



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Faculty Senate Meeting

*Friday, May 8, 2009, 1:00 p.m.
Stephens Center Legends Room*

MINUTES

Present: CAHSS— Anson, Bunch, Clausen, Eshleman, Giammo, Ramsey, Vinikas. CB— Brice, Edison, Holland, Nickels. CE— Bandre, Garner, Hayn, Lindsay, Pack. CEIT— Chan, Jovanovich, Tramel, Tschumi, Tudoreanu. LAW— Aiyetoro, Fitzhugh. CPS— Faust, Robertson, Robinson, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Chen, Douglas, McMillan, Prince, Sims, Tarasenko, Wiscaver, Yanoviak. EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Belcher, Davis, Ford, Williams.

Absent: CAHSS— Chadwick, English, Estes, Levernier, Webb, Yoder. CB— Watts. CEIT— Patangia. LAW— Foster. LIBRARY— Pine. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Rhodes. CSM— Kosmatov, Perkins. 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 April 10, 2009, meeting. **Motion and second to accept the minutes. Carried on voice vote.**

III Announcements

President Ford announced that vice president Ramsey would take his place at the University's graduation ceremony next week. Some banter ensued regarding the University's mace and Ramsey's wielding thereof.

At the end of the academic year, President Ford said, he wished most to look ahead. He suggested the Senate think about what the faculty will be doing to finish out the first decade of the 21st Century.

- The T&P document will come back to the Senate as a revised draft from the chancellor.
- The IRB's proposed policies are still being discussed at the college level, and the Senate expects to see a revised draft in the fall.
- The proposal for use of the rank of university professor will come forward from the ad hoc committee soon.
- We still have the need to develop a timely and reliable system of notification to the Senate of the actions of Undergraduate and Graduate Councils, and a usable system for collecting minutes of committees.
- We have North Central accreditation, with the site team visiting in the fall.
- And last but certainly not least, next year we have the task of planning how we'll undertake the rethinking of the bachelor's degree at UALR.

IV. Reports

A. Chancellor Anderson

The chancellor thanked the executive committee and the Senate for all its time in keeping the matters mentioned moving toward successful resolution in the coming year.

He told a good end-of-the-year story of four young men walking out of Donaghey Student Center, obviously to attend a final. One was grouching about a grade on an assignment. Another was overheard to say, "The woman is *crazy*. If you've got a B, take it and run!"

The chancellor further prefaced his remarks with a story about Ray Thornton, then university president, going into men's room in Fayetteville and seeing a hand-lettered sign over the hot-air blower saying, "Press for a message from the President."

The chancellor spoke of the proposed IRB policies and procedures presently being reviewed across campus. He noted increased federal oversight and increased accountability for research that are requiring us to revise our policies and procedures. He encouraged us to scrutinize and question the proposed changes, and also to remember not to shoot the messenger.

He spoke of the impacts on the university of current economic troubles, and observed that, all in all, we still have reasons to feel good. We are experiencing some effects, certainly, such as a slowdown in fundraising for the EIT building. On our original timeline, we'll have enough to build it but not necessarily enough to finish out all the interior with furnishings and equipment.

We have been notified of a budget cut of just under \$345,000 for next year. If that turns out to be the only cut we get, he said, we'd be fine; students would scarcely notice. It is unlikely to be the only cut, of course, but we will not face the devastating consequences felt by many businesses and nonprofits in the state. He's been collecting articles: Pilgrim's Pride will lay off 800 workers and end relationships with 160 contractors. Affiliated Foods will let go 500 workers. There's a plant closing in Dumas ending 109 jobs. Heifer International is trimming 20% of its jobs. Brent and Sam's bakery is closing, at a cost of 70 full-time and 20 part-time jobs.

