

Academic Senate Executive Committee Minutes
Monday, April 13, 2009
(Approved)

Call to Order

Senate Chairperson Dan Holland called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Executive Committee Minutes of March 30, 2009

The minutes of March 30, 2009 will be approved by e-mail or at the Executive Committee Meeting on April 27, 2009.

Oral Communication:

Follow up on Pension Concerns from Annuitants Association Sense of the Senate Resolution (Item 03.12.09.01 “Mini Briefing” Previously Distributed to Executive Committee on 3/16/09)

Senator Holland: Curt White has been pretty heavily involved with the concerns about the possible legislative changes that may affect pensions. It appears that ASCME is trying to get some things going. There is the call-in day to legislators that they are trying to get organized. As far as using university resources to get it organized, I don't know whether it would be ok to use e-mails to people, because that is kind of a lobbying issue.

President Bowman: I think that e-mails to colleagues would be fine unless it's an official use of the listserves. I think informal communications would be just fine.

Senator Holland: Curt is also interested in getting a contingent from the Senate and ASCME and anyone else interested to try to go and have a meeting with Representative Brady and Senator Brady.

Senator Kalter: ASCME has the call-in days as Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Senator Holland: They also sent a very nice memo around about the do's and don'ts of writing effective letters.

Senator Fazel: Don't the state representatives have the same retirement system as we do?

Senator Holland: No, this is for state universities.

Senator Borg: There are separate retirement systems in the state.

Senator Fazel: So these changes would only apply to university employees?

Senator Kalter: I think that it would affect the five retirement systems.

Senator Holland: There are a number of things in question. I don't know if they have actually reached the point of being bills yet, but there are a number of things under discussion that would make a huge impact on your life, such as instead of getting 2.2% credit for every year you have been here, you get 2% credit, up to a maximum of 70% instead of 80%. There is one that calls for your contribution of 10% instead of 8%. Another is if you have the Quality Care Health Plan, rather than paying more, you will pay any additional difference in the cost between an HMO and the Quality Care Health Plan, which, for a family, would be an additional \$230 per month. There is also the possibility of a 1.5% increase in state taxes. The cost of living increase would go to half of the...

Senator Borg: People already in the system would not have that cut?

Senator Holland: Which one?

Senator Borg: People who are already retired and in the system.

Senator Holland: I think that their cost of living would...

Senator Borg: Would go down?

Senator Holland: Would be the lesser of 3% or half of the actual cost of living increase.

Senator Kalter: I think that the 2% would be for everybody, not just annuitants.

Senator Holland: None of this is actually in a bill yet, but these are the kinds of things that are being discussed. The surviving spouse one is another horrendous one.

Senator Stewart: I can understand some of the others, but why penalize my spouse?

President Bowman: The 2% increase is a possibility, but they can't take away your benefits if you are already in the system.

Senator Holland: Health care, as I understand it, is not actually a defined benefit and they can do whatever they want there, including eliminating it.

Senator Kalter: The 2% will virtually eliminate the traditional pension plan because everyone will move to the self-managed plan. They are taking away the 2%, in essence, because over the last 15 to 20 years they have not actually been putting away the money for our pensions responsibly. They have been using our retirement money to pay for other things.

Senator Holland: I don't mind paying my fair share of a tax increase, which may be 1.5 to 2% in addition to what we are paying now, but if all of these things are approved, it is more like an 8 or 9% tax increase. The question is would people be interested in my trying to schedule a meeting with the Bradys and any other representatives.

Senator Fazel: Let's do it.

Senator Holland: Ok, I will see what I can do.

Senator Borg: Are you going to invite a wider group than the Senate Executive Committee?

Senator Holland: I don't think that we want to show up at their offices with 40 people, although that might not be a bad thing. You work with one of the representatives, Senator Spialek. What would you say about 40 people showing up?

Senator Spialek: I don't think that that would be a bad idea because people call in and they just take your name down. I don't know if anything ever gets back to those people.

Senator Holland: I think that being an official voice of the Senate, along with representatives from the AP Council, the Civil Service Council...

Senator Kalter: I think that Curt might be a good...

Senator Holland: I invited Curt to come if he wanted to and his response was, 'I would be happy to, but I don't know how much good it will do.'

Senator Fazel: How about Lane?

Senator Holland: He might be interested; I haven't checked with him. If you have people you would like to invite or if anybody here would like to be invited, let me know. I will let you know exactly when we can get it scheduled. Hopefully, they will talk to us. It is important that they at least know our position.

Distributed Communications:***04.09.09.01 From Susan Kalter/Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee: Academic Calendar Procedural Questions (Dist. Rules Com.)***

Senator Kalter: The Rules Committee discussed the Academic Calendar with Jess Ray, Jonathan Rosenthal and Mardell Wilson. In the course of the discussion, we asked if we really need to do this every single year. What often happens is that we get together, we take up their time and they come in and explain why things can't be changed.

There are all kinds of really interesting rules about why the calendar has to be the way it is. They have gone through it with a fine-toothed comb by the time it gets to us. The only people who actually hear why it has to be the way it is are usually the committee or the committee and the whole Senate, which seems like a bit of a duplication of effort.

