

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

October 5, 1987

The second meeting of the Faculty Senate for the academic year 1987-88 convened in Room 212 of the Main Building at 2:15 p.m. on October 5, 1987.

Chairman Alan W. Friedman, (English) presided at the meeting.

I. ATTENDANCE

I.

Present: Ricardo C. Ainslie, Lear L. Ashmore, Lee E. Baker, Mark Bernstein, Lowell J. Bethel, Julie H. Bichteler, Oscar G. Brockett, Cindy I. Carlson, Andrew M. Cooper, Arwin A. Dougal, John R. Durbin, David V. Edwards, Wallace T. Fowler, Alan W. Friedman, R. LaVerne Gallman, J. David Gavenda, John M. Geringer, William V. Gibson, Austin Gleeson, Maureen M. Grasso, Alan Gribben, Mark F. Hamilton, Joan A. Holladay, Judith A. Jellison, Kenneth W. Kirk, William R. Koch, Joseph E. Kruppa, Jeanne M. Lagowski, J. Parker Lamb, James L. Larimer, John C. Loehlin, Leon E. Long, Carol MacKay, Ruth McRoy, Priscilla Nelson, Joy Potter, Brenda I. Preyer, Dolores Sands, Gideon Sjoberg, Raynard M. Sommerfeld, William O. S. Sutherland, Walter Wilczynski, Roxanne Williamson, Robert H. Wilson.

Absent: John R. Barbaret, Lance Bertelsen, Allen Bizzell, Elizabeth W. Fernea, Mario J. Gonzalez (excused), Elaine K. Horwitz (excused), H. Paul Kelley (excused), Madeline M. Maxwell, Henry Selby.

Total members present: 44 Total members absent: 9

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of September 14, 1987 (D&P 2586-2592) were APPROVED as circulated.

III. REPORT OF OFFICERS

A. Report of Chairman

Mr. Friedman began the meeting with a number of announcements:

- 1) The Senate was reminded of the dinner at President Cunningham's home on October 6th honoring the Faculty Senate.
- 2) President Cunningham has chosen Austin Gleeson and Roxanne Williamson, from the slate of four names submitted to him by the Senate, to serve as Faculty Senate representatives on the Administrative Committee.

their classrooms. For example, as part of the promotion process, individual syllabi and the statement of objectives for every class are studied, examinations are related to the statement of objectives, etc. Mr. Sommerfeld expressed the hope that the committee would not give up on the evaluation of teaching.

Mr. Friedman, in response to the report and to Mr. Sommerfeld's comments, agreed that the question of teaching evaluations remains alive. Redrafting and review of the CIS instruments is currently in progress. The Senate Committee on Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures, chaired by Maureen Grasso, was directed to continue to monitor the processes on this campus in an effort to move "from a sporadic ad hoc consideration of these matters to a more regular review system." The Senate's Committee on Faculty/Student Concerns, chaired by Wallace Fowler, was also encouraged to consider this matter.

B. Proposed Amendments to the Vacation, Sick Leave, and Maternity Leave Sections of the U.T. Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures.

Mr. Friedman announced that the report on the proposed amendments to the Vacation, Sick Leave, and Maternity Leave Sections of the Handbook of Operating Procedures was postponed until the November meeting.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Preliminary Report from the ad hoc Committee to Review Basic Education Requirements.

Wallace Fowler (Aerospace Engineering), chair of the ad hoc Committee to Review Basic Education Requirements, gave a preliminary report on the committee's work to date. Their findings suggest that in most areas the new basic education requirements are "working fairly well"; however, there are important exceptions. The fundamental, underlying problem appears to be that "the Basic Education Requirements were implemented with no shifts, no reallocations, and no new resources." The two main problem areas identified concern the foreign language requirement and the substantial writing component courses (SWC). The foreign language requirement was stated as a proficiency requirement by the Vick Committee, but has been implemented as an entrance requirement. Further, it appears that some transfer students can avoid taking a foreign language, and there seems to be double standards for entering freshmen who have a foreign language deficiency. The SWC is the most serious concern. Five underlying problems were identified: 1) insufficient number of SWC courses in enough departments to meet student needs; 2) current guidelines force all SWC courses to be 3 semester hour courses; 3) faculty reluctance to offer SWC courses because of the crowded classes, extensive grading, and the problems of teaching uninterested majors who are just taking the course for the SWC; 4) many faculty refrain because they feel unsure how to teach writing; and

5) lack of resources. The ad hoc Committee's report will probably be presented at the November meeting of the University Council.

David Edwards (Government) asked whether the committee had taken into consideration the "national move afoot in the direction of more common core curricula"?

Wallace Fowler responded that the magnitude of the SWC issue was so great that the committee felt that the "long term development of ... new basic education requirements" was beyond its scope. In further exchange between Mr. Edwards and Mr. Fowler, Mr. Fowler said that his committee's charge had been to "identify the problems (arising from implementation of the Basic Education Requirements) and to recommend courses of action to alleviate those problems."

David Edwards reaffirmed the importance of the question of a common core curriculum. "If the University does not address it in a coherent and compelling way, ... it is going to be addressed for us sooner or later at higher levels." For the last three years, Mr. Edwards has been on a "Coordinating Board committee that has been looking at this question for the state as a whole."

Priscilla Nelson (Civil Engineering) asked whether space limitations at certain prime hours were found to be a limiting factor for courses that can be offered in multiple sections.