There are also some encouraging signs: The stock market is stabilizing a bit, apparently. Federal Reserve chairman Bernanke anticipates an upturn in the economy by end of the year, though jobs will continue to be lost for a while longer. Why does this matter? The vast majority of dollars coming into the state's coffers and turning around to go out to us come from both sales tax and income tax. We are among seven states that have done less badly than others, though we're certainly feeling it. And historically we've seen that we go into recessions later and come out later than most of the rest of the country.

The chancellor thinks next year will be hard, but we'll keep moving and be in a good position to recover quickly from whatever hits we take. We still don't have a final budget for next year, and probably won't for a while, he said.

He is asking the deans to look at the caps on course enrollments. He emphasized that he's not talking about big increases. He asked senators for guesses about how many course sections are offered in a semester. He got responses of "300-400" and "1,500." We offered 2,600 course sections last fall. Thus raising course caps by just a couple of seats could make a big difference.

We are experiencing higher amounts of uncollected tuition.

One thing we'll concentrate on is protecting those things that generate enrollment for us. He encouraged every department to cherry-pick the concurrent enrollment courses for excellent new students. EIT, he noted, does that to good effect with the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Science, and the Arts.

DHE is setting up a task force on enrollment. He'll report to us about it in the fall.

Good news: One piece is there will be no health insurance increase next year for employees. Another is AHSS's wonderfully successful black-tie fundraising dinner on Fisher Court, magically transformed for the occasion. In this third or fourth year for the event, the price for tickets was higher; so was attendance, and so was the amount of money contributed in advance of the event.

The annual staff award ceremony this year recognized eleven employees who have finished degrees, taking advantage of tuition discounts to do so. Also recognized were nineteen retirees, and a raft of people with service of five to fifteen years. Janice Brook, of the scholarship office, was the employee of longest tenure, having served the university for forty years.

The chancellor invited questions, and none were posed.

B. Provost Belcher

The provost proposed to update us on one matter, to look forward, and to look back.

About Act 182: Giammo had contact with Sen. Burris about the effect of the act on our foreign-language core-curriculum requirement. He reiterated that it was not his intent to affect such requirements, and said he'd be in touch with ADHE about it. We got final regulations, though, which reflected no progress on the issue. ADHE says undergraduate foreign language requirements will not hold water under the act. The chancellor and the provost intend to go and beard Jim Purcell on this issue. The provost thanked Giammo and Nickels, and saluted Sen. Burris.

Looking forward: We've been working on our self-study for North Central for two years, and we have our site visit dates in November. A lot of the finalizing of the study will perforce take place over the summer. He called Susan Hoffpauir, associate vice chancellor, to the podium.

She noted, that when John Taylor, North Central's liaison to the Higher Education Commission, came to speak to us three years ago, he said, referring to our strategic plan, "You basically *have* a self-study." The committee has been looking at the progress we've made on Fast Forward, and explicitly developing evidence that we meet specific standards within the four focus areas of the evaluation schema.

Hoffpauir said the committee will send drafts to the entire faculty, not so much for editing but for discovering if there are things we've overlooked.

The great part of a not-always-so-great process, she said, has been finding out what this university really is—looking at what faculty and students are doing, how we are connected to community. It's made her proud of "what all of you do."

Belcher gave credit to Hoffpauir for a fine job in leading this immensely difficult process of gathering what we need for our self-study.

Looking back: Last Friday night, the college winners of Faculty Excellence Awards were recognized, and the university awards were made to Flinn for

community service, al Rizzo for research, Yoder for teaching. That occasion is always an opportunity to reflect on the great stuff that's happened:

Can see the progress on our campus toward a new and very green building. We have a new BFA in dance, and new master's degrees in accounting and in taxation. One of our strategic goals was to double the number of nursing grads in five years, and we did it in three. We have new Ph.D. programs approved in criminal justice and reading. We are completing the first year of a convergence curriculum in Mass Communications, training students to work in many media. We're hiring some really great faculty members. The Campus Campaign has a goal of 75% faculty and staff participation, and this year we went from 50.8% to 58%. We've received a major donations from the Walkers for nursing and for IT. We have many faculty members doing great grant work, we're seeing some good federal funding, as for the earthquake center, nanotechnology research, and nursing.

