

Executive Committee Minutes

February 14, 2000

(Approved)

Chairperson Curt White called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Ryan Gillespie, Fred Noyes, Khalid Razaki, Curt White, Steve Whitmore, Matt Goodwin, Steve McCaw, President Boschini, Sandi Zielinski

Excused Absences: Barb Kurtz, Vanatta Ford, Al Goldfarb

Guest: Dr. Eric Thomas, Associate Vice President of Undergraduate Studies

Approval of Executive Minutes

Motion XXXI-110: by Senator Razaki, second by Senator Whitmore. Minutes approved unanimously.

Communications (oral):

02.09.00.01 From Sandra Little: Honorary Degree Committee Meeting (Forwarded to Senate Honorary Degree Committee Members)

Communications (distributed):

02.08.00.01 From Al Goldfarb: General Education Implementation Report

Proposed Agenda for Academic Senate Meeting 2/23/00 at 7:00 P.M.

Presentation: Rob Flott, Environmental Assessment Committee

Action Items:

10.13.99.01 Academic Progress Alert System Review (Academic Affairs Committee and Student Affairs Committee) Dr. Eric Thomas reported that he had gathered data relevant to the proposal as requested by the Senate. This issue was an information item 1/25/00.

Academic Senate Calendar Changes (Rules Committee) This issue was a Senate communication on 12/15/99.

Information Items:

12.14.99.03 Health Education Sequences Proposal (Academic Affairs and Budget Committees)

01.06.00.01 Minor in Foreign Languages in the Elementary School Proposal (Academic Affairs and Budget Committees)

11.22.99.01 Proposal to Eliminate Constitution Test (Academic Affairs Committee) Dr. Thomas reported that the Academic Standards Committee had voted not to approve the elimination of the Constitution Test. They will convey this information to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Motion XXXI-111: by Senator Goodwin, second by Senator Noyes to approve the agenda. The motion was approved. There was one abstention (Senator Zielinski).

Discussion:

Advertising Policy

Senator White: We have a lot of violations of our advertising policy right now. We need to enforce the policy or change it.

Senate's Role in Policy Making

Senator White: President Boschini and I will discuss the Senate's role in policy making on Thursday. If we are going to have it acted on, we will need to take care of it as an information and action item at the final two meetings in March.

02.08.00.01 General Education Implementation Report

Dr. Thomas: It was clear early in the fall that we were going to encounter some problems in terms of full implementation of the General Education program. Those problems involved having enough sections and proper coverage of the sections, particularly in Humanities and Fine Arts. The Provost designated an ad hoc planning committee to review the problems and come back with some solutions. The General Education Implementation Report contains seven difficulties and offers one or more possible solutions to each difficulty. In those solutions, there are a variety of different things that are addressed. Some of them have to do with personnel and resources. Others are curricular adjustments to accommodate student demand. It is those curricular adjustments that have to go to the Senate and are summarized in the Provost's cover memo. This full report has been circulated to the deans of all the colleges as well as the department chairpersons. The deans were supportive of the report and in particular the curricular adjustments.

Senator White: There was a great deal of skepticism about the plausibility of implementing this program in the debates that took place in the Senate when the General Education program was adopted. We were at that time essentially assured by the administration that we were to pass the proposal that we felt was most appropriate in concept and they would worry about implementation. We were also assured that the money from the State would in all likelihood be adequate to cover the expense of it and that no internal reallocations would probably be necessary. The other thing is that no one did a careful count.

Dr. Thomas: As we undertook efforts to take seat counts last semester to start getting real data to the departments, we found that it was not easy data to come up with.

Senator White: This current report is the best and most honest report that describes the situation. The question remains is will the Senate accept these modest revisions.

Senator Zielinski: It was very hard to determine seat numbers at the time because I don't think that anybody could foresee how large this would be and how sweeping it would be. It was a month by month situation in looking at numbers. It is only now that we do have some statistics and looking at the full year experience that we can see the overall picture. I think at the time, it was very hard to ascertain what it would be.

Dr. Thomas: There was also the difficulty of implementing the new General Education program at the same time as continuing the University Studies for existing students. The magnitude of the level of

junior and senior students still needing courses under University Studies exceeded everybody's expectations. So even with estimates, I don't think that anyone would have been on target in that regard.

Senator White: Did the Provost get any more information back about how long this strain is going to last and what resources will be freed up once University Studies courses are phased out?

Dr. Thomas: That information is not yet complete but is forthcoming.

Senator White: It is also fair to say that the recommendations don't address the scope of the problems that the

committee sees. The real response to the problem is that we need to hire more faculty in certain areas.

Dr. Thomas: There are recommendations in the report that call for additional personnel resources. How that is going to be managed I don't know. We have to get to a point to be able to say, here is the total amount of personnel we have to have and then we will start to address that.

Senator Zielinski: Are we over the worse part of doing double duty with offering the old University Studies program and the new General Education program?

Dr. Thomas: No. We are looking at the peak of this in the next fall or spring semester. It will probably last for a minimum of two years.

Senator Zielinski: If we get over the peak and the program straightens out, would it be possible to continue the program as it is or would we still see these same problems and dilemmas that students currently have?

Dr. Thomas: Some of it would we could go back and reinstate. Some of it I am not sure you could and you would have to reassess at the time. Part of it, especially the one related to the outer core, is because of a shortfall of courses in particular categories.

Senator Gillespie: When will this actually take effect? We are already doing academic planning for students' fall semester.

Dr. Thomas: These recommendations would actually give students more flexibility. They do not represent a compromise in content or scope. There are adjustments that invoke fewer restraints so that students can flow across class sections. So it would not make anything you previously said to students in error. They would not have been ill advised about taking the wrong course. The sooner we can get everyone into General Education, the sooner we can eliminate University Studies. Another important aspect is that General Education is not going to let students delay that course work, as was the case with University Studies.

Senator White: It sounds like this is something that advisors need clarification on.

Dr. Thomas: We have had regular inservice training sessions with the advisors because there were parts in middle core and outer core that we wanted to make sure that they were well prepared for.

Senator White: As good as the report is, it is still not entirely clear where the problem is in terms of two-year difficulty versus the long-term aspect.

Senator Noyes: The course I have heard about the most is the Foundation of Inquiry course. There are some real problems that are occurring. Who is teaching these courses? I think that this is a very important dimension. I feel that our program integrity is in question when I here the difficulties that students have experienced.

Senator Whitmore: Some students had a totally different class for Foundations of Inquiry than I did, with totally different expectations, grading systems and requirements. It would depend on the professor.

Dr. Thomas: There is some validity in what you are saying. All of them are concerns to be checked into. They have not escaped attention. The fall of 1998 course has definitely improved this year. We will do everything we can do to continue to improve.

Senator Zielinski: Suggested including with the report an update that concerns have been taken into account.

Senator Razaki: What would happen if a student failed FOI? Students would have to move at the same rate or that will impact the predicted number of seats in the course.

Dr. Thomas: I will provide an estimate of the percentage of students that fail the course.

Senator Boschini: Could you find out how many students failed any course during their first two semesters and how

many freshman failed FOI? If 80% of the freshman failed FOI, but only 10% failed any other course, then that says something too.

Senator White: We will assign this issue to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Motion XXXI-112: To adjourn. Approved unanimously by standing vote.