Jonathan said that he can draw up a memo that talks about the different constraints that we have and have that circulated to the Senate every year. We could do something like that at the first meeting each April—have the proposed calendar presented and then everybody talks about it. It would only go to committee if we really need it to.

We brought up Paul's concern about only one week after Thanksgiving and, essentially, the committee came to the conclusion that there was nothing that we could do about it unless we want to change the contract dates for when we start paying faculty, change the date of Thanksgiving, go to a 14-week semester and I think that there was one other thing. So there are a lot of questions that come up, but not a lot of movement in the calendar most years. That is why I wanted to bring up the question, 'should we continue to do it this way?'

Senator Lonbom: I think that you have a great idea. I think unless there is some other aberrant question...

Senator Stewart: Just a sharing the information and of the calendar with the Senate and if there are major questions, the calendar could go to the committee.

Senator Kalter: It is really important and interesting information about why it has to be the way it is. We did ask about the two weeks and decided that it is better the way it is than some of the alternatives.

Senator Borg: The calendar needs to be done a number of years in advance so that people can predict the schedule for their events. The only thing that I am asking is that when that scenario comes up, automatically saying that there is only one week after Thanksgiving, the question ought to be raised for that year. 'Is there something else we can do about it?' These things cycle; I think it's a 27-year cycle until it comes back to the same calendar.

Senator Holland: That is what makes me nervous about turning it into a full-Senate discussion. Is the calendar something we actually vote on to approve?

Senator Kalter: Technically, we can send it back down the chain to ask them to change things.

Senator Borg: It used to be a voteable item when the Senate had the legislative authority under the Constitution. This was something that we passed and the President signed. When the Board of Trustees changed that legal authority and we became advisory, I think that Curt White was the one who suggested that let's do this in committee and have it presented annually to the Senate. You are, essentially, suggesting taking the next step and getting rid of either the Senate presentation or the committee presentation rather than doing it twice. That seems reasonable to me in this particular process, but I do think that it is important to have the discussion about the calendar.

Senator Kalter: If we are going to eliminate one of those two, it would be the committee discussion that I would eliminate unless there is a problem (noted during the Senate presentation).

Senator Borg: The communication has to be continued because as soon as that spigot is turned off, people are going to be suspicious and wondering about it and this institutional memory isn't going to be here.

Senator Kalter: I agree.

Senator Stewart: And that is what we were proposing, that there be a presentation to the Senate.

Senator Kalter: Yes, and have it be advisory and have it so that if there are enough questions, it can trigger a committee meeting, but the information gets discussed and aired once.

Senator Borg: Since that's just a procedural thing, we can just say that is how it will happen. That doesn't take a Senate vote. It is the prerogative of the Chair to assign duties.

Senator Holland: I think that is specifically in the Blue Book.

Senator Borg: Then we need to figure out the language that needs to be changed.

Senator Holland: So is there motion to change the procedure?

Senator Kalter: I was suggesting that if there was some consensus about it that we give it to the Rules Committee and they can look at the Blue Book and adjust it.

Senator Borg: That would be appropriate. I would suggest that you recommend that the procedure be streamlined as a presentation to the Senate as the rationale.

Senator Holland: If it comes from the committee, the Senate will realize that the committee has looked at it and there will be fewer questions to deal with in April, which is typically when we have very long meetings. However, if we bring it immediately to the whole Senate and it involves a whole Senate presentation, wherein there will be very useful information provided, it will probably add fifteen to twenty minutes to the length of the meeting.

Senator Fazel: Could we have the presentation during the last meeting at which the new Senate is seated? That is when we don't usually have a lot going on.

Senator Holland: That is a possibility.

Ms. James: Is your recommendation that it be an Advisory Item to the whole Senate directly from the Executive Committee rather than from the Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee?

Senator Borg: Yes, from the administrative office responsible for the calendar to the Executive Committee to the Senate.

Senator Holland: Yes, and every year we would have that presentation and we could ask why we have to have the calendar this way. That is very useful information, but do we mind adding additional time to the meetings?

Senator Kalter: I don't know how the timetable got set that the committee presents it in April. I suppose that is just when the Registrar's Office forwards it. Last Wednesday, we looked at the 2013-14 calendar, so we are five years out.

Senator Holland: Shall we have Rules look at it?

Senator Kalter: And I would be happy to communicate with Joe Solberg about it.

Ms. James: Where exactly in the Blue Book is this?

Senator Kalter: It is under the Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee's responsibilities, and I think it should stay under that committee's responsibilities, but only if that is triggered after it is presented to the Senate as an Advisory Item.

The Executive Committee's recommendations concerning the Senate's role in the disposition of Academic Calendar

will be referred to the Senate Rules Committee. The calendar will come before the Senate as an Advisory Item on April 22, 2009.

04.09.09.02 From Ed Stewart, Academic Affairs Committee/S. Parry/J. Rosenthal: CGE Course Prep Package Guidelines Questions

The Executive Committee briefly discussed the question from Sally Parry concerning the CGE Course Prep Package Guidelines. It was decided that the information was referred to the Academic Affairs Committee as an information item only and that no action was required by that committee.

