replacing Professor Schimmelman, a female humanist, the Steering Committee turned to Professor Benson, who combines the same qualifications in addition to recent experience. At this point, every faculty member who volunteered for the Research Committee has been placed on that or another Senate committee or is ineligible because another member of her or his department already serves. Ms. Benson then followed up on this discussion by suggesting that senators, who might not know all these candidates, would appreciate receiving information about them. Mr. Horwitz and Ms. Eberwein agreed to provide brief identifications by rank and academic unit. The chair then called the question, and the Senate approved the slate of nominees.

Then came the second item of new business, also advanced by Ms. Rush (seconded this time by Mr. Kevern). This was a procedural motion to elect two faculty members and an alternate to the new Police Oversight Committee. Candidates for regular seats were Professors Jay Meehan (I January 1993-31 August 1995) and Martha Zingo (I January 1993-31 August 1994), with Edward Farragher to serve as alternate (I January 1993-31 August 1995). Ms. Rush explained that the committee would consist of three sets of two members and an alternate elected by constituencies of faculty members, students, and administrative staff. When Ms. Gerulaitis asked who else had been elected, she learned that the AP election had selected Katie Kazarian and another member and an alternate whose names nobody could remember immediately; students are to be elected by the University Student Congress. Mr. Horwitz, mentioning that the actual balance of the Police Oversight Committee is set by statute, reported that its members are being invited to the university's first swearing-in ceremony on 18 December. The Steering Committee nominated faculty members with regard to specific areas of expertise, with particular attention to those who had volunteered for other committee service.

Completion of special business cleared the way for Good and Welfare, which allowed Mr. Stamps opportunity to advance a special resolution (seconded by Ms. Gerulaitis). He called upon the Senate to urge the Board of Trustees to respond positively to a petition launched by students and now widely circulating on campus by opening Board committee meetings to the university community. The petition follows:

We encourage you to open all meetings of the Board, especially standing committees, to allow the free flow of information to the university community. An academic institution is one segment of society that thrives on the free and open exchange of ideas. These exchanges represent the very essence of what a university is about. Opening the standing committees' meetings would be a clear symbol to the University community of the Board's willingness and interest in hearing from all of us, and an open invitation and challenge to the community to

work with the Board in realizing the vision of Oakland University through this decade and into the next century.

Mr. Stamps thought Senate endorsement of this petition a valuable thing to do, in keeping with this body's satisfaction with last year's openly conducted presidential search as well as with the Senate's desire to improve the sense of community at Oakland University. Ms. Benson, noting newspaper complaints about the Board's lack of openness in conducting its committee business, argued that this is one step we can take to help the community understand how decisions are made. She expected open meetings to benefit faculty members, especially those relatively new to the institution, who seek further insight into how the university operates and who wish to contribute their ideas. She out that we are not a corporation but, rather, a public educational institution. When Mr. Horwitz asked whether he could interpret her remarks generically as applying to more groups than faculty, she replied "partly."

Mr. McKay wondered whether the Senate would be following its own constitutional provisions in voting on such a resolution under the rubric of Good and Welfare rather than taking time to think about it and voting on a second reading. Mr. Horwitz cited precedent, noting that the Senate has occasionally communicated its sentiments on issues of such general interest to the Board. Parliamentarian Appleton interpreted the resolution as offering the sense of the Senate, not a regular motion requiring two readings. President Packard then filled in some background, reporting that the Board decided at its November meeting to discuss this matter of open committee sessions at its next meeting. She thought it appropriate for the Senate to send a representative to present its counsel at that time.

Mr. Olson declared that he had reservations about the substance of the petition in that he objected to public examination of dossiers or discussion of personnel issues. Mr. Cowlshaw, who shared that concern, had been comforted to learn from Professor Briggs-Bunting that there are eight categories of business specifically exempted from the Open Meetings Act-- personnel among them. When Ms. Mittelstaedt asked for clarification about our Board's compliance with state law, Ms. Packard reported that a student had asked the state Attorney General's office and the Oakland County Prosecutor's office to review Board practice in light of the Open Meetings Act and that the Attorney General's office had referred the matter to the Oakland County Prosecutor. That office's investigation found our Board's practice in compliance with state law in that issues discussed by committees then go to the full Board for formal action. Nonetheless, the Board has modified its committee names and charges to ensure full compliance with the Open Meetings Act. She pointed out that Oakland's Board has been meeting for at least seventeen years with closed committee sessions but is considering whether or not to make a change; a decision has not yet been reached. Mr. Stamps replied that, although he is not a lawyer, he has been informed by someone who is that the Prosecutor's Office had found our Board out of compliance and that they were responding by making only minor changes. Ms. Packard repeated that Oakland was not found in violation, since Board committees in no case constitute a quorum. Still, committee charges allowed a potential for violations to occur; so appropriate modifications have been made. When Ms. Mabee asked as a point of information whether Grand Valley State University is the only peer institution to function with closed Board meetings, Ms. Packard indicated that there is great variation among such bodies, with Oakland's practice not unusual. Following this discussion, the Senate voted to approve this special resolution, and Mr. Horwitz directed the Secretary to transmit the Senate's action to the Secretary to the Board of Trustees with a request that a spokesperson for the Senate be allocated time to speak to the matter at the next Board meeting.

