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2005-10-21 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

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Approved Minutes of the ECAS
Eighth Regular Meeting – Academic Year 2005-2006
Friday, October 21, 2005
11:00 a.m. Ploeger Conference Suite, St. Mary's Hall 113-B
Presiding: Dr. David Biers, President of the Academic Senate

Senators Present: J. Biddle, D. Biers, H. Gerla, J. O’Gorman, R. Penno, J. Rapp, J. Saliba, T. Thompson

Absent (Excused): P. Eloe, S. Hileman, K. Huelsman, F. Pestello

1. Opening Prayer:

- Jack O’Gorman provided the opening prayer.

2. Roll Call:

- Eight of the twelve ECAS members were in attendance.

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes will be reviewed at a future meeting.

4. Old Business:

Committee Reports:

- **Academic Policies Committee (Biddle):** The committee will discuss the Quantitative Reasoning Competencies Module 3 at its next meeting on October 24. J. Biddle will include this issue in the committee report for the October 28 Academic Senate meeting. See New Business below for further ECAS discussion on this issue. The APC is also addressing the following issues related to General Education: (1) aligning language used in websites across campus concerning thematic clusters, domains of knowledge, courses, etc. (2) General Education Committee’s plan for an evaluation of thematic clusters – The plan calls for holding multiple focus groups as a means to collect data to support the decision-making process. An independent source would conduct the focus groups and it was agreed that using the Business Research Group on campus would be acceptable. A central issue is how the focus groups will be funded. It was noted that the Unit Review process is used to submit funding requests. However, it was also noted that the Senate has not participated in the Unit Review process in recent years because the Provost has allocated funds directly to the Senate. **Action item:** D. Biers will discuss possible funding for the focus groups with F. Pestello.
- **Faculty Affairs Committee (Gerla):** Discussion focused on the issue of background checks for faculty candidates. A question was raised about the appropriate Senate action. It was agreed that the issue will be a discussion-only item at the October 28 meeting. The goal is to get a broader range of views in response to the memo that H. Gerla prepared on behalf of the Faculty Affairs Committee. It was suggested that it might be useful for each academic division to have a discussion about the background check issue. The Senate will need to vote on this issue at a later date.
- **Student Academic Policies Committee (Hileman):** No report was given due to S. Hileman's absence.

5. New Business:

➤ **Planning Agenda for October 28 Academic Senate Meeting:**

Proposed Agenda Items:

- *Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)* – This will be a discussion-only agenda item and will be led by Paul Vanderburgh, chair of Health and Sport Science; Tom Lasley, dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions; and Tom Eggemeier, dean of the Graduate School. The Academic Senate will need to vote on the program proposal at a later date, which was tentatively scheduled for December 2.
- *Background checks for Faculty Candidates* – This will also be a discussion-only item and will be led by Harry Gerla. As noted previously, this issue will be brought back for a Senate vote at a later date, tentatively scheduled for December 2. *Post-meeting note:* Joyce Carter, Vice President for Human Resources, was invited to attend the October 28 meeting to address the Senate on this issue.
- *Committee Reports* (Academic Policies Committee, Executive Committee, Faculty Affairs Committee, and Student Academic Policies Committee) – There was insufficient time for the committee reports during the September Senate meeting so it is important to review the committees' activities at the upcoming meeting. **Action item:** Committee chairs were asked to prepare a bulleted list of their committee's activities and the issues that they have been addressing and submit the information to D. Biers. The goal is to distribute the information prior to the October 28 Senate meeting. It was suggested to distribute the information as a facstaff announcement in addition to distributing it to the Academic Senate.

- **Quantitative Reasoning Competencies (QRC) Module 3 – Mathematical Modeling:** There are around 200 students who haven't passed this module. The competencies policy states that students must receive a minimum of C- to fulfill this module. There are a variety of courses in the Mathematics Department that can be taken to complete the module. The department's staffing pattern has been predicated on the number of first-year students and the department doesn't have the extra resources to staff for the number of students who would have to retake courses for the module. The current department chair has previously expressed concerns about resources needed to implement the QRC. A major question is whether or not the University calibrated the QRC correctly with those courses. It was commented that General Education is driving the department's curriculum. Is the situation significant enough to reconsider policy? It was commented that 200 students out of 3,000-4,000 is not a big percentage. It was also commented that some additional revenue would be generated through students retaking courses to complete this module and that some of the revenue should be allocated to support the Department of Mathematics. As an implementation issue, the Senate doesn't need to be involved other than supporting the department, and the department should request resources through the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost. The Academic Policies Committee will discuss the QRC at the next meeting on October 24. A better understanding of the issues and review of historical data are needed before taking this to the full Senate; however, J. Biddle will mention it during the APC committee report at the October 28 Senate meeting.

- **Stander Symposium – Alternate Learning Day and Cancellation of Classes:** The academic calendar lists Wednesday, April 5 as an "alternate day of learning." It is not clear if evening classes, particularly those that meet once a week, should be cancelled. In addition, Symposium events will begin on Tuesday evening (e.g., Red Mass, Celebration of the Arts). Will those events affect classes? A question was raised about the number of graduate students who were involved in the Symposium last year with the poster sessions or panel discussions. The School of Education and Allied Professions and School of Business Administration each had approximately 25-30 graduate students who participated and it was noted that participation tended to be professor-driven. The possibility of canceling on-campus classes while holding off-campus classes was discussed. It was felt that making a distinction would be problematic. Another factor for consideration is that there are mixed classes with undergraduates taking graduate classes. It was noted that some students have the opinion that they are coerced to attend the Symposium.

However, this may be a student attitude issue, as well as an issue of how faculty members inform students. Students have voiced a desire for more engagement, and the Symposium presents such an opportunity. The decision whether or not to cancel classes is not for the Academic Senate to make, but the Senate can recommend to the Provost or Provost's Council that clear guidelines are needed. It was also suggested to get Mike O'Hare's perspective since he is a co-chair for the 2006 Symposium. With classes that meet once a week, it was suggested to divide class time – hold class for part of the session and students could also attend the Symposium. Regarding off-campus classes, it was suggested that those students should also be encouraged to participate, but incentives are needed. The value of connections between researchers could be emphasized. In addition, events need to be scheduled in the timeframe in which graduate students would be available to attend (i.e., evening). **Action item:** D. Biers will talk to D. Bickford about the schedule. If there is full support for graduate student involvement, then all classes (noting that the Law School would be an exception) should be cancelled on April 5. Another aspect of the ECAS discussion was whether the full Senate should discuss the issues raised about the Stander Symposium. Although this is a matter of interpreting existing policy rather than setting new policy, it could be of value to have broader consultation and give Senators a chance to voice their perspectives. In addition, it would provide the administration an opportunity to see how the Symposium is viewed. It might also encourage faculty to play a more active role in the Symposium. There was no decision about taking the discussion to the full Senate.

➤ **Other Items:**

- The October 25 ECAS meeting is cancelled. The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 1 at 1:30 p.m.
- Tom Burkhardt, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services, should be contacted about providing information that can be distributed to faculty to review before the November 18 Senate/Faculty meeting on budget planning. The information should be distributed to faculty at least a week before the meeting.

➤ **Adjournment:** **The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Judy Owen