

5-19-2001

Minutes, May 19, 2001

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MINUTES
Faculty Senate
April 19, 2001 – 11:30 a.m.
Science Building, Room 102

1. **The meeting was called to order by Louis Belby, chair, at 11:36 a.m. Roll was taken.** Members unable to attend: Bob Haak & Heidi Storl.
Excused absence: Larry McCallum, Jack Garrett, Dara Wegman-Geedey, Lori Scott, Chuck Hyser, Ben Nefzger & Norm Moline.

Before Business began, Jonathan Miller made a brief announcement about a library event later that day (at 5:30), a discussion of the electronic book and its effects on education, libraries, and the act of reading. He encouraged everyone to attend.

2. Upon a **motion** by Gary Mann and **seconded** by Charlie Mahaffey **the Minutes of March 22, 2001** were **approved** as **amended** with the following **correction**.

Mike Nolan made one correction, noting that on P. 3, item 5, under “Other Business,” the line “the Senate express its appreciation to Al DeSimone” be amended to read “the Senate express its appreciation to Al DeSimone and the Development Office staff.”

3. **Educational Policies Committee** – Rick Jurasek, on behalf of EPC, made the following **motions**:

- a. **Add: PS 455 (S) Advanced General Seminar / 3 Credits**

Communication and critical evaluation skills focused on a controversial area in the discipline of psychology. Major emphasis is placed on small group collaboration, the completion of a personal paper, and a formal oral presentation of one’s results.

Prerequisites: declared Psychology major, PS246 and permission of instructor.

Drop: PS 456 and PS 457

Seconded by Jim Winship and **approved**.

Regarding the change in the catalogue description of PS240 (under “For Information” on the Attachment #1 blue sheet), Jon Clauss pointed out that the Math Department *does* allow credit for both PS 240 and MA 316, which the Psychology Department now does not. Clauss suggested that the Psychology Department might want to clarify their language in the catalogue regarding credit for these courses. Tom Bengston suggested that the language in the catalogue description for PS 240 should read “Students who have earned credit for MA 316 may not subsequently earn credit for PS 240,” but

repeated Clauss's point that Math department would give credit for MA 316 to a student who has already taken PS 240.

4. **Report on Status of Faculty-Board Liaison – Louis Belby**

Lou Belby updated the Senate on the development of a Faculty/Liaison committee.

Belby and President Tredway had met and decided to propose that the faculty members of this committee should consist of the current Senate steering committee members, plus the previous two Senate presidents.

Before the steering committee had a chance to bring this proposal to the Senate floor, however, Belby and Tredway were invited to attend an executive session of the Board of Trustees. At this meeting, it was decided that the Board should establish a long-range strategic plan for the college, in order to “establish the guiding principles of the College for the purposes of selecting the next President and for future recruitment and long-term planning.” In short, the Board wants to define the image, goals, and mission of the College *before* starting the Presidential search, in order to aid that search and be clear about the kind of college we want the next President to lead. There will be four committees working to make up this long-range strategic plan: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Finance, and Campus Planning and Resources. The Board has asked for three faculty members to participate on each committee. Volunteers for these positions have already been solicited through campus mail. Two of the three members for each committee will be elected by the faculty, by ballot; the third member will be chosen by the Senate Steering Committee to provide balance in terms rank, division, gender, etc.

Belby concluded that, for the present, faculty involvement in these long-term planning committees will provide plenty of contact with the Board of Trustees. As a result, the creation of the Faculty-Board Liaison Committee will be, for now, postponed. Belby stressed that this was only a postponement, and that the Steering Committee is interested in institutionalizing Faculty/Board contact when the work of these long-range planning committees are finished. He also emphasized that he was impressed by the Board's willingness to listen to and solicit faculty input—that the faculty's presence on these committees was not merely token. He asked the Senate members to pay attention to the ballots they received for the long-term planning committees, and to vote

5. **Recommendation Concerning Greek Life and Pledging**

Belby announced that this recommendation came from Jason Peters who is not a member of the Senate. He opened the floor to discuss the recommendation, or to make a motion regarding it.

Joe McDowell said he wanted to present Peters' proposal as a **motion** before the Senate. Roger Crossley **seconded**.

