

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting April 29, 1996

Senators present: Bill Beardsley, Nancy Bristow, Alva Butcher, Lynette Chandler, Tom Goleeke, Judith Kay, Grace Kirchner, Bob Matthews, David Potts, Michel Rocchi, Bryan Smith, Kate Stirling

Visitors: Tom Fikes

Kirchner called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. The minutes of April 15, 1996 were approved with the following corrections: 1) The last sentence of page 1 should read "...University Community Committee or a Standing Committee...." 2) On page 2, the third item of the motion on the Student Life Committee should read "Such other duties as may be assigned to it relating to student affairs affecting the academic life of the university."

Announcements: Stirling reported that the Student Life Committee had met and was in agreement with the Senate recommendations.

Chair's Report: Kirchner noted that the final meeting will be May 6th. President Pierce will make a brief report. And the chairs of the standing committees will make their final reports.

Discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Faculty Senate: The discussion centered on the six points noted in the report: 1) Budget, 2) Elect committee chairs in spring, 3) Three year term for senators, 4) Establish liaisons with committees, 5) Review role of standing committees on a regular basis, 6) Is the Senate a representative body or an executive committee?

The discussion ranged over these points, but is summarized below in the order raised by the ad hoc committee.

Budget: Should the Senate have a budget? There was no discussion of this point.

Elect committee chairs in the spring: It was suggested that this would clear up confusion about the charges for the following year. If the new chair were elected in the spring, this would smooth the transition. It would require a bylaw change to Article V, Section 2. This states, "The Chairperson of the Faculty shall name a Convener for each committee during the first month of the fall semester..". A disadvantage of the proposed change is that new members to standing committees would not be able to vote for the chair during their first year of service. It was noted that at times there is a high turnover on some standing committees.

A second approach would be to elect a convener, and not a chair in the spring.

A third approach would be to ask the current chair to be responsible for convening the first committee meeting in the Fall and conducting the election of the new chair.

A final suggestion was that each standing committee should determine its charges for that year in the beginning of the academic year, rather than at the end of the previous year.

The Executive Committee will develop some models, and report back to the Senate.

Three year term for Senators: This would provide greater continuity. It might also solve the problem for replacement of Senators that leave the Senate before the completion of their term. It was questioned whether Senate membership should continue to be broken down into seven senators from the departments of arts and sciences and four senators from the professional schools. (Article III, Section 1, D) The Bylaws had recently been modified to remove this restriction in membership for the Faculty Advancement Committee.

MSP unanimously that the Executive Committee will develop changes to Articles III and IV of the Bylaws so that Senators will be elected for a three year term, and to remove the distinction in membership between the professional schools and the departments of arts and sciences.

Establish liaisons with committees: There was limited discussion of this point. While it would improve communication, the time commitment was a consideration. Some senators also serve on standing committees, and would thus provide natural liaisons. The Senate did not take any action on this issue.

Review role of standing committees on a regular basis: There were two positions taken on this issue. One was that it should be institutionalized. A review on a regular basis would be consistent with the Bylaws, but this has not been done systematically in the past. The other position was that a review of standing committees should only be undertaken on an “as needed” basis. The Senate did not take any action on this issue.

Is the Senate a representative body or an executive committee? The question led to considerable discussion. It has implications with respect to the size of the Senate, and the duties and actions of the Senate.

The Bylaws refer to the Senate as an Executive Committee (Article IV, Section 1). The Bylaws also state that “Unless the Faculty is in session, the Senate shall have all the powers and duties of the Faculty...” (Article IV, Section 5). Are we too large if we are an executive committee? Are we too small if we are to serve as a representative body? Has the Senate ever taken an action that was not referred to the full faculty? What is meant by “in session”? If we were a representative body, who would be our constituencies?

The Senate did not take any action on this issue. But the consensus was that the preferred model is that the Senate is an executive committee. The language in the Bylaws needs to be modified to clarify the role of the Senate. For example, what is meant by “in session”.

Continued discussion of the ad hoc committee report on the Faculty

Advancement Committee: The discussion focused on a document prepared by Kirchner that describes the terms of FAC members.

The discussion was directed at changes and clarifications in the Bylaws. There was general agreement on the following issues with respect to the term of members and the participation of members in deliberations. Terms that end in mid-year should be avoided. If an election is necessary to replace a member, the new term should be stated so that faculty are aware of the term being filled. Members cannot serve during the year in which they are to be considered for promotion or tenure. Members can recuse themselves from deliberations in which the member believes that he or she cannot be fair and impartial.

Time considerations limited any further discussion. No formal action was taken by the Senate.

Membership limits of Standing Committees: The Executive Committee provided a summary of current and proposed membership limits for standing committees. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

The Senate adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alva Butcher