Wallace Fowler responded that space limitations were not mentioned by any deans or department chairmen as contributing to the SWC problem, and added that this is part of a larger issue than his committee's charge.

Gideon Sjoberg (Sociology) commented that he found the report interesting and that it reinforced a position he has held to for a number of years. This is that "no one seems to have looked at the limitations of the bureaucratization of higher education, where you have large classes and process students rather efficiently through the system using standardized examinations. But we cannot deal with the teaching of writing skills on this basis. If we are to solve this problem, we will need a fundamental reallocation of resources."

Wallace Fowler then attempted to give the Senate an idea of some of the tentative recommendations his committee will make. Courses should be offered that will satisfy one or two of the required six SWC course credits, but the total amount of writing presently required should be reduced. Enrollments in SWC courses should be limited to 18-25 students (in contrast to the current 30-35). Resources should be made available to support the teaching of such courses. More TA's should be hired to assist the faculty teaching such courses. Technological advances should be integrated in SWC courses. Workshops and handbooks should be available to faculty who need and/or want them. Teaching load credit (TLC) for SWC courses should be increased from 3.0 to 4.5.

Alan Friedman commented that he had been a member of the Vick Committee, and that "three items that the committee considered fundamental were approved but were never implemented. One had to do with the reallocation of resources; another had to do with keeping the substantial writing component classes small; and the third had to do with the establishment of a University-wide committee to oversee the implementation and approve the substantial writing component courses."

Priscilla Nelson (Civil Engineering) commented that some faculty, at least in her area, are reluctant to let the substantial writing requirement intrude on the technical content of their courses. She expressed the opinion that increasing the teaching load credits for SWC courses would go a long way in communicating the importance of these courses to the faculty and the students.

Ray Sommerfeld (Accounting) asked whether the committee had "quantified the implications of increasing the teaching load credit from 3.0 to 4.5?" He agreed with the desirability of increasing the TLC, but questioned the impact on the total university teaching budget if the number is kept at 18. "It is not going to do any good to send up a report that cannot possibly be implemented, and I think basic -- very basic -- resource reallocation is what is involved, not changing teaching load requirements."

Wallace Fowler agreed that the committee would have to provide "some sort of figures" in its report. He again spoke to the idea of allowing courses to satisfy one or two of the six SWC course credits as well as to the importance of keeping class size fairly small. There are alternatives, but each costs something. "The problem is that the whole requirement was implemented without (added) resources." Faculty were asked to do more without being given any recognition, "not even a pat on the back. You are just taking it out of your hide in order to do it for the University. We have done it for about four or five years now, and something has to happen in order to make this requirement more realistic."

Joy Potter (French/Italian) asked what was meant by a one-hour SWC course. Currently her students write three papers. "Each one gets edited, goes back and they rewrite them. Are you talking about a student writing one paper?" "Yes," was the response.

Ray Sommerfeld said that he was afraid that was the intent and that there were two ways out of the dilemma. "One is to trivialize the requirement and the other is to attempt to implement it." He expressed the hope that we won't trivialize what was intended as a serious requirement. He suggested that one possible way to handle it would be to institute admissions standards, i.e., to be sure students can in fact read and write before they get here. There may also be remedial solutions, but "what I thought I heard in that one-hour requirement was to satisfy something in perhaps the worst possible way."

Wallace Fowler responded by reiterating the present requirement and spoke once again to alternatives such as "three courses with two papers each with a total of at least 12 pages, ... four courses with two papers each with a total of 10 pages," etc. The goal is to expand the requirement in such a way as to allow more flexibility and to get more faculty involved in the process.

Roxanne Williamson (Architecture) spoke to the writing problems encountered when students must write in limited time periods such as in essay-type finals and quizzes. She asked if the committee had considered how writing in testing situations could be included since, from today's discussion, it appears as if the committee had addressed only take-home assignments.

Wallace Fowler said that many had raised questions such as "How can we know that the writing turned in by student X was done by student X?" Small, in-class writing assignments appear to be the only solution. Roxanne Williamson said that she was not speaking of cheating, but of the ability to organize and communicate ideas in a limited time.

B. Resolution Concerning Sentencing of U.T. Students.

John Durbin (Mathematics) introduced a resolution (D&P 2593-2595) concerning the sentencing of 12 students who took over President Cunningham's office in October 1986. Two changes were made, one to make it more precise ("recently" was changed to "on September 24" in line 3) and one to correct a misprint ("agree," not "agreed," in line 4). A brief history was presented. "The central issue of the resolution is, does the sentence fit the crime? And I stress what the resolution does not say. It does not say the students should not have been arrested. It does not say they should not have been convicted. It does not say they should not have been sentenced. It says none of that. It just speaks to the severity of the sentence." He then spoke to why he felt the Senate should pass the resolution.

Arwin Dougal (Electrical & Computer Engineering) MOVED that the resolution be tabled because a number of members did not receive the agenda and/or this resolution prior to the meeting. The motion FAILED.

Ray Sommerfeld (Accounting) expressed concern as to whether "our acting will help or hinder the cause."

Brenda Preyer (Art) said that as a member of the faculty and as a member of the Senate, she wanted "to go on record (as) supporting the motion."

Bill Gibson (Law) said that he respected "our (legal) system, and frankly I do abhor the trial of issues in papers and on television. I would prefer to see the process work itself out in the courts. Clear this has not occurred in this instance, and as a member of this faculty have no hesitancy in expressing my displeasure with what personally I