

university

SENATE

March 15, 2006

WS 218, West Side Campus

Meeting convened at 3:30 p.m.

Members present (alphabetical):

Rick Bassett, Daryle Brown, Mark Bourque, Cindy Chuang, Sara DeLoughy, Abe Echevarria, Robert Eisenson, Gancho Ganchev, Kevin Gutzman, Carol Hawkes, Russell Hirshfield, Kathey Ierace, George Kain, Ron Drozdenko for Karen Koza, Tara Kuther, Sam Lightwood, Peter Lyons, Allen Morton, James Munz, Vijay Nair, Elizabeth Popiel, Karen Raftery, Jeffrey Schlicht, Stacey Alba Skar, Katrina Smith, Robert Whittemore, Mike Wilson, Susan Maskel for Edwin Wong, Marge Steinberg for Patty Ivry, Rebecca Woodward

Guests present: (by department/division):

President J.W. Schmotter, Walter B. Bernstein, Anthony Markert, Roy Stewart, Veronica Kenausis, Gene Buccini, Dan Goble

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Update on the University Action Teams

President Schmotter: What Dan Goble and I want to do is update you on what's been going on with five Action Teams that have been operating this year... the University and our external constituencies participated in the Values and Vision process. We did over 70 focus groups, we talked to more than 600 people and got a whole mass of ideas and insights and thoughts about where Westconn is today, where we might go and how we might get there. We pulled that together in a stake holders conference in March of last year and the Values and Vision Committee tried to identify themes and main observations...of thousands...of comments that people had made. From that we held about four retreats in the spring and the summer of the administrative and then the leadership and then the UPBC joined us to try to take this material and develop it into ways that could be actionable and move the University forward. Out of a retreat we had in August ... we determined that the best way to proceed this way was to identify five areas that we thought were very important to the university that came out of the Values and Vision process and have people work on those to develop plans, strategies, ways to address those and each of those was co-chaired by a member of my team and a member of UPBC. Those five teams are now about to a point where they want to share their work much more broadly in the community and we've distributed to the Senate abstracts of the five teams work so far and they will be working to complete their work by mid to late April. They'll be holding public meetings for people to interact with them, give them ideas.

One team is working on Strategic Enrollment Management, looking at how we recruit students and how we retain them with the very urgent sense that 13 of the 15 economic drivers of this University are based one way or another in enrollment, so having the students here and keeping

them here is important. Looking at some trends that in are in our enrollment that are troublesome. The large attrition we have in the first year, every year, and what that does to the way we schedule, what that does to the way we really operate as a University and one example of that is last fall, as most of you know, we had students living in the Wellesley inn. We needed 115 beds in the Wellesley Inn last fall and currently we have more than 70 beds vacant on campus and nobody living in the Wellesley Inn. That's how big the swing tends to be in the first year. So, that group is working on those issues.

Our second Action Team is working on the same sort of topic from another area and that's the Student Success Team that is trying to develop ways to help students be more successful here. And they've done a lot of work sort of coming up with ideas, benchmarking with other schools, talking to students, faculty and their work is very complementary to the work of the Strategic Enrollment group.

The third group is looking at our Comparative Advantage and what we mean by that... is what we do especially well, what are we known for, how can we strengthen that and how can we market that. The work of those three groups fits and is to some degree repetitive with one another and I'll come back in a minute to tell where we're going with that.

The other two groups are working at other areas that are very important but a little more separate. One group is looking at how we use summer and intercessions. Are we leaving resources, human physical or financial on the table and not utilizing them to help our students' progress to generate revenue, to provide opportunities for faculty and others to be here in the summer? The fifth group, which is co chaired by Vijay Nair and Allen Morton is looking at developing a model for us to assess partnerships. We are approached constantly by other entities in the community, businesses, we approach organizations, agencies to partner. Those partnerships have costs, sometimes they're financial, they're almost always in terms of human costs and we're trying to and I think Allen, Vijay and their colleagues have come up with a very innovative way of assessing not just the financial cost benefit but the whole sort of way of looking at those partnerships and trying to see where they fit with the University.

