



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Faculty Senate Meeting

Friday, February 19, 2010, 1:00 p.m.
Ledbetter Rooms A & B, Donaghey Student Center

MINUTES

Present: CAHSS— Anson, Bailey, Chapman, Clausen, English, Eshleman, Garnett, Giammo, Groesbeck, Ramsey, Vinikas, Yoder. CB— Nickels, Watts. CE— Bandre, Hayn, Kuykendall, Pack. CEIT— Anderson, Chan, Jovanovic, Tramel, Tschumi, Tudoreanu. LAW— Aiyetoro, Goldner. CPS— Barnes, Collier-Tenison, Driskill, Faust, Robertson, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Chen, Douglas, Guellich, McMillan, Perkins, Prince, Sims, Tarasenko, EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Belcher, Ford.

Absent: CAHSS— Amrhein, Webb. CB— Edison, Holland. CE— Hughes. LAW— Fitzhugh. LIBRARY— Russ. CPS— Rhodes. CSM— Seigar, Thompson, Wright, Yanoviak. EX OFFICIO— Davis, Smith, Williams.

I. Welcome & Roll Call

The president declared it to be 1:00 and convened the meeting. The president acknowledged the gorgeous day, and thanked the senators for their dutiful presence. The secretary called the roll.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the December 4, 2009, meeting of the Senate were reviewed and approved on unanimous voice vote.

The minutes of the January 22, 2010, meeting of the Senate were reviewed. The secretary noted a needed correction: Sens. Perkins and Russ had indeed been present, not absent, as the draft had indicated.

Jovanovic moved, Anderson seconded, to delete from the minutes the language that reports the results of the straw poll, on the basis that straw polls are held by Robert's Rules to be out of order. Jovanovic observed that since straw polls do not reflect action, they are, as Col. Robert said, "meaningless and dilatory." Jovanovic believes that by doing these straw poll votes, we're tying the hands of the task force.

Ramsey spoke in opposition to the motion. He said he is not at all afraid that the group formally undertaking these deliberations next year will be unduly swayed by our taking of a sense of the group.

Clausen spoke in favor of the motion, in light of concerns about both the representativeness of the Senate and the phrasing of the questions as either-or propositions.

Robertson, speaking against the motion, raised a point of order. He said the issue should have been raised earlier. He also believes the Senate has a clear sense of what we were doing in that meeting, and that the minutes fairly reflect it.

Jovanovic argued that since it wasn't a binding vote, and since *Robert's Rules of Order* clearly states that straw polls are out of order, the straw poll should not be recorded. He said Roberts is very clear about decisions and actions being recorded, and that a straw poll is neither.

Anson concurred with Robertson, arguing that an objection should have been raised earlier.

Chan pointed out that *Robert's Rules* does not preclude the recording of other things in the minutes than decisions and actions.

The parliamentarian, having consulted *Robert's Rules*, said she agreed with Chan's comment, and suggested that straw polls may properly be conducted when the assembly convenes as a committee of the whole, which may then report its discussion back to the assembly.

Yoder observed that *this* discussion needs to be recorded, and the secretary noted she was typing up a storm.

Robertson withdrew his point of order.

The motion to amend the minutes by striking all reference to the straw poll failed on voice vote.

The minutes, as corrected, of the January 22, 2010, meeting of the Senate were approved on voice vote.

III. Announcements

There were none.

IV. Introduction of new topics

Ford opened the floor for senators to bring up items that need to come to the Senate's attention. There were none.

V. A short debate on a topic related to "Rethinking the Bachelor's Degree"

Resolved: Students must complete a minimum of 120 hours to earn a bachelor's Degree from UALR.

Speaking in support of the proposition: Sen. Mike Watts,

Speaking in opposition to the proposition: Sen. Ed Anson

President Ford suggested that the Senate would decide at the end of this very short debate whether to record a straw poll or convene as a committee of the whole and make a report to the Senate.

