

University Senate Minutes
April 11, 2005

The University Senate met on Monday April 11, 2004 in the Auditorium of the William T. Young Library and took the following actions.

Absences: Alexander, Anderman*, Baldwin, Barker, Berger, Berryman, Bhavsar, Biagi, Brown*, Butler, Carter, Catavolos, Caudill*, Cavagnero, Cibulka, Clauter*, Darnall, Debski, DeSimone, Diedrichs*, Duffy, Duke*, Durant, Ellis, Filak, Fink, Forgue*, Gabel*, Gaetke*, Garen, Gargola, Getchell, Gonzalez, Greasley*, Haist*, Hanson, Harley, Harrison*, Hazard*, Hoch, Hoffman, Issacs, J. D. Johnson, Kerley, Kraemer, Lester, Lindlof, M. Martin, McCormick*, McKinney, Moble, Mohny, Moore*, Nietzel, Noonan*, Odoi, Owen*, Parker*, Peffer*, Perman, Portillo, Pulito, Ray*, Roberts, Robinson, Rouhier-Willoughby*, Royce, Shaw, Shay, D. Smith*, S. Smith, Steltenkamp, Sudharshan, Terrell*, Todd, Tsang, S. Turner, W. Turner, Vasconez, Vestal, Waldhart*, Walker, C. Williams, E. Williams, Witt, Wyatt, Yelowitz*.

* Denotes Excused Absence

1. Approval of the March 7, 2005 University Senate Minutes

The Chair asked if any corrections were needed. Sottile noted the need to change his attendance status. Ms. Scott will make note of the change. Otherwise, the minutes were approved as written.

2. Memorial Resolution

Tagavi read a memorial resolution for Don Leigh and the Chair requested a moment of silence. Tagavi requested that a copy of the resolution be attached to these minutes and a copy sent to the family of the deceased.

Announcements

Tagavi noted that over 700 votes were received in the recent Board of Trustees faculty representative election. He added that Dembo received 459 votes while Kennedy received 290. Tagavi joined the rest of the Senate in congratulating Dembo and thanking Kennedy for his years of service on the Board.

The Chair announced that the Senate Council had recently endorsed a continuation of the Winter Intersession, upon the request of the Provost. Jones asked that the record reflect that the Winter Intersession is still in a pilot phase and that additional reports would be forthcoming in the future.

The Chair announced that the Ad hoc committee on Academic Offenses would delay its recommendations until after the Board of Trustees reviews and approves the proposed changes to the Code of Student Conduct, since that document may have bearing on the committee's recommendations. He added that he expects that committee's work to be completed early in the coming Fall

semester. Grossman asked all Senators to remember that until the proposed rules go into effect the current rules, which state that an E grade is the minimum penalty for cheating, should still be enforced.

The Chair announced that a special called meeting of the Senate will be held on Monday, May 9, 2005 from 3 to 5 in the Young Library Auditorium.

3. Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy

The Chair introduced Mary Ferlan from Human Resources, who presented the proposal in lieu of Kim Wilson. Ferlan outlined the proposed hiring practice and accepted questions from the floor. Jennings asked if there was an appeal process associated with the screening. Garman, who will serve as the Medical Review Officer, said he will contact patients who test positive to discuss any potential prescriptions that may have tainted the results. Ferlan added that in the event of a positive result a more sensitive screen will be conducted on the same sample. Cibull asked what the false positive rates were. Garman noted that if the sensitivity level was set high enough then there wouldn't be any false positives at all. He added that two types of screening tests would be conducted, if need be.

Tagavi asked Garman to provide assurances that perspective employees wouldn't be tested for any illnesses during the drug screening. Ferlan noted that applicants will be notified well in advance of the nature of the screening. Tagavi noted that some drugs, such as Cocaine, leave the applicants system in as little as two days, adding that applicants could stop using the drug, take the test, get hired and then resume their usual drug use. He asked for an explanation, given this scenario, of the value of the test. Ferlan replied that the intention of pre-employment drug screening was to catch the chronic abusers and keep them from entering the institution.

Gesund expressed concern that 100% accuracy in testing was an unreasonable expectation and hoped that some contingency plan be implemented to make sure applicants can appeal and provide a second sample. Ferlan said she'd be glad to consider that advice.

Deem asked if there were plans in place to include all of campus in pre-employment drug screening, rather than just the colleges of the Medical Center. Ferlan replied that at the time being there were no plans to implement the screening on all of campus, but that she wouldn't rule it out for the future. She underscored the emphasis on patient care and the responsibility of the University to practice sound hiring practices.

