

## **Faculty Senate Minutes November 3, 1997**

**Senators Present:** Kevin Barhydt, Bill Beardsley, Nancy Bristow, Terry Cooney, Cathy Hale, Kathie Hummel-Berry, Judith Kay, Grace Kirchner, Bruce Lind, Keith Maxwell, Sarah Sloane, Bob Steiner, Kim Thomas, George Tomlin.

**Announcements:** Grace Kirchner welcomed Senators Kim Thomas and Keith Maxwell to the Faculty Senate. Keith Maxwell announced that the ad hoc committee on student evaluations will be putting out a questionnaire to all faculty soon. Kevin Barhydt asked whether student input would be solicited and Keith Maxwell assured him it would be.

**Chair's Report:** Grace Kirchner said that we will need to discuss the charges made to the Student Life committee and the Diversity committee at a later time.

### **Items for Discussion:**

**1. Discussion of Policy Regarding Deadlines for the Submission of Grades.** Kirchner initiated discussion by asking whether anyone wanted to propose a change. Maxwell asked whether the policy was determined by when Christmas falls during the week. A discussion ensued about the turnaround time for faculty dealing with piles of final examinations and papers. Kay clarified for Hale and others that students, especially out-of-state students, need to learn as quickly as possible if they are to be dismissed. There was more discussion about the availability of staff between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Maxwell noted that four days makes a lot of difference to him in terms of turnaround time. He asked whether it would be possible to adjust the date for those students who are on probation. Cooney said that that would not be possible because we may not isolate student work in that manner. Other Senators murmured assent, including Bristow who noted the confidentiality and need-to-know rules regarding student performance.

**Tomlin made the motion that the Senate recommend that the Registrar change the due date of fall grades this fall to the first business day after the New Year. Maxwell seconded the motion.** Cooney noted that the motion would still leave the date open to being chosen at John Finney's discretion.

Kirchner invited more discussion. Tomlin, Bristow, and Kirchner spent a bit of time discussing who has the power to set and change the policy. Cooney reported his own mixed feelings. He said he is sympathetic to the pressures of grading over the holiday period. However, there are real issues that affect individual students. He said that even though the earlier due date puts pressure on faculty, it was a higher inconvenience for students to get their grades later.

Several Senators noted the importance of keeping the best interests of students in mind. Hale asked how does student interest in speedy grading of final exams weigh against the quality of our grading and evaluating of their exams. She wants to maximize the time the faculty have. Tomlin said he was trying to weigh student and faculty inconvenience, too. He said he remembered the stress of grading over the holiday period. He also said he did not anticipate such faculty protest over the early deadline for the submission of grades to be such that it would lead to a protest withholding of final grades.

Lind noted that he hated to see us set policy only for the sake of those few students who are going to be put on probation or dismissed. What about students applying for graduate schools and fellowships, he inquired. Would they be affected? Maxwell said he had never encountered the problem. Bristow noted that she wished to make it clear that it is not that faculty wish to have a two-week holiday but that we want to do good work in evaluating student final exams and papers. It is from the latter concern that our support derives for a later deadline for the submission of grades. Cooney noted that if all the grades are submitted on time, that the grades go out to students within 24 hours.

**A bit more discussion ensued, and then a vote was taken. Eight voted in favor of Tomlin's motion and five voted against. Motion passed.**

## **2. Discussion of Bylaws Amendment Regarding Voting Methods in Faculty Meetings and Other Bylaw Revisions.**

Kirchner referred us to page four of the Bylaws document and opened the discussion by inquiring whether "by acclamation" meant "by voice vote." She asked, too, whether "acclamation" meant "unanimous." Kirchner explained that she had looked up voting methods in both Roberts' Rules and The Standards of Parliamentary Procedure by Alice Sturgis. The four means of taking votes, according to these two sources, are by voice, roll call, raising the hand or rising from the seat, and a written ballot. She asked whether the Senate might instruct the Executive Committee to write the new language for voting methods in the Bylaws and report to the Faculty Senate next time. The Senate concurred.

