

## **Faculty Senate Minutes October 22, 2001**

**Present:** Dave Balaam, Kris Bartanen, Bill Breitenbach, Terry Cooney, John Hanson, Kathie Hummel-Berry, Martin Jackson, Juli McGruder, Hans Ostrom (Chair), George Tomlin, Roberta Wilson

Ostrom called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 and the minutes of October 8, 2001 were approved as amended.

There were no announcements or special orders.

Update on *By Laws* revisions: Faculty may vote on *By Laws* revisions at the next faculty meeting, after they are read. Jackson inquired whether other proposals were in the works; Cooney answered no.

Discussion of draft "Evaluation Plan for the Core Curriculum" (attached): Cooney began by recounting that this draft had been prepared in response to a Trustee request for baseline data describing current student behavior with respect to electives. These data will be collected using transcript analysis, then follow-up evaluation data will be collected and analyzed about six years hence, after the new core has been fully implemented.

Breitenbach noted that student interdisciplinary experience and their attitudes toward interdisciplinary study are hard to measure, and it is unclear we are doing that yet. He mentioned Susan Pierce's suggestion of the creation of signature programs covering multiple core rubrics, and indicated he would like to see an evaluation plan that would address those specifically. Cooney supported the consideration of such signature programs, saying they could include long existing programs such as Asian studies, and reaffirmed the importance of measuring the success of anything. Cooney reminded the group that the curriculum committee subcommittee had in fact worked on a process to measure the generation of values and three focus groups were conducted this fall to begin to measure that. Conclusions are not yet ready to report. McGruder inquired who was doing the qualitative analysis of such data, and wondered whether the focus groups had been taped and transcribed or simply documented with written notes. Cooney stated they were taped and assumed Randy Nelson was in charge of the research. McGruder pointed out the existence of university supported Nud\*ist software to analyze qualitative transcripts. Tomlin suggested that in addition to other items discussed it might be a good idea to ask the "big questions" such as "What difference has the core made to you?" Balaam asked for clarification regarding the timing of evaluation of the new core. Cooney indicated the target date for follow-up evaluation of the core experience was six years out, which would place it in Spring 2007, when the first class entering under the new core would be seniors. Wilson asked whether this evaluation would be repeated annually, to which Cooney replied unlikely, due to the scope of the undertaking. When Breitenbach wondered whether there might be distortion in data due to cross over between cores among students enrolled before Fall 2003, Cooney clarified that Academic Standards had made a ruling that did not allow core cross over. Ostrom suggested that baseline data should be shared with the University community when it becomes available. Cooney stated that this could be done and the data should be available either this year or next.

Ostrom then turned to item F in the draft evaluation document (student satisfaction with the core in its entirety) and wondered about measures of attitude change in individuals. Cooney pointed out that evaluation would be of attitude change in the cohort rather than individuals, and stated that some questions have been asked historically such as "what was most important about the core?" He indicated that a measure of cohort attitude change could be change in patterns of response to such questions. Tomlin suggested that it may also be important to ask orthogonal axis questions such as questions about attitudes toward the food in the servery. Ostrom inquired

whether Senators wished Randy to share the instrument with the Senate. McGruder indicated she would like to see the survey used with the focus groups.

Discussion of draft of "Goals for this Decade" (attached): This document will be presented to the trustees for comment. Balaam asserted that the mission statement would be improved by the addition of a phrase such as "tolerance of different views" strengthening the concept that tolerance of differences rather than simple appreciation of differences was a mission of the University. Cooney stated that the mission statement had been reviewed two or three years ago with faculty input and it was unlikely the trustees would raise this issue at this point in time. Bartanen argued that the word "appreciation" was, in her view, stronger, and Hanson supported the use of language which is somewhat vague rather than so specific as to exclude ideas in such statements.

Jackson questioned whether the ordering of items in the document implies priorities. Cooney answered that priorities had not been established so the ordering of items did not have that sort of significance. He stated that the science building was probably a top priority, but that it had not yet been voted on. Wilson suggested that while the goal to become a 75% residential campus was fairly specific, many goals are not and perhaps should be more so. Hanson asked for clarification about what sort of dining spaces are needed (Goal 2c). Bartanen replied that it was necessary to look at the impact of each additional step toward greater residence percentage on the ability of Wheelock and other dining areas to serve the growing needs of the campus. She noted that Trimble Hall will include a multipurpose room that will primary function as a lounge, but will be able to shift to dining space when the Rotunda is unavailable due to scheduled events. Wilson wondered whether more dormitory space is planned, and Bartanen replied that the next facility may be more like apartment –style housing. Cooney affirmed the need for more residential space as the campus becomes more of a traditional resident campus, as well as more recreational space. He noted the need for all such construction to be acceptable to the community.

Breitenbach raised concerns about item #1-b (develop additional signature programs, including honors and cluster programs.) He suggested that the faculty had not yet discussed or agreed on whether this was important, and it may be premature to set a goal toward accomplishing this change in academic program on the basis of just President Pierce's suggestion and the very limited amount of faculty input that would have taken place at the faculty conversation. He expressed strong reservations about the creation of new honors programs because such programs would tend to isolate certain classes of students from the general university population, creating separate academic and social roles. Ostrom expressed concerns about demands on faculty time due to the impact of additional honors theses. McGruder wondered about admissions process for existing honors programs, suggesting that she had been underwhelmed by the quality of some honors theses. Cooney replied that honors students are selected on the basis of admission statistics and application essays. Wilson further cautioned that the student independent research (item 1c) is exceeding time consuming for faculty, and that institutionalizing that opportunity would be very challenging.

Wilson wondered whether this document should be brought to the full faculty for further discussion. Ostrom expressed concern that the "straw vote" taken at the faculty conversation in August did not address the level of detail seen in this document, and perhaps faculty input was needed. Breitenbach inquired about the status of this document after trustee approval. Cooney answered that the Board of Trustees has the authority to establish goals, and that those goals become a framework within which allocation of resources occurs. Hummel-Berry expressed concern that resource allocation such as addition of new faculty positions could be overly driven by priorities such as the development of signature programs, reducing availability of such resources for other needs. Cooney replied by example, stating that when the IPE program was added no additional faculty were needed. Breitenbach asserted that he was less concerned about items 2 through 6, but that for item 1 (academic programs) faculty should have a voice. He indicated he was disturbed about the use of the faculty conversation and straw votes within that

conversation to guide academic program development, since it does not really include substantial discussion among faculty. He pointed out that for faculty conversations, faculty are not in control of the development of the agenda items and there is not really an opportunity for extended deliberation. He expressed that he would be very concerned if these conversations became a substitute for faculty meetings in matters such as academic program development. Ostrom agreed that the faculty conversations were not really conversations. McGruder supported this statement, pointing out that attendance is better at faculty meetings, and involves a better balance between new and veteran faculty.

**M/S/P (2 abstentions) to take the draft of “Goals for this Decade” to the full faculty meeting with strong recommendations for faculty attendance to discuss certain focused points within the document, particularly items #1 and #3.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Kathie Hummel-Berry