

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting
MARCH 2, 2005

Present: M. Anderson M. Baum L.. Bianco D. Boerth
L. Cheng Q. Fan E. Fisher D. Georgianna
P. Gibbs K. Gramling J. Griffith B. Jacobskind
Y Kim G. Koot S. Krumholz K. Langley
R. Laoulache S. Leclair K. Manning J. Marlow
H. Michel A. Mollo S. Peterson D. Rancour
M. Roy S. Scarano S. Scott B. Singh
J. Stauder K. Stokesbury L. Sun
E. Winiarz

Excused: D. Borim E. Carreiro P. Currier J. Leffers
S. Sousa

Absent: B. Barnes D. Bergeron A. Gunasekeran A. Hausknecht
F. Karakaya O. Khalil R. Kowalczyk N. O'Connor
E. Ojadi D. Prentice P. Szatek H. Xu
M. Zarrillo

Guests: J. Blithefield, English Dept.
M. Campeta, Library
W. Nelles, A & S Dean's office
B. Rose, Provost's office
K. Suchon, Management Dept.

Susan Leclair, Senate President opened the meeting at 3:35 pm.

1. B. Jacobskind moved to accept Minutes of February 1, 2005. J. Griffith seconded. Motion carried.

Agenda corrections—Gen Ed. asked to postpone; Admissions postponed to April; SFFC asked to postpone.

2. Senate Steering Committee Report

2.1 Commencement—

It came to the attention of the Steering Committee, following our discussion at the February meeting, that the plan we believed was moving forward didn't, and a totally different plan will be in place.

The current plan is as follows: Graduation will begin at 10am; the entire body will proceed to the amphitheater for speeches and conferring of PhDs and Masters degrees. At that point colleges separate. A&S will stay put; everyone else moves. Each college will then hold some ceremony and undergrads will get their diploma folders.

Administration has asked for representatives from each college to meet with the "commencement comm." (not ours)

During sy 03-04 the Commencement committee arrived at suggestions for graduation; these were approved by the full senate. Meetings occurred where these matters were discussed with both M. LaLiberte and Chancellor MacCormack.

G. Koot suggested we send a letter to the chancellor reminding her that we had made a decision that was ignored.

After extensive discussion about what we wanted to accomplish in such a letter, G. Koot moved that the Senate Steering Committee send a letter to the chancellor reflecting the following:

"Thank you for announcing the details that you have decided on how the 2005 Commencement will be organized. This scheme, as outlined to us, is not what the University's Standing Committee on Commencement, supported by the Faculty Senate as a whole, agreed to nearly two years ago. We recommend that you honor your agreement with the faculty and implement what we had agreed to."

E. Fischer seconded.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the language of the motion. After a time B. Jacobskind moved to call the question; K. Langley seconded. Motion carried.

Vote on principal motion held; motion carried.

2.2 Meeting with Chancellor

The Steering Committee held its first meeting of the academic year with the chancellor. The Chancellor seems to have set the agenda. This meeting was mostly about shared governance. Next time she wants an agenda item on Provost characteristics for an anticipated job search. The third proposed meeting would be to discuss GenEd assessment. There is a plan to continue these meetings throughout spring semester. There is some concern that the FSSC be able to bring agenda items to these meetings as well.

2.3 P. Gibbs will submit report on IFC meeting that will be sent via email.

2.4 Other Steering Committee Business

All Senate Committee Chairs have been asked to gather charges and review what the contract contains. E. Fischer distributed a draft timeline for processes for Senate. She has asked for any input before this document becomes final and is widely distributed.

J. Griffith moved to adopt the form with any individual changes submitted. A. Mello seconded. Motion carried.

3. Committee Reports

3.3 – Univ. Curriculum Committee has been asked by the FSSC to hold a special meeting on the MPP so we can send our analysis to the Board of Trustees. Once we receive this report the full Senate will need to act on it. J. Griffith moved that we have a special meeting shortly after break. G. Koot seconded. Motion carried.

Other committee reports postponed.

4. New Business

The task force on hiring and funding of TAs, chaired by A. Fowler, has submitted their report. They found that the problems the Math department experienced are not related to the TA appointment process. The problem is a programmatic one involving the college of engineering's willingness or ability to adequately provide support for the instruction they are demanding of the math department. (full report attached as Addendum A.)

L. Bianco moved to adjourn.; J. Griffith seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Addendum A

Report of the Senate Task Force on Math Department TA Appointments

In response to the Senate's request a task force was convened to look into the conflict that resulted from inadequate TA support for the Math department in courses taught for engineering in general, and IMPULSE in particular. The question we sought to address was whether this conflict was a result of flaws or inconsistencies in the TA appointment process as currently implemented by the UMD graduate programs.

The task force, consisting of me, Eileen Carreiro, Tim Su, Adam Hausknecht and Richard Panofsky met on Dec. 22nd. I volunteered to be the chair of the task force and was unanimously elected (although Adam wasn't present yet when that happened).

Adam presented his concerns about the TA appointment process and explained the ways in which his failure to secure good and reliable TA's had negatively impacted his ability to teach in the Fall of 2004. After some discussion it became clear, however, that the problem was not actually one that involved TA's. TA's were never actually assigned to support the math department in this case. The math department was assigned a very small amount of money, by the college of engineering, to hire assistants for the class and for grading, but this money was not enough to make a TA appointment through any department, and the money was not allocated in time for a formal TA appointment to be made. The students that were hired with this money were actually graduate students who had come to campus with no offer of assistantship, and therefore had demonstrated their ability to be financially independent to the graduate office. Once here, these students were eager to get the money the math department was offering, but they were not TA's in the sense of having been brought to campus with an offer of TA support through a particular department. These students subsequently received better offers of money from other sources and left the math department in the lurch.

Possibly the campus should consider establishing a policy to govern the hiring of students "away" from other on campus jobs once the semester has begun. Students that have committed to help a department or faculty member for the semester possibly should not be allowed to abandon that position mid semester when another more lucrative on campus offer becomes available. But this is not germane to the discussion of TA's who are not allowed to abandon their positions mid-semester.

This problem would not have arisen if the students hired by the math department had been actual TA's, because in that case their support would have come from the department in which they intended to graduate, and they would have signed a graduate assistantship form indicating their willingness to fulfill their TA responsibilities. If they just quit, as the students the math department hired did, there would be serious repercussions for their status in the Country (they would be in violation of their visa which is predicated on their assistantship to provide financial support), and they would be in trouble with their department.

It was clear after discussion that the math department has serious and real concerns about the support they are receiving to help them teach courses for engineering, but that the problems they are experiencing do not arise from any problem in the TA appointment process. In fact the TA process has no bearing on the current problem, since TA's were not involved. One of the solutions to the math department's difficulty would be to have their teaching support come from actual TA's, but whether the college of engineering will be willing to provide that level of support is unclear.

The findings of the task force were that the problems the Math department experienced are not related to the TA appointment process. The problem is a programmatic one involving the college of engineering's willingness or ability to adequately provide support for the instruction they are demanding of the math department. In my capacity as a faculty member of the college of engineering I have agreed to work with Adam as a liaison to the Dean of engineering and to try and resolve the conflict between the math department and the college of engineering; but the Task Force's official finding is that the current problem is not indicative of any problems with the TA appointment process and no further inquiry in to that process is warranted based on this issue.