Ford said he believes it is prudent for us to look at the question of hours' credit required for a bachelor's degree since there seems to be a trend toward lowering the credit hour requirements.

Watts began the debate with the pro position. Following is a paraphrase of his remarks:

Did not come into the debate with a strong position on the issued. Talked to colleagues. Can perhaps best sum up the argument by quoting Tevye, from *Fiddler on the Roof*: "Tradition!"

Watts distributed an excerpt from the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board's policies (2009). The excerpt begins as follows: "The bachelor's degree will be awarded to students upon successful completion of a program that requires a minimum of 120 undergraduate semester credit hours, including the 35-semester-hour state minimum general education core, a minimum of 40 semester hours of upper-level courses, and a minimum of 30 semester hours (including 20 semester hours of upper-level courses) in the major field of study."

Argument does come down to what we have traditionally regarded as a degree. We have some shared ideas about what it means to have earned a master's degree, a doctorate, a bachelor's degree. People will think folks with a bachelor's degree will have spent the equivalent of four years acquiring it.

Anson followed with the con position:

In the interest of transparency, some of you may recall that some years ago I proposed a 100-hour degree minimum requirement: a 44-hour major, a minor, and the core.

One thing I've noticed going on in the university is a reduction of the emphasis on breadth of education at the bachelor's level, and increased emphasis on depth. I believe both are required for a good university education.

Was on the blue ribbon committee that came up with the competencies. Was on the group that gave us our present core.

If we're going to limit the core, increase the number of hours in our majors, and eliminate the minor, the overall hour requirement remains the only device that encourages depth. We need to use it.

Comment from Ramsey: His memory is that we require 124 hours now only because four hours was added for the then-requirement of physical education.

Comment from Jovanovic: It's getting really difficult to craft a good curriculum in systems engineering that conforms to even the larger number of hours that have been granted to that discipline by exception. What he doesn't like about letting other degrees drop to a 120-hour requirement is that it gets a lot harder to convince students they should take a degree with significantly more hours required.

Q from English: ADHE sets a lower-end requirement of 120 hours. The Legislature seems to be leaning in this direction as a *maximum* requirement. Are either of these policies we're likely to be able to influence?

Comment from Tschumi: When we were developing our current approach to the baccalaureate, we asked, "What do you need to know to be a good citizen?" We did have to make compromises from the very beginning, which may have limited the quality of what we came up with—but we were striving for the best education we could provide. The issue now seems not to be the quality of the education; the issue seems to be getting degrees into people's hands. He hates to see that attitude prevail. We know, he said, that 120 hours is not enough to do what we ought to be doing, and he hopes we will staunchly resist efforts to shrink the degree.

Comment from Sims: He supports the points of both Tschumi and Jovanovic. He had to do 180 hours in pursuit of his baccalaureate, and is proud of every one of them.

Comment from Anson: He returned to the idea that our responsibility is to provide both breadth and depth in our students' education. We should be doing what helps that. He understands that some disciplines, like engineering, may require more, and more concentrated, course work, but we must think about the fundamental characteristics of a "good" undergraduate education.

There was discussion—and disagreement—about what "minimum" and "maximum" mean in this context. Someone clarified that the hours required for a bachelor's degree, by current policy, "cannot exceed 150 unless required by accrediting or approval agencies." The provost noted that we can get approval for exceptions, but, yes, there is pressure from the state to keep those requirements as tight as possible.

Jovanovic talked about the BFA in dance, approved last year, which requires 65% of all credit hours to be in dance—78 hours' worth.

Ramsey moved, Sims seconded, that the Senate convene as a committee of the whole to consider the matter of the debate topic. Motion carried on voice vote.

In the committee of the whole, Ramsey moved for a sense of the committee on the proposition, rather than the current requirement of 124 credit hours. After some tangled discussion of what the committee of the whole was voting on, Anson said, "Let's just make this simple: Did Mike do a better job or did I?"