The advertising for UALR is so good, the provost said. He tipped his hat to Judy Williams and her staff, who are working with not just television but all those new media "that I don't do."

The provost closed by observing that while for every great thing we can point to, we could list fifteen more we want to see happen, it's important for us to celebrate each other's fine work and our collective successes.

C. Reports of Standing Committees:

1. Graduate Council, Anne Lindsay, chair

Lindsay noted a number of course approvals, program changes, and new programs, all of which may be found in the [minutes of Graduate Council](#).

Lindsay will be stepping down as chair of Grad Council and is handing over a list of issues for the Council to work on. She said they've streamlined routine business and now can have more time to deal with matters of significance.

Faust asked about the changes needed in how the Council communicates its decisions timely to the Senate—indeed, to the faculty at large. Lindsay said it's on the agenda for next year. They tried something this year, but it didn't work well, so they'll have another run at it. Ford explained the need in light of the University Constitution's provisions. Hoffpauir asked about UGC minutes. Faust said mid-April was the last date of posted minutes. Tschumi asserted that we need to push the information, given the short timelines, rather than rely on "simply passive posting."

2. Undergraduate Council, Jeanette Clausen, chair

Coming up after that discussion, Clausen asked that anyone with ideas about how best to set up a workable system for timely notification should bring them forward, and gave [her e-mail address](#).

Clausen reported they've reviewed and approved the courses for the new BFA in dance; approved a revised AA in Law Enforcement, making the transition from AA to BA more effective; approved an entrance exam for admission to nursing; reviewed and responded to advance notice of a proposed BS in construction engineering that will make use of existing resources and fill a significant gap since there is no accredited program in Arkansas or contiguous states; and approved course numbers for the first

three semesters of Mandarin Chinese, now being offered under generic LANG.

Q from Tschumi: Last year, the Senate passed legislation about the first-year experience courses with the expectation that course content would be reviewed. What's up? Deferred to Hoffpauir. She referred to training, administrative preparation, other matters. Said we can't go forward with F-YE course without resources, and there is as yet no money. *Tschumi:* When this was presented to us, there was discussion about having departments take up FYE classes on their own. Is that off the board? *Hoffpauir:* Not off the board.

(See attachment A for the full text of Clausen's report.)

V. New Business

A. **MOTION.** Executive Committee, presented by Earl Ramsey, vice-president.

(Motion; no second required; majority vote at one meeting.)

Be it resolved by the Faculty Senate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock that students who have met all graduation requirements at the conclusion of the 2009 spring semester shall be approved for the appropriate degrees for which they applied."

Vice President Ramsey presented the motion.

Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.

B. **MOTION.** Sen. Vince Vinikas. (Resolution; no second required; majority vote at one meeting.)

Be it resolved by the Faculty Senate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock that:

We, the faculty of this university, are philosophically, ethically, and legally committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all of our students. This does not imply, however, that all students can or should receive an identical education. The faculty honors and celebrates the diversity of our student body.

We oppose, in particular, a "one size fits all" approach either to higher education or to the life of the mind. As we strive to encourage each of our students to reach their highest potentials, we contend that a "universal design" for all would tend to subvert that mission. Pitching our classes to some Most Common Denominator is not the means to foster individual student achievement.

The concept of Universal Design, borrowed from the profession of architecture, has great merit when it pertains to the built environment. Applied to the world of ideas, however, the agenda encroaches on academic freedom and the rights of students of all abilities to receive the best education possible. Although we regard it as a privilege and a responsibility to listen, there is no circumstance under which this faculty will automatically defer to the judgment of the staff of the Disability Resources Center as how best to educate our students.

The President recognized Vinikas, who moved the resolution, to speak on behalf of the resolution.

Vinikas told about having learned he would have a student with special needs in an upper-level history course. He turned to the DRC. In repeated conversation, he said, the staff and he came to an agreement on how we could offer the student this course without altering the form and content of the course.

