



OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, 11 November 1993
Fourth Meeting

MINUTES

Members present: Abiko, K. Andrews, S. Andrews, Ari, Awbrey, Benson, Bertocci, Bhatt, Braunstein, Bricker, Briggs-Bunting, Buffard-O'Shea, Capps, Chipman, Christina, Dahlgren, Downing, Dunphy, Eberwein, Frankie, Garcia, Gerulaitis, Grossman, Hildebrand, Hough, Hovanesian, Khattree, Kheir, Liboff, Mabee, Marks, Mittelstaedt, Moore, Moran, Muir, Pine, Polis, Reynolds, Rickstad, Rooney, Rozek, Rush, Russi, Schmitz, Schwartz, Schott-Baer, Selahowski, Sevilla, Stano, Stevens, Urice, Wedekind, Zenas.

Senators Absent: Brown, Hansen, Hormozi, Olson, Packard, Pipan, Reddy, Shepherd, Thomas

Summary of Actions:

1. Minutes of 23 September and 14 October 1993 (Kheir; Dahlgren). Approved.
2. Amendment from the Senate Planning Review Committee to modify #4 below (Chipman; Dahlgren). Approved.
3. Amendment to delete provision a. from the amended motion (Frankie; Urice). Defeated.
4. Amended motion from the Senate Planning Review Committee to merge the School of Health Sciences and the School of Nursing (Chipman, Callewaert) Defeated.

Observing a room crowded with senators and visitors, Mr. Russi called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m. He began by calling attention to two sets of minutes, those of 23 September and 14 October. No corrections were advanced and Mr. Kheir's motion for their approval as distributed (seconded by Mr. Dahlgren) brought a favorable vote.

Mr. Russi declared himself very pleased to find such ardent interest in his promised update on the enrollment picture. A blurry screen image eventually brought into clear focus provided useful comparative statistics over the period since 1990 with respect to distribution of undergraduate students by classes. Although these figures may prove a bit deceptive because of a 1992 change in the credit demarcation between sophomore and junior status, they document a big jump in the number of junior students. Mr. Russi supposed that transfer patterns and behaviors of part-time students might account for the difference. When he asked Ms. Briggs-Bunting whether this information responded adequately to her question at the previous meeting, she replied that the statistics were helpful but still left her wondering how to project her recruitment needs for part-time faculty. Mr. Russi thought it wise to scrutinize such figures in terms of particular academic units.

Proceeding to information about 2+2 programs intended to ease transfer of students from two-to four-year institutions, Mr. Russi reported that the university currently has one such program

that has been approved by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction. This is an agreement with Oakland Community College that should be signed by officials of both institutions within two weeks. Two other agreements now being negotiated will be sent to UCUI for approval. He assured the Senate that no level of governance would be bypassed. When Mr. Hovanesian asked whether both agreements were with OCC, Mr. Russi said that they were. Mr. Stevens declared himself very impressed with the extent to which many of our sister institutions are already actively present on nearby community college campuses. He urged Oakland to move ahead in this area with all deliberate speed.

The last information item concerned developments with the Equal opportunity Policy. Last month's Senate recommendation has been discussed by the Board's University Affairs Committee, which now seeks legal advice on its impact. That committee expects to receive a legal report at its December meeting, and Mr. Russi promised to keep the Senate apprised of developments.

After presenting these information items, Mr. Russi stepped out of the chair for a few moments to make a brief statement regarding the proposed merger of two schools that provided the Senate's sole and sufficient item of business for the day. He placed his recommendation to consolidate the two schools within the context of his overall responsibility to organize deployment of human, financial, programmatic, and physical resources within the Academic Affairs Division. Having activated the Senate's review mechanism by referring this matter to its Planning Review Committee and associated groups, he had been afforded ample opportunities to provide his thoughts within the review process. At this point, he thought it time for the Senate itself to debate the resulting proposal and to render its judgment, and he pledged to take its recommendation very seriously. He held himself accountable to the Senate for reporting to it his own final recommendation. He ended with a statement of appreciation to all those colleague senators who had labored intensively to examine this complex issue. With this expression of gratitude, he resumed the chair and turned over the floor to Senator Chipman.

