



# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, April 15, 1982  
Ninth Meeting  
128, 129, 130 Oakland Center

### *MINUTES*

Senators Present: Akers, Appleton, Briggs-Bunting, Brown, Chipman, dark Copenhaver, Coppola, Cowlshaw, Dawson, Downing, Eberwein, Eklund, Eliezer, Feeman, Frampton, Gardiner, Gerulaitis, Ghausi, Grossman, Hetenyi, Heubel, Hildebrand, Horwitz, Ketchum, Kleckner, Mallett, Miller, Moeller, Otto, Pine, Pino, Russell, Sakai, Scherer, Schwartz, Sevilla, Shallow, Stokes, Swartz, Tripp, Witt.

Senators Absent: Arnold, Boulos, Burdick, Champagne, Christina, Gregory, Hammerle, Hightower, Howes, Kurzman, Lambric, Lindell, Pak, Rhadigan, Somerville, Stamps, Stanovich, Strauss, Wilson.

Mr. Kleckner called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m. Mr. Hetenyi, seconded by Mr. Downing, then moved approval of the minutes of the Senate's April 8, 1982, meeting. The secretary read into the record a correction by President Champagne; the fourth line of the last paragraph should read: "He sees no cash-flow problems now, nor does he anticipate them next year if the cutbacks are restored in a timely fashion and are held to the-\$2.7 million level because of tuition reserves from September. If they are not restored or are increased to the original \$4.6 million level, problems should be anticipated." With no additional refinements offered from the floor, the minutes of the previous meeting were then approved as corrected.

No old business detained the Senate from energetic discussion of four new motions. First came a proposal from the Committee on Academic Standing and Honors calling for mid-term grading in 100-level courses (Moved, Mr. Akers; Seconded, Mr. Shallow):

**MOVED** that the instructors of 100-level courses provide to each registered student some form of evaluation of his or her academic progress prior to one week before the withdrawal period ends.

Ms. Tripp wondered why only 100-level courses were included in this motion and suggested that the legislation be extended to include 200-level courses as well. Mr. Ring, representing the sponsoring committee, thought that his fellow-drafters of the proposal would support such a change; they were simply being cautious. Mr. Cowlshaw then asked whether anyone had data on how widespread the problem addressed by this resolution actually is. Mr. Ring had no data, but Mr. Kleckner recalled some complaints each semester while Mr. Appleton said his impressionistic sense from the vantage point of an advising office is that it happens a lot. Whether such a problem existed or not, Mr. Moeller objected to this method of dealing with it.

Although he always provides early grades in his courses, he resented the notion of having his instructional habits legislated. He wondered whether a return to giving mid-term grades to freshmen would be economically feasible. Mr. Ring thought a mid-term grade likely to be a little late to provide a student with information before the withdrawal period ends, and Mr. Kleckner noted that mid-term grades would still have to be based on some form of evaluation. Ms. Gerulaitis reported herself basically supportive of the motion but unhappy about its insensitivity to the needs of professors, who resent being told how to behave. She was willing to provide a grade within the stipulated time but knew of courses in which neither a paper nor an exam would exist so early in the term. Ms. Schwartz preferred the use of the word evaluation (in the motion) to grade (in the comment and Congress resolution) as it provided greater flexibility. When Mr. Cowlshaw inquired whether three quizzes in six weeks would serve as evaluation, he learned that they would?even without being averaged into one mid- term grade.

Mr. Heubel argued that this proposal could work to the advantage of faculty as well as students in that it would help a professor identify functioning members of a class: early in the semester. The floating population of late-admits and no-shows now make; it difficult to establish a valid class list until some work has been submitted for grading. Mr. Grossman wondered, however, whether an instructor might not be technically in violation of this procedure for failing to provide a grade for no- shows. He and Mr. Moeller anticipated problems of enforcement of a policy solely dependent on faculty compliance, with no grades channeled through the Registrar. Mr. Shallow felt no concern on this score, pointing out that aggrieved students could complain to the University Congress or to other functionaries interested in honoring academic policies. When discussion turned to interpretation of regulations and to methods of enforcement, Mr. Hetenyi?also basically sympathetic to the proposal?felt his apprehensions rise. He would be content so long as complete flexibility exists for the faculty member to achieve the purpose of this legislation in any reasonable way, but he would reject published guidelines and regulations. Sensing that the discussion was raising needless concerns among those who arrived at the meeting sympathetic to the proposal, Mr. Heubel then suggested that those who favored the motion stick with their own original reasoning rather than being swayed adversely by favorable arguments they disliked.

Thus advised to terminate debate on the first issue, the Senate turned its attention to the second: a motion from the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction to designate the degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Moved, Mr. Dawson; Seconded, Mr. Akers):

**MOVED** that the School of Engineering redesignate the Bachelor of Science degree as the Bachelor of Science in Engineering for all undergraduate engineering programs other than Engineering Physics.