He proceeded until he was contacted by DRC staff who said what he was doing was unacceptable, and that the course would have to be altered significantly in both form and content for all students in order to meet the needs of the student with a disability.

The episode, Vinikas said, highlighted for him the apparently irreconcilable conflict between faculty and DRC staff on matters related to faculty's exercise of academic freedom and pedagogical judgment.

Speaking against the resolution, Aiyetoro raised a couple of concerns about it and introduced Ranko Shiraki Oliver, member of the Law School faculty and chair of the university wide committee on disabilities, ceding the floor to hear from her.

Oliver said she never understood universal design, as it was presented to us, to be a one-size-fits-all proposition. She thought the idea was that we make our courses able to reach all students in the classroom. Her concern with the resolution is that before the Senate passes such a resolution, there should be someone here from the DRC to speak for the idea of universal design. A second concern is that adopting the resolution as presented might be viewed as not embracing all students, or as a way to avoid equal opportunity and equal access for all students. Her recommendation is that the Senate not pass this now, but extend the matter into the fall so that we can make good on our invitation to the DRC staff to come back.

Anson spoke for the resolution. The point of the resolution for him responds to his concern that DRC staff are already interpreting universal design in a particular way as it applies to course design and instructional methods.

Robinson spoke against the resolution, noting that he is a speech pathology professor and indeed teaches the concept of universal design in public education. He sees universal design as a progressive philosophy. He said he's saddened that we've come to this place where we see the issue as pitting faculty and DRC staff against each other when we should be collaborating. The resolution seems to attack the philosophy rather tackling the specific behaviors that may have encroached on academic freedom. He echoed Aiyetoro's contention that universal design is the exact opposite of a one-size-fits-all approach.

Oliver was recognized again, and noted that she has taught disability law for a long time. She chairs the Chancellor's committee on the enforcement of the ADA. Here to explain to the Senate the concept of universal design. If I had not been professionally involved with universal design for over twenty years, I too would probably be skeptical.

What is giving us difficulty, Oliver said, is the application of the philosophy not just to buildings and equipment but to what happens in our classrooms. She said she cannot tell us in detail what it means because the application of the principles is highly context specific.

Oliver strongly encouraged delaying this matter until fall, when the DRC staff can come and explain their position. Assessment requires us to step back and say, "How can I teach this course so that its content is better understood by every student?" One of our many constituencies is people with disabilities, along with people with varying learning styles, and with English as a second or third language.

Ford sought speakers in favor of the resolution. Jovanovic, who was recognized, had a question: If we pass this, what vulnerability might it create

regarding a lawsuit? Oliver responded: We have a dual mandate: not to discriminate against people with disabilities and to provide “reasonable accommodations.” It’s always possible that we could be sued if we have such a statement on record. She made clear that fear of lawsuits should not deter us from doing what we believe is right. She told of having had a student who said to her, “I will not be called on in class” because he had a learning disability. She did not accede to the student’s demand, holding that such would certainly not be a reasonable accommodation.

Giammo, who was a member of the working group of faculty and DRC staff, spoke for the resolution. He went into the working group with the hope of finding language all could support and came out with even greater concern. No one in the group, in his opinion, was opposed to making reasonable accommodation. The discussion was about making changes to the entire course—and removing from faculty the responsibility and the right to determine whether changes made in the classroom are academically sound and good for everyone.

Sims spoke against the resolution. He suggested there’s still confusion about what’s universal design and what’s reasonable accommodation.

Melanie Thornton, staff member of DRC said she believe a lot of faculty’s concern is based on misunderstanding of particular circumstances. She said DRC staff would never say “you have to do this.” Universal design puts the control in the designer’s hand, she said, and we would only be seen as collaborators in that process. We can offer suggestions, but the choice is always faculty’s.

She elaborated on staff’s opposition to including the phrase “academic freedom” in the earlier resolution in support universal design. It had to do with how the resolution would look from the point of view of people who identify themselves as having a disability. Staff believes it would be read an intent to support interests other than those of people with disabilities.