Mr. Chipman launched discussion by introducing what he represented as a friendly one-sentence amendment to the original motion that he and Mr. Callewaert had placed on the floor at the 23 September meeting. This amendment, which Mr. Dahlgren seconded, had been printed on the agenda. Mr. Chipman referred to the extensive Senate Planning Review Committee report distributed with the agenda for the amendment's rationale, asking senators to accept this additional language as a collegial courtesy to colleagues who presented the motion. When Mr. Christina asked whether that meant that the Senate should vote on it, Mr. Chipman hoped that it would--even though he conceived of the new wording as a friendly amendment. With Ms. Briggs-Bunting promptly calling the question, the Senate approved the amendment by a show of hands with some evidence of dissent. The amended motion then read:

MOVED that the Senate recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees the consolidation of the School of Nursing and the School of Health Sciences into a single school which shall also have administrative responsibility for the Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute, to be implemented as soon as possible. In order that this consolidation best provide for the further development of the academic programs of the units to be merged, their faculty and staff, and the entire university, the Senate also recommends to the President and the Board that:

- a. As soon as possible, an open, national search be conducted for a dean for the new school, with an interim dean to be appointed following thorough faculty consultation and to serve until the successful conclusion of that search,
- b . A name be proposed by the faculty involved to reflect the primary mission of the new school with such name and a faculty constitution to be approved through normal governance procedures,
- c . The administrative structure of the new school be based upon a departmental model with department chairs reporting directly to the dean, and
- d. That a one year's delay in the accreditation review of Nursing scheduled for next year be sought with a site visit requested for the following year.

Mr. Chipman then introduced his SPRC colleagues--particularly Mr. Eberwein, Mr. Russell, and Ms. Piggott, who had chaired subcommittees, asking that those non-Senators be recognized to participate in debate despite their ineligibility to vote. He asked the same privilege for Mr. Murphy, chair of the Senate Committee on Human Relations. Following these introductions, he provided further background on his committee's recommendation, noting that subcommittees had continued to conduct the inquiries he had described to the Senate in October with respect to four focal questions. In view of their findings, the Senate Planning Review Committee concluded that a consolidated school structure is an academically viable option that universities may choose or reject. They also concluded that there was no basis for fears of immediate jeopardy to Oakland's nursing accreditation. The SPRC expects an exceptionally careful review of the nursing program in any event and considers such scrutiny healthy for the university. They did, however, recommend a one- year delay in the timing of the accreditation visit. When confronted with the question of whether we could achieve consolidation in a human sense, he reported that the SPRC heard very clearly the concerns of nursing faculty about threatened diminishment of their stature. Item "all had been placed in the amended motion to preserve the tradition of faculty participation in naming of school leadership. The committee also listened attentively to concerns about distanced access to a dean and about perceived institutional disrespect toward women. Items "a" and "b." were intended to mitigate such concerns. He concluded his report by indicating that the SPRC endorsed the total motion as it now stood by a narrow margin of 5 to 4. On that note, he opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Bricker began by asking whether it would be fair to summarize the report as saying that, just because consolidation is do-able, therefore it should be done. Mr. Chipman demurred. In an ideal situation, he thought, if we were designing a new university configuration today, we probably would not choose to separate various health units. We are not starting from scratch, however, but have two existing schools--the university's smallest and most expensive. Not anticipating that either is likely to grow so substantially as to function with the economies achieved by Oakland's larger units, he recommended seizing upon the present situation as an opportunity to achieve the sort of simplification many faculty members have long talked about in their offices. Why not try to do it?

When Mr. Bertocci then asked whether any member of the SPRC would like to speak for the minority side, Mr. Eberwein rose to the challenge. Praising the amendment as "elegant," he nonetheless withheld support even from the amended motion because it was based on hurried research that compared unfavorably with the sort of inquiries his committee had learned about

when the same question came up at other universities. Evidence so far compiled had presented him with no compellingly persuasive argument for making this change.

Mr. Christina questioned Mr. Chipman's historical memory with respect to the Commission on Mission and Priorities, which he recalled as advising elimination of the School of Health Sciences rather than consolidation of that school with Nursing. Mr. Chipman chose not to argue the point with Mr. Christina, who had served on CAMP. He remembered that the Commission's report called for elimination of several units, most notably the School of Performing Arts, that it advocated retaining the School of Nursing at its existing level of support, and that it suggested that the School of Health Sciences either be folded into Nursing or dropped. The Senate had not acted upon that recommendation.

