



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

**Faculty Senate Meeting**

*Friday, November 14, 2008, 1:00 p.m.  
Donaghey Student Center, Rooms B & C*

MINUTES

*Present:* CAHSS—Bunch, Chadwick, Clausen, Eshleman, Estes, Giammo, Martin, Ramsey, Vinikas, Yoder. CB—Holland, Nickels, Watts. CE—Bandre, Garner, Hayn, Lindsay. CEIT— Chan, Jovanovich, Patangia, Tschumi. LAW—Fitzhugh,. CPS— Collier-Tenison, Faust, Rhodes, Robertson, Smith-Olinde. CSM— Kosmatov, McMillan, Prince, Sims, Wiscaver. EX OFFICIO— Anderson, Belcher, Ford, Williams.

*Absent:* CAHSS— Anson, Levernier, Webb. CB— Brice, Edison, CE— Pack. CEIT — Tramel, Tudoreanu. LAW— Aiyetoro, Foster. CPS—Robinson. LIBRARY— Pine. CSM— Chen, Douglas, Perkins, Tarasenko. EX OFFICIO— Davis, Lyn-Cook.

*I. Welcome & Roll Call*

The President declared it to be 1:00, and called the meeting to order. The secretary called the roll.

*II. Review of Minutes*

Nickels offered a correction to the minutes of the October 17 meeting: the motion from Academic Calendar and Schedules Committee was tabled. The secretary apologized for her cerebral outage at the end of the last meeting, and thanked Nickels. Tschumi said he did wonder what it was he had said where the draft minutes read only, “Tschumi said...” Faust assured him she had spotted that lapse and filled in the gap. He was relieved, if still a bit curious. On motion, second, and voice vote, the minutes were approved as corrected.

*III Announcements*

*A. Campus Campaign*

Ford encouraged senators to participate in the comprehensive Campus Campaign and to encourage others in their departments to do so.

*B. Faculty New-Student Awards Program*

Ford reminded senators of the Faculty New-Student Award program. The award to first-time enrolling undergraduate students is a \$200 per semester tuition reduction for each semester the student remains in good standing. Each faculty member has the opportunity to initiate one such new award each academic year. Ford described it as an opportunity for faculty to help a student

beginning his or her college career, and to help the university and ourselves at the same time by perhaps encouraging students to enroll at UALR who might not have without this gesture of support.

## *IV. Reports*

### *A. Chancellor Anderson*

The chancellor recognized two faculty colleagues who were just elected to the General Assembly: Jim Nickels (who mentioned that his opponent was in favor of students carrying guns on campus) and Ann Clemmer, of Political Science. It's been a long time since we've had this kind of representation, and he indicated his great respect for those who will do such important and difficult public service.

In an effort to put our financial prospects in perspective for us, the chancellor reported the sky is not yet falling on this institution, and he doesn't anticipate that it will. Things are difficult, and may get a good deal more so. The governor presented his budget yesterday, and we're still trying to understand all that's in it. The governor and the Department of Finance and Administration are still seeing growth in the economy, and projecting even a slight increase in tax revenue for next year. If we begin seeing reports that sales tax revenue is declining, that will no doubt mean we should be anticipating further cuts.

The chancellor directed the Senate's attention to what's happening around the country in our sister institutions. We're seeing cuts made by even very well-heeled private and public universities. We're still ahead of the curve, but have some hurdles: we're about \$800K down on tuition (170 fewer students X 2 semesters X 12 hours X \$200 per credit hour). Now up to about \$525K in additional insurance cost. Putting those factors together with a decline in our investment income, we're down about \$2.3M. We'll get through this without terrible pain, but with some real disappointments. We're dealing with what we have in front of us now, and that should be our best preparation for next year, when we'll be no doubt facing phase two of surviving tight times. Hiring, for example, is likely to be slowed—we're already going slowly this year—and may need to be put on hold.

The chancellor reminded the Senate that if we take out concurrent-enrollment students, we've actually had an enrollment decline of about 600 students. This surely points up how important is faculty's involvement in recruitment efforts.

We do now know what's likely to happen with the grocery sales tax. The gov has recommended removing a fourth cent of the original six. \$31M.

*Q from Chan:* The state's surplus is still there, isn't it? How does it figure into the budget outlook. *A:* The surplus can only be helpful, but it was certainly not clear yesterday exactly how the governor intends to use it. The chancellor is encouraged that the governor may well see the surplus as a way to shield the higher-education part of the state budget. K-12 is untouchable now as a result of the Lakeview decision. Before, if there was a cut to be absorbed, it could be spread over the entire range of education expenditures, while now it's distributed only across half of that, which means the cuts would be much deeper.

