

Senate Council Minutes  
February 23, 2004

The Senate Council met on Monday, February 23, 2004 at 3:00 pm in the Gallery of the W.T. Young Library and took the following actions.

1. Approval of the Minutes from January 16, 2004

The minutes were approved with the modification of deleting "in the e-mail" from one of Tagavi's statements.

2. Update on Senate Apportionment and Board of Trustee elections

Tagavi circulated copies of the Senate apportionment calculations and noted some of the differences between this year and last year. Bailey asked how the former College of Human Environment Sciences figured into the calculation. Tagavi replied that they had been consolidated with Agriculture, adding that Agriculture was now entitled to more seats as a result.

Tagavi outlined a concern he had about rounding the numbers, noting that sometimes rounding aided large colleges while penalizing smaller colleges. He suggested that the minimization of inequity should be based on a percentage rather than the absolute inequity. Tagavi added his committee would examine this issue, if asked to do so by the Senate Council. There was general consensus among the Council members that the Rules and Elections committee should examine this issue and form a proposal for the Council to consider.

The Chair asked when a call for nominations will be requested for the upcoming Board of Trustees faculty representative election. Tagavi replied that it would be soon. The Chair suggested having the nominations due around Spring Break. The Tagavi noted that his committee had just revised the composition of the Graduate Council and that he would forward it to Ms. Scott.

3. USP proposal for the Oral Communications requirement

The Chair thanked Associate Provost Kraemer for attending to discuss this item. Kraemer outlined the basic tenants of the proposal, including Communications inability to continue to serve a growing population outside its own college and the lack of professionals who could be hired to help teach the extra courses. He also noted a national-level movement away from centralized communication requirements toward the integration of the skills into the student's discipline. He added that many students are not able to register for the required class until their Senior year by which point they've already been deficient in the required skills for their entire undergraduate careers. Kraemer reported that, based on Communications recommendation, the USP Committee voted to eliminate the requirement.

The Chair asked how the USP Committee voted. Kramer replied that the vote was not unanimous with one or two committee members voting against the proposal. Kramer added the need to offer the best possible curriculum that the University could possibly offer and suggested that enrollment pressures and increasing class size had exaggerated the problem as of late.

Debski noted the importance of the oral communication requirement and related the difference she could detect in her undergraduate students who had taken the required course and those who had not. She questioned the notion that qualified people were not available to be hired, were funds available. Kraemer agreed with Debski, but noted that some programs on campus already prefer to integrate this requirement into their own curricula rather than utilizing COM 181. He added that students who fulfill this requirement through their department learn how to speak about their discipline rather than learning how to perform.

Debski worried that if the students were not required to take COM 181 then “nobody might feel responsible for teaching this” skill. Kramer said the reality was that Communications couldn’t offer that single course to enough students.

Yanarella reiterated Debski’s concern about the lack of pressure on programs to incorporate the requirement into their curricula. He feared that in the future the inclusion of such skills in the programs may dissipate for lack of a driving force to integrate them into the programs. Kraemer agreed that different programs will feel differently about integrating the skills into their curricula and added that SACS will still hold the University accountable for the dissemination of these skills. He said he thought the institution would be able to impart these skills through some other mechanism.

Tagavi agreed with Debski that the argument suggesting a lack of qualified instructors was odd. Tagavi asked if colleges weren’t allowed to raise admissions requirements to limit enrollment why USP should be allowed to drop requirements due to resource problems. He also wondered if this would lead to other USP requirement changes and wondered how one requirement could be deemed more important than others. Kraemer disagreed, saying the predominant principle should be “what is the best curriculum we can implement”. He noted that might not be the ideal curriculum, but that it was important to balance the various resource needs and the needs of the students to maintain a quality curriculum. He added that other curricular changes would be considered individually and warned against generalities.

Saunier asked how the fulfillment of the requirement would be document so students could transfer that requirement from one institution to another. Kraemer replied that this was one of the issues that would have to be addressed during implementation. Kraemer noted increased curricular pressures from CPE and SACS, and suggested that perhaps the CPE curriculum might not be a very good one. Saunier added that from a student’s perspective (attending UK to complete the core curriculum and wanting to block transfer to another institution) it would not be in the student’s best interest if there was no way to monitor the fulfillment of the oral communications requirement. She added that historically the Communications faculty had felt strongly that only they were qualified to teach oral communication skills.

Grabau suggested that the University was not establishing the necessary competencies in the SACS general studies evaluation and felt that SACS had not been diligent in addressing this issue. He expressed concern that relying on SACS to enforce the integration of these skills into the colleges might lead to the evaporation of those skills.