Ms. Gerulaitis then declared her intent to vote against the motion because she knew no other way to express her dismay about this process, which struck her as peculiarly disrespectful toward a largely female faculty. Mr. Braunstein expressed a different concern: that the amended motion would place the current faculty and dean of the School of Health Sciences in the same non-viable position the original motion placed the nursing faculty. He wondered what Dean Olson's position would be if forced to resign, and he worried that upheaval would undermine the admirable contributions and achievements of Health Sciences colleagues. Mr. Chipman's response was that every single faculty member in the School of Nursing felt just that way about the original proposal. He concurred with Mr. Braunstein's praise of the Health Sciences faculty but maintained that a truly open search (defined as one in which anyone who wants to apply may do so) would be the best way to resolve questions of leadership.

Ms. Briggs-Bunting then spoke as a veteran of departmental merger, recalling the pain of Journalism as the smaller unit in a shotgun marriage to Rhetoric. Her experience told her that such combinations can be made to work, and she used that history as an argument for simplifying the university's overall administrative structure in order to liberate money for actual education. While on that subject, she urged similar simplification of vice presidential lines in response to the announced retirement of the Vice President for Governmental Affairs. Mr. Christina, by contrast, scoffed at cost saving projections released by the Senate Budget Review Committee as "a joke." When Mr. Chipman noted that the SBRC had not revised its estimates, Mr. Christina countered that they should. Ms. Muir thought Ms. Briggs-Bunting naive if, as a department chair, she imagined that any savings would actually be returned to nursing and health sciences programs. Ms. Briggs-Bunting pointed out that her department teaches more sections than either of the schools that would be consolidated and does so with one chairperson (helped, of course, by deans) to coordinate diverse offerings. Mr. Bricker, feeling somewhat reluctant to press the point, reminded Ms. Briggs-Bunting that her department's structure might not serve as an ideal model for consolidation since the College of Arts and Sciences Planning Council has given considerable thought to the advantages of divorcing units now bound in this shotgun marriage.

When Mr. Grossman expressed interest in hearing comments from the faculties affected by the proposed merger, Mr. Rozek spoke as a health scientist. He anticipated that, in a combined unit, each Health Science program would remain academically strong no matter whether the dean came from a health science background or from nursing. Mr. Eberwein called attention to a late-arriving anonymous response from the SPRC questionnaire to Arkansas State University, noting that it referred to funding disappointments.

Ms. Frankie then introduced a different subject of debate, proposing that the amended motion be divided into separate issues for voting purposes. Mr. Chipman understood the Senate's prior action as creating one unified proposal, but Mr. Russi suggested that an amendment would be in order to delete any particular item. So advised, Ms. Frankie (seconded by Mr. Urice) moved to delete item 'la.' Presenting herself as a strong advocate both of the proposed merger and of affirmative action, she urged consideration of the overall good of the whole university. She appreciated the amendment's politically strategic attempt to overcome objections to the original proposal that deprived a predominantly female faculty of their privilege of selecting their own dean, but she wondered whether it could be right to compensate for that injury by sacrificing a highly qualified and experienced male administrator. Mr. Eberwein then raised a logistical question, wondering whether it made sense to deliberate on decanal appointments before the Senate decided whether or not there should be a new school. Ms. Mittelstaedt advised against person-specific discussion. As a faculty member in Nursing, she respected Dean Olson but feared establishing an unfortunate precedent. Mr. Chipman opposed the amendment to delete "a," declaring that he would not ask his colleagues to support establishment of any school that did not safeguard its faculty's clear authority to choose its leadership. "Open," he stressed, "means open." When the junior Senator Andrews moved to call the question, the amendment failed by a decisive vote.

Ms. Moore then asked how the Senate Planning Review Committee had consulted community opinion, particularly that of our nursing alumni. Having noted the prominence of nursing graduates in their profession, she supposed their judgments and concerns should be considered. Mr. Chipman indicated that his committee had conducted no specific study of their responses but noted that the Open Hearing had provided useful insight. It was his belief that, if faculty members themselves come to support a consolidated school's new name and structure, they can communicate their positive attitudes.