Advancing to information items, President Packard offered her perspective on the previous day's demonstration by the Association of Black Students, which had been reported in newspaper accounts as a sit-in at her office. She said she had observed part of the demonstration at lunchtime, with about 35 students conducting a rally. When the students then came to see her, she agreed to cut short her meeting with the Senate Budget Review committee in order to talk with them. They sat politely in her office while waiting to confer, but there was nothing like a hostile takeover. She found the students concerned with two issues: financial aid and a minority affairs office. The first problem arises from shifts in federal aid for college students away from direct grants toward loans, incurring heavy debts for education burdens any student, but hits particularly hard those from economically disadvantaged homes. Oakland University tries to help, though Michigan law prohibits targeting scholarship awards on the basis of race. During a recent trip to Washington, she expressed her concerns to Senator Levin about financial aid.

In respect to the second issue, the president explained that students are running out of patience after years of demanding a minority affairs office. In her five and a half months at Oakland, she has become aware of their position from reading Umoja and talking with student leaders as well as from consulting with Vice President Bledsoe. In September, she referred the issue to the Senate Steering Committee, which directed the Committee on Human Relations to offer its informed advice on the merits of establishing such an office; that committee is still deliberating. She reasoned that, whether or not we agree with the students' request, we must recognize their sense of need and respond to their desire for a locus or center. Recognizing that students chafe at the slow speed of the university's institutional response, she respected the seriousness of their behavior and their courteous, professional statement of concerns. She has asked Ms. Bledsoe to expedite Senate committee action as much as possible. Recalling her experience as a faculty member at Miami University of Ohio when women students asked for a center that proved useful for a time, Ms. Packard thought it unwise to let grievances fester and proposed instead that we find ways of helping these students without establishing duplicate services for minority and other students. She has, therefore, asked Mr. Pierson to lead Oakland's efforts to respond to student requests.

Mr. Stamps then inquired about the name "Office of Multicultural Relations", learning from the president that the nomenclature is only tentative at this point. The idea is to assist minority students in their relationships with the many offices on campus where help is available to them. Perhaps it would be useful to institute one place where minority students could find help or seek advocacy. Mr. Stamps wondered what was meant by "multicultural." At the day-long faculty forum on minority retention the preceding Friday, he remembered that term being applied specifically to African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students rather than to those of Asian heritage. What, he asked, does the university really mean by this word, especially since all of the students requesting the center are black? Ms. Packard interpreted the word broadly to include all "non-majority" students. Mr. Peterson then expressed concern that such a multicultural center might be dominated by one group to the exclusion of Arab students and other minorities. Like Mr. Stamps, he shared the concerns of the aggrieved students but urged a broad perspective on multicultural issues. Referring to the Senate's vote last winter on a new ethnic diversity curricular requirement, he inquired where that initiative stood. Mr. Appleton responded as chair of UCUI, which has been reviewing course proposals to meet that requirement. He reported that his committee has already approved twenty-some proposals, not yet quite enough for the policy to go into effect for the 1993-94 academic year. He expected it to be implemented the following year and urged departments to advance additional proposals. Ms. Packard then drew the discussion to a close by assuring the Senate that she had no

criticism of its behavior; its Committee on Human Relations still has another semester in which to make its recommendations. On the other hand, she wants to respond effectively and in good faith to student requests even as she awaits the committee's contribution. She stated that she had received a student proposal a few weeks earlier that envisaged an extremely comprehensive center providing many duplicated. This is not what she envisages providing. The idea is simply to identify a liaison for minority students with existing student services offices. If minority students are uncomfortable at Oakland University, she believes it the university's responsibility to help them feel comfortable and to facilitate their success.

Ms. Packard then progressed to the next information item, indicating that she would soon send out information about her proposed planning process with requests for people to nominate appropriate persons to serve on various task forces. The process has been slowed down by various factors. She has taken the Steering Committee's suggestions and other counsel into consideration in adapting her plan. She concluded with reassurance that "we'll get started after the holidays. I promise."

