



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Faculty Senate Meeting

Friday, October 17, 2008, 1:00 p.m.
Dickinson Hall Auditorium

MINUTES

Present: CAHSS— Anson, Bunch, Chadwick, Clausen, Eshleman, Estes, Giammo, Levernier, Martin, Ramsey, Vinikas, Webb, Yoder. CB— Brice, , Edison, Holland, Nickels, Watts. CE—Bandre, Garner, , Hayn, Lindsay, Pack. CEIT— Chan, Jovanovich, Tramel, Tschumi, Tudoreanu. LAW— Aiyetoro. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Faust, Rhodes, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Chen, Douglas, Kosmatov, McMillan, Sims, Tarasenko, Wiscaver, Yanoviak. EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Belcher, Ford, Williams, Davis, Lyn-Cook.

Absent: CEIT — Patangia. LAW— Fitzhugh, Foster. CPS— Robertson, Robinson. LIBRARY— Pine. CSM— Prince, Perkins.

I. Welcome & Roll Call

President Ford exercised the “awesome power” to which he occasionally refers and declared it to be 1:00 p.m. He called the meeting to order. He also noted that his awesome power does not extend to spelling, and apologized for sending out an agenda with the name of the building wrong.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the September 19, 2008, meeting of the Senate were reviewed and approved as distributed.

III Announcements

Ford announced that he has been recruiting a team to work on the proposed code of classroom conduct. His intention is to get the group together, designate one of them as the actual writer, and have them get on with creating a draft code that sets out the norms of civility we wish to reinforce in the university. Their work, of course, will come to the Senate for review and approval. He will announce the group as soon as he has acceptances from them all.

IV Election

Ford apologized for the executive committee's failure to remember that the Senate should have last month elected to the Appeals Council two academic administrators below the rank of dean.

Ramsey nominated Robertson and McMillan. Hearing no other nominations, the president called for a vote. **Both were elected by unanimous voice vote.**

V. Reports

A. Chancellor Anderson

The Chancellor assured the Senate that he checked the name on the building, and it is correct.

He thanked the Senate for moving ahead on the code of conduct.

Enrollment this fall, at 11,966, he said, is okay in a broad sense. It's down 211 from last fall. He observed that because of our tightening of admission standards, we deferred admission of 322 would-be freshmen for additional academic preparation.

The numbers in recent years have been distorted, in a sense, because they include high-school concurrent enrollment students. Had we not had them, we'd have seen a sharp decline in the last few years, as would a number of other schools in the state.

He reminded us that recruitment is everybody's business at UALR. We have a special institutional interest, as well, in recruiting freshmen who will stick with us and be successful across their whole paths to a degree.

The chancellor had nothing new to report about health insurance. We will probably be paying more than \$400K in increased costs this year. He reminded us that the university has absorbed all the cost increases for some years now without passing on any of the burden to employees. We probably will not be able to do that this year.

As for the state revenue, the chancellor is still cautiously optimistic that we'll be able to get all we were slated approved for in the last biennial budget. Belt-tightening is still the order of the day, though, given the decrease in enrollment, the increase in health insurance costs, and the general insecurity of the economy. He said we might liken our situation to that of a fine boat heading into choppy waters. We're going to survive, because we're on a solid boat that can get through either a small or a big storm, but the journey may be rough.

Nothing, he said, would help us as much as a surge in enrollment in the spring semester,

We're revising the online application for admission, and he appreciates the good work being done. We're also close to pulling the trigger on an electronic PAF. We're developing an electronic master calendar, which may seem easy, but turns out to be surprisingly difficult. Still, we're moving ahead.

He has received the P&T document. Says it's a good piece of work (thought it reads, unsurprisingly, as if it were written by more than one committee), and he commends the Senate's effort.

Q from Ford: We sent you a resolution last spring that relates to the Faculty Excellence Awards. Still on your desk? *A:* Yes. Haven't made up my mind yet.

Q from Tudoreanu: How do the rising numbers in graduate enrollment affect us? How do they factor into the situation? *A:* The increase is good. Graduate enrollment is small in comparison to undergraduate, so the impact of growth is less. He doesn't buy the notion of emphasizing one over the other. Thinks we're in a good position to recruit graduate students. Our own undergraduates, of course, will feed our graduate programs. Remarked on the two undergraduate populations, with one being the 45% of students who are older, from midtwenties up. Thinks those numbers bode well for continued growth in graduate enrollment.

B. Provost Belcher

The provost lunches monthly with the SGA officers, and wants us to know they are active and interested leaders—and that most of them are out of the Biology Department, whatever that means. They want to take a more active role in our community. Belcher is impressed. They have some issues they're interested in that mesh well with ours.

