

Senate Council
October 15, 2012

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3 pm in 103 Main Building on Monday, October 15, 2012. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise.

Chair Lee X. Blonder called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

1. Minutes from October 1, 2012 and Announcements

The Chair said that no changes to the minutes from October 1, 2012 had been received. There being **no objection**, the minutes from October 1 were **approved by unanimous consent**. The Chair then suggested SC members go around the room and offer their impression of the October 8 University Senate (Senate) meeting. Below is a summary of some comments.

- Senators may have been disappointed with the lack of a back and forth dialogue.
- The meeting went well; faculty senators in particular seemed more engaged.
- The comment about engaging in a dialogue through the newspaper was insulting to some.
- One college has voted (as a committee of the whole) to not endorse the October 4, 2012 SC memo to President Capilouto.
- The President should make an effort to attend more Senate meetings.
- There is a difference between informing and carrying on a real conversation.

The Chair reported that she was named as a member of the Provost Search Committee; she had submitted the names of three other faculty members as possible members but none were selected.

Due to invited guests' schedules, the Chair suggested the agenda be re-arranged. There were no objections.

3. Committee Reports

a. Senate's Academic Programs Committee – Andrew Hippisley, Chair

i. Proposed BA in Environmental and Sustainability Studies

Guest Hippisley explained the proposal to SC members. He explained that the **motion** from the Senate's Academic Programs Committee (SAPC) was that the Senate approve for submission through the President to the Board of Trustees the establishment of a new Bachelor of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Studies. Hippisley explained the proposal in detail.

There was extensive discussion among SC members, Hippisley and Guest David Atwood (Arts and Sciences/Chemistry). SC members were fairly supportive of the proposal in general, but also identified a few issues that they asked Atwood to rectify in an updated version of the proposal. Wood **moved** that the proposal for a new BA in Environmental and Sustainability Studies be returned to the SAPC to:

- Provide an updated letter of support from College of Arts and Sciences Dean Mark Kornbluh;
- Remove the reference to the degree being homed in the Department of Chemistry and change it to being homed within the College of Arts and Sciences;

- Clarify the program faculty for the proposed BA in Sustainability and Environmental Sciences.
- Clarify how program faculty for the proposed BA in Sustainability and Environmental Sciences will be added or removed;
- Provide an updated letter of support from College of Agriculture Dean M. Scott Smith;
- Provide a letter of support from the chair of the Department of Chemistry expressing support for Atwood serving as director of the BA in Environmental and Sustainability Studies; and
- Provide a letter of support from Mary Arthur (Agriculture/Forestry).

Brion **seconded**. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed and two abstaining.

4. Honors Program Discussion - Ben Withers, Honors Program Director

The Chair invited Ben Withers, director of the Honors Program (and interim Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education) to discuss a few issues facing the Honors Program. Guest Withers did so. He said there were a few issues on which he specifically requests SC input. Grossman suggested that after discussion, Withers return in a few weeks with draft rules language for the SC to review and, if approved, to send to the Senate's Rules and Elections Committee (SREC).

- Relationship of Honors Program to departmental honors
 - "Honors" title
 - Potential for sharing credits that count toward both
- Responsibility for identifying, vetting and approving "H-sections"
- Possibility of clustering courses in honors around a common theme/topic

Regarding the use of the term "Honors," SC members were of the opinion that departments can offer students a "degree with honors" (lower case "h") but that the term "Honors Program" was reserved for the Honors Program, directed by Withers. There was also support for encouraging or requiring departments and programs to begin to use "with distinction" instead of "with honors" to further differentiate between the two; this would also allow students to graduate with both types of commendation. SC members expressed concern when Withers mentioned that there are a handful of programs on campus that purport to admit students into a specific departmental honors program. Withers emphasized that the college dean and associate dean were sympathetic to the needs of the Honors Program to protect the name.

After discussion, Grossman **moved** that the Chair write a letter to the chairs of Biology and Psychology to provide details of their "honors programs" so the Senate Council can better determine if those programs are in compliance with Senate Rules pertaining to admission to programs. Wasilkowski **seconded**. Wood suggested that the college dean also be carbon copied. Debski suggested that the letter include a query as to whether the department offers a degree with distinction or enrollment into a honors degree program. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

Withers then asked SC members to consider the issue of H sections for Honors Program courses. In the past, students had to enroll in specific Honors Program courses, which were clearly identified as being Honors. Now, students just enroll in the designated H section of an existing course Withers said that moving forward there needs to be a mechanism to create H sections for control and continuity. He said there needed to be a mechanism to require a department to get the approval of the Honors Program prior to creating an H section. SC members suggested that any creation of an H section would need to be reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate Council. Withers wondered if that was necessary, since it

was the Honors Program faculty of record that is responsible for ensuring adherence to high Honors Program standards. He said that he and others involved in the Honors Program looks at enrollment of incoming students and anticipates how many sections of humanities courses, social sciences courses, natural sciences courses, etc. should be created; then individual departments are asked to identify specific faculty who can teach the H sections. The requirements for students in H sections is not differentiated by, for example, a 30-page paper instead of a 20-page paper, but rather that a writing assignment require deeper insights, a broader topic, etc.

SC members who commented agreed that any H designation would need to run the full course approval process. Withers thought that would create a huge hurdle for the Honors Program to overcome, since the need for H sections is identified and then created in a very short time frame. Grossman said he was a little skeptical that an abbreviated approval process would work, but suggested that Withers put together some draft language for the SC to review. Withers thanked SC members for their input.

2. Old Business

b. Discussion on President's Evaluation by the Faculty

Coyne explained that he wondered if the SC had made a final decision on how best to utilize the presidential evaluation questions that were developed in spring 2012 in response to concerns that the evaluation done by the Board of Trustees (Board) did not sufficiently allow an opportunity for faculty to offer opinions on issues of importance to faculty. SC members discussed the spring 2012 questions and a variety of related topics: the Board's evaluation of the President; the results from Faculty Trustee Wilson's spring 2012 survey of faculty on President Capilouto's performance in academic year (AY) 2011-12; and the likely future survey of faculty on the President's performance in AY 2012-13.

SC members acknowledged that they had finalized the questions for a faculty survey on the President's performance in spring 2012. Since the questions will be used in a survey of all faculty, SC members agreed to review the questions at the next SC meeting to ensure the questions are ready to be presented to faculty.

The Chair asked SC members' indulgence to remain for a little longer to discuss aspects of the Board's recent retreat and meeting, as well as the upcoming special University Senate meeting on October 22. SC members agreed and discussed a variety of aspects of the upcoming meeting including format and possible questions.

The meeting was adjourned shortly before 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lee X. Blonder,
Senate Council Chair

SC members present: Anderson, Blonder, Brion, Coyne, Debski, Edwards, McCormick, Wilson, Wood and Wright.

Invited guests present: David Atwood and Andrew Hippisley.

Prepared by Sheila Brothers on Friday, October 26, 2012.