Sharon Downs, DRC director, added that the language in the resolution now before the Senate sounds as if confrontation is what characterizes faculty interaction with DRC staff. She said their approach is not that.

Another senator comments that he is not sure where the resolution would take us, where its framers intend for it to take us. Thinks we probably need a lot more time to learn about these ideas before we act on it.

Anson, speaking in favor of the resolution, said we’ve been making accommodations for more than thirty years, and gladly so. The final decision about how to structure courses and how to accommodate students must rest with the professor, and he believes the resolution makes that clear.

Clausen spoke against the motion, saying she doesn’t feel her academic freedom encroached upon by a commitment to the principles of universal design.

Nickels moved, Tshumi seconded, to table the resolution. Motion carried on voice vote.

VII. Open Forum

Nickels announced he had just got word of five cases of H1-N1 in Arkansas: four at Camp Robinson and one in Lawrence county.

A question was raised about the task force working on roles and rewards for nontenured and non-tenure-track faculty. Ford said they're at work, and will continue into the fall.

The provost, Ford added, has said that the next group we'll work on will include research and special-projects staff. Robertson made the pitch for that discussion to come sooner rather than later.

A question was raised about the packets that faculty submit for Faculty Excellence Awards: are they available for review? Ford said he thinks it is the case that the packets go from deans to administration to reviewers and are then returned to their owners. The winners' packages go to the provost, and no one knows whether they are available to review.

Ford said he will ask the question of the provost on behalf of the faculty.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Faust, Secretary.

Attachment A

Undergraduate Council Report to Senate, May 8, 2009 *Jeanette Clausen, Chair*

Update on business conducted since my last report on April 10:

1. **DANCE Curriculum.** In January, the UGC recommended approval of the BFA in Dance, which is making its way through the approval process. In April, we approved the courses that will support the BFA when it is available, as well as the current BA in Dance. TAD has revised courses, developed new ones, and eliminated obsolete courses to make an efficient and flexible program to serve UALR students and comply with the guidelines of the accrediting body, the National Association of Schools of Dance.
2. **AA in Law Enforcement.** The UGC approved the revised AA in Law Enforcement. The changes basically bring the AA into compliance with the state minimum core. The total number of hours required (62) remains the same. The revised degree has the salubrious side effect of making it easier for AA completers to transition to a BA in Criminal Justice. The change is effective with the Fall 2009 semester.
3. **Nursing.** The UGC approved a change to the Nursing admission requirements to include an admissions test beginning with the 2010 entry cycle. The change is motivated by research that shows close correlation between admissions testing and student retention/degree completion.
4. **BS in Construction Engineering.** The UGC reviewed and responded to an Advance Notice Comment Form for a BS in Construction Engineering. EIT has been working on this program for a couple of years and will present a proposal next year. The program has support from the Arkansas Construction Industry. It will make use of existing courses and faculty in CNMG and SYEN, so it can be implemented with few new resources. The plan is to meet ABET's accreditation guidelines for this type of program. There is at present no ABET-accredited program in Construction Engineering in Arkansas or in any contiguous state.
5. **CHIN 1311, 1312, 2311.** The UGC approved three new course numbers, CHIN 1311, 1312, and 2311 (Mandarin Chinese I and II, Mandarin Chinese III). Chinese is currently being taught under generic LANG numbers. The new alpha code will make it easier for students wanting to study Chinese to find the courses and will accurately identify the language on their transcripts.
6. **Other.** The UGC approved changes to the requirements in the BBA in Management (General Management Emphasis) necessitated by content changes in the major and by various course changes, deletions, or suspensions that had been approved earlier. Other courses changes approved were in ECON, MKTG, MUED, and ANTH.

This concludes my report. Again, I thank the UGC, both the elected and the ex officio members, for their hard work and upbeat attitude. It has been a pleasure to work with the UGC this year.