



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate

Second Meeting
October 16, 2003

Minutes

Members Present: Andersen, Bard, Berven (D), Berven (K), Bhargava, Blume, Chapman, Cipielewski, Connery, Didier, Downing, Dunn, Eberwein, Eis, Goldberg, Goslin, Grossman, Hanna, Haskell, Keane, Khapoya, LeMarbe, Lepkowski, Licker, Mabee, Machmut-Jhashi, Maines, McNair, Moore, Morrison, Moudgil, Nancy, Mukherji, Olson, Otto, Porter, Rowe, Russell, Russi, Schweitzer, Smith, Stamps, Thompson, Tracy, Williams, Wood

Members Absent: Fink, Frick, Gardner, Giblin, Graves, Hansen, Klemanski, Savage, Schochetman, Schott-Baer, Sethi, Sevilla, Wagner, Wendell, Willoughby

Summary of Actions

1. Informational Items:

--Budget Report and Update ? Mr. Russi

--Restructuring of Grants and Contracts Office and Graduate Study ? Mr. Moudgil

2. Roll Call. Approval of September 2003 Minutes (Mr. Goslin, Mr. Khapoya).

3. Motion as amended from Steering Committee to exempt second degree students from Oakland University's undergraduate writing requirement (Mr. Tracy, Mr. Blume). First reading.

4. Procedural motion from Steering Committee to add an ex officio appointee from the Academic Advising Council. (Mr. Tracy, Mr. Stamps). Approved.

5. Procedural motion from Steering Committee to staff Senate standing committees (Ms. McNair, Mr. Blume). Approved.

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. Provost Moudgil opened the meeting with welcoming remarks to new senate members and expressed his gratitude to returning senators for the last two productive years working together to advance academic programs at the university. He then called attention to the unofficial resolution made two years ago made in the Senate which in effect invited the President to offer an update on the university, and particularly the state of the budget, at the beginning of the academic year. He invited Mr. Russi to address the senate community.

President's Report

Mr. Russi began his [presentation](#) with observations regarding the 2004 budget and the allocation of those resources throughout the university. The guiding principles for the 04 budget process were circulated through the Senate Planning and Budget Review committees to determine the priority in allocating funds. The theme of 04 allocations was to support the

academic core of the institution, and to allocate new resources despite cuts. The university was able to receive additional funds from the state, and 50% of those funds have now gone back to Academic Affairs. A priority was to conserve faculty positions. One time allocations were also made, along with cost containment efforts to increase efficiency.

Mr. Russi then produced charts showing the percentage of the total budget that is directed toward Academic Affairs; in 04 the figure stands at 69%. In the adjustments made for the \$10 million shortfall, cuts in Academic Affairs amounted to 3.4%, whereas other areas experienced a cut of 5.5%. Oakland University was one of four institutions that recently received additional funding back from the state, allocating approximately half the \$1.9 million amount back to students in the context of a tuition rollback (approximately \$970,00) with the remainder given to Academic Affairs, approx. \$852,000 for instructional positions this year and for hiring of new faculty next year, as well as funding to support the Undergraduate Education Initiative as well as support for graduate programs.

Other areas outlined by Mr. Russi included: the allocation of \$1.9 million for capital projects, which this year consisted mainly of classroom development, expansion, and refinement along with a large expenditure for a multi-media laboratory to support the School of Nursing (with matching funds from Crittendon Hospital); one-time allocations of \$500,000 (Meadow Brook Art Gallery, General Education Initiative, MTD Pep Band, and MERIT membership ? a critical aspect of our technological advancement). Cost containment efforts totaling \$3.7 million were highlighted, along with additional cost containment measures that include the well publicized measure of no salary increases for senior administration as well as plans for program review that have been strongly encouraged by the Board. Other key areas for cost containment will affect hiring, energy conservation, and health care initiatives.

Turning to the focus on supporting Academic Affairs, Mr. Russi commented on several important areas: budget incentives for future enrollment, the capital campaign, lobbying efforts in Lansing, and the continuing effort to establish partnerships to provide more resources. Mr. Russi mentioned that a key area of the university that is in great need of attention is grant and contract activity. Other opportunities outlined: new programs; fund raising through the annual fund, at 5.7 million during 02-03 (down from previous years because of decreased corporate contributions); capital campaign, currently in the silent phase with efforts directed at recruiting large donations from friends of the university (15 million thus far), and by October 2004 when public announcement of the campaign is made, 50% of the total goal (50 million) is expected to have been raised.