Chancellor talked briefly about the kinds of questions that will need to be answered as the state goes about structuring the lottery scholarship fund.

Ford asked if the Chancellor had any comments on the recommendations regarding promotion and tenure policy sent him by the Senate in September. The chancellor said he has them, has read them, and should be back to the Senate to talk about them before too many moons have passed. Ford asked if he would comment on how many moons were too many. Laughter, kindly, prevented a serious reply.

### *B. Provost Belcher*

The provost said it was his pleasure to bring three things of a positive nature.

First, he noted the difficulty of keeping up with the status of our endowments' investment income, much of which is in scholarship funds. It's been hard for us even administratively to know exactly where we are. Karin Bara and Aaron Baker have collaborated on creating an automated system that will enable timely information to each department on the exact status of their scholarship funds. He's even more excited about an aspect of their work that will permit students to enter information about themselves and find out precisely the scholarships they're eligible for.

Second, the provost reminded us that we have brought in a consulting firm (NGT) to work with us on customer service. Of particular note to NGT was how we treat transfer students. Given that 2/3 of our students are, that's a real problem. The provost reported that, in an effort to make the process easier, more transparent, and more quickly effective, we're pulling together all the information and services into a single office that will handle transfer students.

Third, the provost reported there was a drop in the number of students needing remediation in math from 52% in fall '07 to 39% this fall, and a drop in students needing remediation in reading and writing from a percentile in the upper thirties to one in the mid to upper twenties from fall '07 to fall '08. He believes this is where we're seeing the benefits of our tightened admission standards.

*Q from Ledbetter, a guest at the meeting:* The transfer office sounds like a terrific idea. Who's going to run it that actually knows what to do? *A:* Good question; we're looking. It will be in Vice Chancellor Donaldson's shop somewhere, and we're looking for the right person to lead it. Ledbetter encouraged the provost to be sure all faculty advisers are kept well and thoroughly abreast of what's happening.

### *C. Reports of Standing Committees:*

#### *1. Fringe Benefits Committee, Lars Powell, Chair:*

There are some changes to the benefit plan being made that will affect not only the university's budget but our personal ones as well. There has been about an 11 percent annual increase over the last several years, and though each has come as a result of something unexpected, perhaps we should start expecting them...

We can anticipate next cycle a 6.5 percent increase in premiums, but also increases in deductibles (from \$550 to \$759), out-of-pocket maximum now capped at \$2,000 instead of \$1,000. Inpatient, primary physician, specialist, and pharmacy copayments all are showing increases.

There's also a larger issue we're going to have to face as the cost of health care continues to increase. We've handled these rises with increased cost-sharing. It may be time to be careful what we wish for, remembering that health care benefits are also compensation. While we have great benefits, our salaries don't compare so favorably with our colleagues around the country.

Powell noted we've created some new programs intended to support healthier living, and we're trying to determine how those are paying off for us.

Powell brought information about the size of the insurance system, a question that had arisen at the last Senate meeting: about 15,000 employees, 31,000 members, \$102M estimated total expenditure. Those numbers give us some context for the \$6.2M shortfall systemwide.

The chancellor said a number of these specifics will be sent out next week to the campus.

2. *Graduate Council, Anne Lindsay, Chair*

It's been a reasonably quiet month. The only major thing we've been working on is the new initiative being led by Hoffpauir and having to do with accepting more military training as transfer credit than we have in the past. Graduate Council has endorsed this approach, which Clausen will say more about in the report from Undergraduate Council.

3. *Undergraduate Council, Jeanette Clausen, Chair*

Undergraduate Council (UC) will post on its website (a link to which may be found on [the Faculty Senate web page](#)) its agendas the Friday before each meeting and draft minutes the Friday after. She said they've pretty much been doing that. She said they still haven't quite figured out how to manage sending out an e-mail to the Senate and all the faculty.

UC is about to address the minor question.

A revised accounting program had come forward/

HSCI is the course designation for a new Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences.

They're not yet ready to bring the Senate recommendations regarding military transfer credit yet, but UC would see those courses articulated by the American Council on Education as acceptable. ACE has a rigorous system for course articulation and recommending a number of credit hours. While we're not quite ready to close the deal, Clausen said, this does seem to us a good thing to do. Our current policy is antiquated, and there would be significant advantages.

