



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Faculty Senate Meeting

Friday, February 20, 2009, 1:00 p.m.
Donaghey Student Center, Rooms B & C

MINUTES

Present: CAHSS— Anson, Bunch, Chadwick, Eshleman, Giammo, Martin, Ramsey, Webb, Yoder. CB— Edison, Nickels. CE— Bandre, Garner, Hayn, Lindsay, Pack. CEIT— Chan, Jovanovich, Tschumi, Tudoreanu. LAW— Foster. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Faust, Rhodes, Robertson, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Chen, Douglas, McMillan, Tarasenko, Wiscaver. EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Belcher, Ford, Williams, Davis.

Absent: CAHSS— Clausen, Estes, Levernier, Vinikas. CB— Brice, Holland, Watts. CEIT— Patangia, Tramel. LAW— Aiyetoro, Fitzhugh. CPS— Robinson. LIBRARY— Pine. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Robinson. CSM— Kosmatov, Perkins, Prince, Sims. EX OFFICIO— Lyn-Cook.

I. Welcome & Roll Call

The president declared it to be 1:00 and convened the meeting. The secretary called the roll.

II. Review of Minutes

The Senate reviewed the minutes of the January 30, 2009, meeting. **Motion and second to accept the minutes carried on voice vote.**

III Announcements

A. Rescheduling the May meeting of the Senate

President Ford asked the faculty's pleasure about changing the May 1 scheduled meeting of the Senate to May 8 and the location to the Legends Room in the Stephens Center. The consensus was that the change was an excellent idea. In celebration of the completion of spring semester, adult beverages will be served at the close of the meeting, thanks to Athletic Director Chris Peterson.

B. College level meetings with IRB policy drafting team

Given the discussion here last month, and the IRB's desire to have wider discussion about proposed policies, the IRB wishes to meet with interested faculty in smaller groups, by college. President Ford asked senators for recommendations of two people from each college to serve as point people in setting up these meetings. Ford acknowledged Lisa Sherwin, John Pittenger, and Bill Jacobsen, IRB members present.

These people were recommended to set up a meeting between IRB representatives and interested faculty:

- From AHSS, Vinikas was proposed and Webb volunteered.
- From Business, Steve Edison and Larry Holland.
- From Education, Trish Bandre and Judith Hayn.
- From EIT, Eddie Tudoreanu and Nick
- From Professional Studies, Robinson and Rhodes.
- From Law, Foster volunteered and will ask the other two senators.
- From CSAM: Yanoviak and Tarasenko
- From the Library, Pine.

Ford asked the volunteers to set up and facilitate meetings between interested faculty and IRB representatives for the purpose of discussing the proposed policies. He asked that the meetings all occur within the next four to six weeks.

C. 'Rethinking the Bachelor's Degree,' President Ford

President Ford made the case to the Senate that it's time for a careful, thorough revisiting of the bachelor's degree at UALR. He proposed the Senate use the next regular academic year, fall 2009 and spring 2010, to plan for that undertaking, which would begin full-force the following fall, after North Central reaccreditation is behind us. (The full text of the President's brief speech is appended to these minutes.)

IV. Reports

A. Faculty Senator and State Representative Nickels

At the request of Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Bill Walker, the president recognized Nickels for a report on the legislative session in progress.

Nickels noted several things going on at the Ledge that directly affect us and other institutions of higher education:

- Effort to repeal Amendment 33 of the Arkansas Constitution. Puts boards of higher ed institutions and some others at a level where there's not much legislative oversight. Rep. Roebuck has filed a bill in State Agencies to abolish that amendment. Nickels's reading is the motivation for the bill is that HE institutions are seen as not sufficiently responsive to legislators.

- HB 1357, the Roger Phillips Transfer Policy Act, has been signed into law.
- There's another bill having to do with transparency about compensation in HE.
- Still another that has come out of UCA's recent troubles has to do with the use of unrestricted tuition income to fund scholarships. UCA was using about 35%, and we use, he thinks, about 7% to 8%. There is also the matter of "off the books" scholarships.

When Walker asked him to talk about the transfer-of-credit bill, he thought it might be better to have Rep. Mike Burriss (Mark Burriss of STaR is his brother), who sponsored and shepherded the bill. Rep. Burriss has been open to improving the bill so that it's workable for those of us in four-year institutions, so much so that Nickels wound up signing on as a cosponsor.

Nickels pointed out that what's driving this and lots of other legislation is the concern about getting more students to graduation.

Burriss thanked the faculty for their work in helping men and women of Arkansas realize their dreams of what they wish to become. He noted his own history as a college instructor. The bill, he noted, is named for his good friend who was an adviser at National Park Community College.