He wished there was some way to continue documenting the fulfillment of the oral communications requirement, if outside of COM 181, and suggested that it was the responsibility of USP to “mind the shop” on the enforcement and documentation of this requirement.

Kraemer noted the difficult position the committee found itself in. He said the committee felt that the skills should be inherent in the undergraduate experience. Kraemer added his own opinion that every department should be required to show how they were going to fulfill the requirement, but feared that such a move would put the USP committee in the difficult position of having to sort through “a whole range of alternatives, good and bad”. Saunier noted that Kraemer’s suggested requirement would ease the transfer concerns considerably.

Kennedy suggested the root of the problem was resource allocation and wondered if financial issues were solely the purview of Administration or if the Senate Council and the Senate should get involved. He added that this proposal represented a slippery slope which he feared was “getting steeper”. Kraemer noted the “sad state of undergraduate education in a research institution with state cuts” and expressed his frustration with the situation. He thought the Administration would be willing to redistribute resources for the benefit of the students, if resources were available to redistribute. He added that “the faculty govern the curriculum, but resources are governed by Administration”. He suggested the need for more philosophical discussion of this issue in the Senate. He suggested that funds could be redistributed from other programs, but worried the faculty in those programs would feel adversely impacted.

Kennedy suggested the Student Graduation Contract will increase pressure on the Administration to ensure that the necessary courses are offered. Kraemer said that was part of the reason Communications felt it couldn’t continue to meet the need.

Cibull asked if the size of the college would be reduced if the proposal were to pass. Kraemer replied the college would continue to offer the same roster of courses and the same number of sections. Cibull suggested that if the oral communication requirement was migrated into the colleges then Communications should be available to the programs to help offer expertise for course development. He spoke against abolishing the requirement but suggested that having the various programs teach these skills might be something to consider.

Chard favored integration of the skills into the department, suggesting that it might help students “learn the language of their professions”, but she expressed concern about how the departments were supposed to find resources to develop and teach new courses. Debski added her concern about the quality of the instructors who currently teach the courses. Kraemer replied that many of the sections are taught by graduate students. Debski wondered if graduate students were in the pipe-line to enter the profession how there could be a lack of qualified professors. Kraemer replied that he didn’t know.

Yanarella reiterated his position and noted a duality in the heart of the question. He said the first question was how the departments would demonstrate their ability to

imbed these skills into their core curriculum. He said the second question was how Communications could be kept “on the hook” to aid departments in developing courses for their own curricula. He expressed the need to recognize the efforts of both Communications and the departments in this endeavor by making financial resources available to both. Kraemer asked what would happen if the requirement was not abolished and there were no resources to support the requirement. He asked what should be done with all of the students who can’t take the course until they are seniors. Yanarella replied that he’d rather have seniors take the course late in their careers than not take it at all.

Bailey suggested continuing the requirement but encouraging other departments to develop alternatives. Chard noted that some programs might choose to abandon the requirement if it isn’t already part of their course roster. Bailey noted that Chemistry had integrated the skill into its own curriculum successfully.

Cibull said he was disturbed by the presentation of the argument that “we value this so much that we want to do away with it”. Kraemer replied that there was a need to value the skill, but not necessarily to value the need to take a specific course to achieve the desired competencies. Cibull said he’d like the committee to present concrete examples of what the students should be able to demonstrate, if the onus for teaching these skills transferred to the departments.

Debski suggested encouraging other departments to follow Chemistry’s model. Kraemer expressed concern that such a solution would present the departments with an unfunded mandate. Debski noted that it was only an unfunded mandate if the departments were forced to be responsible for the oral communication skills, but suggested that giving departments the opportunity to develop their own communication courses might prove beneficial.

The Chair noted a need to decide this issue apart from the larger pedagogical concerns of the Senate Council, though indeed this issue embodies part of those concerns. Debski and Cibull expressed concern about the precedent the endorsement of such a proposal would set for other departments that provided education to students outside their own colleges, like Biology, Chemistry and English. Tagavi suggested that the Senate should ask the Provost to reallocate resources.

Cibull suggested asking the committee to develop a plan to transfer the skills into the departments while being sensitive to resource issues. Chard added that the committee should ask Communications if they’ll be limiting their services to programs that chose to still require COM 181. Kraemer suggested the Senate Council could invite Communications to a meeting in order to resolve some of the questions. Cibull made his earlier suggestion a **motion**. Chard **seconded** it. The motion read:

The Senate Council charges the University Studies Committee to develop a concrete plan through which the responsibility for developing oral communications skills would migrate to the departments, should the proposal eventually be approved.