Ms. Gerulaitis inquired why the degree would not be called Bachelor of Engineering, if such a title exists. Mr. Kleckner said that It did, but Messrs. Witt and Ghausi explained that their School prefers the Bachelor of Science in Engineering designating they do not want the specialized degrees in mechanical engineering and electrical engineering now being awarded elsewhere. Mr. Witt noted that the B.S.E. degree did not exist when the B.S. was originally approved for our program?a program originally described (as Mr. Hetenyi recalled) as one in engineering science. Mr. Grossman wondered whether the Senate was responding to a request from the School of Engineering or imposing something upon them. Mr. Ghausi assured him that his School wishes to offer this degree. In response to Mr. Grossman's next question, however, he indicate' that majors in Computer and Information Science would still receive a

B.S. Mr. Feeman inquired whether the School of Engineering's request to redesignate its degree was a unique desire within the University. Mr. Sudol said that UCUI had asked other school whether they had such intentions and received no expressions of current interest.

The next proposal also reached the Senate through UCUI on behalf of the School of Engineering; it was a resolution (Moved, Mr. Dawson; Seconded, Ms. Gerulaitis) to allow the School to deny credit toward an Engineering degree for certain courses:

**MOVED** that the School of Engineering be authorized to deny credit toward a degree in engineering for courses which are prerequisite to, or of similar content but lower level than, MTH 154, PHY 151, and CHM 144.

Messrs. Horwitz and Sevilla wondered what this proposal was all about, why it was necessary. Mr. Kleckner explained that the Senate might reasonably be concerned about impingement on its policy requiring eight credits of free electives. Mr. Horwitz ' observed that the student whose eight credits of something like Math 101-102 were disallowed for an Engineering degree would have to take extra credits. He saw an obvious problem of disparity between schools emerging. Mr. Kleckner thought that the Senate might accept different degree requirements in different programs; though it might, in its wisdom, prefer to take ,up the larger issue of rejecting certain courses for any degree. Messrs. Hetenyi and Dawson reminded their colleagues of a precedent: some Music courses cannot be credited toward a Music major. Mr. Dawson urged UCUI an the Senate to look at this same problem with regard to all our programs. Mr. Kleckner noted a distinction between the cases included in this motion and cases where departments reject certain courses for major credit; in the Engineering situation?given the tight major program? such courses could not slide into the elective column.

Mr. Copenhaver expressed puzzlement about the term "free elective," wondering whether Engineering students could count a Shakespeare course toward their degree but not Math 102. That turned out to be the case. Mr. Ghausi said he hoped students would elect natural science, social science, or arts courses?anything of interest to them- rather than prerequisites for major courses. Mr. Miller pointed out that "disallowed courses would not really be electives but prerequisites which do not provide the curricular flexibility the Senate intended in requiring "genuinely free electives." Mr. Witt agreed that the motion on the floor protects the original purpose of Senate policy. Mr. Pino suggested wording the matter positively to emphasize the Senate's intent to provide students with some upper-level courses in different fields; he call these "semi-restricted electives" in response to Mr. Russell's observation that "genuinely free electives" would have to include options within a student's major fie Ms. Schwartz invited the Senate to develop lexical distinctions among "genuinely free electives," "free electives," "specious electives," and "slave electives."

Mr. Ketchum recalled attention to the larger problem of gradually escalating the total number of credits which may be required for any Oakland University degree. The current legislation, according to Mr. Kleckner, represents the Steering Committee's attempt t solve one problem without raising the enormous issues associated with it. One issue which bothered Mr. Russell was the power of accrediting agencies to influence Oakland University policy. He wondered whether the School of Engineering would actually lose accreditation, if it refused to comply with this advice from the visitation team. Mr. Witt, understandably reluctant to force such a confrontation reviewed his colleagues' unsuccessful attempts to educate their visitors in the value of genuinely free electives. He saw a real problem in his school's non-conformity with

national standards. Mr. Horwitz maintained that the Senate should respect the recommendations of such bodies and not jeopardize accreditation.

Mr. Hetenyi attempted to open fresh perspective by suggesting a return to a prehistoric policy which required students to meet a proficiency standard for admission to a major program. Mr. Witt pointed out that his school already imposes admission requirements but finds that some entrants whose records suggest mathematical or scientific competence prove to need introductory coursework. Mr. Grossman thought it would be difficult to interpret transfer transcripts when implementing a policy on "disallowed" courses, but Mr. Witt felt he could manage.

An alternative remedy for the problem came from Mr. Grossman, who suggested a university 3rs policy which would prevent a student from getting credit for two courses with similar content; he thought departments could stipulate such overlaps. This proposal struck Mr. Copenhaver as operating unfavorably against a student who takes a low-level Chemistry elective, finds she likes Chemistry and goes on to major in it, taking along the way introductory course specifically designated for majors. At present she can count the first course as an elective, and he hoped the Senate would preserve that possibility. Mr. Grossman then testified that the Department of Mathematical Sciences approves of this motion, which complies with a policy recommendation of the Mathematical Association of America to withhold college credit for high-school-level math courses. Mr. Hetenyi worried that such a policy might forfeit state funds, which depend on credit delivery. He remembered when remedial composition courses and some musical ensemble activities bore no course credit. Mr. Kleckner noted that, in the cases envisaged by the resolution on the floor, credit would be awarded by the University but could not be counted toward particular degree requirements.