The provost reminded us that he talked last month about the Higher Education Coordinating Board and its consideration of a number of issues, including program review. At a meeting recently, all the proposals passed. We're really waiting for guidance from the state Department of Higher Education (ADHE).

In summary, all degree programs will undergo external review in a seven- to ten-year period. From ADHE, we need guidance about what we ought to be looking for in a self-study for those programs that don't have formal external accreditation already. There's also a logistical issue about how to fold the now unaccredited programs into the flow of a repetitive cycle of review.

On program viability: the policy went from a requirement of 3, 2, and 1 graduates annually on average over the previous five years for baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral programs, respectively, to a requirement of 6, 4, and 2 graduates annually on average over the previous three years for baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral programs, respectively. There is provision for a few exceptions based on exceptional need in the state.

Jim Lynch and the Office of Institutional Research are undertaking to determine which degree programs might be on shaky ground, so we can start working. For example, there is the issue of cognate programs, which may be, with state-level approval, considered conjointly in order to meet the viability standard.

We will have three classes of degree programs that don't at present meet the program viability standard: those very close; those that are new and will make it; and a few that are going to be a major challenge.

We'll take our first snapshot June 30, 2010, then annually thereafter. Any program that comes up lacking will have two years to get up to standard. After that, the university can keep offering the degrees, but they won't count toward our eligibility for state formula funding.

Q from Ramsey: May be premature to ask, but what would happen to tenured faculty in a nonviable degree program? *A:* It is premature. Each situation is so different. Sometimes, for example, though a degree program might not be viable, courses in that program might well need to continue to be offered.

Q from Eshleman: The 2010 snapshot will cover the period 2007 to 2010? *A:* Yes.

C. Reports of Standing Committees:

1. Graduate Council, Anne Lindsay, Chair

Lindsay said the Council hasn't much new to report, but does want to say in the spirit of providing more and better information, they have a new secretary who's putting much more detail into minutes. Minutes are available on the [Graduate Council's web site](#), which can be linked to also from the [Faculty Senate's web site](#).

Have consulted with Judy Williams and with Jeanette Clausen about how best to disseminate the work of the two Councils widely.

2. Undergraduate Council. Jeanette Clausen, Chair

Clausen spoke further to the three issues Ford had asked the Council to consider:

Timely notification of faculty: the plan is to post draft minutes on [UC web site](#) on the Friday following UC meetings, and to post the agenda the Friday before meetings.

Concerning issues that need to come to the entire Senate: the Council believes the language of the constitution gives broad power to the Senate to review any decisions they believe need to be reviewed.

Streamlining the Council's work: The Council didn't meet last Wednesday, as they continue to explore the feasibility of meeting only every other week. Following the example of Graduate Council, they will impose an April 15 deadline for matters to come before the Council.

As for the Council's recent actions, they approved an "Ethics in the Profession" course in principle to be added to the core. There's collaborative work happening now in developing the syllabus.

3. Fringe Benefits Committee, Lars Powell, Chair.

Powell began by wishing it were a happier reporting occasion, but we ran a \$6 million deficit in employee benefits last year. That leaves us with a debt to pay and with reduced expectation that the value we hope to retain in these benefits will hold.

Committee has requested data from the U of A System to try to find out what's driving the increases. There are lots of levers that can be pulled to change the cost of benefits, but we have to understand what's happening. Said there had been no push-back from the System in face of the request for data. He expects it to be forthcoming, and the committee will keep on with its analysis.

Ford asked Powell to share his view of our plan relative to others.

Powell sits on the board of the central Arkansas insurance underwriters' group. He sees lots of benefit plans, and is not aware of a more generous one.

Q from Tschumi: What's the total annual plan expenditure? If we knew, we could better judge what the \$6M deficit means. *A:* We don't know, and we're trying to find out.

Q from Ramsey: How many employees are covered by the system *A:* We don't know that yet, either.

Q from Aiyetoro: Will the faculty have input to the committee on alternatives we might be considering? *A:* Absolutely. Powell noted the structure of the committee, which is intended to represent the campus. He did remind us that our power is only to recommend.

Q from Tschumi: When will the System need to make a decision? *A:* Depends on how good their credit is.

Q from Nickels: Currently QualChoice is the administrator. Likely to continue? *A:* If we saw some likelihood of significant cost reduction, an RFP might be recommended. Pointed out that there are few organizations qualified to serve as benefits administrator for a plan of this size and nature.

Ford thanked Powell, and observed that it probably makes sense to invite him back several times to keep the Senate posted.

V. Old Business

- A. RESOLUTION. Executive Committee (No second required; majority vote at one meeting.)

