

Senate Council Minutes
April 5, 2004

The Senate Council met on Monday, April 5, 2004 at 3:00 pm in the Gallery of the Young Library and took the following actions.

1. Approval of the Minutes from March 29, 2004

The Chair asked the Council members if there were any corrections. There being none, the minutes were approved as written.

2. Student Health Services excuse policy

Greg Moore, Director of University Student Health, outlined his concerns regarding the lack of enforcement of a policy stating that Student Health Services will not give excuses from class, tests, projects or the like based on illness. Moore cited administrative time and money, appointments being given to health students and an increase in counterfeit excuses as a few of his concerns. Moore asked for the Senate Council's endorsement in enforcing the policy.

The Senate Council members discussed the differences between minor, major, and long-term illnesses, the need for greater communication between faculty and students and what sort of verification of illness faculty can expect from students. Edgerton noted that telling faculty they may request verification and then not providing verification to students may create some conflicts. Further discussion ensued regarding how best to inform students and faculty that the policy will be enforced. The Chair suggested informing the faculty and students via broadcast e-mail at the beginning of the summer and again just before the fall semester begins. Cibull suggested advertising the change in the Kernel. Grabau suggested encouraging faculty to include it on their syllabi. The Chair will notify the Provost and the Ombud before sending the broadcast e-mail, which will also be presented to Moore prior to distribution.

3. Uniform Cover Sheet

Debski and Chard offered some editorial changes in renaming the columns on the sheet. The Chair said that Tagavi was absent from the meeting and said he did not bring a copy of Tagavi's e-mail in which he proposed the sheet. The Chair noted the existence of a routing for curricular and program changes. Ms. Scott indicated that the form is available on all Senate Committee web sites. Chard expressed uncertainty as to why an additional form was necessary and recommended tabling the issue until a later meeting.

4. Dean search committee for College of Health Sciences

The Chair asked the best mechanism by which nominations for the committee should be sought. Chard and Cibull suggested sending the request to the Senate. Cibull also suggested that some items like this could be sent to all faculty in the future, given the relative ease of sending a broadcast e-mail. Debski supported the idea of sending the request to the Senators who could in turn approach their colleagues. The Chair suggested forwarding the request to the Senators and seeing how large of a response

is received before considering a broadcast e-mail to the faculty. The Council members expressed general agreement.

Announcement:

The Chair announced the Governor's signature of legislature that will relocate LCC to KCTCS. The Chair suggested forming a small work group to address faculty and curricular issues that may arise as a result of the transfer. Saunier reported that such a group apparently already exists, though she was unaware of the committee's composition. The Chair said he would consult with the Provost regarding the composition of that group. He added that the number of senators allowed by the GR's may need revision.

Saunier noted that a new vice-chair election will be needed once LCC becomes part of KCTCS, since she is vice-chair elect. Debski recalled that Ernie Bailey had been elected in the event that Saunier was unable to serve during the December Senate Council officer elections. The Chair noted that the Saunier's position on the Senate Council will be filled by a runner-up from the last Senate Council election.

Other Business:

Kaalund asked the Senate Council members to consider ways in which programs that are struggling with their course offerings and resource issues could be identified and aided before they reach the "code red" stage recently experienced by USP required courses like writing and oral communications. Grabau agreed that the Senate Council should not "manage by crisis". Debski noted that the two programs in crisis for USP had recently been addressed, and that sometimes it is "too late" for programs who are in the crisis stage to be helped. Kaalund suggested identifying courses and programs in the "code yellow" stage and helping them avoid crisis situations.

Chard suggested each college's internal review process could help in the process of identifying these courses and programs. Debski suggested rethinking "what a USP program should look like" and suggested the USP Committee should take on such a task. Cibull suggested rethinking the way in which teaching is accomplished and considering increasing the use of technology. Yanarella suggested scheduling a block of time in the future to consider the issue more deeply with the aim of exploring different possibilities. The Chair suggested this topic might be well suited for discussion with the Provost at the upcoming breakfast.

5. Four Remaining SACS issues

The Chair thanked the Provost and VP Ray for attending the meeting to discuss this issue. The Provost outlined the four remaining issues and explained they were in the "second report" phase of the accreditation reaffirmation process. The Provost said the first issues pertained to 400G and 500-level courses being taken by both undergraduate and graduate students in the same course section. SACS expects that different attention be paid to those two groups of students in terms of how they are graded or what requirements they fulfill, to name a few. The second issue pertained to faculty credentials. The Provost explained that SACS requires faculty to either hold a doctoral

or terminal degree in the appropriate field or to have sufficient experience to explain the lack of the degree. He noted the two primary areas of concern as being Education and Social Work. The third issue regarded SACS perception of UK's over-reliance on TA's for teaching delivery, while the fourth was concerned with the monitoring, supervision and professional development of TA's. The fourth issue dealt with the monitoring, supervision and professional development of TA's.