He believes higher education has a serious responsibility in developing the future of our state. We must raise the educational achievement of our students in order to raise per capita income in this state as a whole. The year 2010 will likely mark the turning point from an increasing to a declining birth rate. We are, he says, going to have to change our methods of marketing higher education. He asked if senators had seen the Kaplan commercial, which he called “pretty impressive.” We have to change our ways of creating and delivering education so that it is accessible to more of the kinds of students we’re going to have.

He said the intention of the bill was in no way to do harm to universities. He noted that he is not our enemy, though there are those at the capitol who are. Rep. Burriss thanked the provost for his help, and said he thought David wouldn’t mind if he told a story about having given Belcher an early draft, which Belcher returned with recommendations. Burriss said he’d take it back to the lawyers. He did, which set up the opportunity for Burriss to call the provost back and tell him he’d failed the test. “If I did what you told me, there’d be no point in running the bill!”

The provost then asked, “Will you give us another chance?” to which Burriss replied, “You can’t take a final exam over.” Burriss enjoyed the tables-turned jest, but did believe the help of the the provost and others in higher ed made the bill better.

There is bill, he said, still a work in progress, that would call for common course numbering.

Q from Eshleman: Does the Transfer Policy Act mean we can’t ask transfer students to meet our requirements for foreign languages? *A:* There are exceptions to not requiring lower-level courses, and one of those is if the lower-level courses are a requirement of the degree program the student has chosen. Burriss said what we’re trying to eliminate are the unnecessary obstacles to transfer of credit.

Q from Cheatham: What if there’s been a gap of 5 or 10 years between the completion of an associate degree and coming to a four-year school? *A:* We both know it’s going to be hard for those students, but they should be given a chance to succeed.

Q from Rice: The Act gives ADHE the right to decide what the core will be. How does this relate to the state minimum core? *A:* The degrees that are specified in the bill have already been set up by ADHE under the existing minimum core standards.

Q from Tschumi, following up on Rice’s question: Do you foresee that the core for these degrees should become more like the 35-hour state minimum core for four-year degrees. *A:* Yes.

Q from Mathis: Will this act be in line with the 2010 deadline for articulation agreements that work also across state lines? *A:* Yes.

B. Chancellor Anderson

Before Rep. Burriss left, the chancellor offered him the following line he thought might be of use to him. “Old shoes and politicians have one thing in common, and it is that the tongue wears out last.”

A comment on Amendment 33: He doesn’t think there’s much chance that a successful drive to repeal it could be mounted. Would be very surprised if this made it

even into the three constitutional amendments the Ledge can commend to the voters. A failed fight to repeal it would leave a bunch of people who do need to work together finding it even more difficult to do so.

Amendment 33 came about because of the firing of J. William Fulbright by a governor. He thinks the insulation provided to universities is often overstated, since after all, the General Assembly controls the appropriation of state funds.

On transfer of credit, the chancellor said, we've made a good deal of progress. This campus, among all four-year institutions, has been able to deal with these issues very well.

Not much change on the funding front. If the governor's balanced budget proposal holds, we'll know where we stand. The chancellor said he has never been so worried about how bad it could become. If we can hold the line this time around on the governor's revenue projections, next year won't be easy, but it will be okay. But we don't yet know how deeply the national recession will strike us, or when.

One thing the chancellor wishes our legislative friends would do in addition to measuring our performance by regional and national benchmarks—which he thinks is a reasonable thing to do—is benchmark appropriation standards regionally and nationally as well.

The chancellor gave President Ford a “verbal pat on the back” for his position on looking hard at some important undergraduate curriculum issues. We can do that planning next year as we move through North Central accreditation.

The chancellor earned applause.

C. Provost Belcher

The provost noted that once again the chancellor has mentioned all his material.

He did reinforce one of Ford's points: it really is important that processes get set up ahead of time, to help assure us a fair, thorough process that doesn't drag on forever but also isn't rushed.

Academic affairs budget hearings took place earlier this week. He will meet soon with the Deans and then separately with the Planning and Finance Committee of the Senate to facilitate a conversation about what our priorities should be. What is it that we should be worried about? What's most important for us to attend to?

Our priorities are what will drive specific decisions about budget allocations. They are how we focus strategically.

Thursday, March 5, is the Planning & Finance Committee meeting. The provost asked that senators send their ideas about these matters either to your members on the committee or directly to the provost.

(The provost did observe that he was not acting alone, but rather representing all his colleagues in the System when he sent Rep. Burris a version of the transfer policy bill the lawmaker “was not exactly pleased with.”)

D. Reports of Standing Committees:

1. Graduate Council, Anne Lindsay, chair

Lindsay reported there will be a graduate coordinators' meeting next Wednesday in Donaghey Student Center. The coordinators will be discussing a number of important issues with the new associate dean and dean of the Graduate School.

