

2-8-2008

2008-02-08 Minutes of the Academic Senate

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MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

February 8, 2008

KU West Ballroom, 3:00 P. M.

Senators Present: P. Benson, D. Biers (presiding), A. Brian, L. Cook, D. Darrow, G. DeMarco, W. Diestelkamp, G. Doyle, C. Duncan, T. Eggemeier, A. Fist, R. Frasca, A. Jipson, P. Johnson, J. King, L. Laubach, R. Marak, M. Moss, J. O'Gorman, R. Penno, F. Pestello, D. Poe, D. Sink, R. Wells

Senators Excused: C. Bowman, R. Crum, , R. Kearns, L. Kloppenberg, R. Larson, T. Lasley, C. Letevac, M. Patterson, Y. Raffoul, J. Saliba, A. Seielstad, L. Snyder, T. Stevens, T. Sutter,

Guests: D. Bickford, K. Webb, J. Farrelly, C. Sullivan, J. Leonard, B. Bardine

1. Opening Prayer: Senator Jipson opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Roll Call: Twenty-four of thirty-nine Senators were present.

3. Minutes: December 14, 2007: Moved and seconded, minutes were approved.

4. Announcements: D. Biers announced that the elections for the University Promotion and Tenure Committee are completed, but results are not finalized. An announcement will be forthcoming in the next week.

5. State of the Senate:

The meeting was devoted to reports from the standing committees and the Executive Committee with opportunity for discussion and questions on issues that are being addressed in the various committees.

Academic Policies Committee:

Senator Darrow reported on three issues that are currently on the agenda for this committee.

1. The 2009-2010 Academic Calendar. The Committee has standing oversight for purposes of consultation with the University Calendar Committee. The committee reviewed calendar proposals for the 2009-2010 academic calendar at its meetings of January 17 and January 31. During its review, the committee reached the general conclusions that there should be a fall semester midterm break, that the spring semester should include a standard week of "spring break," and that there was a preference for a longer break between semesters. The committee also suggested that the registrar, University Calendar Committee, and Graduate Leadership Council explore the possibility of creating a separate graduate calendar as a means of guaranteeing the creation of the seemingly elusive 15th Monday. The APC chair took the recommendations to the University Calendar Committee earlier this week and, along with the Registrar, will present the Calendar Committee's recommendations to the Provost Council some time within the month. A question was raised about the break between the regular academic year and the beginning of the Summer session. The University Calendar Committee will be looking at the Summer calendar.

2. Senate Document 1-07-04: Challenges and Recommendations for the & Scholars Program was briefly discussed at the meeting of January 31. The Honors and Scholars team has been invited to, and will attend, the February 14 meeting to present the proposal and answer questions. The Committee will then carry out its discussions and draft a recommendation. A question was raised as to the relationship of this proposed revision and proposals that may emerge from the work being done by the sub-committee on a Common Academic Program. It was noted that this would be a good question to ask at the February 14 meeting. It was also noted, that all meetings of the standing committees are open meetings. This one will be at 10:00 AM in KU 211.

3. Common Academic Program Subcommittee. The chairperson of the CAP committee has been delivering fortnightly reports and has been attending every other meeting of the standing committee. In addition to weekly 90-minute meetings, the subcommittee is engaged in a number of threaded discussions. On one level the subcommittee is engaged in the exploration of larger ideas that can serve as a basis for implementation, such as the question of what it means to “embrace a ‘reading the signs of the times’ approach.” In addition, individual subcommittee members are also conducting case studies (looking at groups of students) to determine what the pressure points are in the current curriculum that facilitate or obstruct the realization of a common academic program. The subcommittee has been focusing on two particular issues: capstone courses and first-year seminars. The subcommittee is trying to define what capstone experiences at UD should look like in relation to the mission of individual units, and is debating the merits of a “project” vs. “courses” approach. On the topic of first-year seminars the subcommittee is considering such questions as the relationship between a first-year seminar and the disciplines, the relationship between a first-year seminar and current orientation programs and courses such as ASI 150, and the relationship between a first-year seminar and academic advising.

Faculty Affairs Committee

Senator Doyle reported on two issues that are currently on the agenda for this committee.

1. Doc 06-11, Post-tenure Peer Review. The Committee has spent weekly meetings during the Fall 2007 discussing how to develop a post-tenure review policy that is meaningful, developmental, and that would minimize any increase in faculty workload. After considerable dialogue and consultation, the Committee has determined that there is little support for a separate post-tenure review policy. Because the University already has a number of administrative and peer mechanisms for post-tenure review, such as promotion reviews, sabbatical reviews, and annual reviews for the purpose of merit, the Committee does not believe that adding another layer of review will improve

faculty performance. The Committee is developing a document that will include the statement of philosophy on post-tenure review that has already been reviewed by the Academic Senate along with a request to the Provost to conduct an audit of sabbatical and annual review policies and procedures. Once the audit is completed, the Committee will determine recommendations for these processes in order to incorporate peer review more systematically.

