

SENATE

February 18, 2004

Present: J. Aina, W. Boelke, J. Brooks, S. DeLoughy, D. Grasso, C. Hawkes, R. Hirshfield, K. Ierace, K. Koza, T. Kuther, P. Lyons, L. Marcone, D. Moser, J. Munz, F. Muska, J. Pohl, J. Schlicht, P. Secondo, R. Whittemore, K. Wiss, E. Wong

Visitors: Jim Roach, Charles Spiridon, Linda Vaden-Goad, Irene Duffy, Alicia Jensen, Carolyn Fensterer, Amanda Lubell

President: V. Nair

Parliamentarian: TBA

I. The meeting convened at 3:40 p.m.

II. Announcements:

A. University President Roach announced that Dr. Thomas Philbrick (Biology Department) had been awarded a CSU Professorship. Professor Philbrick briefly addressed the senators and guests.

B. Senate President Nair announced that we were awaiting the 3rd. revision of the WCSU Strategic Plan and that the Roger Sherman Debate Society will debate the Strategic Plan at the March Senate meeting.

C. Senate President Nair announced that the University Advisory Committee (UAC) for the Presidential search was in place and Josephine Hamer (Mathematics Department) was the Chair. Even though Dr. Hamer could not attend the Senate meeting, she had provided the following update:

The UAC is meeting today to clarify what our role and position in the process, to begin finalizing our wants and needs for a new president (and those of the rest of university). We will review the meeting held last semester regarding the faculty/staff wants and needs, and the meeting with Chancellor Cibes. The UAC will meet with the Trustees Search Committee next Wednesday, Feb. 25, to discuss our position, and the process of selection. Dr. Hamer was informed by the Chancellor that the committee will have materials on all candidates by the third week of March, and the final 20 or so candidate list from the search firm by the end of March. The final timetable for the search has not yet been established.

Senate President Nair added that it was his understanding that the Board of Trustees expected the process to be concluded by the end of this semester before many of the faculty left for the summer and to have the President appointed by the beginning of June.

III. Minutes of the December 2003 meeting

Motion: THE SENATE SHALL APPROVE THE MINUTES OF ITS DEC. 17, 2003 MEETING (Munz/Aina). Correction under 1B, WCSU debate soc. Is Roger Sherman not Robert Sherman. Under attendance, it is J. Aina not A. Aina. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

- A.** Dr. Amanda Lubell (Mathematics Department), sitting in for Charles Rocca, addressed the motion on class time. Dr. Lubell reported that members of her department are concerned about students not having time for a break in classes 100 minutes long or longer. Time taken for a break, under the present system, is time taken away from instructional contact. The Math Department, therefore, recommends that 10 minutes be added to every class that meets for 100 minutes or longer.

Irene Duffy, the Registrar, noted that there are quite a number of courses scheduled for 2.5 hours (especially in Education and Educational Psychology) and that adding ten minutes to all these classes will prevent students from taking courses back-to-back. She added that classes that start now at 8:00p and finish at 10:30 would not begin until 8:10 and would end at 10:50p, in effect eliminating our 8:00p classes. She added that there are 28 undergraduate classes being taught at 8:00 and losing them would cost the University \$676K. Senator Secondo (Chemistry) said that labs taught in her department are two hours and fifty minutes long and adding ten minutes to all of those classes would wreak havoc on scheduling those labs. Registrar Duffy asked if we would have to add ten minutes to all summer school classes, adding that this is just one of the many questions raised by the resolution.

Dr. Lubell responded by asking about the fact that students are not getting what they pay for when breaks are taken out of instructional time.

Registrar Duffy said that members of the Education Department reported to her that they taught their courses without a break. Dr. Lubell admitted that many faculty members do allow a break during their classes. She went on to say that her students reach a saturation point about half way through an evening class and that she wishes that she could give them a break. One senator raised the question of this issue really being about the 37.5 hours of class contact we are supposed to have with students each semester. In longer semesters, such as the present one, there are 40 contact hours scheduled, so taking time out of class for a break would not only be reasonable but in keeping with our responsibility for 37.5 contact hours.

In response to a question by Sen. Wiss, Registrar Duffy said that she might be able to accommodate individual faculty member's request for extended class time, for example for those in the Math Department who are teaching calculus.

The discussion continued. Sens. Hawkes and Secondo pointed out that some subject material might not be suited to block classes; some subjects, such as calculus perhaps, may better be taught in shorter, more frequent periods. Sen. Kuther suggested that varying classroom activities might be a way of maintaining students' attention. Sen. Whittemore pointed out that this issue is probably better settled by the Math Department, since changing all courses 100 minutes or longer will certainly cause a plethora of problems, some of which have been voiced already. Dr. Lubell agreed and expressed her gratitude to the Registrar for her willingness to work with members of her department who want 10 minutes added to their longer classes so that students can take a break.

Sen. President Nair asked if there were any other comments, noting that he had not heard any in support of the motion. Sen. Moser pointed out that we are legally obligated to meet with our students for the prescribed time and that he, therefore, was thinking in terms of voting for the resolution.

Sen. Pres. Nair called for a vote on the motion:

ALL CLASSES OVER 100 MINUTES LONG SHALL BE SCHEDULED IN A TIME SLOT WITH TEN EXTRA MINUTES ALLOTTED FOR A BREAK (e.g. A 120-MINUTE CLASS SHALL HAVE A 130 MINUTES TIME SLOT). (Rocca/Moser) R-03-12-05. Defeated (2-0-20).