In spirited discussion, the following points and concerns were established:

- Paul Olsen spoke for the motion, arguing that the Greeks have proven that they can't effectively govern themselves, that it is possible to create unity and loyalty without the physical and emotional abuse involved in pledging, and that pledging activities preclude almost all other activities, including academic ones.
- Rowen Schussheim-Anderson thought the proposal was good, but wondered whether it could be effectively enforced. Tredway said that would be the responsibility of the administration. He also pointed out that the Senate and the administration share responsibility for oversight of the social life of the college. Whatever motion comes from the Senate would have to be considered and worked through by the administration as well. But he agreed that something needed to be done to improve the current Greek situation.
- Dean Evelyn Campbell and others expressed concerns over the process the Senate was following to propose this change. She suggested that the problem could be more effectively solved with better communication between the students and faculty. Working together, she suggested, students and faculty might come up with a solution that would accomplish the same goals, and that students would accept the solution because they would have been part of the process. Clayton Guler, a student and chair of the Greek/Faculty Liaison Committee, echoed Campbell's concerns; he reassured the Senate that other Greeks *were* bothered by problems in pledging, and that useful changes had already been made recently, such as stopping late night door knocks, and informing pledges if they would be having morning activities the night before.
- Jeff Strasser was concerned about placing more rules on the students; he said that we were trying to turn them into adults, not return them to third grade. He suggested that instead of imposing new rules, that we toughen our academic standards and not accept any excuses for missed work/classes due to pledging. That way, he claimed, the students would have to make their own decisions about pledging, and accept the consequences of those decisions.
- Mark Vincent and Jon Hurty pointed out that an individual's pledging often affected more than just that individual; it affected the class as well, especially when pledges don't show up for class discussion, or ensemble practices. So toughening academic standards would not fully solve the problem. Jon Hurty also expressed concern that Peters' proposal, which limits pledging activities to weekends, might actually make things worse for the music department, which has many spring activities and performances on weekends.

- Mark Vincent and Mary Em Kirn also claimed that dialogue was a fine idea, but that the pledging situation has never really improved, despite previous attempts to increase dialogue
- Peter Kivisto suggested that a group of Greek and Independent students should respond to Peters' proposal and suggest changes. He suggested that focused discussion of the merits of a particular motion would be more useful than unfocused dialogue.

Tom Bengtson brought a **new motion** to the floor, replacing McDowell's motion. He moved that the Senate refer Peters' proposal to the Greek-Faculty Liaison Committee. Mike Wolf **seconded**.

More discussion followed:

- Bengtson spoke in favor of his motion, echoing Dean Campbell's concerns that the best way to get students to buy into a change is to involve them in the decision-making process. He remarked that he was surprised to see a motion brought before the Senate before it had been through the appropriate faculty committee on that subject. He argued, further, that there have been significant changes in pledging, such as the reduction of pledging activities from seven weeks, and that these changes have been effective because students have been part of the process.
- Tom Banks asked if Bengtson would consider recasting his motion to include a certain date for a response. Olsen asked if Bengtson would consider amending his motion to include proposals other than Peters'-such as a proposal to limit Hell Week to Spring Break, or to abolish pledging completely, as several national fraternities have (as Mary Kirn pointed out). Bengtson said yes, on both counts.
- Ellen Hay suggested that Peters' proposal needed to more clearly define what it meant by "pledging activities." Would that include, for example, wearing tee-shirts, or having more than 2 members of a fraternity/sorority sit together at lunch?
- Jeff Coussens pointed out that the reduction of pledging from 7 weeks to 5 weeks only intensifies the pledging activities. He expressed concern that further curtailment, as per the Peters' proposal, would only lead to more intense (although less frequent) pledging activities.
- Tredway added that the Greek/Faculty Liaison Committee is comprised mostly of students, not faculty, and that it had no Independent students as members. He explained that it was designed to be more of a conversation group than a decision-making group, and expressed uncertainty that it should be the locus of an overall review of the pledging problem.
- Dave Snowball agreed, but said that turning the proposal over to the Greek/Faculty Liaison Committee was a necessary start. He claimed that the faculty's knowledge of what changes have already been made in the pledging system, and how effective they have been, is too limited. Further, it would be useful to know what other schools have done about this problem, and how well their solutions have worked.

- Mark Vincent said we should make it clear to the Greek-Faculty Liaison Committee that we will be taking up this issue at our next Senate Meeting. He added that students will not always agree to measures designed to be good for them, but that we have to set these boundaries nonetheless.
- Cecelia Vogel asked if there is a group of students on campus we could also get feedback from-a group of Independent students, for example?

With time running out, Bengtson **amended** his **motion** as follows: that Peters' proposal, and any others, be relayed to the Greek-Faculty Liaison Committee for discussion, and that the Committee would report back to the Senate at its next meeting on May 8, 2001. Stacey Rodman **seconded** the amended motion.

Bengtson called the question. The **motion carried**.

6. **Announcements**

There were no announcements

7. **Adjournment**

After the faculty speedily cleared the hall, Dave Snowball made a **motion** (retroactively) to adjourn the meeting. Paul Olsen (retroactively) **seconded**. The motion carried as the faculty had already voted with their feet.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Greene
Secretary