

Faculty Senate Minutes
March 2, 1998

Present: Anton, Beardsley, Bristow, Cooney, Hummel-Berry, Kirchner, Sloane, Steiner, Tiernan, A. Wood

Visitor: Mace

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of February 2 Senate meeting were approved. Consideration of the Minutes of February 16 Senate meeting was postponed until the next meeting.

Announcements:

The next meeting of the Senate will be March 23 rather than the 16th since the regularly scheduled meeting date falls during spring break.

Secretary of the Senate, Cathy Hale has had a request for nominations for the election of faculty to the Senate distributed to all faculty.

Rafael Gomez, newly elected president of ASUPS, has a class which conflicts with scheduled Senate meetings so he will appoint someone to represent ASUPS in his place. The appointment has not yet been made.

Chair's Report:

1. Kirchner reported that Sarah Sloane did an excellent job in proof-reading the Bylaws. They will be posted on the web, although not exactly in the same format as the hard copy which will be available in the Associate Dean's Office and in department offices. Kirchner will inform the faculty of the web posting of the Bylaw revisions and also hard copy availability for review. Faculty will have two weeks to comment and provide input on the Bylaw revisions before they are considered for full Faculty approval.
2. Kirchner indicated that Anton shared an APA parliamentary procedures booklet as another alternative to Roberts. Kirchner indicated that the booklet provided an excellent history of parliamentary rules and of the many alternatives to Roberts. The APA parliamentary procedures are more liberal than Roberts and Sturgis, for example not requiring a second to any motion. The feeling of the Senate was that Sturgis was the best alternative to Roberts, but that would be up to the full faculty to decide if they concurred with the proposed Bylaws change to Sturgis.

Approval of candidates for Honorary Degrees:

Cooney presented the list of candidates for honorary degrees. The proposed candidates were selected by a committee composed of faculty, students and trustees. The candidates must be approved by the Senate and the Trustees. It was M/S/P that the proposed candidates be approved.

Discussion of MIRS 502 and MIRS 503 Reports:

Wood raised some concerns about recent MIRS reports (MIRS 502 and MIRS 503). The MIRS 502 summarizes fall semester enrollment units for 1995, 1996 and 1997. Her concern centered on MIRS 503 which summarizes similar data along with units per FTE faculty for the 1996-1997 fall and spring semesters. MIRS 503 was distributed to senators for discussion.

Wood feels that the reports do not give a full picture of faculty load and requested that additional data and analysis be included in future reports.

MIRS 503 provides department and program data on 1) total units generated, 2) number of full-time faculty, and 3) units per FTE faculty. Wood indicated in chemistry, faculty spend many hours in lab sessions with the students for which students do not register for credit. Wood would like to have additional categories added to the MIRS reporting which 1) give contact hours per FTE (this would not be office hours, but only those hours recorded by the registrar) and 2) student units per FTE faculty teaching those units. Wood feels this would present an expanded picture of faculty load compared to what is currently represented in the MIRS reporting.

To illustrate her concern Wood presented data for fall 1997 chemistry department enrollment, but she felt a analysis for other science departments, art, CTA and several other departments would yield similar results. The biggest difference between the current MIRS 503 report and Wood's calculation was units per FTE faculty (in fall 1996 this was 82.2 on MIRS 503) compared to units per FTE faculty teaching those units (for fall 1997 was 169). The difference occurs because the number of faculty is adjusted to reflect the fact that a full-time faculty load does not relate 100% to units generated.

Wood suggested that faculty load of other departments such as art, CTA, etc. have many hours of formal contact with students that are not reflected in the current MIRS reports. Wood would like the Senate to request John Finney to prepare expanded MIRS reports that include data reflecting registrar scheduled hours per FTE and student units per FTE faculty teaching those units.

Cooney raised several concerns: 1) Finney should first be invited to meet with the Senate to discuss MIRS reports before the Senate makes a request, 2) there are resource implications which accompany any request for additional data crunching, 3) issues regarding a number of individual department's methods of dealing with data will be raised. This raises issues of faculty workloads and standards across the university without accounting for diversity of how faculty and departments teach their classes.

Mace indicated that contact hours are used by some accrediting groups. Wood indicated that the American Chemical Society has a statement about contact hours in assessing validity of programs. Wood does not feel that further analysis would necessarily result in rigid standards, but will highlight differences in a manner which the current MIRS reports do not.

Beardsley questioned the role of data-for-data sake and felt that all this does is make it inevitable that decisions will be based solely on number crunching. Anton is concerned that data are incomplete. He questioned whether Independent Studies for example are included in total number of department/program units. Cooney indicated that IS units are included.

Bristow asked how data are used. For what purpose is data in the MIRS 503 report used. Wood feels that the current data reflect how many tuition dollars are brought in per FTE within a department. Cooney indicated reports are used to note trends and changes over time, whether demand on a department is increasing or falling. Wood felt that this tracking could also be done by looking at contact hours per FTE faculty.

Grace reported her conversation with Finney in which he indicated that data are used to look at trends over time. Only courses that have labels to program or department are counted for that department or program.

Cooney expressed concern about what will be gained by additional analysis. Why the university should invest resources to make the additional calculations. Faculty and administration are aware of the diversity of how faculty spend their time and energy in teaching. Wood felt that the data are probably already in the database and it would not be that difficult to generate additional figures.

Mace felt that trends could be usefully followed by tracking contact hours per FTE over time. Anton indicated the contact hours per unit has been an issue since, non-science departments, spearheaded by English, went from 4 classes to 3 classes per week per unit. Anton expressed concern that if contact hours are counted they should include all hours including office hours. Wood restated that she simply

wants to have another means of presenting the ratio of units per FTE faculty that more accurately reflects the amount of registrar recorded contact hours per faculty.

Bristow indicated that contact hours might better explain faculty load in chemistry whereas in history it is not necessary, since contact hours and units taught are quite uniform.

Cooney is concerned that it gets pretty messy, for example English 101 has individual conference class hours scheduled with students which are not counted and what about the times that labs do not meet. There are many issues that makes it difficult to parcel out exact contact hours. No matter how you deal with the data, it does not tell the whole picture. Any department can establish labs, for example English or history could establish labs just as science currently does. The bottom line is that there is diversity in how faculty meet their classes and we all acknowledge that faculty work hard.

Anton feels that no matter what is done there will not be an accurate picture. Cooney defended the data, flaws are of what data can and cannot do. Data can be manipulated, so data are used to look at trends, not to immediately make decisions.

Sloane indicated that she found Wood's case persuasive and if Wood wants to track more data, she sees nothing wrong with the request. Bristow indicated agreement with Sloane. Wood moved that Kirchner invited John Finney to join the Senate the next meeting to discuss the possibility of including additional information in future MIRS reports. Motion passed with one no vote and Cooney abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Steiner