Debski asked if clearly stating the policy on the four issues would satisfy SACS. Ray replied they want evidence of policy implementation and monitoring. Ray added that Dean Blackwell from the Graduate School is working with the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council to communication to department chairs the need for oversight on these issues.

Cibull suggested communicating with course directors via a multiple choice questionnaire to determine how differentiation between undergraduate and graduate students is determined. Ray replied that Blackwell is conducting a survey to that effect, the results of which could be communicated to SACS.

Ray noted that the issue of appropriate credentials for those teaching graduate level courses needs to be addressed. She said the use of the teaching credential certification form was helpful and said Blackwell was helping to ensure the criteria were clearly defined and publicized. Ray cited Social Work and Education as two areas in which the issue of credentialing was questioned by SACS. The Provost pointed out that the PhD in Social Work is a relatively new degree. Ray added that SACS has asked for a statement about the emerging degree. The Provost noted that some clinical faculty and adjuncts are excused from some of the stringent requirements by virtue of their experience in their fields. Ray concurred, noting SACS primary concern was for the competence of the instructors.

Ray outlined the difference between TA's who were autonomous and those who were supervised and suggested that in the future the University might only report those TA's who act autonomously. She noted that TA's who are truly autonomous must possess the necessary credentials to teach while those who are not autonomous will not assign grades. The assignment of grades will be conducted by the course coordinators, who are faculty. Ray said she was in the process of determining how many TA's are autonomous and how many are under supervision.

The Provost said he planned to use revenue obtained through the implementation of the new upper-division fee to help reduce the number of TA's used and increase the hiring of full-time lecturers or faculty. Debski asked what sort of ration would be acceptable to SACS and Ray replied that a target had not been provided. Cibull asked how the University fared in comparison to its benchmarks. The Provost replied that of the 13 universities examined 72% of the courses were taught by full-time faculty compared to 64% at UK. The Provost added that the University had committed to raising that number to 66%.

Jones asked about the nature of the underlying issue. Ray replied that the real issue was whether or not the University had adequate faculty resources. The Chair asked for an explanation on the distinction between an autonomous TA and a lecturer. Ray replied that funding sources were a part of the explanation. The Provost added that TA's were only allowed to work 20 hours per week and that lecturers had a full-time workload with benefits. Debski asked if SACS was concerned about class size when considering the question of adequate faculty resources. Ray reiterated that specific targets were not provided for the institution. The Provost noted that the percentage of large classes at UK is smaller than at other schools while the percentage of small classes at UK is larger than at other schools.

Ray addressed the last issue, pertaining to the training and professional development of TA's. She said that Blackwell has been communicating with the colleges and departments to make sure they provide orientation at the beginning and middle of each semester in addition to the orientation provided by the Graduate School. She added that Blackwell had developed a supervisor check-list for use in the evaluation of TA's. And finally, each TA will be visited in the classroom once a semester for evaluative purposes.

Cibull suggested comparing the grades of students in different sections who take the same tests. Ray agreed to examine that approach.

Jones asked the Provost about a section of the Administrative Regulations pertaining to RA's being informed of the criteria upon which they will be judged to receive their RA award in the subsequent year. Jones asked the Provost if he recalled how much attention was paid to this particular AR when he was Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost replied that more attention was usually given to TA renewals.

The Provost said that by presenting these remaining unaddressed issues to the Senate Council he hoped the Council members would help suggest possible solutions. Cibull suggested exploring other teaching methods, including the use of technological instructional delivery methods.

The Chair informed the Council members of a recent e-mail from the Provost in which the Senate Council was asked to provide nominees for the dean of Health Sciences search committee. The Chair said he will send a broadcast e-mail to the Senate to solicit nominations.

Other Business:

The Chair discussed the recent disagreement over the definition of educational units. The Academic Organization and Structure Committee defined an educational unit as one that fulfilled a teaching, research or service function. The Provost said he preferred the word "and" to "or" and suggested that an educational unit fulfills all three missions. Jones asked about the Center for Drug and Alcohol Research in which post-doc training is accomplished. He asked if that sort of training qualified as "education" and would satisfy the Provost's definition. The Provost agreed that it would and used the example

of the Center for Research on Violence Against Women as being a non-educational unit. Jones said the use of the word “and” instead of “or” was acceptable to him so long as one portion of the three-pronged mission was not given more weight than the others. Cibull noted either definition was prone to interpretation. The Provost agreed.

The Chair reminded the Council members of their upcoming breakfast with the Provost and suggested a few topics of conversation.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:03.

Respectfully submitted by
Jeff Dembo, Chair

Members Present: Chard, Cibull, Debski, Dembo, Edgerton, Grabau, Kaalund, Kennedy, Saunier, Yanarella.

Visitors Present: Moore, Nietzel, Ray.

Prepared by Rebecca Scott on April 13, 2004.