The Faculty Senate endorses the resolution entitled, "A Campus Commitment to Universal Design" as presented below with the addition of the following proviso:

Recognizing that academic courses are delivered in a variety of pedagogic modes, faculty will retain freedom to exercise judgment in incorporating universal design where appropriate within course frameworks and in accord with the best practices of various disciplines.

A Campus Commitment to Universal Design

WHEREAS, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to providing a quality educational experience to a diverse student body;

WHEREAS, the university also has a history of being in the forefront in terms of the campus community's response to disability;

WHEREAS, the traditional accommodation approach of responding to disability perpetuates a "separate but equal" model;

WHEREAS, the adoption of universal design as a framework within which we deliver instruction, plan our services, and organize academic programs will place UALR in the forefront of universities that are making the shift from a reactive approach to a proactive one;

WHEREAS, the implementation of universal design will likely result in new and improved design;

WHEREAS, many educators have noted that implementing universal design principles benefits most students – including students with disabilities; students for whom English is a second language; international students; nontraditional students; students with a learning style that differs from that of his or her instructor's teaching style; and academically at-risk groups (which at UALR includes African American men).

Therefore, be it RESOLVED by the Faculty Senate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock

That UALR staff, faculty and administrators adopt a formal campuswide commitment to universal design and publish a summary statement on key web pages and in undergraduate and graduate catalogs;

(Sample statement: The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is committed to the creation of usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable learning environments. We promote the principles of universal design for the betterment of all members of our diverse campus community, including people with disabilities and other identity groups.)

That universal design concepts be infused in faculty and staff training—especially training that relates to course design, Web design, information delivery, and service delivery;

That UALR implement a campus diversity initiative and include Disability as an aspect of the diversity that is an integral part of our campus community;

That the university revisit campus policies and adapt them to reflect this paradigm shift;

That as staff and faculty orientation materials are developed, incorporate messages that promote this philosophy as a part of our campus culture;

That UALR use the principles of universal design to guide construction/development of all aspects of the campus environment: the built environment, classrooms and labs, the IT environment, instruction, programs, and services and engage faculty, staff and administrators in identifying disabling environments and reconstructing them based on these principles;

That UALR hire architects who are trained in universal design principles and involve the Chancellor's Committee on the ADA in the early planning stages for new buildings and remodeling projects;

That we view the need to retrofit a process, product or environment or provide an accommodation as a signpost pointing toward the probable need for redesign;

That we promote inclusive, equitable design with our vendors or potential vendors by communicating the need for products that are usable, to the greatest extent possible, by all of our students, faculty, staff, visitors and alumni and purchasing products that meet our standard; and

That we, as a campus, utilize the following as guiding principles as we move forward toward this vision of a more equitable, sustainable and usable campus environment:

Disability is an aspect of diversity that is an integral part of society.

*Disability is a social construct resulting from the present inability of social institutions and designed environments to accommodate individual differences.
(Schriner & Scotch)*

Access is a matter of social justice.

Good design means, among other things, that a product, process, or environment is, to the greatest extent possible, usable by everyone.

Creating and advocating for usable, sustainable, and inclusive learning environments is a shared responsibility.

Commentary:

Universal design, a concept that emerged from the architectural field, is now recognized as a viable concept for rethinking and reconstructing many environments—including the environments found in educational settings. Frank Bowe, a pioneer in these efforts, defines universal design as it applies to the educational setting as “the preparation of curriculum, materials and environments so that they may be used appropriately and with ease, by a wide variety of people.” In essence, the application of universal design moves us from the separate but equal approach of accommodating individual differences, to a more inclusive and equitable way of thinking about design of instruction and service environments.

We propose a campus-wide commitment to universal design as a framework within which to deliver instruction, plan our services, and organize academic programs.

Recognizing that academic courses are delivered in a variety of pedagogic modes, faculty will retain freedom to exercise judgment in incorporating universal design where appropriate within course framework and in accordance with best practices in the various disciplines.

Ford reminded the Senate that this measure came before the Senate on the agenda for April 18, and was never reached because of the extensive work on the Senate’s recommendations for tenure and promotion policy.

Anson expressed his desire to make sure we’re only approving the resolution itself and not the commentary. The president and others said the Senate was acting only on the resolution, and that commentary was merely language from the proposers of the resolution intended to set out the rationale for action.

Anson offered a motion to strike the commentary from the minutes.

Vinikas seconded. Spirited parliamentary discussion ensued, with several senators offering opinions as to whether it was either wise or even feasible to make such a deletion from the written record of the body, and about whether the rules of order permit consideration of such action when there is a motion on the floor. The new parliamentarian, Smith-Olinde, rose impressively to the situation and advised the president that Anson’s motion was an incidental motion, and must take precedence.