The Chair thanked Ferlan for attending and informed Senators that further questions or comments could be directed to either Mary Ferlan or Kim Wilson.

4. Open Enrollment Benefits Update

The Chair introduced Joey Payne, who provided a brief presentation. Payne outlined the changes to various plans and explained which employees did and did not need to re-enroll for the upcoming year. He described the various benefits available, expenses associated therein, and future plans to help employees lead healthier lives. He discussed changes to the Healthtrac rewards program, prescription drug benefits and dependent life insurance coverage. Payne provided a list of open house dates, times and locations and informed the Senators that they could contact Tim Buckingham if they were interested in scheduling a Benefits presentation for their particular areas.

5. Proposed changes to the ARs regarding post-doctoral appointments

The Chair invited Greissman to present the proposal to the Senate. Greissman noted that the proposal had been before the Senate Council three times and had received its approval on each of those occasions. The first time regarded the proposed change in the maximum number of years (5) a post-doc could hold an appointment. The second pertained to a change to the reporting structure that adapted to the Provost system. The third change was to codify a change in practice regarding International student use of UK health plans. Greissman invited questions from the floor.

Yates asked for an explanation of why a practice had been changed before the AR was updated. Greissman replied that in response to an overwhelming number of students who sought services from Student Health Services, the decision to offer more comprehensive and less expensive coverage to International students through the UK health plans had been negotiated among the Dean of the Graduate School, Student Health Services and the Office of International Affairs. The untimely departure of Nancy Ray from the University was, in part, the cause of the lengthy delay in codification of the agreed-upon changes in practice.

The **motion** to approve the AR was on the floor by virtue of a positive recommendation from the Senate Council. There being no further discussion a vote was taken and the motion **passed** without dissent.

6. Proposed changes to Doctoral programs

The Chair noted that all three proposals were forwarded from the Graduate Council and the Senate Council, the later of which sent a positive recommendation. The Chair invited Braun to present the proposals.

Braun outlined the various proposals and invited questions from the floor.

Proposal 1: Tagavi asked if the new course form to establish XXX 767 had been forwarded with the proposal. Blackwell said that if approved she would work with the Senate Council office on the creation of the courses.

Tagavi noted that according to Senate Rules “S” grades can only be assigned to courses that carry zero credit hours or are residency courses. He suggested Blackwell change the proposed course name to Dissertation Residency Credit, and made a motion to that effect. Blackwell accepted the amendment as friendly.

Albisetti challenged the portion of the proposal that suggested the new tuition arrangement would prove “revenue neutral”. Blackwell agreed that students who take an excessively long time to finish their dissertations will in fact pay more tuition in the long run, and that such extended payments may serve as a catalyst for earlier dissertation submission. She also noted that students who may finish more quickly would find it financially advantageous to do so.

Thelein suggested that the assumption that most doctoral students receive some sort of funding is untrue and that the proposal was unfair to programs that had longer time-to-degree averages.

Deem asked why the XXX 767 course will count as a 2 hours course instead of 1. Blackwell explained that the current 18 hours of residency had been roughly divided over five years, but with a slight financial incentive for finishing early. Blackwell added that of our benchmarks Pennsylvania State is the only institution that used the current system.

After further discussion the **motion** on the floor from the Senate Council to approve the motion **passed** with one abstention (Albisetti).

Proposal 2: Braun introduced the proposal and invited questions from the floor.

Jones proposed an **amendment** that “at the end of five years, or at the end of all possible time extensions, if granted, the student will be dismissed from the program” in response to Tagavi’s concern that it was unclear what would become of students after the five year time period. Cibull **seconded** the amendment, which passed without dissent. The **motion** on the floor from the Senate Council to approve the proposal also **passed** without dissent.

Proposal 3: Braun introduced the proposal and invited questions from the floor.

Jones suggested an editorial change to the first sentence which read “In the graduate student handbook, which is approved by a majority vote of the graduate faculty of each program...” in order to clarify who approves the content of both the graduate student handbook and who establishes the standards by which the students will be gauged. Blackwell accepted the suggestion.

Eldred asked by when in the academic year students should be informed as to whether or not good progress is being made. Blackwell responded that in the

case of TA's it is clear that determination should be made before March 15 annually.

Edgerton offered the friendly amendment of "one or more of these bodies" in reference to who would evaluate the students. Blackwell didn't think the suggested wording was necessary.

The **motion** on the floor from the Senate Council to approve the proposal was **passed** without dissent.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:46pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ernie Bailey
University Senate Secretary

Prepared by Rebecca Scott on April 29, 2005.