The U.S. Army Reserve national center for education is located in North Little Rock, and it's important for us to be identified as a military-friendly university. There's potential there, much larger than we had first thought, for enrollment.

4. *Academic Calendar and Schedules Committee, Amy Barnes, Chair*

Barnes drew applause when, ever the consummate communications professional, she made the microphone at the podium work through skilled manipulation of the on switch.

She distributed a cover memo and one example of a template for scheduling final exams. She reminded the Senate there have been mistakes in and confusion about finals scheduling over the last few years. She suggested we read the memo carefully, since it communicates the principles on which the templates are based, all of which are matters of policy previously established by the Senate. She said the committee will ask for the Senate's formal approval of the templates at its next meeting. She invited senators with questions or suggestions for changes to contact her ([aobarnes@ualr.edu](mailto:aobarnes@ualr.edu)).

*Q from Nickels:* What about final schedules for courses offered in WebCT/Blackboard? *A:* We asked Linda Musun to seek input from teachers offering online courses, and are awaiting the results before we come forward with a recommendation on the matter.

*D. Reports of ad hoc committees*

*1. Ad Hoc Committee on University Professor, Dave Spillers, Chair:*

A year ago, Spillers said, Ford called a meeting at 7:30 in the morning, and gave us the charge of determining whether it is feasible and desirable for UALR to initiate the rank of university professor, and if it is both feasible and desirable, of developing procedures for instituting it.

Spillers distributed a report of the committee's work so far.

He noted we've had this rank for some time, but up to now it's been in the hands of administration and used to reward outstanding faculty members. We'd like to put the rank in the hands of faculty, he said. The proposal is for college tenure and promotions committees to come up with their own criteria. He said the committee is recommending a "council" to keep some control and prevent the rank from being entirely elitist. They assume there will be a raise associated with the rank.

There was some discussion of how to mesh these recommendations with the proposed university guidelines for tenure and promotion. Spillers said they had not consulted the proposed guidelines.

Eshleman observed the document mentions only teaching and research. Spillers said all three areas of scholarship were indeed discussed, and should have appeared in this document. He assumes there will be some rubric developed, but said the committee has not worked on it in detail.

*Q from Jovanovich:* Is the intent to merge this into the larger tenure and promotions process? *A:* Spillers said he assumes so, since this rank is intended to be an academic award, and a rank to be aspired to.

Ramsey suggested that all three of the traditional areas are touched on in the draft.

*Q from Chen:* Since you referred to Fayetteville's policy as you worked, are there departures from the Fayetteville policy in your proposal? *A:* The composition of the council was a primary one, since we thought it important to widen participation in it. Fayetteville had two ranks, one having to do with more administrative things, and we took that out.

Spillers thanked the faculty for their input and questions, and said they plan to bring the matter forward for a vote in the spring. Ford encouraged Spillers to bring a next iteration to the Senate in December, and Spillers said they would probably do so.

*2. Roles and Rewards II, Catherine Lowry, Chair:*

Lowry could not be here because of a family matter. Ford made a brief status report on the task force that recently convened for the first time, and will likely work for the next year. He reminded the Senate that it grew out of the previous Faculty Roles and Rewards Task Force, which looked only at tenured and tenure-track faculty, and is charged with a similar exploration of roles and rewards for nontenured faculty..

*V. Old Business*

There was none.

*VI. New Business*

- A. MOTION. Undergraduate Council, Jeanette Clausen, Chair. (Majority vote at one meeting.)

*Replace the current wording in the Undergraduate Catalog with the proposed wording presented below:*

*Current wording:*

Students may substitute four (4) hours of the eight (8)-hour science requirement in the core curriculum with technical courses, with certain conditions. The substitution will be two for one; the student must take two (2) hours of a technical course for every one (1) hour of an approved competency course. A technical course is defined as any science course at the 1000-level or above that is not approved as a core course. Each substitute course must have a laboratory component, and all substitute courses must be from the same discipline. A science course is from the disciplines of anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science, or physics. The remaining four (4) hours of the science competency requirement must be met by an approved core course.

*Proposed wording:*

A student who takes four-hour lab science courses outside of the UALR science core requirements for the purpose of using the course(s) toward his or her degree program requirements will be allowed to use the course(s) to satisfy the UALR science core requirement."

Clausen said the position of the majority of UC members is that the two-for-one requirement disadvantages students who begin intensive science curricula but who then change their plans and need only meet the core requirement.

*Q from a senator:* Why are we meddling with the core? *A:* We're not. We're just proposing to change the policy for students who would have met their core science requirements if they had continued in their first major. We already allow students transferring from other institutions to transfer course and core credit in this more favorable way, and it seems unwise and unfair to treat native students more strictly.