The improbability of eliciting such positive attitudes became apparent immediately with Dean Zenas's presentation of School of Nursing objections to the amended motion. Reminding the Senate that the original problem was one of permanent School of Nursing leadership, she maintained that fears of diminishment to the School's stature were already being realized. Graduate applications have decreased, undergraduate students are considering transfer, and she feared that the nursing program might be forced to maintain numbers by lowering admission standards. All this would result from the university's signaling to the community its diminished support for nursing. Objecting to the idea of entrusting administrative leadership of the program to a department chairperson, she suspected such a person would be perceived by the outside community as a quasi-administrator. Although nursing offers fewer class sections than the Department of Rhetoric, Communication, and Journalism, it has responsibility for many contracts and external placements. She also objected to the amendment's recommendation for delay in the accreditation review, that being a decision properly entrusted only to the nursing faculty. Nursing, she pointed out, is not the university's most expensive academic program and is steadily growing more cost-efficient. In any event, she disputed the assumption that the proposal would save money. It would still be necessary to hire a dean and program administrators. That dean would come into a crisis situation. Her colleagues do see this as a gender issue, and they question whether the university has acted in good faith. What, she wondered, would organizational change do to educational outcomes for our students? Her speech, ending with a declaration of passionate opposition to the proposal, won ringing applause. Ms. Mittelstaedt then followed up by speculating that, if a similar merger were contemplated in a corporate environment, there would have been a major cost-benefit analysis that had not been undertaken here as a way of considering a very significant

decision.

Mr. Murphy then spoke up for the Senate Committee on Human Relations, calling attention to the "plain, blunt statement" it had contributed to the agenda mailing. He reported that his committee colleagues found the whole proposal deeply flawed, especially with respect to gender equity. Ms. Rush responded in her capacity as Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, summarizing advice she had given the Human Relations Committee and the subcommittee of the Senate Planning Review Committee that had looked into charges of gender discrimination. Distinguishing between illegal discrimination and actions that, in general, are not supportive of women on this campus, she expressed satisfaction that two Senate committees have responded seriously to concerns raised by the nursing faculty. On the other hand, she did not believe that any full-scale discrimination had occurred. The issue in this case seemed not to be one of differential treatment of men and women but of differential impact since the projected administrative change would affect women more than men. The nursing faculty, however, would not be the only group experiencing transition. She thought that the issue of a female dean raised a mistaken notion of the dean's position as gender-specific and advocated, instead, a full, open search for leadership. Because perceptions are very important, she urged the necessity of maintaining a supportive campus environment for women and other groups historically disadvantaged within academia. Judging the amended motion a responsible and effective response to these concerns, she declared her support.

Mr. Liboff agreed with Ms. Rush's conclusion but expressed concern about appointment of an interim dean. Mr. Schwartz took this opportunity to inquire about previous School of Nursing dean searches, asking whether last year's search did or did not fail. Mr. Chipman replied that the Search Committee had followed instructions to submit an unranked list of finalists for the position; considerably later, they were informed that the search had failed. Administrative explanations of what happened indicated that the finalists, while not unqualified, were not considered good fits with Oakland University. From the perspective of the nursing faculty, however, Ms. Zenas responded that administrative failures to make an appointment looked like evidence of bad faith. Going back four years to Dean Lindell's departure, she called attention to a seventeen-month interlude before the first search was initiated. That search resulted in an offer being made to a candidate who declined after seven weeks, by which time other finalists had accepted positions elsewhere. The second search resulted in the nursing faculty's identification of a candidate they admired but who, not being found a "good fit" here, had gone instead to the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. She maintained that it was time to get this decision on the table and to move forward. When Mr. Bertocci inquired about the seven weeks afforded the first candidate, Ms. Zenas said that the prospective dean was not given a fixed time period for making her decision. When she did respond belatedly, it was to turn us down. Mr. Bertocci supposed that, had she wanted to come to Oakland University, she had been given ample opportunity to say yes. Ms. Mittelstaedt agreed but felt that our administration had courted the candidate too inattentively, not realizing that she was also being wooed by another local university. The two searches succeeded in locating six candidates acceptable to our faculty who have wound up taking deanships elsewhere. Mr. Bertocci then asked whether the voice of the school's faculty had been clear in support of any one candidate. Ms. Schott-Baer said she could not speak to the first search but had served on the second Search Committee and could testify that there was unified support for one individual. Mr. Chipman then deflected this discussion, pointing out that the most important current task is to try to make the best decision now to provide for successful installation of a dean in the near future.