The nays had it by a country mile. **The committee of the whole adjourned.** The Senate resumed its business.

VI. Reports

The president asked for a **motion to suspend the rules in order to add to the agenda a report from Jim Nickels, faculty senator and member of the House of Representatives of the Arkansas General Assembly. Motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously on voice vote.**

Nickels began by reporting there may be some mischief going on in the special language votes. He found some having to do with transfer credit. A state senator is concerned about the role of ADHE and the Higher Education Coordinating Board, apparently fearing that schools are using those bureaucracies to get what they want in spite of the law's requirements. He's proposing that such changes not go into effect without having been reviewed by a legislative committee. Most other state agencies, when they promulgate rules and regulations, have to bring them before a committee to explain what the rules are about. This senator wants the same to apply to higher ed. This proposal hasn't been submitted yet; Monday is the last day to do so. Nickels got it yesterday afternoon and forwarded it to Bill Walker, vice chancellor for university advancement.

The other issue that's impacting higher ed is the lottery. They passed a resolution to allow a lottery bill. It was understood that we would be setting the amount of the scholarship. The proposal is for \$5,000 a year for four-year institutions, and \$2,600 a year for two-year institutions. What's come up is a provision that if the student comes from a grade-inflated high school, the student will have to jump through another hoop or two to qualify for a scholarship, such as having a 19 on the ACT.

Concern was raised in earlier discussions, because the experience around the country has been that there's an inflationary bump in grades whenever lottery scholarships are made available. Folks want to revisit this issue in light perhaps of the upheaval in elected offices this year, since it affects lots and lots of legislative districts. It looks to Nickels as if the proposal will be to give a year or more grace on triggering the grade-inflation penalties. He believes what will happen is a one-year extension.

The biggest impact on higher ed in the session, of course, is just the budget itself. K-12 is being held harmless. We're taking \$21M out of the unclaimed property fund to shore up K-12. Yesterday, House members were worried about whether we'd have enough cash on hand to make tax refunds on June 30.

We're anticipating a \$100M shortfall in Medicaid expenditures from state general revenue, which would trigger an additional loss of \$300M in federal matching funds, and a significant decrease in program services.

A. Chancellor Anderson

The chancellor has three issues to discuss: the status of draft IRB policies and procedures, the inclement weather policy, and budget matters.

On the draft IRB policies:

He sent them to general counsel Matt McCoy at the UA System office, and Mr. McCoy has spent a lot of time with them. The chancellor asked him to identify parts of the document that went significantly beyond the federal requirements. He found some, and found some that went beyond but sounded like a good idea. The chancellor has asked George Jensen, chair of Rhetoric and Writing, to lend a hand in polishing the language of the document. The chancellor observed this will take a while. He will send a draft back to the group that developed it, and is hopeful that we can emerge with a good policy.

On the inclement weather policy:

He wishes to revisit it while the memories of recent bad weather are still fresh, with the goals of improving our policy and our systems, particularly of communication. There have been three meetings already about this.

He observed that the policy was established before the rise of the internet and e-mail, and before we had significant numbers of students living on campus.

Communication channels have improved considerably. We used to rely on TV and radio, but they wouldn't permit us to report, for example, that the university is *open*. We now have many other possibilities: e-mail, the Web site, text messaging, our emergency phone system. Still true, though, that with major power outages, those might not be especially helpful.

The internet has also changed the class experience, such that twenty percent of our classes now are online. It seems obvious to the chancellor that those classes would, for the most part, carry on in spite of weather. An additional large percentage of our courses use the Web as a supportive technology. We also have more remote sites than ever before. The Law School's library is also the Pulaski County Law Library, which creates new consequences of closure for inclement weather.