So, those groups are going to be presenting their work and there are two purposes that we will use what they have done for. The first purpose is to effect changes that can improve the place and there are specific recommendations in all those areas that can be implemented, some administratively, some coming to this body, some by individual departments and schools to make improvements. Another purpose of all these teams will bring all of their findings together with the Values and Vision work, with the work that's been going on in other committees with my own observations about this place and use it as a basis to draft the strategic plan for the University. The way we're going to do that is we're going to use a consultant that helped us in our August retreat of UPBC and the Administrative staff. He helped us...organize our thoughts and we're going to ask him to draft a plan that we, in May, will hold another retreat to try to make some sense of it and adjust and keep on working on the summer, bring that before the whole University community next fall for discussion and debate and hopefully consensus on this is the way we will move forward as a University. Our thought of using an external person was there's a lot of repetition in the work especially of the first three groups, someone from one of those groups might see things differently and the person we are fortunate enough to have is a

gentleman named Clint Seidall who was formerly the Director of Strategic Planning at Cornell, he's done this a lot, he's written books about it and he was very simpatico with us so he's a very easy guy to work with. He understands us so he's a knowledgeable outsider who will pull it together, give it back to us we can tear it apart, work on it. So that's what's kind of going on, we're reaching a point where we are really, the teams are really going to be going out into the community, holding open meetings to get input into their work and the recommendations that they're going to be making. I wanted to give you that sort of overall framework of where this work fits and where I see it going. Dan's going to talk a little more specifically about the teams.

Dan Goble – Thank you Dr. Schmotter. The role of the UPBC in this, in this is where I ...fit in as the Chair of the UPBC ultimately will be in the draft of the Strategic Plan but more importantly in the implementation of the plan and that's why I wanted to make sure we were able to bring everybody up to speed on this now so there could be some input in the month of April and May into the process, more of an open forum. So there will also be a place on the website where you can go or your constituents can go to check out what's happening. My hope is that we'll get input in the next couple of months.

What you have in front of you are abstracts....We actually have to have full reports finished by mid-April. For those of you who would like to see those full reports for your reading pleasure, those reports will be on the website as well if everything goes as planned. The retreat we're going to hold in May is specifically designed to basically flush out a Strategic Plan and put all these things through a meat grinder and come up with something hopefully we can use a University. The greatest frustration I've seen on the UPBC over the last couple of years is that we get great proposals but it becomes almost a subjective decision on whether they're going to be implemented or not. We don't really have a plan to plug them into and our goal is to have a plan that we can bring your proposals and put them against the plan and see if it works. This is extremely, as you know, an extremely important process that we're all going through and we just want to make sure that we have enough public input in the process so this is the perfect time for that. Hopefully by fall, we'll have a plan in place and we can move on as a University with some shared goals and our universal vision.

If you have any questions for myself and any of the Action Team Chairs we're all open to this..... but the people to really ask the questions about of the other teams are the Chairs of those teams.

II. MINUTES

A. December, 2005

Sen. Whittemore noted that on page three, line four the word "honest" should be replaced with "onerous."

Sen. Nair noted that on page two, last paragraph, line three the phrase "working faculty" should be replaced by "voting faculty."

Sen. Nair noted that on page six, fourth paragraph the word “improving” should read “including.” This change needs to also be made on the final page where the motions are summarized.

Sen. Nair noted that the motions need to be renumbered, since there was a duplicate number (05-12-4)

Motion to accept minutes passed (Munz/Popiel, 4 abstentions)

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. CUCAS Proposal to Change the Procedure for Modification of the Curriculum

R-06-02-03: THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE CUCAS PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE PROCEDURE FOR MODIFICATION OF THE CURRICULUM.

Sen. Schlicht –We had a discussion in our department about this proposal and specifically our department chair who would be the person who would be most affected, I think, in having to review the applications that come in on a monthly basis to CUCAS. Her feeling was that overall it’s going to be a timesaver, because we won’t have to do all the replication, reproduction of paper work and getting signatures and so while she realized that it would mean a little bit more work for her on a monthly basis she still thought from that standpoint, work saving, that it was a good idea. There were no objections to it from any other standpoint in terms of whether it was something the University should or should not do, it was discussed on a utilitarian basis so our department is in favor of supporting this change.

Sen. Whittemore – one thing that came up in our department discussing this was that although it’s a utilitarian proposal it does seem to change the spirit of contacting colleagues because it’s almost as if the expectation is the chair of the department will review this then distribute it to members of the department for discussion and that is similar to what it was before but now if the department chair doesn’t catch it on the web, it goes on through without the department signifying that they did or did not see it. That seems to change what used to be the spirit of it which was the department might not have anything to say, but at least they’ve indicated that at least they have attended to the proposal.

