

Oakland University Senate
January 13, 2011
Minutes

Members present: *Anderson, Awbrey, Bednarski, Berven, D., Berven, K., Doman, Eis, Folberg, Gallien, Grimm, Graetz, Grossman, Guessous, Hay, Jackson, Kruk, Latcha, Leibert, LeMarbe, Lepkowski, Licker, Mabee, Marks, Meehan, Miller, Mitton, Moudgil, Orzach, Pedroni, Piskulich, Reger, Riley-Doucet, Russell, Schartman, Shablin, Spaguolo, Sudol, Switzer, Tanniru, Tardella, Walters, Wells, Williams, Wood*

Members absent: *Chamra, Chen, Free, Frick, Giblin, Hightower, Kim, Mili, Moran, Penprase, Polis, Schott-Baer, Schweitzer, Southward, Tracy*

Summary of Actions:

Informational Items

Update on BALS program

Provost's update

Unfinished Business

Resolution to endorse the OU/OUBOT Joint Statement on Academic Freedom (first reading)

New Business

Motion from the Steering Committee to recommend approval of the Early Education and Intervention/Education Specialist Degree (first reading)

Motion from the Steering Committee to recommend approval of the B.A. in Creative Writing (first reading)

Provost Moudgil called the meeting to order at 3:15 P.M.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Update on Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies—Mr. Sudol, Ms. Sifonis

Dean Sudol provided a brief summary of the background of the BALS program, a program built on existing minors in the CAS. He observed that it had come through the CAS Assembly like all proposals, and had passed unanimously. He addressed the concern that had been expressed by the Senate Planning Committee whose members were not certain that department chairs would be willing to allow their faculty members to teach courses for the BALS program because they could not afford to. Mr. Sudol pointed out that the CAS already provides 16 out of 20 courses for the Honors College—the equivalent of 4 ½ full-time positions. Routinely, he requests replacements because of this. Also, there are other interdisciplinary programs, such as Women's Studies and Judaic Studies, for which the CAS provides courses. CAS departmental chairs make sure to highlight these contributions to other programs in their requests for new positions, and so

it is an advantage for departments to allow their faculty members to teach these courses. As far as the BALS program is concerned, there is a need for two courses to be taught next year, and Ms. Sinfonis will do them both. He then introduced Ms. Sinfonis (Psychology), the Director of the BALS program, noting that her experience in the field as well as her courses taught on campus will make her very well-suited for the job. Ms. Sinfonis then addressed the remaining questions that had lingered from the last time the BALS program was discussed at the Senate. (1) The perceived overlap with the Bachelor of Integrated Studies had been discussed, resulting in the finalized copy for the university catalog of the BALS program as well as the understanding that the BALS program is a program to be contained within the CAS. (2) Regarding concerns about interdisciplinary studies and how they work (how does one teach these kinds of courses), Ms. Sinfonis clarified that the courses will tie in with the CAS themes, such as Creativity for 2011/12. She will go through the core areas in the CAS and find a coherent stream. At the 400-level, the students will tie it all together. (3) LBS 100 will be the only new courses in Fall 2011, with other courses to follow the next year. The Executive Committee is now in place and they will assist in the planning. In the future, seminar level courses will be offered. Money will be set aside to release faculty members for courses taught. (4) The role of graduate assistants for the BALS program will evolve over the next few years. At first, they will be able to help with advising and research, and later will serve as TAs to help with instruction. Ms. Sinfonis emphasized that things are becoming more interdisciplinary out in the world, and there is a need in industry to straddle disciplines. New ideas are driven by interdisciplinary approaches. The BALS program will teach students how to bridge and tie disciplines together.

2. Provost's Update

Provost Moudgil provided a brief update on the searches going on for Dean of Kresge Library, Dean of the School of Nursing, and Director of the Office of Research and Development. He urged senate members to participate in these searches as much as possible.

Mr. Moudgil then announced the good news that a \$30,000,000 capital outlay had been approved to fund a new building for the School of Engineering and Computer Sciences.

Lastly, Mr. Moudgil referred to the update on the state of the university that had been given by President Russi, and encouraged senators to provide their input to the planning for the future that is taking place now.

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of December 2, 2010

The [minutes](#) of December 2, 2010 were approved (motion by Mr. Latcha, second by Ms. Guessous).

B. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Statement on Academic Freedom

RESOLVED that the Senate endorses the Oakland University/Oakland University Board of Trustees [Joint Statement on Academic Freedom](#). (motion by Mr. Doman, second by Mr. Meehan)

First reading: Debatable, but not eligible for final vote at this meeting.

