

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes April 7, 1997

Senators Present: W. Beardsley, W. Haltom, G. Kirchner (Chair), B. Lind, R. Matthews, K. Maxwell, I. Nagy, M. Robertson, S. Sloane, B. Smith, B. Steiner.

Visitors Present: W. Breitenbach, A. Tullis.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The 24 March 1997 minutes will be approved at the 21 April 1997 meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

1. Kirchner asked the Senate to define a "reasonable attempt" to notify potential candidates that they have been nominated for a committee. It was agreed that notification by electronic mail and voice mail, followed by a sufficient waiting period, should constitute a "reasonable attempt" at notification.
2. The Senate approved Smith's request to place all three ballots for the upcoming elections in a single envelope.
3. Kirchner announced that Committee Chairs reports were scheduled for the 5 May meeting; written reports would be circulated in advance of the meeting.

DISCUSSION OF BYLAWS AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE CONCERNING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Breitenbach, representing the Professional Standards Committee, distributed a proposed bylaw amendment paragraph concerning conflicts of interest. The paragraph was modeled on the Faculty Advancement Committee's practice in which a member of a department is recused when there appears to be a conflict of interest. Haltom led a discussion centering on the issue that the "appearance" of conflict is as critical a concern as conflict of interest itself. At Maxwell's suggestion wording was changed to reflect the larger context of "in matters" where a conflict of interest appears to exist, as opposed to the more specific wording of "in cases."

The revised paragraph follows:

In matters brought before the Professional Standards Committee (PSC), the individuals involved or any PSC member may raise the issue of a conflict of interest concerning a member of the Committee. If the conflict of interest is disputed, those members of the PSC who are not involved in the alleged conflict of interest shall conduct a confidential, written vote to determine if an apparent conflict of interest exists. If it is determined that a member of the PSC appears to have a conflict of interest, that member shall be recused from deliberating and voting. If a member of the PSC is recused because of an apparent conflict of interest, the PSC, at its discretion, may appoint a substitute to participate in the case.

Haltom moved that the above paragraph be accepted, Beardsley seconded, and the motion was passed. Breitenbach was asked to share the Senate's revised version with the PSC, in hopes that both groups could agree.

DISCUSSION OF AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE USE OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS:

The discussion began by reviewing Cooney's previously stated concerns that the task of this ad hoc committee be focused and realistic so that the group will most efficiently use its time. Discussion followed in which Matthews suggested that a broad charge might be good. Among issues to be considered, Haltom suggested considering how evaluations could be put to better use, Maxwell raised the issue of validity of the evaluations, and Sloane questioned the subjectivity of interpretations of the evaluations. Matthews suggested that Sloane and Maxwell work together on the committee and solicit volunteers from both on and off the Senate. Sloane questioned the November deadline, given its timing with the tenure decision process. Matthews suggested that the committee report back to the Senate, then their interpretations and recommendations will appear in the Senate Minutes, hopefully inspiring a larger campus conversation. Smith suggested that even the acknowledgment of the imprecision of the tool could be valuable. Nagy commented

that in discussing the tool, larger philosophical issues of teaching could be identified and discussed.

Matthews suggested the following motion:

That the original charge be modified to reflect the composition of the committee as an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate, that would make its report to the Senate early in the spring of 1998; and that Maxwell and Sloane be on the committee, in addition to encouraging participation from any others.

The motion was seconded and passed.

OTHER BUSINESS.

A discussion followed among Senate members about concerns as to the reception of the Ad Hoc Core Review Committee's Report and on the direction that subsequent faculty deliberations had taken. For clarification, a history of the discussions of the Core over the last year was given. As a result of the Senate's discussion the following resolution was created, to be made at the next faculty meeting:

The Faculty Senate moves that further discussions on the Core be halted until the 1997-98 academic year, and that future discussions will begin with consideration of the report of the ad hoc Core Review Committee elected by the faculty.

This resolution was adopted by those Senators present at the 7 April 1997 meeting of the Faculty Senate, with the exception of two recusals. Nagy left before the final vote was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta Robertson