



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Oakland University Senate Eighth Meeting

Monday, 27 April 1987

MINUTES

Senators Present: Appleton, Barnard, Blankenship, Chatterjee, Chipman, Coffey, Copenhaver, Dahlgren, Downing, J. Eberwein, R. Eberwein, Frankie, Gerulaitis, Haskell, Hildebrand, Hough, Kiwiesz, Ketchum, Khapoya, Kleckner, Liboff, Lindell, Moore, Rozek, Russell, Srodawa, Taylor, Terry, Thomas, Tripp, Willoughby, Wilson, Witt.

Senators absent: Barthel, Bertocci, Bingham, Bhatt, Burke, Cardimen, Champagne, Clatworthy, Desmond, Diltz, Garcia, Hamilton, Hart-Gonzalez, Hartman, Herman, Heubel, Higgins, Hightower, Horwitz, Pettengill, Pillow, Pine, Reddy, Righter, Riley, Schimmelman, Stillman, Stinson, Straughen, Swartz.

Summary of Actions:

1. Minutes of 9 April 1987 (Ketchum; Gerulaitis). Approved.
2. Motion concerning 1-grade records (Chipman; Downing). Approved.
3. Motion to modify membership of the Academic Standing and Honors Committee (Downing; Hough). Withdrawn.
4. Motion to fill a vacancy on the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (Hildebrand; Hough). Approved.
5. Procedural motion to call a special spring Senate meeting (Thomas; Willoughby). Approved.

Mr. Kleckner, anxious to get started in time for those Senators still frantically grading to finish their task, called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. He directed attention to the minutes of 9 April 1987. Approval of these, having been moved by Mr. Ketchum and seconded by Ms. Gerulaitis, was accomplished by voice vote without discussion.

This action cleared the way for debate on the first item of old business; a motion from the Academic Policy and Planning Committee to establish a system for recording Incomplete grades. (Moved, Mr. Chipman; seconded, Mr. Downing)

MOVED that written records must accompany the assignment of an incomplete grade for any undergraduate or graduate student, specifying the work that must be completed in order to remove the I-grade and a schedule for completing that work. Sufficiently detailed information about course expectations must be provided to allow another faculty member to carry out terms of the agreement, if necessary. Copies are to be maintained by the instructor, the student and the instructor's department office; forms should be submitted to the department office along with any grade sheets recording I-grades. Responsibility for requesting the incomplete

rests with the student; although faculty members may, at their discretion, initiate preparation of the I-grade form in emergency situations when the student is unable to do so. This policy is to take effect with the fall 1987 semester.

Mr. Haskell declared himself opposed to the motion and unconvinced by the arguments adduced previously in its favor. He doubted that the motion would do a good job in responding to the two problems identified in the previous agenda as reasons for adopting a new system. He objected most strenuously to the idea that everyone assigning an I-grade must fill out a form just because a relatively small number of persons might go on leave or resign. Such changes of circumstance struck him as foreseeable so that faculty members could make their own arrangements for completion of outstanding work. The probability of a faculty member's dying with I-grades still outstanding seemed less than the likelihood of mid-term mortality (yet we do not require instructors to fill out comparable forms every night to provide plans for succeeding classes). In Mr. Haskell's experience, the typical occasion for giving an I-grade is a call from a parent on examination day to report a student's hospitalization or other good reason for not completing the semester's work. In such cases, he awards an I and requires that the student show up the first day of the next semester to take the examination. He doubted that he would be willing to give an I-grade under such circumstances if forced to bother with this form. He objected as well to this system as a response to real or supposed abuses of the current grading system and thought that faculty derelictions were more likely to result from ignorance than any other cause. Regular bulletins from the Provost's office on I-grade policy would be a preferable response to any problems. The notion that a student might let work pile up until the eighth week of a subsequent semester collided with his own experience that they show up to take a missed exam on the opening day of the next term and with his conviction that it is a faculty member's right to set the schedule for making up work. He opposed the idea of giving students responsibility for initiating requests for I-grades because the very existence of such a system might convey a false sense of entitlement to the student and result in special petitions when instructors denied requests.

Mr. Chipman respectfully disagreed with most of these comments. He noted that the APPC had recognized the hassles that might be associated with yet another form but saw such problems as no worse than those of computing a numerical grade. So far as abuse of the system was concerned, he thought this system would effectively correct the habit some instructors have fallen into of assigning an I-grade to anybody not present at examinations. He thought it no more likely that students would take to petitioning an instructor's refusal to grant an I than that they would petition to demand a 4.0.

Several specific questions then arose. Mr. Liboff wondered where forms for this purpose would be available and whether they would be sent to faculty members with each semester's grade sheets. How could faculty be assured of sufficient supply for each grading period's differing needs? Mr. Chipman said they would be available in department offices and the Registrar's office (like the old WS/WN forms). Mr. Ketchum asked about the "window of opportunity" for applying for an I and what the instructor should do when no such petition arrived before the deadline. Ms. Eberwein said that the student had until the scheduled final examination date for the course to make such a request, after which instructors would presumably be arriving at final grades and turning them in under tight time constraints. Faculty members who lacked assigned work from any student who had not made proper arrangements for an Incomplete would do what they are now supposed to do: award the numerical grade that had been earned and later petition for a grade change, if late-arriving information made that action necessary. With discussion thus concluded, the motion carried by voice vote.