The third information item came from Mr. Appleton, who reported that UCUI had approved an agreement between Oakland University and Oakland Community College to enter into a "2+2" agreement for programs in engineering and computer science. Students taking the designated pattern of courses at OCC would be automatically admissible to the university and strong candidates for major standing in the School of Engineering and computer Science. Mr. Horwitz pointed out that, although this articulation agreement required no formal Senate action, it merited consideration in that it might set a precedent for similar arrangements. Mr. Appleton identified this as our second "2+2" agreement, following the one long in practice for the B.G.S. program. This one differs in that it requires the student to earn grades of 2.0 or higher in each course to be transferred from OCC. He then yielded the floor to Associate Dean Bhatt to provide further information. Mr. Bhatt indicated that his school seeks to strengthen its programs by attracting good students who might otherwise not enroll here. Although we already have transfer students in engineering and computer science programs, this agreement eases the transfer process by steering candidates to courses that will count toward their Oakland University degree without guesswork. He indicated that the agreement had been mutually arrived at by the cooperating institutions. When Mr. Chipman asked how this agreement differs from the university's current behavior in terms of transfer admissions, Mr. Bhatt replied that the typical transfer applicant to one of his school's programs must first apply for university admission, often discovering the need to make up academic requirements. Hereafter, candidates can pursue a defined program at the community college and be admitted here automatically. Mr. Chipman then inquired whether they would also be admitted automatically to major standing and learned that there were no such guarantees. For the benefit of those unfamiliar with SECS procedures, Mr. Horwitz mentioned that internal assessment of a student's record is required before students can advance to 300 and 400-level courses. Mr. Appleton declared that no academic requirements of any sort have been waived for this program. When Mr. Chipman asked who checks the record, he was told that OCC would do so, though OU would review records and make sure any deficiencies were corrected before a student's admission to major standing. Mr. Downing, mindful that this agreement might serve as a prototype for others, asked that copies of the agreement be made available and was assured that they would be.

For the next information item, Mr. Horwitz provided the fall enrollment figures he had expected to circulate with September minutes. Astounded at how long it took for the new information system to furnish such data, he announced that the total headcount for fall

numbered 13,068--an increase of 67 students. How that computes into FYES remains to be calculated. He also warned that comparisons of these figures with those from earlier semesters would be misleading unless one went back to years before 1985 because the new system reverts to an earlier pattern of counting all enrollments, not just those of students who continue in courses. The promised data are attached to these minutes.

Mistakenly believing that the meeting approached its close, the chair then recognized Dean Urice to spread glad tidings. Mr. Urice declared himself proud both as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and as a faculty member in the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance to announce that Oakland's student production of Cloud Nine had been selected in area college theatre competition to advance to regional competition in Carbondale, Illinois, and from there, perhaps, to national theatrical finals. He professed himself delighted with the achievement of these students (the second such triumph in three years) and reported that he now seeks funds, including support from local businesses, to send our thespians to Illinois. He warmly invited everyone to attend a benefit performance on the evening of January 4, noting that theatre-goers could anticipate "a good script but a great production." One of our student actresses in Cloud Nine has won nomination for a special award. Applause followed this welcome news of student artistic glory.

Ms. Packard then informed the community that she has responded to many complaints by establishing a Parking Committee to be chaired by Senator Rush. suggestions. Ms. Rush invited comments and Mr. Peterson asked who or what committee makes decisions about purchases of printers and supplies for student computer laboratories. Mr. Horwitz, regretting the absence of William Connellan, acknowledged that academic computing falls into his bailiwick. A sum of money gets set aside annually for student computer usage (as distinct from administrative computing); academic deans and the Director of Academic Computing Services submit proposals for use of that fund. He advised consultation about problems, including Mr. Peterson's concern about wasted paper, with Gerard Joswiak.

The next question came from Mr. Haworth Hoepfner, who requested information about a case that had come to his attention. A student suspended from the university on the basis of a hearing into date-rape charges continues to show up regularly in the Oakland Center. Hearing that access to public buildings cannot be denied--even to someone whose presence represents an implied threat to the student who pressed rape charges, Mr. Hoepfner wondered what policies govern such a situation. Ms. Packard responded that she knew nothing of the case and, in any event, could not violate privacy laws by discussing details in public. Nonetheless, she confirmed that university buildings are public property. We cannot evict anyone or physically escort him from campus unless there is immediate, specific threat to someone's safety.

Finally, Ms. Benson requested that the Senate take some time early in the winter semester to think about possible revisions to its constitution. Anticipating that the document would have to be amended to replace the word "provost" with "Vice President for Academic Affairs," she thought this might be a good time to contemplate other changes--including committee structure. She asked that copies of the existing constitution be circulated. Mr. Horwitz, agreeing that it makes sense to review such matters periodically, pledged that the Steering Committee would undertake this review. On that note, he wished everyone happy holidays and welcomed Mr. Gerulaitis's call for adjournment at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

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