It was noted that there is peer review in the sabbatical process, so why is an audit needed? It seems to be the case that different units and departments understand how to interpret this requirement quite differently. Once an audit is conducted, it will be easier to determine what needs to be put in place in order to ensure consistent peer review in the sabbatical process. An audit will provide data from which existing processes can then be strengthened. It was also noted that one thought is that the annual merit review period might be changed to an academic year, allowing for more emphasis on performance and more time for productive feedback.

2. Doc 06-08. Evaluation of Faculty Teaching for Purposes of Tenure, Promotion and Merit. The Committee is reviewing the document. Three issues have been identified for discussion. First, it needs to be clarified how this policy would impact and relate to the and the Library faculty. Second, there is a sense that the document should be divided in to three parts. One would address tenure and promotion to associate. One would address further promotion, and one would address merit review. Since post-tenure peer review is related to the second and third parts, it might be possible to treat the first part independently of the rest and bring that forward for the action of the Academic Senate this year. Third, the issue of including evidence of the “quality of student learning” for the evaluation of individual faculty is being discussed. While student learning is an accepted measure for assessing programs, it is more problematic when applied to individual faculty, especially at the University level. The committee is seeking thoughts on this issue. There was considerable discussion on this issue. It was noted that the library uses the category of librarianship rather than teaching, but that methods of evaluation for teaching could serve as guidelines for evaluating librarianship. Many suggestions were offered in relationship to the question about student learning. It was noted that S. Wilhoit serves on the Committee as a representative of the Faculty Board and T. Lasley is the dean representative. Both have expertise that has contributed to the deliberations of the Committee. One concern is the extent to which student learning, at the College level, can be attributed to a specific faculty member. It was noted that the Committee is considering keeping student learning as one way of evaluating teaching, but making it optional or focusing on what faculty do to promote student learning rather than on measuring this through student

work. It was suggested that the student form used to evaluate faculty performance might include a question that would help with this measure. It was noted that external consultants evaluated this document in the process of its development. They did make comments about this issue. These may be helpful. It was also noted that these comments were mixed. It was suggested that the Committee might look at the inaugural address of the new President of Harvard.

Student Academic Policies Committee

Senator Fist reported for the Committee.

1. Honor Code. The Committee is focusing on getting the Honor Code document in a form that can be brought to the Academic Senate. A fundamental issue that has prevented the development of this document is the relationship between a code and an enforcement body, an Honor Board. The Committee is proposing an iterative approach, bringing the code forward independent of the board, because the climate of the institution is not yet ready for the implementation of an honor board.

A question was raised as to why this is taking so long. It was noted that the membership of the Committee changes yearly and so continuity has been difficult to maintain. This has hurt the progress of the work. In addition, student life issues have been introduced during the last year. It was also noted that while the academic issues could hold for both undergraduate and graduate students, the student life issues are not the same. T. Eggemeier offered to facilitate the involvement of graduate students in the process. The document could be shared with the Graduate Leadership Council and the Provost Council.

2. Doc 06-08. Evaluation of Faculty Teaching for Purposes of Tenure, Promotion and Merit. The committee is also charged with reviewing this document. They note the helpfulness of the mid-term diagnostic process.

Executive Committee

Senator Biers reported for the Committee. In addition to receiving updates from the three standing committees and working with the issues in these committees, they are working on:

1. University committees. T. Stevens and L. Laubach are taking the lead in finalizing a list of all University-wide committees and major committees in each of the units. They are asking the responsible persons to provide updated information about the charge of each committee, its membership, terms of membership, etc. All of this information will be posted on one website and maintained by someone in the Provost Office. It is hoped that this work will be completed by April.

2. Nominating Committee. J. O’Gorman is taking the lead in re-establishing a committee to generate potential members for committees. The

hope is to ensure broader representation on committees and to allow for a diversity of representation as well as the involvement of junior faculty.

3. Elections Committee. The Executive Committee has reconstituted the Elections Committee by adding a representative from the Faculty Board and from the Academic Senate to the one person remaining on the Committee.

4. Diversity issues. The Executive Committee has had a discussion with J. Ling and has scheduled a regular meeting to discuss how the Academic Senate and the Executive Committee can better promote diversity on campus. One suggestion is that the Senate can develop a process for reviewing all of its proposals and actions for implications for diversity issues.

5. English Competency Requirement. The Department of English has been distributing a proposal related to the competency requirement. This has not yet been presented to the Academic Senate. The Executive Committee has asked for a meeting with various constituencies to explore the appropriate way for vetting this matter.

A question was raised as to whether or not this might delay work in progress. It was noted that the meeting was to determine the appropriate processes for any such changes.

6. Processes and Procedures of the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate has been functioning since the beginning of the 1980s. While many of its processes and procedures are included in the Constitution, others have been formalized in various Senate documents and yet others have been instituted by practice. The Executive Committee is developing a document to set out these processes and procedures. P. Johnson is facilitating this work.

7. Reports on Background Checks and the Maternity Policy. The Committee has requested reports from J. Untener on both of these issues. The Executive Committee wants to know if there are any issues that need to be addressed in relationship to either of these issues. There were several issues that were left for later deliberation and decision in relationship to the maternity policy. These should be addressed, and it should be determined if there are any other issues.

9. Adjournment: Moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Johnson