

Faculty Senate Minutes
March 8, 1999

Senators present: B. Beardsley, M. Birnbaum, D. Bowe, N. Bristow, T. Cooney, Connie Hale, B. Haltom, D. Hulbert, H. Ostrom, B. Steiner, G. Tomlin, P. Valentine

Visitors present: K. Bartanen, B. Breitenbach, J. Deters, J. Evans, D. Scott

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

1. **Minutes.** The approval of the minutes were postponed.
2. **Introduction.** David Bowe, ASUPS president was introduced.
3. **Announcements.** There were no announcements.
4. **Special Orders.** There were no special orders.
5. **Discussion of approval voting.** David Scott, Mathematics faculty, made a presentation on approval voting. He was concerned over the slow progress of the core deliberations and suggested having the faculty consider approval voting to speed up the process. Approval voting allows any number of proposals to be put on the table for a vote, each proposal receiving one vote or no vote per voter. A faculty member could vote for as few or as many proposals as he/she wished in a priority order. This way, a vote for all of the proposals would carry as much weight as voting for none. Faculty would be encouraged to "adopt" (plagiarize?) proposals of others by adding or deleting portions as they see fit. Birnbaum thought the current process of discussing each course individually has more merit than considering entire packages in a single vote. Bristow wondered whether approval voting could be used to consider a specific section of a core proposal. Cooney questioned the need to use valuable faculty meeting time to discuss a voting procedure. He also noted the relative success of the current deliberations using standard voting procedures.
6. **The Connections Seminar.** Tomlin presented a proposal for a junior seminar: "The Connections Seminar, connecting knowledge, deliberation and action in a complex, diverse world." Tomlin noted that almost every formal core revision proposal, the Ad Hoc committee's, Plan B, Taranovski's, Veseth's original, and the Senate subcommittee synthesis proposals of last fall, contained an upper division interdisciplinary core course, thus, these ideas should be represented in the current deliberations. He hoped the seminar would connect students to those in other majors to different perspectives or schools of thought and to the outside community. This would help them foster a dialogue on modern dilemmas at the local, state, national and international levels. Birnbaum was concerned that the proposed course would require a focus on contemporary topics in order to be linked to contemporary society. She also wondered what shape courses with community service would take other than "uplift" projects. Cooney liked the title, but was concerned the courses might limit the connections to contemporary issues and not open students to the span of experiences across time. He also noted that 75% of UPS students are already involved in community work. Tomlin replied that the difference to doing community volunteer work was that this course would and be an intellectual research experience based on a contemporary issue in need of resolution, not a volunteer experience. Bartanen liked the second half of the proposal, where students would be involved in community work. Birnbaum thought such a course should connect disciplines and communities, but felt it seemed very unlikely it could do both. Cooney felt the university shouldn't get involved in the public advocacy such a program would suggest. Valentine thought students would be excited to be involved in work in the outside community. Bristow presumed the structure of the courses would allow the faculty to do

the teaching and for the students to collect the information. Ostrom suggested adopting current courses in International relations and SCXT, but the faculty should have a couple of years to work out the details of the remaining courses and an option for the “action assignment.” Haltom thought the seminar could be developed by small groups of faculty, and then be “grafted” onto the core, rather than trying to approve the core category *a priori*. Steiner suggested incorporating the Veseth “citizenship” ideals into a “connections” seminar. Cooney wondered how such a seminar would fit into the intellectual mission of the university. He thought existing SCXT and CV cores could fit well into the seminar, but that International Studies courses would not. Tomlin disagreed, feeling the International Studies would fit and that the courses would fit very closely to the goals in the university’s mission, except perhaps for “aesthetic appreciation,” and that they would further advance the goal of working collaboratively in teams of diverse people. Valentine concurred, and commented on how some study-abroad programs would not only fit well, but would encourage students to interact with the world around them. Birnbaum thought the seminar should not be so capacious as to lose its sense of distinction. Bartanen felt the articulation of goals and objectives should be similar to the work done on the new freshman seminars. Beardsley objected to having a new seminar with no distribution or major requirements attached, noting the rest of the core categories would have to be “squashed” into the four remaining units. Tomlin replied that this core category would possibly subsume large parts of three existing categories; thus leave more room for fitting remaining course categories into the core. To develop a sense of connections between intellectual activity and the real world problems before all course work for the major was completed would be a goal of the connections seminar. For that reason, he thought the seminar would work best during the junior year. Ostrom agreed. Bristow questioned the need for another “distinctive” core class. Given these suggestions, Beardsley suggested the possibility of moving to “Phase 3” in the core deliberations. Cooney stressed the importance of keeping the framework of the liberal arts degree in mind by bringing students together outside their majors in their upper-class years and of maintaining a sense of “verticality” in the core. Valentine agreed, and commented on how he felt students enjoyed “mixing” with others outside their major. Steiner felt breadth was important in the student’s education and that he supported courses that were “unique” to UPS, despite the lack of support for Science-in-Context, one of the “unique” courses. Wood thought the argument over the number of cores could be flexible because some students could be allowed to take as few as four cores outside their area while fulfilling a 7 unit core, providing that the courses in the major count as breadth requirements. Hulbert thought the core should be limited to 7 courses from different areas in order to provide a wide range of experiences for students outside their area of interest. Ostrom didn’t see the necessity of adding yet another seminar in order to “get the students together.” Cooney didn’t think the “Connections” core would need to be a seminar, because upper division course are already limited to 20 students (only 3 more than the seminar limit of 17).

8. **Science in Context** Evans opened a discussion on how Science-in-Context could fit into the revised core. He suggested the “unpopularity” of the core is due to the difficulty of “pulling-off” the individual courses because of the large class sizes (up to 55 students). The current guidelines offer two features not found in the guidelines for other areas of the core: 1) They mandate team teaching and 2) they mandate a limited number of courses, in order that students can be provided a “common experience.” Furthermore, Evans pointed out the rewarding experience faculty had in integrating their courses through team-teaching, despite many faculty do not find this to be the most comfortable or effective way to use their teaching skills. While some students enjoy the give and take of multiple perspectives, many find it frustrating. Evans suggested improving the core by opening up the teaching to single faculty members (already approved in at least one class) and by finding a place for SCXT in another core area (but not necessarily in a category by itself). Pointing to a chart he distributed, Evans suggested “shrinking” the current science core requirement down from 3 to 2. One challenge would be to find a

place for Math and Foreign Language, elements Evans thought were important to include in the core. He hoped options for taking these courses could be found in other core areas. Haltom suggested giving students a choice between Math and FL. Bristow suggested the possibility that students might not need to count all of the 9 units in the proposed core if some of the major requirements could be fulfilled through one of the freshman seminars) Beardsley said many of cores need to be rewritten anyway. He suggested having students pick 2 Humanities courses, one being an upper-division course. Cooney suggested a couple of other possibilities: 1) To combine Math and Natural Science core categories and 2) Counting FL as either a Society or a Humanities option. Bristow considered the option of including FL as an International Studies core. Haltom asked the all-important question: do we live with existing requirements or are we willing to change them? He also cited the possibility of going to a pure distribution requirement core. Cooney felt the guidelines for the core categories should be clearly defined. He also saw a danger in going to a "pure" distribution" requirement core that could result in the possibility of having freshmen take 300 level courses. Ostrom felt strict guidelines might limit departments to be forced to be told what courses they must offer in the core. Cooney disagreed, citing the importance of the institutional goals set forth by the Board of Trustees and that they be considered while developing guidelines for the core, rather than leaving the decisions to the individual departments.

9. Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Hulbert