Edgerton suggested including in the motion a request for information regarding how many programs would elect to continue requiring the course and whether Communications would attempt to meet those needs. It was accepted as a friendly amendment. The **amendment** read:

Include in this plan information regarding how many programs would continue to require COM 181 and how Communications would continue to serve those students.

After brief discussion the motion **passed** without dissent.

Chard made a **motion** to collect information from Communications about current and projected enrollments and the possibility of resource reallocation due to decreased enrollment. Debski **seconded** the motion. The motion read:

The Senate Council requests Communications to provide information detailing current and projected enrollment in required Communications courses to support the proposal of the University Studies Program. Communications should include information regarding reallocation of resources due to potential decreases in enrollment, should the proposal eventually be approved.

After brief discussion the motion **passed** without dissent.

#### Other Business:

The Chair asked Kraemer to briefly discuss the LCC Transfer Program proposed by the President. Kraemer replied that the program would essentially build on the existing transfer and advising practices. He said the program would provide greater access to the University on targeted advising days and that UK might have a greater presence at LCC in the form of an on-campus admissions/advising office. Kraemer said “it is in our own self-interest to promote and expand successful transfers”.

Tagavi asked if the CPE or the Administration could force departments to accept courses from any community college and asked if that had been done by legislation in the past. Saunier noted the existence of a state law that said the community colleges were able to teach any course offered by UK and said she assumed UK had to accept those courses.

The Chair thanked Kramer for attending and answering questions. Kraemer departed.

#### 4. Definition of Educational Units

The Chair reminded the Council members that the Academic Organization and Structure Committee had been charged by the Senate Council to determine the definition of an educational unit. He added that the committee’s definition would be presented to the AR/GR Task Force the following morning.

Chard said her committee found considerable disagreement in the academic community regarding the definition of centers and institutes and noted the same problems when studying the benchmarks. Chard drew the Council’s attention to the first item of the

report and read from it. She noted that anywhere faculty were being assigned to conduct teaching, research or service was an academic unit. She noted that this definition excluded those centers and institutes that perform solely administrative functions, but that the rest of the units in question would fall under the purview of the Senate.

Cibull noted that the faculty of those centers were already under the purview of the Senate in that they are faculty, but asked why it was important to include the centers under the purview of the Senate. Jones noted that when the Center for Drug and Alcohol Research (CDAR) was recently reorganized by Board action the Senate was not consulted. He added the definition proposed by the committee would clarify for the Administration which units rose to the level of educational units and which were administrative.

Brief discussion followed regarding primary appointments, distribution of effort percentages and home units for purposes of promotion and tenure. Bailey said that the Senate's purview was educational policy and that the committee attempted to find a way to include all units in which faculty were active with at least a part of their DOE dedicated to their activity in that unit. Bailey asked if the other Senate Council members had suggestions as to how to limit this inclusiveness without inadvertently omitting a unit that should be included.

Chard reviewed the rest of the proposal. Jones noted the language of the proposal tried to mirror the language used in defining the roles and responsibilities of departments in the GR's. Cibull agreed that the Senate should have purview over teaching and research, but disagreed that service should be included. Bailey replied that all units containing faculty deserve the attention of the Senate.

Tagavi suggested distinguishing between centers that are 100% service and use no faculty time and those that are 100% service and use faculty time. He asked if his suggestion was agreeable to Cibull. Cibull replied that it was.

Chard reiterated that the GR's outline the functions of departments and faculty but do not define service. She cited this as the source of the language in the proposal. Cibull replied that departments have responsibilities in all three areas, but that centers do not.

The Chair suggested some minor editorial changes to make the language of the document more consistent. After brief discussion Tagavi **moved** to accept the proposal. Jones **seconded** the motion. There was no further discussion. There were none opposed and Cibull abstained. The motion **passed**.

##### 5. Academic and Administrative Committee Assignments

The Council members reviewed the list of nominees compiled by Ms. Scott. They discussed each category and suggested a short list of nominees. Ms. Scott will recompile their suggestions and the Chair will forward the list to the President's Office. The finalized list of nominees will be linked to these minutes.

##### 6. University Senate Agenda for March 8, 2004

The Senate Council members reviewed the draft agenda and approved the items. Ms. Scott will post the agenda for the Senate ten days before the Senate meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by  
Jeff Dembo, Chair

Members Present: Bailey, Chard, Cibull, Debski, Dembo, Edgerton, Grabau, Jones, Kennedy, Saunier, Tagavi, Yanarella.

Guest Present: Kraemer.

Prepared by Rebecca Scott on February 26, 2004.