Cooney noted that there are two other kinds of voting: voting outside the meeting, and voting by proxy. He noted further that page four may be suggesting a change to what is said on page two. He said we might be giving a vote to people who are not involved in the deliberations. Kirchner noted that these are related issues. She said we might start with a discussion of what voting methods are a good idea. Tomlin asked if we had information on what kinds of votes have been taken by proxy in the past.

Maxwell said he was worried about votes by a minority that constitutes the quorum. Cooney mentioned that the opportunity for a written ballot would not necessarily provide a protection from the kind of situation that Maxwell is describing. Beardsley said that the mail ballot might be appropriate when the vote was particularly important. It might be good also for people who work or teach during the hour of the faculty meeting. He argued that a mail-in ballot would be approved by a majority of the faculty present only in exceptional circumstances; he said that leaving in the provision for a mail-in ballot is a harmless inclusion in the bylaws.

Cooney noted that the mail-in ballot option raises some interesting implications. He mentioned that there would need to be a structure of process around each of these ballots. Around 20 or 25 people are visiting faculty, too, he said.

Kirchner said that if we feel the discussion of voting methods in the bylaws will be controversial, we could separate this portion of our suggested bylaws changes from the rest of the package. She reminded us that we will need a three-quarters vote to change the bylaws. We could separate this concern out of the package and deal with it first.

Bristow noted that in the event of an issue of great seriousness, a mail-in ballot might be appropriate so that everyone is given a voice (and an opportunity to vote). Others on the Senate discussed whether the option of a mail-in ballot would provide any incentive to faculty not to go to faculty meetings. We would not wish to support a disincentive to attend deliberations of the full faculty. Kirchner asked whether anyone wished to make a motion to change or clarify the bylaw. Cooney said that it might be important to clarify that the request for a mail-in ballot may not be made after a vote has already been taken. Kirchner reminded us that we need to fix this bylaw generally. She asked what methods of voting we are going to allow.

**Cooney made a motion that the Senate direct the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to draft new language about voting that will include the four voting methods discussed by Sturgis and Roberts, namely, voice, roll call, raising hand or rising from the seat, and written ballot. Steiner seconded the motion. The Senate unanimously approved the motion.**

Kirchner then asked to draw our attention to the new-to-the-Senate changes detailed in the bylaw packet. The new-to-the-Senate changes are identified by underlining in the righthand column. Most changes have been discussed by the Senate already. If there are other topics we would like to revisit, she said, please let her know. Kirchner also suggested that Sturgis may be better than Roberts as a guide to faculty

meetings. She mentioned that Carol Curtin has ordered some copies of the Sturgis book for the bookstore.

Kirchner then drew our attention to page two of the proposed bylaw changes regarding the chairing of faculty meetings. She explained that this proposal originates with her. The language she is proposing would allow the president to ask the vice chair or with the approval of the Senate another member of the faculty to lead the meetings for her. The Senate could veto even the appointment of the Vice Chair by asking the President to resume her role as chair. She asked us to think about this for the next time.

Cooney drew our attention to Section One, Membership of the Faculty. He asked the Senate to think about "full-time emeritus appointments." Do we still need this language, he asked. Lind reminded us of the history to this document. Cooney asked whether the whole phrase should be struck. Kirchner asked about full-time lecturers and inquired whether anyone could think why the bylaws should differ from the Faculty Code.

Lind asked why we give visiting faculty a vote. Bristow remembered her own one-year visiting position at a different institution and said it was very important to her to preserve the voting rights of visiting faculty. She said to do otherwise is to create a two-tiered system that she would oppose vehemently. Cooney noted that only those faculty who have taken up the kind of relationship to the institution that Bristow was describing would actually come and vote at a full faculty meeting. Tomlin noted that we may wish visiting faculty to vote on things that affect them directly. Kirchner said that the Executive Committee could prepare language on this issue, too, if the Senate wished. The Senators present murmured their assent.

Kirchner then asked the burning question, are we ready to adjourn? We are ready, we said. The Senate adjourned at approximately 5:30pm.

Submitted respectfully,

Sarah Sloane