Anson detailed his objections to the concepts in the commentary in which he sees a number of unclear or incorrect suppositions. Giammo expressed similar concerns.

Jovanovich pointed out that neither the Senate’s nor Robert’s rules of order require that discussion be recorded. Thus, he said, we should wait until we review the minutes for adoption.

Clausen observed that the paragraphs titled “Commentary” very explicitly say faculty may always exercise final judgment.

Vinikas said it seems clear to him that we as a faculty do not know what “universal design” is, or what a “commitment” to it means. He understands we are already obliged to accommodate people with disabilities, and so has trouble making out what the real import of a “commitment to the principles of universal design” would mean beyond our current commitment.

Sharon Downs, chair of the Disability Resource Center, said the commentary was added specifically to respond to concerns raised by the senators in the spring.

In an effort to answer Vinikas's question of "what's different about this from what we already do," Downs offered the following:

Historically, we have responded to the needs of students with disabilities individually and reactively. Universal design is about a proactive response in which the university expresses its intent to design its campus and its educational programs so that they are accessible to the largest possible number of people. Such a commitment remains entirely voluntary; professors may do as they wish, but the resolution supports and affirms the philosophical framework of how we at UALR see the issues related to disabilities and accessibility.

Ford called for a **vote on Anson's motion, which passed on voice vote.**

The committee accepted as friendly a motion by Aiyetoro to strike the parenthetical phrase "*(which at UALR includes African American men).*"

The committee accepted as friendly a motion by Vinikas to strike the phrase "*WHEREAS, the traditional accommodation approach of responding to disability perpetuates a 'separate but equal' model.*"

The committee accepted as friendly a motion by Tudoreanu to strike the phrase "*That the university revisit campus policies and adapt them to reflect this paradigm shift.*"

Smith-Olinde said that perhaps, since she and others now in the Senate were not present last spring when this matter first came before the body, we might have a presentation on it by the Disability Resource Center at the next meeting.

Tschumi suggested it might be useful to establish a working group to spend some time answering the questions that have arisen and bring the matter back to the Senate.

Sims spoke against the resolution on the grounds that we are already complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Watts moved to table, seconded Tudoreanu. Passed on voice vote.

VI. New Business

A. MOTION. Sen. Roger Webb (Legislation; second required; majority vote at one meeting.)

The Faculty Senate instructs the Undergraduate Council to explore the continued appropriateness of UALR's minor requirement for bachelor's degrees and instructs the Council to return legislation to modify or abolish the requirement if that is deemed appropriate.

Motion seconded by Ramsey.

Webb spoke to the motion, saying that he had really wanted his motion to kill the minor, but was asked by Ford to move that it be referred to Undergraduate Council. He observed that we have waived the minor requirement for a whole college, and we routinely waive it for all manner of reasons under all manner of circumstances. Further, he suggested, it's a particular problem for many transfer students. He described it as a tradition mostly honored in the breach.

Ramsey strongly supported the motion, noting that even the "tradition" is not at all universal.

Clausen, new to this university, asked if anyone could recount the original thinking of how it came about.

Jovanovich observed that while minors were meant perhaps to broaden the educational experience of students, we now have an extensive core curriculum that does that. And should we do away with the requirement, individual disciplines and degree programs could still certainly structure their own requirements for minors.

Cheatham suggested we should pay special attention to possible unintended consequences for particular programs if the requirement is to be removed.

Eshleman commented on the possible advantage to graduates to have a minor noted on the transcript, making it clear, for example, to prospective employers without their having to read a long list of courses and notice where the student's emphasis was.

Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.

B. Motion. Academic Calendar and Schedules Committee. (Legislation; majority vote at one meeting.)

The Faculty Senate affirms the existing policy concerning late registration/schedule adjustment as an important student service and a tool in retention, reminding faculty members that they have the prerogative to limit any problems associated with late registration through attendance policies and penalties for failing to turn in required work.

Barnes said in support of the motion that the committee had determined eliminating late registration could easily result in losing as many as 1% of the student body, at a cost of half a million dollars in revenue per semester. Late registration periods of at least five days are policy in all universities in the state.

Nickels spoke against the motion, expressing again his concern about how much is lost when students enroll late in his web-based course. He made clear that he is challenging the policy because of academic, not financial, concerns. He noted that retention is mentioned in the motion, but that no data was presented that spoke to retention.

Nickels moved to table, seconded by Sims. Motion to table carried on voice vote.

VII. Open Forum

The lateness of the hour apparently overrode the need to discuss anything further.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at about 3:30 p.m.