*Q from a senator:* Would this mean social science lab courses could count toward the science core? *A:* The answer is no. We tried to determine how many students would be affected by this change, but we couldn't; the university has not kept information on students who had not been permitted to count their 4-hour lab science courses outside the core.

Tschumi suggested the language "degree program requirements" is unclear, and suggested that they change the wording to "major requirements." Robertson suggested that "major requirements" would rule out courses outside their major discipline, though such courses are sometimes required. Tschumi said that indeed a major can require a course from another department.

**Friendly amendment by Tschumi to substitute the word "major" for the words "degree program." Accepted by the Council as friendly.**

Jovanovich spoke against the motion on the basis of its language related to "intent." He said that in reviewing transcripts, we cannot determine intent. Every student who took the same courses should be treated equally. And, he added, it should be auditable. We should be able to look at the transcripts to satisfy our accrediting body that the rules were followed. As this policy is written, you'd have to interview students as to

their intent. Having voiced his opposition, he added that he would be in favor of dropping the 2-for-1 rule, and for otherwise liberalizing the range of courses available to satisfy the core.

Sims raised the question of blue-ribbon competencies. He said that while some may regard them as antique, he still takes them quite seriously in both pedagogy and assessment. If our core is going still to be based on these competencies, he said, this motion seems not to be desirable.

Martin asked Clausen, who deferred to Hoffpauir, if we have a procedure now that permits students to seek waiver for whatever special circumstances might exist. There is, she said. And the advisors have noted that particular advisors may know the route to take to help students who change their paths toward a degree, while others may not. There are students who get this waived, and students who don't if their advisors hew to the rule in the catalog.

Giammo sought a middle route in language that would give us a way to ensure that students who change majors can get flagged. Smith-Olinde said she thinks there is no way to know exactly when students move from one major to another.

Jovanovich added the point that the policy as stated might be seen as encouraging students to game the system.

Smith-Olinde seconded Hoffpauir's concern about ill-informed advisors, and said that's clearly our responsibility, and students should not suffer for it.

Sims suggested that this is a nonacademic policy being proposed. He doesn't see it as disadvantaging or penalizing students who change majors; most students who change majors understand they may incur additional requirements.

Clausen noted that NGT noted, in general, that we make far too extensive use of special-exception procedures, and that when the special exceptions become the norm, it's time to change the procedures. While it is not clear how frequently special exemptions are sought in relation to the science two-for-one rule, the Council's sense is that we need a way to make things easier for these students so they are not treated differently than students who transfer into UALR.

Tschumi explained the history of the development of rules for the science part of the core.

Robertson spoke in favor of the motion. Suggested that we might need to get a little more precise with the wording.

Mike Ledbetter was recognized and spoke in strong opposition to the motion, reiterating the development and assessment of the science core curriculum and the blue-ribbon competencies. Proposed a rhetorical friendly amendment that would strike the word "science" from the motion, and thus would provide that students could take whatever courses they want to take in history, thereby ignoring the competencies in history. This is not, he said, a fairness issue for students; it's about educational integrity. To adopt the motion would be to go against things we've said are important.

Vinikas offered a friendly amendment to strike the word "science." Not accepted.

Tschumi said he's been growing more and more concerned about what's happening around the core. At the time we developed the core, he said, our emphasis was firmly fixed on educational quality, but the fact is we really do have two very different sets of rules about the core now: one for native students and another for transfer students, who are treated with much more flexibility. That needs to be addressed, and given that

eleven or so years have passed since we last gave major attention to the core, it would probably be time to revisit it thoroughly in any case.

**Jovanovich moved a substitute motion. Ramsey seconded. “A student who takes a course outside the UALR core requirements, but in the same department as a core requirement, will be allowed to use the course to satisfy that UALR core requirement.”**

Eshleman spoke against the substitute motion, observing that it would effectively do away with the core. He said he certainly understands the impulse, but thinks such a sweeping change is worthy of more considered discussion.

Yoder said he is no particular friend of the core, but agrees with Eshleman.

**Nickels moved to table the substitute motion. Robertson seconded. Motion carried on voice vote.**

**Nickels moved to table the original motion. Robertson seconded. After hearing the voice vote, the president asked for a hand count. The motion carried 19-9.**

### *VIII. Open forum*

There was widespread gathering up of gear, and no further matters were raised for discussion.

### *VIII. Adjournment*

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Judith Faust, Secretary.