Sen. Nair – I just want to say for the record that I think a minor change had been agreed at the last meeting which is on page 2, under proposed procedures for curriculum course revisions, number 3, it says Chair will electronically post the proposals and notify all department Chairs. There was confusion which Chairs of the school or of the university: University should be inserted there.

Motion to accept modifications passed (Munz/Schlicht, 2 opposed, 5 abstentions)

B. Air Quality

Sen. Popiel was to take the issue to the working conditions committee, whose meeting was delayed until April. Item will be placed in Old Business on the next agenda.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Posthumous Degree Proposal

Dr. Hawkes – We had a committee that met several times to consider the situation and look into practice at our sister institutions and we think that the proposal takes into consideration the fact that because of our requirements of accreditation we must make sure that degree requirements are complete if we actually give a degree, but we do have the opportunity to recognize the achievement of students who have completed at least 90 credits toward the degree and also in a lesser way of students who have had the bad luck to have to drop out before that time through the department and I think you can read this and if there are any questions I would be happy to answer or any member of the committee.

Sen. Whittemore – I notice that Southern invites parents to commencement that would have been their child's commencement. Is there a reason that's not included in our policy, was it discussed?

Sen. Hawkes – I think we were more concerned with the policy on actually awarding a degree than with the social aspects of it but certainly parents could be invited to a commencement. If the degree is to be awarded, if they are simply to get a certificate of achievement I don't know if it would actually be presented at commencement.

Sen. Whittemore – but if the degree were to be awarded, it would be an appropriate invitation.

Sen. Hawkes – yes, if the degree is awarded, yes. I see no reason why that shouldn't be in there.

Sen. Wiss – one thing I think we wanted to do was make sure the students were treated fairly because sometimes if family members were advocates for their child then they got a lot of attention but sometimes our students pass away or become sick and no body acts as their advocates so this is a way of making sure that all of the students, anyone on campus, is aware of an issue, the Registrar's office is notified and everyone is treated similarly.

Sen. Gutzman – I have two questions. First it says Southern has awarded degrees, I'd like to know in what circumstances. Secondly, I'm a little bit surprised at the idea that if a student died in her last semester it would jeopardize our accreditation if we gave her a degree posthumously, so I'd like to know if you can give us more detail about this accreditation issue. It seems to me humane to say that if somebody died during final week of her last semester we would contemplate giving her a degree posthumously.

Sen. Hawkes – The integrity of the degree means that certain requirements have been met. We always do have the option if there is a possibility of substituting one achievement for another or

waiving a certain requirement that I think would be up to the department but I think that we do have the requirement that a person who achieves a bachelor's degree say has completed 120 or 122 credits. We are obligated to fill that requirement.

Sen. Gutzman – Is this an accreditation issue then?

Sen. Hawkes – Yes.

Sen. Gutzman – It is. Then [under] what circumstances has Southern awarded degrees?

Sen. Hawkes – I don't recall the particular circumstances, does anybody on the committee recall that?

Unidentified – I think that Irene would have the details.

Sen. Hawkes – She might have the details. I think that we have once or twice done this, it is not the right thing to do and we shouldn't continue to do it.

Sen. Gutzman – well that's the policy issue that we're facing.

Sen. Hawkes – it is not the right thing to do, we have looked into that, whether Southern did it or not, or whether we have done it or not it does not meet with our accreditation standards and we jeopardize the integrity of our degree if we award a degree to someone who has not completed the requirements of that degree.

Sen. Lightwood – I, too, think I struggle with this a little bit. The accreditation seems as though it would be an issue if we're awarding degrees to people, but once they've died is this still the same issue?

Sen. Hawkes – It's still a degree.

Sen. Lightwood – Regardless of who or what, I see.

Sen. Hirshfield – I think there are many ways to honor the dead and acknowledging that they've completed something or earned something when they haven't is not necessarily fair, to them as well.

Sen. Wiss – I think Kevin's right. That is the issue before you to decide if this is the right policy or not but I'll just reiterate what Carol said which is there are procedures in place where requirements or substitutions can be waived or made so if the circumstances are appropriate I think we felt comfortable that this could also be a humane policy as well as one that met our accreditation standards. I agree that's an incredibly important part of this equation.

Sen. Popiel – Dr. Echevarria and I were mentioning if this is going to be filed there is a typographical error. "Background: WCSU has no policy on matters involving terminally ill or deceased students". I just thought before we voted we might want to clarify.