Mr. Moudgil introduced this topic by reminding members that the Senate had authorized a committee to merge the two existing Academic Freedom statements that existed on campus into one document. The present document is the result of that work. The statement is now available online, and it is hoped that it will be approved by the end of the semester by the Board of Trustees.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Motion from the Steering committee to recommend approval of the Early Education and Intervention/Education Specialist Degree

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees approval of a [program leading to the Education Specialist in Early Education and Intervention](#). (motion by Ms. Jackson)

Julie Ricks-Doneen (SEHS, Human Development and Child Study) explained that the decision to create the Education Specialist in Early Education and Intervention had grown out of national and state changes to the Disabilities Act. There has been a huge movement across the country to include children in general education classrooms in a more inclusive setting. Professional development programs have been started to facilitate the inclusion of young children in the general classroom. There is a strong history and background to support early intervention. The State of Michigan has wanted to support early intervention for young children, and there has been a great interdisciplinary interest in this effort. An assessment of the need was done, and this included interviews with people in the field. New standards will now prepare early childhood teachers to become specialized in special needs students.

The program will involve 36 credits, and will include theoretical and practical applications, with a capstone course. The emphasis will be on developing leaders and so the leadership angle is very strong throughout the program. Furthermore, a subset of credits from this major can be used for a Ph.D. program. Mr. Grimm said that if he recalled correctly, a letter from the Assessment Committee concerning this program had been tentative, and he wondered if there is now final approval. Mr. Moudgil advised Ms. Ricks-Doneen to find the final approval letter so that it will be available for the next meeting. Ms. Ricks-Doneen pointed out that every course was developed collaboratively and across disciplines, with Special Education and Early Childhood Development and so it is very much an interdisciplinary program.

Mr. Moudgil observed that it seems that early intervention is very much needed in early childhood education in the world today, and may be the answer to many of the problems that are seen.

2. Motion from the Steering Committee to recommend approval of a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees approval of a [program leading to the Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing](#) (motion by Ms. Miller)

Susan Hawkins (Chair, English department) and Ed Haworth Hoepfner (English) were present to provide background and answer questions about the Creative Writing proposal. Mr. Hoepfner pointed out that Creative Writing began in the 1950s as an area of academic interest, but it was not until the 1960s that it became an undergraduate program in the USA. Over the years, the number of programs increased dramatically up to the present time. Now 500 colleges and universities offer Creative Writing programs in the United States, and of these, 159 offer undergraduate programs. 80% of these are BAs like the proposal from the English department (and not BFAs). So this proposal is in line with the mainstream. It offers equal amounts of academic work and creative writing. Students interested in genre work, fiction and poetry, and eventually screen-writing and television-writing, will understand the history and theory behind the genres so that they will be well-informed writers in their genre. Saginaw Valley is the only nearby institution to offer this kind of a B.A. Oakland University will be the first in its particular demographic area to provide a B.A. in Creative Writing.

Ms. Hawkins provided background to the development of the present proposal. She said that in the summer of 2007, Dean Sudol (CAS) urged the department to develop a creative writing program. Over the course of the next two years, in conjunction with the Dean's office, the program was developed. They decided not to do a concentration in creative writing because concentrations are cumbersome and nobody knows that they are outside the university. They also considered briefly doing a minor, but they want students to be able to get a job upon graduation, and for this, a major is required. She pointed out that the program had received unanimous approval at the April 13, 2010, meeting of the CAS Assembly. Ms. Hawkins said that students are extremely interested in getting a B.A. in Creative Writing. She believes that this major will draw students to OU, especially non-traditional students. OU will be the only university in Southeast Michigan to offer this program, and it matches the Creating the Future plan.

Ms. Jackson added that the Senate Planning Committee liked the proposal, and had unanimously approved it. Ms. Hawkins expressed her appreciation of the governance procedures, and the continued support of the English department. Ms. Hay (Communications) said that speaking from a 'sister field', she believes that Communications students will benefit from this program because they are interested in creativity in writing as well. Ms. Hawkins said that in the interdisciplinary spirit, cinema and TV-writing would be added later. Mr. Meehan said that there seemed to be some interest as to why they had decided to offer a B.A. and not a BFA program, and he asked for an explanation of what the difference is. Mr. Hoepfner said that 80% of the programs in the USA are B.A. programs instead of BFAs. The B.A. does not involve as many creative writing workshops, and involves more academic courses. He said that when he came to OU, he was the only one teaching creative writing, but now there are four faculty members who do this. There are growing numbers of Ph.D.s in creative writing, and institutions offering Ph.D.s in creative writing want their students to have backgrounds in theory and history. The B.A. is the preferred degree. The present program will be taught by faculty members with Ph.D.s, and will have a strong academic core. Later if screen-writing and TV-writing are added, they will need new courses, but for the present they are set to go. He noted that the creative writing professors will also be able to teach literature courses.

D. GOOD AND WELFARE

Ms. Piskulich said that nominations are being requested for the Phyllis Law Googasian Award. Nominations should be forwarded to Ms. Piskulich or Jo Reger.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dikka Berven