Mr. Grossman raised a new focus of discussion by noting that the community had been hearing dire predictions from our nursing faculty about loss of students and besmirching of image if a merger occurs. He wondered how credible those threats might be. An undergraduate student immediately responded that she felt scared about her own future and would consider transferring in the event of a school merger. She would advise friends to apply to other institutions rather than to Oakland. A graduate student testified that evidence of institutional disrespect for nursing would force her to transfer to Wayne State University. Mr. Chipman indicated that his committee took such concerns seriously but did not find them persuasive. He believed that our nursing program's reputation depends on what we do and what we deliver rather than on any particular administrative structure. A nursing spokesperson then restated concerns articulated at the Open Hearing by hospital administrators, pointing out that they reflected grave uneasiness about this university's perceived lack of respect for its nursing program. Another student told of his anxieties about the impact of institutional change on our highly skilled nursing alumni, whose professional accomplishments have been opening up opportunities for our new graduates. Still another student wondered whether this proposal reflected an institutional model at President Packard's previous university. He cautioned against basing decisions on inadequate research and wondered what impact institutional change might have on student Board performance.

When Mr. Grossman said that he appreciated their concerns but still wondered how institutional structure actually affects such outcomes, Mr. Christina threw the ball back in his court by asking whether he would prefer a dean or chair of Mathematical Sciences. Mr. McKay, now chairing that department, found the question an interesting one but assured the Senate that his colleagues identify strongly with the College of Arts and Sciences and have no thoughts of secession despite their massive numbers of sections and students. Ms. Zenas pointed out that nursing is the most numerous health- service profession in the United States. Her colleagues and their students regard separate school status as a matter of professional recognition.

Ms. Dunphy wondered about alumni views on the projected merger and inquired whether the Planning Review Committee had sought counsel from persons in hospital administrative positions. Mr. Chipman pointed to Open Hearing statements as pertinent evidence, noting that nursing faculty had printed and circulated this material at their own expense. His committee had not directly sought hospital and alumni input, fearing negative publicity if they were to take out an ad to call attention to the fact we are having a big fight. Thus, they had no detailed information on community sentiment. When Ms. Dunphy went on to inquire whether hospital administrators with whom the School of Nursing has contractual relationships had been alerted to projected changes and asked about anticipated impacts, Ms. Zenas reported that her colleagues have received many statements of support for continuing school autonomy.

Mr. Bertocci then asked the reasoning behind the negative recommendation reached by the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, inquiring why that group differed from the Senate Planning Review Committee. Mr. Eberwein explained that UCUI based its judgment purely on the basis of projected curricular effect. While conceding that the information they had been able to gather in a short time had to be inadequate, he observed that it showed no strong educational reason for going ahead with a merger. Some of the collaborative benefits that might result from school consolidation could be achieved without institutional reconfiguration. He acknowledged the sobering impact of comparing the deliberate way in which the University of Vermont is approaching the question of school merger in terms of state medical needs with the way the issue has been presented here.

Mr. Moran, professing himself generally opposed to the merger proposal, acknowledged that he found some of the Open Hearing Statements useful expressions of personal opinions but otherwise unpersuasive. His opposition rested on the basis of nursing's professional stature. Looking at the list of schools with consolidated health units, he considered that Oakland was already on the side of the angels with a separate School of Nursing. He anticipated rising status and compensation for nurses with a new national health care plan. Ms. Mittelstaedt asked how she could prepare nursing students to practice independently (as the Clinton health plan encourages) if she fails to maintain autonomy for their school.

The student Senator Andrews thought the key issue should be program enhancement rather than money. Although he might be called idealistic in striving to strengthen each academic program, even if excellence proves more expensive, he still advocated such efforts. Although some community members think fears raised by nursing faculty, students, alumni, and hospital administrators are invalid, their fears are still real and will cost the university irreparable loss through departures of students. He pointed out that, if people do not want an improved widget we hope to build, its merits will not matter. He had hoped to hear an argument that this motion would bring real long-term good but had been disappointed. A graduate student then thanked the Senate for allowing non-members to engage in this discussion. Although she did not herself think the merger question a gender issue, she underscored that it truly is one of professional recognition. Nursing students, like their professors, want to maintain their own school.

On that note, Mr. Bricker called the question, and the Senate approved his move to proceed to a vote. A show of hands demonstrated that the motion failed by a vote of 18 Yea and 26 Nay. When Mr. Russi declared the motion defeated, applause brought the meeting to a joyous conclusion. With no Good and Welfare items brought forward, the chair thanked the Senate and its hard-working committees for their thoughtful response to this issue and welcomed Ms. Briggs-Bunting's move for adjournment at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Jane D. Eberwein
Secretary to the University Senate

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