Pres. Kuther – As I understand it this is a policy issue so we will not be able to vote today, we'll be able to vote in April unless we vote to suspend the rules and that would require 2/3 majority. Further discussion of this?

Sen. Gutzman – I wonder whether the accrediting institutions have a published policy about this issue or exactly in what sense this understanding that this is incumbent upon us has been promulgated by the accreditors. I'd like to know whether there's some statement from them that we might see in the interim between this meeting and the next.

Sen. Hawkes – The standards for accreditation define the number of credits for a degree for different degrees and that is the policy.

Pres. Kuther – Do these accrediting institutions, do they have any policy of this sort of awarding of a degree?

Sen. Hawkes – Not specifically a posthumous degree, but an awarding of a degree means a certain amount of. I think we have to ask ourselves do degrees [inaudible] action of the head or of the heart. If it means a certain thing, it means a certain thing, now if we do want to honor and acknowledge the work or the effort of students who have had the unfortunate fate of dying or becoming very ill before they achieve their degree but nevertheless have they achieved the degree or haven't they?

Pres. Kuther – I think we would all agree with this idea that it's important to honor them and honor their achievements, I think that Senator Gutzman was talking about the idea and correct me if I'm wrong, with asking whether these accrediting bodies have any formal statement anywhere regarding this sort of issue that might help us and guide us and if they don't then.

Sen. Hawkes – They don't have one regarding a posthumous degree they do have a formal statement of the necessary credits that go into a degree and so does the State of Connecticut.

Pres. Kuther - Thank you, that helps. Further discussion? Hearing none we will pick this up again in April

B. Class Attendance

Dr. Roy Stewart – Late in the fall semester we were talking about students at risk and we were talking about various strategies and at one point I said to the Deans why don't we ask that the faculty take attendance in each class for about the first 3-4 weeks of the semester? I was going to actually issue a statement to that effect.....There's a page from the faculty handbook on B-7 "regardless of attendance requirements, accurate attendance records must be kept". It looks to me like that's already a requirement to take attendance. What I would ask that you discuss however, is then reporting that attendance and I'm asking for that for two purposes, the first one is the at-risk student, so that hopefully we can catch the student very early who may be simply sleeping in and needs a little nudge. The second purpose is really for the finance folks. In speaking with Beth Amyot I realize that as weird as this sounds if we don't know who is here at

the beginning of a particular semester we don't know how much money is coming in. We have people who say they're going to be here, we count on them and then they just don't show up. As odd as that may sound, that's one way we can find out how many students we really have at the university and as you know the allocation from the State of Connecticut is based on the number of fulltime students so it's really a record keeping thing, it is absolutely nothing other than that for the finance people but I wanted to have the Senate have an opportunity to discuss this issue because frankly I suspect there will be some concern voiced by some faculty about the reporting of attendance. At the previous university I worked we did this and for about the first 3-4 weeks of the semester and it was helpful so I'm asking that you consider it. I'd be happy to respond to any questions about it.

Sen. Munz – We have received from the Academic VP's office, in the past, each semester first notice that I guess it's Connecticut statute requires that we take attendance and then also I think it's the supreme court has ruled that you can't rule that as a basis for grading.

Dr. Stewart – Pardon my English but I ain't never heard any one of those things.

Sen. Munz – Yea, we've gotten it almost every semester.

Dr. Stewart – Which court has ruled that you can't use attendance in developing a grade?

Sen. Munz – I think the piece in the staff bulletin says the Supreme Court. You can use it only, for instance if it's a discussion course then you can use "non-participation" as a basis.

Dr. Stewart – And you get points for going to class?

Sen. Munz – I don't think so.

Sen. Nair – When this thing first came up I don't recall sometime ago, I talked to a few faculty and two concerns were raised. The first two were already mentioned, the matter of report and the second was there was some talk about perhaps using a standardized method of taking attendance, which might be a concern from what I heard.

Sen. Schlicht – I'll just comment on, my question what do you plan on doing, let's say you get a report that a student has not been in class for three weeks, you're going to email them, or send them a letter?

Dr. Stewart – What am I going to do?

Sen. Schlicht – Well, whoever. What's the theory behind it, what action will be taken?