The chancellor briefly recounted the events of the recent bad weather. We had, he said, an extraordinary situation and made an extraordinary decision in response to it. The decision, he said, is clearly his, but the faculty should think carefully about it. It's important for the institution to be open and doing business as expected. (Our Christmas-New Year's break, he noted, is different because it's expected.)

The communication issues we had were not really a surprise. If we were doing it over, we'd do the message better. People understood largely the idea of offices being open and classes being cancelled, but not everyone did. And we'd certainly pull down some outdated copies of the policy that we didn't even know were still out there.

The chancellor especially thanked Physical Plant, whose staff came in all three days, clearing streets, sidewalks, and parking lots for the possibility that we might be open for evening classes. They even pressed into service some of the construction workers at EIT to help get things cleared for people Wednesday morning.

Here are some of the policy issues to be deliberated:

- The connection of our decision to the LRSD decision. Continue it? Sever it? Tie it to another institution, such as UAMS? Seems to be strong sentiment that we should not have our policy tied to another institution. We don't have identical interests and circumstances.
- Our communication strategy. Might need to put in place some expectation that people other than the chancellor and provost can be helpful in getting the word out.
- Clarifying some issues of definition. When evening classes begin. What it means when "offices are open" and "classes are cancelled." Pay and leave issues.
- The issue of making up missed class time the chancellor tosses to the faculty. What to do about lectures, special events, ball games, and off-campus units.

He has had many of the people most involved, and some of the people present in the Senate working already. He will put in place a body to develop a proposal, and will circulate it and vet it.

On the budget:

He thinks we're okay from now through the end of the fiscal year. Next year is quite different. We'll continue the hiring freeze. There will be exceptions, but they'll require the approval of the relevant vice chancellor. Some considerations as

to what exceptions might be approved are these: protecting revenue sources, the criticality of program positions, extraordinary opportunities.

One uncertainty we've faced is about to end with the legislative session. Likely will not be much different from the governor's original proposal.

The Medicaid issue in the state is apparently not going to affect us in this session, but sometime in the next six months or a year. He recalled that in '91 or '92 there was a similar shortfall which resulted in an early-December special legislative session and the soda-pop tax. There probably will not be new sources of revenue approved this time around.

Finally, he's heard of special language proposals related to tuition increases—one that would require that they be reviewed by legislative committee, not one that any gains from tuition increase should go to scholarships. This increases the uncertainty about the willingness of the trustees to pass a tuition increase.

We don't know about the continued impact of the larger economy on state revenue. Some sources are taking a more negative view than are DFA and the governor. Enrollment? More is good, and it looks as if it might be likely. More stimulus money to be available? Maybe.

The chancellor has asked the vice chancellors to look at three budget scenarios:

- Worst case: An additional \$5M cut in next year's budget. (Less than 5% of our budget, but still a painful, if not a catastrophic hit.)
- Middle case: \$3M.
- Best case: An additional \$1.5M

The chancellor noted that he had done some serious thinking about how much of this to communicate to you. He assured the Senate that he's not sandbagging, not telling us it's going to be bigger than it's really likely to be, nor is he underplaying the risk, since that would be a problem as well.

Sandra Robertson is at work analyzing, the vice chancellors are analyzing their areas, and the Senate's Planning and Finance Committee will be pressed into service as well.

Next year may not be the end of it, of course. We need to make conservative assumptions going forward. The university will offer another window of early retirement for staff. We may, he said, offer another window for faculty early retirement as well. Anything we do in that area will require UA approval.

To his knowledge, no other campus in the UA system has used the early retirement option as well as we have, and he doesn't see that changing. There are some things we could do to make it a little easier on departments, but we'd give folks an opportunity to take advantage of the current system before we'd tinker with it.

The chancellor said we'll keep dealing with budget in a calm and systematic way, doing everything we can to minimize the disruption to the work we are here to do.