Having reflected on the previous motions in such detail, the Senate was in fine form debate on the fourth item of new business, a motion from UCUI regarding B.G.S. degree requirements (Moved, Mr. Miller; Seconded, Ms. Briggs-Bunting):

**MOVED** that, to obtain a Bachelor of General Studies degree, the student must successfully complete at least the last 12 hours as an admitted candidate to the program; and that candidacy be authorized by the University and the Faculty Council for General Studies when the student has approval of his/her plan-of-work and rationale for the Bachelor of General Studies degree from the Bachelor of General Studies Advising Committee.

Ms. Gerulaitis objected that this motion violated the original concept of the B.G.S. program as an opportunity for absolute free choice. She was satisfied to let the program serve as a last-minute catch-all for a student who suddenly chooses not to major in something. Mr. Sudol explained that the legislation attempted to close a loophole so that all students would submit a plan of work, as envisaged but not required] in the original B.G.S. proposal. Ms. Chapman-Moore, representing the Faculty Council for General Studies, pointed out that there was no intention to steer persons toward specific courses but only to provide guidance within a student's chosen plan. Ms. Gerulaitis maintained, however, that the catalog descriptions of the B.G.S. program as unique and maximally flexible would be controverted by the proposal.

Mr. Chipman asked what the intent of a program plan was when the B.G.S. degree was first established. According to Ms. Gerulaitis, it was recommended to accommodate a student in carrying out personal academic choices?whether for a diverse program or total saturation in

Math. When Mr. Feeman asked when the student had been expected to file such a program plan, she said the time had been left deliberately unstipulated. Mr. Copenhaver inquired whether a program plan was an original degree requirement for the B.G.S. and learned from Mr. Kleckner that it was not. In any event, Mr. Copenhaver found it hard to think of a "retrospective plan," like some of those filed just at graduation. Upon Mr. Grossman's asking whether any program plans now presented are ever turned down, Mr. Heberle said that some are rejected for technical reasons though not for intellectual ones; and Ms. Briggs-Bunting, like Mr. Heberle a B.G.S. adviser, argued that such planning benefits a student by helping establish a focus. She agreed strongly with the proposal, although Mr. Shallow maintained the right of a student who has fulfilled the requirements of a degree to earn it, even if entering the official program at the last minute. Even if this motion carries, Mr. Grossman established that a student could file a late petition of exception.

Mr. Grossman wanted to know whether the B.G.S. is seen outside this university as a personalized degree or as a non-major. Ms. Chapman-Moore felt students considered it a personalized degree. Mr. Witt recalled considerable attention to advising in the original rationale for the program; it was never intended as a consolation prize. Mr. Mallett observed from his perspective on the Faculty Council that the B.G.S. has been treated as an escape hatch by students unable to meet requirements elsewhere. He favored closing the current loophole for academic escapees. Although no member of the Faculty Council could give Ms. Scherer and Ms. Schwartz a precise count of such fugitives, Ms. Chapman-Moore thought they might comprise about ten percent of the growing B.G.S. population.

Mr. Russell maintained that really closing the current loophole would require more than 12 credits. Seconded by Mr. Chipman, he offered an amendment to change the number 12 to 24 to allow at least two semesters of planning toward a personalized degree. Ms. Chapman-Moore felt that the original credit stipulation would involve the student in more than a semester's work, since most B.G.S. candidates are part-time students.

Mr. Eklund reminded the Senate of criticism from around the University about lack of adequate standards in the B.G.S. program. The CAMP report in particular called attention to the escape-hatch potential of the degree. He indicated that the Faculty Council was trying to respond to such concerns and would welcome more stringent requirements. On the other hand, Mr. Horwitz objected to detailed program plans as smacking of major and minors. If we have a B.G.S. program at all, he argued that it should be a "pure" one even to the extent of allowing fugitives to seek asylum two seconds before graduation. He disliked the idea of having students waving major-like program plans before an employer and then queried whether Mr. Horwitz felt equal discomfort at having any Oakland University alumnus brandishing before an employer a Bachelor of something degree which has no evidence of general education.

There were no private resolutions offered and only one information item, preparing the Senate to expect a report from UCUI next week on its study of the undergraduate grading system. Mr. Chipman suggested giving the committee an I-grade for this project. With President Champagne absent, the Senate lost the benefit of whatever remarks he might have offered; although he reported through Mr. Kleckner his lack of budgetary news since the previous meeting. Mr. Kleckner, therefore, welcomed Mr. Sevilla's call for adjournment at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:  
Jane D. Eberwein

Secretary to the University Senate

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