Dr. Stewart – For the student that's missed? Well, I don't really have a very good, specific answer for you, Jeff, but I know at my previous university we had a retention officer and that person got the names of those people and made an attempt to contact them and see if there was a problem, see if there was something that could be done to help them. That would be my answer is that the University would try to intervene in some appropriate way to provide that student some assistance.....Over the last several months I've become more and more concerned that

Westconn needs to do a better job of ratcheting up the retention rate of first year students. I'm really only talking about maybe at most 2-3 percentage points but I think that has tremendous budgetary impact on us and I think it's the right thing to do. I couldn't spell out for you every single one of the steps we would take, but basically we would put into place some protocol for some appropriate intervention and some help.

Sen. Schlicht – I think that's a good idea, hopefully it would be some sort of personal contact. I'll just make a comment reinforcing that I've taken attendance in my classes since coming here and the correlation between not attending and grade is pretty obvious.

Sen. Steinberg – I'll speak to this from the Enrollment Management Strategic Action Committee. What Roy is saying is something that we're bringing forward as a clear recommendation and getting all of us to understand what our minimum requirements are as faculty around attendance tracking that we can convert that into some good advisement, some strategic interventions that could help students who have a poor start here cause they don't know how to handle the freedom. They don't know how to handle 8:00 classes, etc. with that we could probably strengthen retention if we hit early on. We know that if people miss the first 3 weeks of classes the likelihood of recouping is pretty darn slim and that's what we're concerned about. The other issue, the one that has to do with income management actually the tighter we are on recording who is really here, the less of a head count we might get money for, so it might be counter productive in one sense, but in the other retention in the long run, is a better goal because retaining means that we're moving students through a degree program rather than losing them because of some poor social habits that they may have at the beginning.

Sen. Whittemore – I have a comment. In terms of funding issues I think that's a good point. I know when I came here first as a new faculty I'd get that list of enrolled students in a class and it was always higher than what were actually filled in seats in a class so I said to my Chair shouldn't I be correcting this number and he said oh, no, no, don't correct that just sign it and pass it through. The number is not significant for one point, but usually it's off by, in three classes, 6-10 students. And then in the course of the term we don't report again. I'm assuming that that number somehow serves for the States' purposes and it may indeed be that if we keep very careful track and I'm not arguing not to, but that's an interesting point for me. The second thing that had to do with funding issues, when we turn in the grades as it stands now and you may know this if you have a student who hasn't finished the work, you have to indicate the last date that you saw them in class, so if you're taking attendance that's the way most of us use it at least to report it. It doesn't deal with the three week issue of catching somebody who's not yet in the program.

Dr. Stewart – I'm dealing right now with the opposite situation, where a student was sitting in class the entire semester and his name didn't appear on the roster. In years past I thought about creating a bumper sticker that says "if they ain't on your roster, they ain't in your class", so that's the other side of it is that sometimes students sit in classes and then can't figure out why they didn't get a final grade.

Sen. Lyons – has any thought been given to the actual process that we'd be using to do this?

Dr. Stewart – I'll be honest with you, Peter, I haven't given much thought to it but I know Irene has, because I asked her early on to try to begin to develop a protocol. Actually, I don't want to open a whole new can of worms here but it would seem to me that we ought to develop some kind of an online easy way to do it.

Sen. Echevarria – On the class list the Registrar's office sends there is line that says that if they're not on this class list, they're not in your class now, if you see somebody that shows up in the class that's not on the list, you write in that name and get that back to the registrar. That happens during the first three weeks of class.

Pres. Kuther – Thank you. Further discussion?

Sen. Whittemore – What would be the next move?

Pres. Kuther - As I understand it this was more of an information gathering item, correct? So, unless we'd like to move forward with this, as I understand it, Dr. Stewart had intended us to discuss this item, I would assume for us to be informed of it as well as for him to gather our thoughts on it.

V. Other Business

None.

Motion to adjourn passed at 4.25 p.m. (Nair/Popiel)

SENATE RESOLUTIONS

March 15, 2005

R-06-03-01: THE SENATE SHALL APPROVE THE MINUTES OF ITS DECEMBER 2005 MEETING. Passed with 2 abstentions.

R-06-02-03: THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE CUCAS PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE PROCEDURE FOR MODIFICATION OF THE CURRICULUM. Passed with two opposed, five abstentions.

R-06-03-02: THE SENATE SHALL APPROVE THE POSTHUMOUS DEGREE PROPOSAL. Policy; no action