Mr. Russi then turned to state appropriations as another piece of the revenue pie. Currently, state appropriations amount to 38%, compared with a figure of 56% in 1992, and down from a high of 75%. Oakland's situation, however, is not particularly dire as compared to other Michigan universities. Taking into account the adjusted budget figures, the per-student appropriation in 2003-04 is roughly \$3890, a figure equal to 1993-94.

Turning to the situation facing the university in the immediate future, Mr. Russi discussed the cuts anticipated in the 2005 budget. The potential shortfall in the state of Michigan could amount to 900 million dollars, a figure which certainly paints a grim picture. The governor has only four or five areas to make adjustments, provided that nothing is done on the revenue side. Estimates of cuts in higher education range from 5 to 15%. Further cuts are certain; Mr. Russi will work with the Senate Planning and Budget Committees once the extent of those cuts are determined. A revenue forecast will be available in January, at which time action on the 2005 budget will come into clearer focus.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Russi invited senators to ask questions regarding the budget update. Mr. Russell posed a question regarding the wage freeze, inquiring specifically about which employees were not affected by the freeze. Mr. Russi's response was that the line was drawn with the President, Vice-President, and the Deans. Mr. Russell asked a second question, asking for clarification of a statement made regarding one-time funding for the Microsoft license and the MERIT arrangement. Mr. Russell asked whether it is not inconsistent to use one-time funds continually? Mr. Russi replied that future expenditures for these crucial services will be incorporated into the base budget. Mr. Moudgil then thanked Dr. Russi for sharing his time with the Senate.

Restructuring of the Offices of Grants and Contracts and Graduate Study

Mr. Moudgil reported on his review of the Research and Graduate Study office, a review that generated a key issue dealing with the SMART zone initiative, which has the potential to energize university finances, promote partnerships, and generate resources. Tax increments in the SMART zone area (Rochester Hills) can be captured and reinvested for research and development, allowing for more faculty research projects. Upon Mr. Moudgil's recommendation, and with Mr. Russi's approval, Randy Hansen, former interim vice-provost, has now been moved to the position of special assistant to the president for SMART zone.

Another consequence of the review was the determination that if research is to be emphasized at Oakland University, then it must be separate from the office of graduate programs. Graduate programs, in turn, have their own needs that will be better served as a separate entity. Mr. Moudgil pointed out that external funding at the university is now at about the same level as 1992. The current 12 million dollar increase this year resulted from federal grants to Oakland University for strategic initiatives that are time-bound. Dean Ron Olson, who had planned to retire in December 2003 after seventeen years in the School of Health Sciences, has agreed to continue to serve the university as interim head of the research office. Mr. Moudgil expressed his gratitude for Dean Olson's willingness to serve until a national search to fill the position is possible.

Mr. Moudgil thanked Claire Rammel for her service as head of Graduate Studies, and then expressed his gratitude to Ron Sudol, associate provost, who has agreed to head the Graduate Council. Delighted to have such qualified individuals to contribute to the future of graduate studies, Mr. Moudgil again offered his thanks for their tireless efforts on behalf of the university. Mr. Russell asked whether these moves can be defined an academic re-organization. Mr. Moudgil responded that he recommends a national search for the director of the research office and that he plans to solicit campus-wide dialogue regarding the type of leadership desired for graduate studies ? full or part-time, etc.

The secretary proceeded with the roll call after which the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting of September 18, 2003 were approved. (Moved Mr. Goslin, Seconded Mr. Khapoya)

New Business

The first motion concerned an exemption from the undergraduate writing requirement. Moved by Mr. Tracy, seconded by Mr. Blume.

MOVED that second degree students from a regionally accredited institution are exempt from Oakland University's undergraduate writing requirement.

