

Faculty Senate Minutes
March 24, 1997

Senators Present: W. Beardsley, K. Barhydt, T. Cooney, M. Farmer, W. Haltom, J. Kay, G. Kirchner (Chair), R. Matthews, K. Maxwell, S. Sloane, B. Smith

Visitors: John Finney

Secretary's note: For a number of reasons, events in the meeting did not occur in the usual order, and discussions were started, stopped for a time while other discussions took place, and then resumed. That is not indicated in the following minutes.

Minutes of the March 3 meeting were approved as modified. The Chair noted that code interpretations require Trustee approval.

Announcements: Dean Kay announced an open forum on the results of the Residential Life Survey.

Senate ad hoc committee on evaluations: The Chair presented a list of colleagues expressing interest in the committee. Dean Cooney asked whether the charge to the committee was sufficiently clear, noting that student evaluations of teaching is a common expectation in universities and accrediting organizations. After some further discussion, the topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Commencement: The discussion then moved to commencement. Dean Finney described the process, and mentioned several changes that will shorten the length of this year's ceremony: There are slightly fewer graduates, the presentation of the senior class gift is moved to some other time, the President will introduce the senior class speaker, and we will sing stanzas 1 and 4 of *America the Beautiful*. During a free-wheeling discussion (i.e., I think I got most of it written down), the following points were raised:

1. Marilyn Bailey is the individual in charge of the details, though a larger planning group worries about them. Planning for the next commencement ceremony begins in June. The President's cabinet sets major policy, and the commencement committee works on implementation details.
2. There was some interest in arranging things so that faculty could greet students either as they enter or leave the stage. There was some concern that this might lengthen the ceremony.
3. Given that commencement activities involving students and parents now occupy both days of the weekend, some faculty feel that they need to make a choice either to attend departmental functions with students and parents or to attend commencement.
4. Commencement activities take place in Spring at a time of uncertain weather, and the students very much want to have the ceremony outdoors. Given this, several suggestions were made on ways in which the ceremony could be shortened if there were indications of bad weather (shortening speeches, moving the commencement speaker to Friday, etc.). Perhaps, several suggested, there should be a "Plan A" for cooperative weather, and a "Plan B" for inclement weather.
5. The option of not having students walk across during the ceremony was raised and quickly turned down.

The length of the ceremony continued to be an item for discussion. One option considered would be to move the commencement speaker and perhaps the honorary degrees to Friday night. No consensus emerged on this issue. At the request of the Senate, Bill Haltom has offered to start timing the ceremony to give the Senate some data (Dean Cooney had, at an earlier meeting, indicated that some of these data were available). Opinion was divided whether or not the ceremony has been shorter in recent years, longer, or the same length. In the end, no action was taken.

Faculty interested in commencement should forward suggestions to Dean Finney.

Advancement Committee Vacancies: Professor Ragan will be leaving the FAC next year (she will be considered for promotion and can therefore not serve on the FAC that year), and so an additional vacancy has occurred. After some discussion, it was agreed to extend the deadline for the call for nominees.

Nominations for Faculty Senate: It was decided that if a nomination to the Faculty Senate had incorrectly categorized a colleague (professional schools, etc.), that the nomination still would be accepted.

Conflict of interest bylaw change: The draft bylaw language governing issues of conflicts of interest within the Professional Standards Committee was circulated. After some discussion, the issue was continued to the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Matthews