B. Labeling General Education courses

Sen. Schlicht called the senators' attention to a handout, prepared by the Registrar, that showed three ways in which courses could be labeled so that advisors and students could easily identify what courses could be used to fulfill in part our General Education Requirements. Sen. Whittemore spoke on behalf of the version that used bold print at the left-hand margin. Sen. Schlicht preferred the bold version at the right margin, but acknowledged that more space is used.

Sen. Whittemore made the MOTION to adopt the first style in the handout: bold print at the left margin.. (Whittemore/Schlicht)

Sen. Moser suggested that the labeling be further refined to include which of the five subjects in the Humanities Requirement a particular course addressed. For example, a course could address the foreign language requirement or the literature requirement—a course, in the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges, for instance. He stated that he found “Humanistic Studies” (one of the five areas in the Humanities Requirement) a mystery to him. Sen. Secondo suggested simply adding to the Gen.Ed. Humanities Requirement a definite specifier—literature, humanistic studies, etc. Sen. Schlicht saw no need for the additional specifier.

Sen. Pres. Nair asked the Registrar if having these issues straightened out in the March meeting would interfere with the publication of the catalog. The answer was “No.” There was a general consensus that the bold-at-the-left format was preferred and that Sen. Schlicht work out specifiers for Social Sciences Requirement and Humanities Requirement.

IV. New Business

Children and Pets at work

Sen. President Nair introduced Sen. Whittemore, who spoke to the issue of a memo by Charles Spiridon (Dean of Human Resources) concerning children and pets at work. Spiridon’s memo had raised issues of health, safety, and liability. Addressing Dean Spiridon, Sen. Whittemore asked if the memo was a statement of policy already established or an ad hoc creation of policy spurred by particular events. Dean Spiridon said that he had received a number of complaints about faculty bringing children to work and other employees who bring children or pets to work. He felt the need “to communicate the University’s feelings on the matter.” Sen. Whittemore pointed out that his department’s memo in response to Dean Spiridon’s asked when and where the policy had been determined and what review had been given. He went on to say that emergencies arise that require faculty to make a judgment—to miss teaching a class or to teach that class with his child present. Is the presence of children on campus, in a parent’s office, for example, to be wholly eliminated? Is liability really an issue?

Sen. Hirshfield said that a good deal depended on the behavior of the child: if the child is well behaved, s/he should be welcomed; if the child is disruptive, s/he should not be brought to campus. Sen. Muska reported that sometimes his students bring their children to class and that he would not like to see a blanket policy concerning the presence of children on campus, particularly in cases of emergency. Sen. Aina said that faculty who bring children to work should be attentive to the potential dangers in, say, a chemistry lab where the parent may be working. So there is a matter of safety that needs to be addressed.

The question remained: will one policy be adequate to every circumstance concerning children on campus.

Sen. Schlicht said that he wanted to hear from those who believe that the presence of children poses a health risk, a safety risk, or a liability risk.

Dean Spiridon said that dogs present health risks because some people have allergies and the pets may not always be monitored. As far as children are concerned, if the University accepted the presence of children on the worksite on a regular basis, the University becomes liable if the parent leaves and the child is injured. Dean Spiridon added that the Collective Bargaining Agreement makes provision for an employee, in an emergency, to care for a child away from the worksite: sick days, personal days, family leave.

Sen. Muska mentioned that people's allergies notwithstanding, a seeing-eye dog must be allowed on campus and in class. Dean Spiridon said that seeing-eye dogs are considered working animals and are licensed and certified. Sen. Whittemore made the helpful distinction between a child regularly accompanying a parent to campus and a child who does so only in cases of emergency, such as school cancellations. He thought the latter quite understandable and acceptable. The former situation would best be addressed first by colleagues in an effort to try to resolve the problem.

The discussion continued unabated. One senator said that one of the unique things about working at a university is the occasional child or pet that one sees. She said that, with her husband fighting in Iraq that she is a single parent and needs the help provided in a university environment. Sen. Grasso said that she brings her children to campus on her days off, adding that she did not think that any parent in his/her right mind would put a child in jeopardy. She also said that as long as the child is contained and is cooperative and playing quietly, she has no problem.

Sen. Deloughy commented that a blanket policy seemed a bit like the death of common sense, saying that she is opposed to banning children and pets because of an occasional abuse or potential "issues" that may arise. If they do arise, then we can deal with them, rather than going to the extreme of a universal policy.

Carolyn Fensterer (secretary for Communication and Theatre Arts) related a story about her exceptionally quiet dog (so quiet, in fact, that most people who come to Fensterer's office don't even know she's there.) In the summer, when adolescents from off campus come to use our basketball facilities, in one instance students came to her door and demanded to be let into the gym. At that point Fensterer's exceptionally quiet dog stepped around the desk in full sight of those making the demands. They backed off rather quickly.

Sen. Brooks called for a vote. Sen. Pres. Nair pointed out that there was no motion on the floor, but Sen. Whittemore was working on one. Sen. Pres. Nair suggested that action on this matter be postponed until March.

Sen. Whittemore said that his proposal at the next meeting would include calling for a clear path of authority to the maker of the policy. Sen. Nair asked Dean Spiridon if the memo and the policy we had been discussing had come from him. Dean Spiridon answered in the affirmative.

Sen. Whittemore said that his proposal, then, would address the grounds for making such a policy. Sen. Pres. Nair asked Dean Spiridon if he had not said earlier that there had been complaints and that deans and department chairs had said that they wanted something in writing from Human Resources before addressing them. Again, Dean Spiridon answered in the affirmative.

Sen. President called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. There was universal movement on this issue.

Submitted respectfully,

Tina Marippu, Recording Secretary
Peter A. Lyons, Senate Secretary

WCSU SENATE RESOLUTIONS

February 18, 2004

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