B. Provost Belcher

The provost talked about the plan for setting up a working group to lead the rethinking of the bachelor's degree, which is before the Senate in the form of a motion on this meeting's agenda. It mirrors what Fred Williams, then Senate president, and he did in 2005 to establish the Task Force on Faculty Roles and Rewards. There is merit to appointing rather than electing such a working group, he said, in order to get the best mix of senior faculty, who bring experience and

history, and junior faculty, who are going to have to live with this for another twenty years.

Q from Tschumi: Any idea about the size of the committee? *A:* He's thinking eight to ten, much like we did with Faculty Roles and Rewards. He said they might even come back with a plan for the composition of the committee, and try to vet it. The provost observed that the question of how we ought philosophically to approach composition is an interesting one: should it be a House-of-Representatives kind of thing or a Senate kind of thing?

The provost extended "Joel's cheery budget message" by announcing his intent to launch next week a budget planning exercise. He will have the deans begin working with their colleges on how they might deal with budget cuts at three levels. It is, at this point, an exercise, because its purpose is not to nail down the cuts we're actually going to make, but to get us thinking as well and widely as we can about how to reduce the budget without affecting enrollment.

The next state revenue report will come April 15, and we can't wait until the then to start thinking about how we'd handle a cut.

As the provost finished his report, Ford noted that he had asked the provost to talk today about setting up the group to revisit the bachelor's degree. Ford wants to move into next year ready and with a plan. He asked Undergraduate Council to consider how we should move ahead. He asked that if they thought it appropriate for another group to do this, they come forward with a resolution for the Senate's consideration.

In response to a comment and question from Tschumi, Ford said it would be his inclination to ask broadly for those interested in serving on this committee.

VII. Old Business

A. *MOTION.* Undergraduate Council, presented by Jeannette Clausen, chair.
(Legislation; no second required; majority vote at one meeting required.)

A task force responsible for conducting the review and reporting of requirements for the UALR baccalaureate degree to the Faculty Senate shall be appointed by the provost and the Faculty Senate president by the end of the current semester.

Commentary: A task force, unlike a standing committee such as the Undergraduate Council, will have the review of degree requirements as its sole responsibility and will have a stable membership to see the task through from beginning to end. This task force will be appointed by the provost and the Faculty Senate president from a slate of nominees who have been selected according to accepted practices in their units and who can commit to serving on the task force for two years or possibly longer, as needed to complete the work. The task force membership should include senior faculty steeped in UALR's culture and values who are familiar with the current baccalaureate degree requirements and their rationale, as well as more recently hired faculty who will be the ones to implement and champion the requirements that are ultimately adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate. The task force will consult

with stakeholders in all academic and support units, students, and alumni. It will report at regular intervals to the Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Council, the Student Government Association, and other bodies as deemed appropriate. To ensure that the review can begin without delay in Fall 2010, the membership of the Task Force shall be determined by the end of the current semester.

Clausen said the discussion leading to the motion was long and vigorous, lest anyone think that the provost and Senate president came and told Undergraduate Council what to say. Their first draft, she said, was much, much longer. Clausen said the Council knows it is not the body to take the lead on this rethinking of the baccalaureate degree.

Tschumi offered a friendly amendment to connect the commentary to the main motion by striking the word "commentary," and substituting the words "It is expected that..."

Clausen and UGC members present accepted the friendly amendment.

The president recognized Rosalie Cheatham, who raised a concern that a number of colleges do not have governance structures that provide for the election of a slate of nominees. She suggested the question might have to do with whether the committee should be comprised representatively (as by college) or with open membership (as Ramsey had urged).

Jovanovic asserted his concern that the motion as presented would permit the president and the provost to simply appoint whomever they want for whatever reasons they want. He pointed out that the Undergraduate Council is elected by colleges, and so is the Senate. He suggested that we should not shirk our responsibility as elected representatives.

Anson moved to postpone until early in the March meeting. Watts seconded.

Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.

VIII. Open Forum

Ford invited comments from the Senate. None were proffered.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Faust, Secretary.