Motion was amended by unanimous consent to reflect the following terminology: "regionally accredited institution." The University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction recommends adoption of this proposed change for second degree students. Ms. Eberwein commented on the effect this exemption may have on that population of students who have not proved their writing proficiency at a previous institution. Ms. Gilroy commented that this change was proposed by the Rhetoric faculty as a way to streamline the admissions process in obvious cases of second-degree students who have met an accredited institution's requirements for writing proficiency, but may not have demonstrated the completion of two separate writing courses (if, for example, the student placed out of a course). She emphasized that these are not transfer credits. Mr. Grossman inquired whether this situation resembles a similar discussion that took place a few years ago regarding the General Education requirements. Ms. Awbrey noted that this scenario was not regarded by the Rhetoric department as a similar situation. Ms. Gilroy responded to a concern raised by Mr. Cipielewski, who felt that the wording of the motion could suggest that students be exempt who have simply earned another degree (without having necessarily demonstrated a writing proficiency) by reiterating that she sees this exemption as a logical request that serves our second degree students as well as the department of Rhetoric. She added that regionally accredited institutions do have writing requirements, although they may slightly differ from Oakland's. The alternative, a formal review process of individual writing courses that undergraduate transfer students currently undergo, would require far more resources in time and staff that is feasible or reasonable. Ms. McNair added that this exemption would apply to a very small number of students and that a great deal of faculty time could be saved. Mr. Khapoya commented that he would feel better if the student could demonstrate some evidence of writing ability rather than implement a blanket policy allowing such an exemption. Mr. Blume noted that graduate students do not need to meet these requirements; they arrive with a set of proven skills that are continually honed through further course work.

Mr. Moudgil pointed out that while we might look down on some other institutions' policies, at times our courses are not considered acceptable elsewhere, and that there is larger issue that perhaps needs addressing; namely, that a lack of proficiency in writing and communication skills is perhaps more widespread than simply pertaining to students, but concerns faculty and staff coming into the institution as well.

Mr. Tracy finally suggested that it may be useful for the Provost to invite the Chair of Rhetoric to a future Senate meeting to address the issues raised in the discussion. Mr. Moudgil agreed to do so. The last comment regarding this motion was made by Mr. Grossman, who suggested that it may be premature to vote on the issue, as the restructured General Education requirements to be revealed later this year may change the character of the writing requirement itself. Mr. Moudgil alerted Ms. Awbrey that this issue could be addressed in future discussions of General Education at the Senate.

Next, attention turned to a procedural motion from the steering committee:

MOVED that the membership of the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction be modified to include an *ex officio* appointee from the Academic Advising Council. (Mr. Tracy)

Following Mr. Stamp's second, Mr. Moudgil read the following comment: The University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction recommends adoption of this proposed expansion in its membership; a member of the Professional Advising Council has attended meetings

informally for about a year to good effect.

Without discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

The final item of new business involved a procedural motion to staff a Senate standing committee:

MOVED that Barbara Penprase (Nursing) be appointed to the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, 2003-2004 (replacing Diane Norris) (Ms. McNair)

Upon Mr. Blume's second, the motion was approved unanimously.

Good and Welfare

Mr. Ciplewski opened with an observation that one of the senators appointed last year to act as a liaison to the Board of Trustees is no longer a member of the senate, and then inquired about the future status of this position. Mr. Moudgil explained that during the recent contract negotiations with the AAUP, it was agreed (by both sides) that an "Academic Relations Committee" be established which would, in effect, be the communicative liaison with the Provost, President, and Board. Members of the Steering Committee have made amendments to the language of the agreement made by both bargaining teams, and those are now under review by Dean Downing. Provost Moudgil stated that he intends to report on the issue at a later date. The further question will be whether the Senate will want to continue with its own faculty liaisons to the Board, along with the "Academic Relations Committee."

Ms. McNair asked what sort of response the BOT made, if any, to last year's attempts to communicate the Senate's position. Mr. Moudgil explained that it is not his place to speak on behalf of the Board, but that, in fact, communication from the Board is made through the General Counsel. Provost Moudgil indicated that he has communicated orally and in writing the suggestions from the Senate to the President, and at this time there has been nothing conveyed from the Board on the status of those discussions. He further stated that he would be willing to ask the General Counsel for a response.

Mr. Russell asked to clarify President Russi's response to his earlier question regarding wage freezes. Asking whether the implication is, in fact, that anyone below the rank of Deans and senior administrators may see a salary increase this year, including the APs, he posed the question of whether there is an overall wage freeze at this university as was reported in the press over the summer. Provost Moudgil responded that his knowledge of the wage situation is as the President reported in the budget update: that the salaries of the President, Provost, Deans, and Vice-Presidents are frozen. Mr. Moudgil will specifically ask this question of the President; as of this moment he is not aware of any such discussions regarding raises for anyone at the university.

With no further items related to good and welfare, the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Olson and seconded by Mr. Khapoya at approximately 4:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Machmut-Jhashi
Secretary to the University Senate

11/17/03

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