The remaining item of old business was a motion from the Academic Standing and Honors Committee to modify its membership specifications (Moved, Mr. Downing; seconded, Mr. Hough):

MOVED that membership of the Academic Standing and Honors Committee be expanded by the addition of the Coordinator of the Academic Skills Center (or designee) as a non-voting *ex officio* member.

Mr. Downing announced his decision to withdraw this motion that he had introduced; Mr. Hough, the seconder, concurred.

Reasons for withdrawal were explained by Mr. Downing, who spoke in behalf of the Steering Committee. He indicated that the Steering Committee was concerned about questions raised both at and after the 9 April Senate meeting and thought it best to withdraw the proposal at this point in order to consider it more fully and bring an improved motion to the Senate at the start of the next academic year. An important consideration is the overall membership of the Academic Standing and Honors Committee. The current motion, if successful, would result in more than half the membership holding non-voting positions. The Steering Committee had hoped to address this matter in part by appointing the Director rather than the Coordinator of the Academic Skills Center to the new position; with that suggestion proving unwelcome to the original sponsors of the proposal, the Steering Committee would prefer to reconsider committee membership as a whole rather than deal with problems piece by piece. Questions raised about current practices with respect to dismissal of students who have failed to meet the requirements for continuation in DOP status indicate the need for more data for Steering Committee consideration. This information will probably be provided in the annual report of the Academic Standing and Honors Committee but is not currently available for Senate use. Had this proposal reached the Steering Committee earlier in the year, these matters could have been ironed out before submission of a motion to the Senate. At this point, the Steering Committee judged it prudent to withdraw the motion for action early next year. Ms. Gerulaitis then asked whether current practices with regard to DOP status are under review. Both Mr. Hough and Mr. Kleckner indicated that the Steering Committee would try to make an informed assessment of whether any changes are needed with respect to that policy.

The remaining item of scheduled business was a procedural motion from the Steering Committee to name David Housel to the seat on the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction that is reserved for the School of Human and Educational Services (Moved, Ms. Hildebrand; seconded, Mr. Hough). No discussion followed this nomination, and Mr. Housel was elected with unanimous support. His term runs from 15 August 1987 to the same date 1989.

Arrival at the good and welfare part of the meeting brought an inquiry from Mr. Thomas about current University policy on granting emeritus rank to retired faculty. A year ago, the History Department nominated a colleague for this honor in accordance with its own policies and that recently approved by the Senate in response to recommendations of the Matthews Committee, but no further action has been taken on that nomination. Mr. Kleckner responded that the current policy is still the one passed by the Senate and subsequently by the Board in 1981. Last year's Senate recommendation has not yet been advanced by President Champagne to the Board. Assuming that it would eventually progress through that final stage of approval, Mr. Liboff wondered whether the usual grandfather clause would obtain and was assured by Mr.

Kleckner that anyone who retired within the terms of the Matthews Committee recommendation would still be eligible. Ms. Gerulaitis noted that a long time had elapsed since last winter's Senate action and asked what was the hang-up. Mr. Kleckner stated that the Senate action, if ratified by the Board, would broaden the existing emeritus policy quite significantly and might not prove beneficial to the institution.

Recalling that the Senate had already considered this matter, Ms. Gerulaitis thought that the President, if unhappy with the outcome of this body's deliberations, might come before the Senate to discuss his concerns. Mr. Kleckner agreed, if that were the will of the Senate. He suggested inviting the President to a meeting early in the next academic year. Mr. Russell proposed holding a special meeting for that purpose within the next few weeks. With Mr. Kleckner reminding the Senate of its constitutional right to call additional spring-summer meetings to confront a particular item of business, Mr. Thomas offered a motion to invite President Champagne to such a special meeting in the near future. Mr. Willoughby seconded the motion, which was approved without dissent or further discussion.

Mr. Downing then asked about the work of the ad hoc Senate Committee on Presidential Review. Mr. Barnard, chair of that group, reported that members had met to formulate plans and that they are now working with Mr. DeCarlo to schedule a meeting with the appropriate Board subcommittee. He was optimistic about the prospect of completing such arrangements shortly.

A third and final inquiry came from Mr. Rozek. He wondered how close the dean search in the School of Health Sciences was approaching to closure. He also inquired whether there was any truth to the rumor that one candidate had been offered not only the deanship of the school but also the additional rank of Dean for Research within the University as a whole. Mr. Kleckner knew nothing of such speculation. He expected a decision to be made shortly after the Search Committee presents its recommendation sometime in the near future.

Drawing the meeting to a close, Mr. Kleckner called attention to the two information items on the agenda. This turned out, however, not to be the final meeting of the current Senate. He promised to schedule an additional session and to inform members promptly about that gathering. Reassured that they would soon be gathering again, Senators returned to their other duties at approximately 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

Back to
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
SENATE
Home Page