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2003-12-12 Minutes of the Academic Senate

University of Dayton. Academic Senate

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APPROVED

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
DAYTON, OHIO
MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

December 12, 2003
Kennedy Union, rm. 331

Presiding: Dr. Joseph Saliba

Senators Present: Biers, Bork, Dandaneau, Doyle, Eloe, Gauder, Gerla, Gorton, Hall, Hallinan, Hartley, Kocoloski, Lewis, Morman, Mullins, Partlow, Pestello, Putka, Rapp, Sargent, Schworer, Villalobos, Youngkin, Yunblut

Guests: Bickford, Chan, Courte, Darrow, Johnson, Robinson, Rogatto, Skill, Webb, Westendorf

1. Opening Prayer: Fr. John Putka, S.M., began the meeting with a prayer.
2. Roll Call: Twenty-five of thirty-nine Senators were present.
3. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of October 31, 2003, were approved.
4. Announcements

The incoming senators were welcomed and introduced. The current senators also introduced themselves.

Joe Saliba asked that the faculty please consider attending the December 20 graduation ceremonies. Faculty presence means much to the students.

5. Final Examination Week, I-03-10

John Rapp, on behalf of the Select Calendar Committee and the Academic Policies Committee, presented Senate Document I-03-10 to the Academic Senate for a vote. The action is legislative.

This document is now up for vote following the approval of the Statement of Recommendations on Finals Week, which contained much of the same language. This proposal, if adopted, would replace the existing finals policy.

Steve Dandaneau noted that this policy follows the policies from the Registrar and the Faculty Handbook. Points 1 and 5 are new since this document was last presented to the

Academic Senate. Mindful of the variety of possible meaningful culminating experiences, the Select Calendar Committee also made note that there are always exceptions to the rule and has included ways of dealing with the exceptions.

Q: The proposal notes that finals week should be “one full week” of examinations. Does this mean 5 days or 7 days?

A: The sum of final examination week would include 5 days of exams, plus the 2 weekend days immediately preceding and at least 1 study day.

Q: Point 8 concerns exceptions to the stated policy. This point seems redundant in light of Point 3.

A: This point was added to recognize that there are exceptions to the general rule. It is a useful redundancy to underscore this fact.

Favor: 24

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

6. Diploma Exercises and Commencements, I-03-12

John Rapp, on behalf of the Select Calendar Committee and the Academic Policies Committee, presented Senate Document I-03-12 to the Academic Senate for a vote. The action is consultative.

Tom Westendorf strongly supports this proposal. He estimates that it will cost approximately \$8000 - \$10,000 to mail diplomas.

Q: This policy is consultative. Who will legislate?

A: The Registrar. Tom Westendorf noted that he wanted this consultative action to pass so that he can carry through with the change.

Favor: 24

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

7. Statement of Recommendations on Finals Week, I-03-09

John Rapp, on behalf of the Select Calendar Committee and the Academic Policies Committee, presented Senate Document I-03-09 to the Academic Senate for a vote. The action is consultative.

The Academic Senate is being asked today if the Select Calendar committee is headed in the right direction.

The Select Calendar Committee, which was empaneled by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate and which reports to the Academic Policies Committee, has been reviewing the academic calendar with a focus on academic rigor. Over the next year, the group expects to bring several proposals to the Academic Senate. This first proposal specifically focuses on finals week, although other University activities will subsequently be affected.

Steve Dandaneau, head of the Calendar Committee, explained the proposal. The Calendar Committee is asking the Academic Senate to reaffirm the importance of finals week as well as the importance of study days. This proposal would also call for an end to early senior finals, as the committee found that the senior finals policy has the tendency to erode the importance of finals week. In recognizing the importance of studying for finals, the committee also recommends that certain areas on campus be open 24 hours during finals time; this recommendation is now under consideration by the Student Policies Committee.

The main consequence of this policy will affect commencement, as grades will likely not be certified in time for diploma exercises. Footnote 5 in the proposal notes some graduation possibilities.

Q: Could this policy be read as requiring an examination or culminating experience during finals week?

A: See footnote 4, beginning "Other than in rare cases..." This statement acknowledges that there are cases when courses are completely finished before finals week. For example, capstone courses in the School of Business often end early.

Q: Isn't the ultimate judgment about final exams with the department chair?

A: Authoritatively, yes, but it is one's colleagues who set the standards.

Q: Has the Dean's office reviewed item 2, abolishing early grades, and what will be the extra cost?

A: Currently, the early grades are needed to certify that students meet graduation requirements and to begin work on probation issues. The graduation date is firm, so grades must be done before probation cases can be reviewed. This new policy would ease the pressure to get everything done and allow the office to focus on probation cases. The cost of sending diplomas after the fact is very modest in comparison to the productivity that is gained.

Q: Is there not already a requirement for a final exam or exam-type experience during finals week?

A: The Faculty Handbook states the need for a final exam. However, there is an ambiguity of sorts in the policy. Do finals have to take place during finals week? Maybe unclear. As it stands now, however, some faculty are not using finals week at all.

Q: What are the costs or technical issues for the registrar?

A: It is not even a concern, especially knowing the extra work currently required at the Dean's office to complete grade certification.

Student feedback: Like the proposed policy, spoke of the frustration of having work pushed up so that grades could be turned in early.

Call to question.

Favor: 29
Oppose: 0
Abstain: 0

Resolved, that the Academic Senate recommend the adoption of and adherence of the principles and practices outlined in Senate Document I-03-09.

Favor: 29
Oppose: 0
Abstain: 0

8. Summary of Strategic Planning Open Forums

Laura Yungblut reported that the two strategic planning open forums were well attended, with about 25-30 people each time. Some common themes emerged, including the need to more fully define what it is to have academic excellence, as well as concern about the need for quality teaching in order to build academic excellence. Participants also spoke about the graduate programs as a source of knowledge and finance generation. And finally, there were some who felt that the University was going about the effort the wrong way, that a mission and vision needed to be articulated first.

9. Reports from Standing Committees

Faculty Affairs Committee: Harry Gerla reported for the FAC.

- a. Finals Week proposal: The committee met and discussed this proposal.
- b. Academic Senate Constitution: The constitution may need clarification regarding replacements for senate vacancies. The committee will be looking into this issue.

Academic Policies Committee: John Rapp noted that the APC will be reviewing the following items: in light of the academic rigor discussions, the committee will be looking at the last day to add a course as well as the last day to drop a course with a "W." The committee also expects to review the proposed Law School degree.

Student Academic Policies Committee: There was nothing to report at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

Respectfully submitted: Heidi Gauder, Secretary of the Academic Senate.