One new interdisciplinary certificate program (management and information technology) has been approved.

The graduate faculty status form has been revised, and is available on the provost's web site.

A new topic for Graduate Council—and one for which Lindsay is seeking feedback today—is a policy for the number of times a student may attempt to complete a course. On the one hand, we are a place of opportunity; do we want to limit it? On the other hand, a student who takes a course many times without completing it is using up public resources in a way hard to justify.

Robertson said a related issue is incompletes. Students who take too long, he observed, dig a hole it's hard to get out of.

Lindsay asked if senators present see this phenomenon. Douglas said it is a problem in her department.

2. Undergraduate *Council*, *Jeanette Clausen, chair*

Clausen was out of town. Senators were referred to the Council's web site for minutes of meetings.

V. Old Business

There was no old business before the Senate.

VI. New Business

There was no new business before the Senate.

VII. Open Forum

No topics came forward for discussion.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Faust, Secretary.

Appendix:

Rethinking the Undergraduate Degree

An address by Assembly President Richard Ford to the UALR Faculty Senate on February 13, 2009

Universities, like other human organizations, experience cycles in their lives, some long and some short. We are all familiar with some of the shorter cycles, those that fit into a yearly calendar such as the rhythm of the academic year, or the ebb and flow of the academic semester. Longer cycles that we are familiar with are those that occur on five- or ten-year intervals like

accrediting agencies' visitations. But cycles with terms longer than that are less obvious to us because they either outreach our memory or they just aren't recognized as such. Today I would like talk about one of these longer cycles in a university, and suggest that we are nearing a peak (or valley) of this cycle. Specifically, I will suggest to you that it has been more than twenty years since the UALR faculty undertook a concentrated effort to examine the undergraduate curriculum in a holistic way, and I believe it is time to do that again. I am referring to the efforts of the "blue ribbon committee" that in the 1980s looked at the "core," the foundation on which we base our undergraduate degree. I submit to you that it is time to revisit our university core, and many other aspects of the undergraduate degree, in a systematic and holistic manner. Times have changed. UALR does not exist in the same environment that we did twenty-something years ago. We no longer "own" students: few of our graduates begin their college degrees with us. Students today face many more educational choices than did students in the past. I believe we need to begin the process of *rethinking the undergraduate degree*.

I think it is my responsibility to suggest this task to this group at this time for several reasons, including the need to meet our responsibilities and to ensure sufficient time for us to adequately prepare ourselves for the upcoming task. Allow me to elaborate: First, as most of you know, UALR will host the North Central accrediting team next fall, and we all hope that we will be reaccredited during the following spring. That process not only will provide us some basic beginning information but will also be good timing for any new program changes that might result from the rethinking of the bachelor's degree. Second, the faculty is charged with the responsibility of establishing the academic curriculum for the university. Therefore it is only proper and fitting that this body, which is the elected voice of the UALR faculty, initiate the process I am suggesting. And my third point is that the task of rethinking the undergraduate degree should be entered into in an organized fashion resulting from a thoughtful planning period. I suggest that this body spend all next year in educating ourselves and planning the various "what"s, "who"s, "how"s, and "when"s of systematic reexamination of the undergraduate degree at UALR.

I suggest that during each faculty meeting next year we spend some time talking about this task. We should agree as to what topics will be reviewed. Some, like reviewing the undergraduate core, might be obvious, but other topics, such as reviewing the total number of hours required for graduation, may not. The issue of 120 hours as posed to 124 hours is looming on the horizon. I believe we should suspend consideration this year and next of the question concerning the minor. I also believe is appropriate for us to consider such matters as

how many hours in residences are required for a UALR degree and the issues related to upper-level course entrance exams.

I also envision next year as a time for us to discuss and agree on the methods by which we will accomplish our task. What working groups will be formed? How will we select the people to work on these groups? What rules will they operate under? For example, will we send a group off to write something only to be amended line-by-line on the floor of the Senate or will we agree to that the groups' work will be presented to us for an up or down vote, as is sometime done in the U.S. House of Representatives. I think next year should also be used as a planning period for assessing cost and requesting funding to support this entire process. I can see the possibility of asking for funds for retreats, or for some travel to accomplish our goals.

Yes, I do think next year we need to spend a lot of time planning for the start of another long-term university cycle. Whether it's a peak or a trough is unclear to me, but I believe we do need to recognize that it's time to take on this task of rethinking the bachelor's degree. So my closing words to you, with this major task in front of us, are these:

***The time has come," the Walrus said,
To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages— and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.***

from "The Walrus and the Carpenter," by Lewis Carroll