

Faculty Senate Minutes

April 4, 2005

Senators Present: Barry Anton, Alyce DeMarais, Peter Wimberger, Bill Haltom, Chelsea Howes, Kris Bartanen, Julian Edgoose, Bill Beardsley (chair), Suzanne Holland, Eric Orlin, Keith Maxwell

Guests: Carrie Washburn, Martin Jackson, Leah Rommereim (student), Ryan Coon (student), Rich Anderson-Connolly, Bob Matthews, Carlo Bonura

Chair Beardsley called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Chelsea Howes, the new student Senator, was welcomed to the Senate.

The minutes of the March 21, 2005 meeting were approved.

Special Orders:

Barry Anton commended Sarah Brabeck for the successful Relay for Life event held at Puget Sound on April 2, which raised over \$30,000 for cancer research.

Old Business:

The Senate ratified unanimously another individual proposed for an honorary degree.

Senators returned to the motion concerning the P/F option at Puget Sound postponed from the March 21 meeting. **Senator Haltom** asked Martin Jackson, chair of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), if he wished to clarify the discussions in the ASC concerning P/F. Jackson remarked that the faculty on the ASC might not be representative of the full faculty, so that perhaps a larger group of faculty, or the full faculty, might vote to keep it. He indicated that the Senate might want to send the motion on to a meeting of the full faculty, or the Senate might want to overturn it themselves. **Senator Wimberger** asked if the ASC action in removing the P/F option entirely seemed appropriate to the abuses that the ASC had noted. Jackson indicated that some faculty oppose the P/F option in principle, so that he made the motion to eliminate the option as a means of getting discussion started, and admitted himself somewhat surprised that the motion passed. **Senator Haltom**, indicating his discomfort with the notion that a faculty committee had not reconsidered a motion whose passage surprised it, supported the motion to overrule. **The motion to overrule the ASC elimination of the P/F option at UPS was then passed unanimously, with two abstentions.**

New Business:

The Senate then turned to the proposal on the academic calendar forwarded to the Senate by the Curriculum Committee (see Appendix 2 to the Senate minutes of 21 March). **Senator Holland MS to reject the proposed calendar.** Coon spoke out forcefully against the notion of removing a day from Reading Period in order to add a vacation day elsewhere in the term, arguing that it would negatively impact his abilities to finish the semester strongly. **Senator Holland** reported

that the sentiment of her department was also against shortening Reading Period, and also was concerned about the possibility of having four exams in a single day. **Senator DeMarais** noted that students she knew also did not want to lose Reading Period, but wonder if we could have an extra vacation day without having to lose a day elsewhere. Carrie Washburn indicated that the proposal began as a means of dealing with the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, but that the Dean's office hoped that the proposal might also even out the number of days in each semester to 69. The question was raised where did the number of 69 days come from, and the response was that accreditors do focus on the number of teaching days per term, and 69-70 was where most of our peer institutions were.

Senator Howes remarked that there was zero support among students for shortening Reading Period, because it was important as a stress reliever. Even if some students did not use Reading Period appropriately, many did use it appropriately, and relieving stress at the end of the term was a legitimate use of Reading Period. She also noted that if the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is created as a holiday, students will take the whole week off.

Rich Anderson-Connolly, chair of the Curriculum Committee, indicated that the proposal for a three day Reading Period grew out of a compromise. Acting Dean of Students Dougharty had indicated to them that he did not see the shortened Reading Period as a deal-breaker, and that more days at Thanksgiving and/or for Fall Break might be a good idea. **Senator Wimberger** asked about Reading Period days at comparable schools; Anderson-Connolly replied that the average was 2.5.

Senator Anton raised the issue of Fall Break and whether there might be flexibility there; Anderson-Connolly indicated that the committee had not wanted to eliminate Fall Break. Senator Holland asked if it were possible to start after Labor Day; Anderson-Connolly replied that the Christmas holiday governs the fall calendar, dictating when classes need to begin. **Senator Bartanen** indicated that the fall term is already shorter than spring, so we can't cut out another week, but need to recognize that the fall term starts in late August.

Senator Orlin returned to the issue of Thanksgiving, suggesting that it might be better to give the entire week off in exchange for the two days in October. **Senator Anton** asked the students what they thought. Coon indicated that he might prefer a week at Thanksgiving to a Fall Break, but his real concern was maintaining a four-day Reading Period. Rommereim said she had no strong feeling between a full week at Thanksgiving and a two-day Fall Break, while Howes said she thought it was better to have a full week at Thanksgiving. **Senator Haltom** asked whether we would face the problem of creep on the Friday before a full week holiday or the Monday after, and Howes said she thought we would. **Senator Bartanen** asked how a full week break might affect the momentum of classes returning from Thanksgiving. Bonura said that students can not expect to get a full week holiday at Thanksgiving and that the holiday will creep over the weekends.

Senator Edgoose wondered about the possibility of having exams extend onto Saturday, which might allow a four-day Reading Period to be preserved without forcing exams into a compressed time frame. Carrie Washburn indicated there might be religious issues with scheduling exams on a Saturday. **Senator DeMarais** spoke in favor of a four-day exam week, and Anderson-Connolly noted it had been done in the past. **Senator Orlin** voiced concern that students might

potentially have four exams in a single day, and that if we move to a system with four exam blocks in a single day, we ought to have a written policy allowing students to reschedule at least one exam if they had three or four in a single day.

Senator Wimberger spoke in favor of retaining some form of Fall Break, saying it provided an opportunity to catch up on grading, and **Senator Edgoose** acknowledged that without a Fall Break it is a long haul from the start of the term to Thanksgiving. **Senator Holland** noted that taking a full week for vacation just before the end of the term presents difficulties for ending the term strongly.

Senator Wimberger spoke in favor of the overall proposal, recognizing it as a compromise that did a good job in balancing different needs. **Senator Edgoose** was less sympathetic, feeling that the different number of teaching days per term was not so problematic, and expressed concerns about Reading Period and the last week and a half of classes in general. Anderson-Connolly noted that having terms of the same lengths enables faculty to use the same syllabus whether the course is taught in the fall or the spring. **Senator Holland** thought that adjusting syllabi was not a major concern; she suggested that a term of fewer than 69 days was still possible. Anderson-Connolly indicated that the committee was not necessarily trying to maintain a certain number of days in the term, but that 69 days fit what the committee was trying to accomplish. **Senator Anton** noted that we could also accomplish some of the goals for the number of days of Reading Period or vacation by starting the term earlier.

Senator Maxwell suggested that the Senate ought not to get in the habit of overruling standing committees, and suggested we defer to the Curriculum Committee's expertise in this area.

Senator Orlin then **MS to substitute a motion that would send the Curriculum Committee proposal to a full faculty meeting rather than rejecting it.** Rommereim worried that student involvement is not being sufficiently heard on an issue of importance to students. **Senator Bartanen** suggested that the process is working; students are being heard, but ultimately the calendar is an academic decision that belongs to the faculty. **Senator Howes** echoed Rommereim's concerns about student involvement. Anderson-Connolly reiterated that the process is working; the student representative to the Curriculum Committee brought a report back to the Student Senate, the committee did take student views into account, and the final proposal is a compromise between student views and other views.

The Orlin motion to create a substitute motion then passed unanimously.

The substitute motion, to send the proposal on the academic calendar to a faculty meeting, also passed unanimously.

The Senate returned briefly to the topic of teaching evaluation forms. **Senator Edgoose** noted that the phrasing of questions differed on various forms, and that he thought it was important to have both positively and negatively worded questions, which would help avoid the language of receiving 'straight sixes' on these forms.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Orlin