04.09.09.03 From Ed Stewart/Academic Affairs Committee: Proficiency Examination Policy (Information Item on 4/22/09)

Senator Stewart: The basic motivation for the revisions to the Proficiency Exam Policy was that existing policy does not correspond with departmental needs. So there was a rewording of some of the parts to make it more beneficial for students and more useful to departments.

Senator Borg: You may notice that the policy states that the ‘Senate recommends that’, which doesn’t make it a policy. That was probably in reaction to the change in status of the Senate in the 1990s. This needs to be reworded. I don’t see any changes in substance; it is just that we are trying to clarify things. So if that is helpful, I think it would be a wonderful change to get rid some of that type of text.

The policy will come before the Senate as an Information Item on April 22, 2009.

DISTRIBUTED BY E-MAIL (Not included in Executive Committee Packets):

04.10.09.01 From Ed Stewart/Academic Affairs Committee: Baccalaureate Degree Programs Policy – Time Limit for Courses as Prerequisites (Formerly Presented to the Senate as the “Baccalaureate Degree Policy – Ten-Year Limit for Course Prerequisites” (Action Item on 4/22/09)

Senator Stewart: There were e-mail communications between Cynthia, Jonathan Rosenthal and I about the Ten-Year Limit for Prerequisite Courses Policy. This is the one that we submitted as an Information Item on February 18, 2009, but had not yet submitted as an Action Item. Jonathan has sent me and I have distributed the reworked version because it makes it more flexible.

It is now called the “Time Limit for Courses as Prerequisites” rather than the “Ten-Year Limit for Course Prerequisites”. The recommendation is for a limit of seven or more years, rather than a strict ten-year limit. The idea is that it is not up to the university, but it is up to the individual unit to decide if there is time-sensitive material in those prerequisites and they set the policy through catalog description.

The areas that are underlined and in red are some of the changes that have been made after questions that arose at the Senate meeting. There is also an area highlighted in yellow within the policy, itself.

Senator Borg: As I look at this, the body of the policy has not changed since the last Senate meeting. It is the context and rationale that have changed.

Senator Stewart: Yes and the yellow highlighted area is really a sample of how the catalog copy could be written to include the limitation.

Senator Kalter: I was really happy with the flexibility of the committee on the issues that were brought up on the floor of the Senate.

Senator Borg: I do notice that the text just below the area highlighted in yellow, item number 10, should not be included. The University Writing Policy does not exist anymore so it should not be included. Where did you get this version of the policy?

Senator Stewart: From Jonathan Rosenthal.

Senator Borg: If this is on the web as the policy, someone needs to make that change right away.

Senator Stewart: He may have gotten it from the web.

Senator Borg: We need to check on that because the elimination of the Writing Exam has already been approved.

Senator Stewart: Do I need to strike through that item since it has been eliminated?

Senator Borg: The copies distributed to the Senate should not contain this language so there won't be any question about what we are voting on.

The policy will come before the Senate as an Action Item on April 22, 2009.

NOTE: The policy online contains the text regarding the Writing Exam as a graduation requirement. Vickie Kiser of the President's Office and Jonathan Rosenthal of Academic Services have been informed of the discrepancy and the changes that need to occur.

Proposed Agenda for Academic Senate for April 22, 2009:

***Academic Senate Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, April 22, 2009
7:00 P.M.
OLD MAIN ROOM, BONE STUDENT CENTER***

Call to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2009

Chairperson's Remarks

Student Body President's Remarks (Senator Spialek)

Administrators' Remarks

President Al Bowman

Provost Sheri Everts

Vice President of Student Affairs Steve Adams

Vice President of Finance and Planning Steve Bragg

Committee Reports:

- ***Academic Affairs Committee Chairperson: Senator Stewart***
- ***Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee Chairperson: Senator Kalter***
- ***Faculty Affairs Committee Chairperson: Senator Borg***
- ***Planning and Finance Committee Chairperson: Senator Fazel***
- ***Rules Committee Chairperson: Senator Solberg***

Action Items:

03.26.09.01 2009-10 Institutional Goals and Priorities Report (Planning and Finance Committee) (Please See Senate Packets of 4/8/09 for this Report)

04.10.09.01 Baccalaureate Degree Programs Policy – Time Limit for Courses as Prerequisites (Formerly Presented to the Senate as the “Baccalaureate Degree Policy – Ten-Year Limit for Course Prerequisites” as an Information Item on 2/18/09) (Academic Affairs Committee)

Information Items:

03.06.09.02 College of Arts and Sciences Bylaws-Revised (Rules Committee)

04.09.09.03 Proficiency Examination Policy (Academic Affairs Committee)

Advisory Item:

03.12.09.02 Academic Calendar for 2013-2014 (Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee)

Communications

Adjournment

Motion XXXX-: By Senator Fazel, seconded by Senator Kalter, to approve the Senate Agenda of April 22, 2009. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Motion XXXX-: By Senator Mason, seconded by Senator Fazel, to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved.