

Special University Senate Meeting
January 29, 2007

The University Senate met in special session at 3 pm on Monday, January 29, 2007, in the Auditorium of the W. T. Young Library. Below is a record of what transpired.

The special meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

1. Minutes from December 11 and Announcements

The Chair said that there were some revisions to the December 11, 2006 minutes, indicated by “track changes” in the handout. Hearing no objection, the minutes were approved as amended.

Noting Parliamentarian Blyton’s absence, the Chair shared that Blyton was experiencing some health issues and might soon receive a pacemaker. The Chair asked that senators keep Blyton in their thoughts and prayers.

The Chair reported three announcements. He said that changes to two Education Abroad courses (ISP 499 and IES 433) had been approved by the Senate Council (SC) on behalf of the Senate. The deadline by which applications had to be filed for summer Education Abroad programs was March 1, so a swift approval was necessary. The courses were for fee calculation purposes only and the changes were that the courses would carry a grade of “S” and be valued at zero (0) credit hours. The SC considered the changes to be non-academic modifications.

The Chair said that during the summer, some students from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) were advised to take KCTCS courses to raise their UK GPA. Late in the afternoon on the last day before the December holiday break, the Chair received a call from University Registrar Don Witt requesting clarification. The Chair received unanimous support from the SC over the listserv to grant an extension. He explained that it was not a new waiver, but rather that it allowed a one-semester continuation of the practice that would have ended December 2006. He said that the waiver allowed KCTCS students who were admitted and enrolled at UK for spring 2007 to have their KCTCS fall 2006 grades factored into their UK GPA. SC members, however, made it clear to the Chair that they would not agree to any further extension; the Chair relayed that sentiment to Witt.

There was one rule waiver for a student requesting a retroactive withdrawal. The student submitted a completed retroactive withdrawal application (RWA) to the Office of the Senate Council on December 15, which was within the two-year window described in Senate Rules 5.1.8.5.A.2. The Senate’s RWA Committee could not render a decision on the RWA because the student’s application arrived three days after the monthly meeting. The Chair explained that since the

SC routinely granted similar waivers of SR 5.1.8.5.A.2, he felt comfortable granting the waiver on behalf of the SC.

2. [Whitepaper on a Revision of USP to Continue UK's General Education Reform Effort \(Discussion ONLY\)](#)

The Chair offered a brief background on the recent history of general education reform at UK. He asked that members of the [USP Reform Steering Committee \(USPRSC\)](#) stand to identify themselves; USPRSC members College of Arts and Sciences Dean Steve Hoch, Gatton College of Business and Economics Associate Dean of the Undergraduate Resource Center Nancy Johnson and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Chair Phil Kraemer were present and introduced themselves. The Chair explained that Provost Subbaswamy wrote the UK-LEAP white paper to jumpstart the discussion, not to be considered the final word. He added that no one was present to defend the white paper; its purpose was to start a conversation to engage the USPRSC. The Chair noted that the Provost had sent the white paper to all faculty members via an email. He added that Provost Subbaswamy was not able to stay after presenting the white paper. He invited the Provost to the podium.

Provost Subbaswamy began by commending the SC's leadership in calling for the special meeting; it showed the seriousness with which the faculty were approaching the University Studies Program (USP) reform effort. He said that across the country universities reviewed such programs every 20 years or so, so UK was involved in a natural part of what other universities were experiencing. The Provost offered a very brief history of USP reform at UK and said that the USPRSC members were highly qualified to move the general education agenda along. He said that his role was to synthesize the general education reform effort and also bring in external conversations occurring across the nation. Provost Subbaswamy said that the white paper borrowed from the American Association of Colleges & Universities' (AAC&U) ten-year effort to change general education conversations and practices across the country.

The Provost said that there would need to be a reward system for faculty who committed time to undergraduate education reform. The issue needed to be discussed further, but he said that if a group of faculty worked over the summer, they would be paid a summer salary. Provost Subbaswamy said that there should be both realistic and honest levels of funding; any suggestion to do more with less would not be well received.

Provost Subbaswamy explained that he did not intend to go over the structure of the white paper, but instead wanted to share some thoughts. As senators entered into the general education reform dialogue during the coming months, the Provost offered some suggestions:

1. Enter with a notion of constructive criticism. If there was something not liked, expressing distaste should be coupled with an explanation of why, as well as an alternative suggestion.
2. Do not enter into policy-making anecdotally, a common mistake with collective deliberations. Avoid making policy by autobiography and looking backward – look forward.
3. Both ultra-pessimism and ultra-optimism will not work.
4. Be pragmatic and use common sense.

Provost Subbaswamy ended by thanking those present for engaging in the general education reform dialogue and sustaining interest and engagement through the process. The Chair thanked the Provost for attending and then the Provost departed.

The Chair invited USPRSC Chair Kraemer to say a few words. Kraemer said that during the day's meeting, the role of the USPRSC would be to listen; he said that the committee, still in preliminary conversations, requested input by February 15. He said that although the USPRSC had met a couple of times, the committee was at the same initial phase that the rest of campus was at. Kraemer thought the current general education reform discussion was a good opportunity to talk about things in ways that bordered on optimistic, a chance to be ambitious and a chance to lead the curve.

The Chair noted the presence of Lou Swift and said he was glad to see him and appreciated him coming. Guest Swift said that for obvious reasons, he was delighted to be in attendance. He said that general education reform was something universities should do every 20 years.

The Chair suggested the dialogue begin. He asked that questions be directed toward him instead of other attendees. The Chair also said that he would recognize new speakers before recognizing those who had already spoken.

Finkel said that when he thought of a university studies program, he thought of a set of course requirements. He said that while the white paper said to think in terms of learning outcomes, he wondered how the completed product could avoid being a list of requirements. In response, the Chair said he would recognize USPRSC members if they wanted to comment.

Kraemer said that he did not intend to offer an answer for every question posed, but said that at some point there would need to be a discussion about courses in a curriculum. He hoped it would not be a list, but rather that it would be an intelligent framework that would justify a course listing. He said the USPRSC was concerned with the coherence of courses; an internal framework needed to be created where the pieces made sense and fit together. The Chair asked for other comments.

Grossman said that Finkel's question reminded him of the cross-disciplinary requirement of USP. He said it had been a nightmare to administer and made no sense to students; it was an exercise in checking boxes. He suggested that when decisions needed to be made, he hoped the USPRSC be aware of that problem and try to avoid a list of courses but not make it impossible to understand.

The Chair noted that Director of the Office of Assessment Deborah Moore was planning to attend, but had other commitments and could not attend until 4 pm. The Chair asked that questions related to assessment be held until she arrived.

Forge suggested that in thinking of learning outcomes, there could be a checklist of courses needed to get to the outcome. He expressed concern about students leaving UK and not knowing what they know. He said that as a result of going through USP, a student should know what to say when writing a resumé explaining learned abilities. It would be an improvement for students to be able to enunciate why they took the courses they did and how they could be used.

Yanarella stated that it was necessary for the USPRSC to keep in mind a variety of issues. The identity of a revised general education plan would need to be clear; faculty and students should have a clear sense of the purpose of general education. There also would need to be clarity regarding what direction the new general education initiative would take – would it orient itself to be more of a distributional requirement, similar to what USP is currently, or will it be, as was a key recommendation, an outcomes-based system? Yanarella said that any new general education program would need to orient itself towards a continuing assessment of the programs and how well courses served the goals of the new system; if problems with a new system could be identified through assessment, then the university would be able to make corrections.

Snow asked if there had been any input from recent UK graduates about their feelings about USP. The Chair invited Yanarella to respond. Yanarella said that the GERA Committee held 15 forums and also put forth extensive efforts to hold a student forum. The Student Government Association (SGA), however, made it clear that it was not particularly interested in taking part in the formative discussions. He said the conclusion of the GERA Committee was that students would like to be more involved in specific requirements and courses in the curriculum. He thought the USPRSC should extend an invitation to the SGA again to take part in discussions, but thought they would receive a similar message of a lack of interest. The Chair then invited Kraemer to respond.

Kraemer said that students needed to be involved and that the USPRSC would try to again solicit input from students. In terms of Snow's question about recent graduates' thoughts, he said that there was a lot of information available about what students encountered nationally when they left campus. Information from AAC&U surveys of students was used to support principles in the white paper. Kraemer said that surveys showed students needed to be flexible, be able to

engage in life-long learning and have minds nimble enough to be able to relearn and retool; such survey information was on the GERA website. Yanarella confirmed for Kraemer that the GERA website was still available. Kraemer said that the USPRSC were informed by national reports and that much of what was in the white paper was supported by such information.

The Chair recognized Joanna Badagliacco. Guest Badagliacco said her comments were about the capstone experience. She said that there had been a lot of success in sharing expectations with students very early on about what was expected with respect to learning. She requested there be thought put into how to offer such information to students in smaller classes or during the first year. Badagliacco went on to ask how the USPRSC would address the problem of very large classes and the ability to mentor students and offer sufficient attention. Kraemer said that the USPRSC would need to keep an eye on a student's first year experience, but not in terms of specific curriculum. He said that ignoring the issue of students' needs in their first year would indicate failure.

Yanarella said that the USPRSC would need to look at graduation rates and retention. In addition, there needed to be efforts to figure out ways in which the general education learning outcomes and distributional requirements could be folded into the major, which would reduce the number of courses required specifically in the general education curriculum. He said that a capstone experience was also important, in part to move away from the perception that USP was something for students to "get done with" before moving on to what some students perceived as the "real" work in the major.

The Chair recognized Jane Jensen. Guest Jensen said that she was concerned about the lack of inclusion of other educators, such as individuals involved in student affairs or advisors. She said that co-curricular aspects of a new general education program could be clearly articulated through the advising structure. Jensen said that one reason that Miami University [Miami of Ohio] was considered a benchmark in general education reform was because Miami University encouraged all professionals in higher education to work and communicate with the whole campus, including student and academic affairs offices. Jensen added that the field of student affairs was about 10 years into the student learning imperative; their professional ethos was one of learning outcomes. Including those individuals should be done now, not toward the end of the process.

Kraemer responded that the USPRSC had discussed that issue. He said there was a real opportunity to use a co-curriculum in a strategic way; many learning experiences of students would fit into a general education program even though it might not occur in a traditional classroom, such as Education Abroad. He said it was important to include it into general education discussions.

Parker spoke about the need to include a health and wellness class at the university-wide level in USP. He said that such an offering had tied to a variety of issues, including the Commonwealth's problems with diabetes and obesity. Parker lamented that there was currently no health and wellness component of the current USP and said that a number of students would be attracted to such a course. He also said that attention should be paid to ensuring that there were sufficient resources to avoid students having to broker with professors to get into closed courses. The Chair noted that Deborah Moore had arrived so questions regarding assessment could be asked.

Yanarella offered comments that followed up statements by Jensen and Kraemer. Yanarella said that expectations about co-curricular elements should be explicitly spelled out when the USPRSC re-worked the general education foundation. He said that UK 101 courses were tailor-made to offer an opportunity for students to get a clear sense of the identity and purpose of USP. Yanarella added that College of Fine Arts faculty were ready and very willing to become fully involved in curricular and co-curricular development as it related to the arts. He said that there were many opportunities to have high culture woven into the general education curriculum. Guest George Szekely confirmed that as a member of the Department of Art in the College of Fine Arts, his faculty colleagues were ready to engage in that type of activity.

Steiner wondered how a new general education program would be assessed. Kraemer suggested that from afar, it could be observed that a curriculum was not well structured or that a failure (such as the cross-disciplinary requirement of USP) could highlight areas of need. He added that it was not necessarily easy to measure aspects of curriculum or solicit a student's assessment. Kraemer said that colleagues like Deborah Moore would be needed. The Chair invited Moore to comment.

Guest Office of Assessment Director Deborah Moore said that part of the problem was not having a good baseline. Once a baseline was established, it would be easier to set priorities of what would be measured first. She said that faculty would need to decide on what measure to use, keeping an eye on the quality of data being used. She said that once one chunk was addressed, another chunk of assessment could begin. Moore said it would be important to communicate clearly across campus the expectations of the new general education program. What was learned, what went well, what did not go well, etc. would need to be broken down so that the issue of assessment would not seem too overwhelming. She added that there were many ways to define and measure; decisions would need to be made about whether to use an existing measure or if one should be created. Once learning outcomes were cemented, an assessment plan could be developed.

Guest Stephen Voss said that during the GERA forums, health and nutrition needs were tentatively suggested to reside in citizenship topics; he expressed

concern that health and wellness issues were not present in the white paper. Voss said that an educated professional in society would need to know how to work his or her own body. He requested that the USPRSC include health and wellness in the citizenship component. Kraemer said that he would make sure the USPRSC was aware of the request; he added that it might not be a particular course in health and wellness that needed to be established, but rather that individuals could begin thinking about how students could get to health and wellness issues without creating a new course.

Grossman stated that he was uncomfortable with suggestions that co-curricular activities, once referred to as extracurricular activities, should be part of the educational process at UK. He said he was not opposed to such offerings, but cautioned against allowing co-curricular activities that were not supervised by faculty or approved by the Senate to be included in part of an official general education curriculum. Parker said that he mentioned funding for health and wellness courses because while health and wellness majors were required to take such courses, the College of Education did not have sufficient resources to offer such courses en masse. He said that it was funding issues that prevented KHP 230 from being offered through USP.

Swanson suggested that integration was needed more than the creation of new courses. The information a student with a chemistry major needed to have about world industrialization should be put into current courses and not used as the basis for a new course. Kraemer said that type of suggestion would need to be addressed during curriculum framework discussions.

Hertog expressed his disagreement. He said that general education should be something that every graduate from UK should have and know. The learning outcomes should be universal and essential skills such as thinking and communicating did not need to be discipline-specific. He said that there should first be a curriculum for all UK students, after which decisions could be made about how to fit the curriculum into majors. Steiner said that it was good to have faculty in different disciplines understand what the outcomes should be, otherwise the result would only be basic skills. Steiner said that general education should continue through the major studies, not as separate courses.

Cammers said that he liked the overall feel of the white paper. It was less prescriptive and offered students more latitude in movement around campus and into career paths and goals. He said that anarchy in the system could be avoided by increasing the level of advising that students received, such a suggestion not being apparent in the white paper. Cammers said that there needed to be more focus on advising.

Yanarella expressed his agreement with Cammers. Yanarella said that one of the last GERA forums was for advisors, who showed a key concern in precisely that area. While there were legions of very dedicated advisors who clearly had their

students' issues at heart, advisors still needed clear guidelines to present to students. He said that if a rich framework for general education was developed, it was likely to be well received by advisors.

Snow said that the USPRSC was working under the premise that the current USP did not work well. She said that the USPRSC should spend a lot of time with the population of recent graduates. Snow acknowledged that students might have a hard time identifying what exactly USP did not offer, but said that continued conversations could help identify threads of concern. She said it seemed that the USPRSC was moving ahead somewhat blindly by not soliciting more feedback from recent graduates.

Dean Hoch said that there was a substantial body of research that was not specific to UK but rather looked at higher education in general to review the very issue Snow was concerned with. He said that there was no need to look at UK students specifically. Dean Hoch noted that one inadequacy of higher education was that professors rarely reviewed literature about higher education issues, only about topics in discipline-specific fields. He said that there were good studies that could be used, which included follow ups with students five and ten years post-graduation. He confirmed for Snow that there were recent studies available.

Cammers said that the issue for students should not be "what I did not get at UK" but rather "what I did not bother to take at UK." Students needed to be responsible for their own deficiencies. Cammers said that student responsibility was important. Kraemer said that Cammers had an important point, but also that faculty needed to take responsibility for being intentional when it came to the purpose of higher education. Kraemer said that students might not understand the intentionality of a curriculum, but needed faculty to make explanations of why a course was being taught. He said that if that message came across much earlier to students, it would allow students to better take charge of their education.

Badagliacco said that UK 101 came up repeatedly as a transitional course. She said it allowed students to better understand what to expect from their education. She said that after advising for many years she had heard many statements from students saying that they did not know why they took a course, just that they had to. She said she separated students mentally into either a group that wanted to learn or into a group that just wanted critical skills so they could get a job. She said faculty needed to help students understand their expectations for themselves and make sure they had expectations of faculty as well. She also wondered how faculty would be able to mentor large numbers of students. Badagliacco added that students probably would not realize what they "should have" taken until much time had passed after graduation.

[Unknown] said it was important to learn from past mistakes. One problem with USP was that it did not change the culture of faculty. He said that majors argued

that major courses belonged in USP only because they were applicable to some aspect of a USP goal. [Unknown] requested that even before the USPRSC began work on the level of courses to offer, the committee think in concrete and idealistic terms of how to change the mindset of faculty at large. While it was natural for a faculty member to concentrate on his or her specific discipline, there needed to be a cultural change. Once the culture changed, many other things would fall into place.

Dean Hoch supported the statements by [Unknown] and said that issue had been discussed in USPRSC a lot. Hoch said that as the revised USP unfolded, it would require a radical change in the faculty culture. He said that one of the single biggest problems with the current USP program was that while there were lofty goals for each category, 100-level courses were usually an introduction to the discipline and the USP goals were probably not read by the faculty member. He said that the goals of USP were being ignored by faculty for a good reason – the goal of the faculty member teaching the course, perhaps as an introductory course, did not mesh with the loftier USP goal for the same area. Dean Hoch said that after concerns of the white paper were addressed, then the USPRSC could decide how to construct courses that permanently and forevermore achieve the goals of the learning outcomes. He added that there would be massive changes required from college faculties.

Calvert said that the single most important thing would be to make explicit the derivation of a reformed general education program. Language about what specifically was to be achieved would be more helpful than broad language like, “think in multidisciplinary perspectives.” He also said the information should be explicit and placed on the web so that all advisors could be thoroughly indoctrinated.

Sottile said that one aspect of general education that he struggled with pertained to accreditation boards’ requirements that engineering programs meet certain standards of life-long learning. He said that implementation of a new general education program would be important in aiding students and faculty with understanding overall purpose. Sottile added that some colleges would have a better ability to integrate major courses with general education learning outcomes than others.

Yanarella expressed concern with comments about “once and for all,” indoctrinating faculty and educating students – he thought that general education reform should be addressed more flexibly. Mistakes would be made no matter what steps were taken. Yanarella said that a clear-sighted framework and well-defined learning outcomes should be the immediate goals. He said there would be changes and evolutions to general education and that assessment processes would need to be built into to find out if students were learning what they were supposed to. He said that any plan that did not include regular assessment was bound to fail.

Hertog suggested that there were two ways to go about revising USP – the USPRSC could look at existing classes and see which ones met the requirements of learning outcomes, or a curriculum could be designed after which courses would be developed; he thought the second option would be more successful. In response to Grabau, Hertog explained that current classes were essentially hostage to the department. Courses would have to adjust to learning outcomes, but it would be hard to adjust completely. Instructors teaching USP courses should follow the curriculum guidelines set forth to meet the curriculum. He opposed adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of courses already in place.

Snow expressed concern that there did not seem to be any interest in querying recent UK graduates about their opinions. She said that the current discussion was centered on UK and a way of learning for Kentucky. She again asked if there was any data about what UK students wanted. She wondered if it was worth revising USP without assessing what UK graduates felt they should have received academically but did not. Kraemer responded that such information would be helpful, but that it would be difficult to develop a survey and to find the graduates. He acknowledged that the senior survey did not address much in the way of curriculum. He said that there was some information gleaned from UK's participation in the Wabash National Study that would offer some data on UK students that the USPRSC would review.

Hallman said that while students' responses would be valuable, the average recently-graduated student would likely rank something like life-long learning as something not applicable to the job market. She said that a new graduate might not know what they had missed.

Grossman offered a follow-up statement regarding how it would be easier to create courses and populate with faculty than to take existing courses and modify. He agreed that it might be easier, but in the end it would be ultimately self-defeating; USP would end up with courses that were only relevant in the department. It would promote the culture of students wanting to “get done with” USP so they could go on to the “real” learning in the major. Grossman added that there was a little exaggeration about the need to change mindsets for USP reform to be successful. He said that what was needed was an interface between the goals and subject matter of courses along with appropriate ways of learning the subject matter. Cammers stated that faculty needed to put into perspective the magnitude of what USP reform would impact; faculty should be careful not to oscillate about the reform's optimum effect or the magnitude of changes. Instead of saying that UK did a bad job of educating undergraduates, the better statement would be that USP needed to be examined and that changes would be made to better align the program with its goals. He thought UK did a great job of educating and said he would send his daughter to UK.

Moore shared that there was no reason why there could not be a longitudinal effort of both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The Wabash National Study focused on quantitative issues. Moore said that choices needed to be made in terms of what was being done now and what would be done in the future. She said care would need to be taken in articulating where UK was in the reform effort and the progress that was being made. She said that when she reviewed USP, there was no monitoring or assessment, which allowed it to move into odd directions. Moore said that if the revised USP program went in the wrong direction, perhaps the method of assessment being used was not working well or that maybe the goal was not well stated. Moore said that along with the need for a clear plan, individuals needed the fortitude to stay with it.

Forgue's comments returned to the distinction between existing courses and creating new courses, which he said was a false dichotomy. He said components of both would be needed throughout the four or five years a student was an undergraduate at UK.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions. Hearing none, he invited Kraemer to make some follow-up comments. Kraemer said that the USPRSC wanted as much feedback as possible from the campus community by February 15, 2007. He said it could be emailed to USPRSC members or to Provost Subbaswamy. The USPRSC would deliberate and review all input and take it into account when presenting something more concrete. Kraemer said that his intent was for the next iteration to imply aspects of implementation but not outline such matters specifically. He added that a change to the culture was critical. He said that it was not overly difficult for faculty to become informed about the goals of USP and to teach accordingly. Kraemer said such changes went beyond the curriculum itself to how faculty interacts as colleagues. Kraemer said the Senate's discussion had been very useful and he encouraged additional input; he said he would enjoy being inundated with suggestions and information.

Waldhart asked to whom comments should be directed. She supported as much transparency as possible in the deliberations. With a February 15 deadline for suggestions, Waldhart wondered if there was any way for faculty to have a sense of the other comments put forward; would there be a public place that could serve as a repository for suggestions? Kraemer said that currently there was no such mechanism. After the USPRSC incorporated feedback into a proposal, there would be additional, more intense discussions. Kraemer said that the goal was to bring the framework to the Senate for much input and then approval before the end of the spring 2007 semester. Kraemer said that Provost Subbaswamy wanted curriculum work to begin over the summer.

Grossman said that for the academic offenses discussions, the Big Blue Board was set up for comments. He suggested using a similar mechanism for USP reform.

Debski asked when the USPRSC expected to bring something to the Senate for discussion, before any vote would take place. Kraemer replied that he would like to bring something to the Senate in March.

There being no further comments or questions, the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Larry Grabau,
University Senate Secretary

Absences: Anderson, Anyaegbunam, Bartilow, Bernard*, Bhatt*, Bhavsar, Biagi, Bollinger*, Bordo*, Brown, Burchett, Butler, Campbell*, Caudill, Chew, Clauter, Crofford, Deem*, Dembo, DeSimone, Desormeaux*, El-Ghannam, English*, Fording, Fox*, Frost, Gaetke*, Garrity*, Gonzalez, Harley, Hasselbring, Hazard*, Houtz, Jasper*, K. Johnson*, Jones*, Karpf, Kelly*, Kim*, Kirschling, Lester, Lilich, Lock*, Look, Martin*, McCormick, McKnight*, Michael*, Mitchell*, Mobley, Mohny, Newman*, Odoi, Patwardhan*, Perman, Piascik, Pulito, Ray, Remer*, Roberts*, Santhanam*, Sawaya*, Segerstrom, Shay, Smart, D. Smith*, M.S. Smith, Staben, Steltenkamp*, Stump*, Sudharshan, Terrell, Todd, Turner, VanDyke*, Vasconez, Vestal, D. Williams, G. Williams, Wiseman, Witt, Wyatt, Yates*.

Invited guests present: Nancy Johnson.

Non-Senate members recognized by the Chair: Joanna Badagliacco, Jane Jensen, Deborah Moore, Lou Swift, George Szekely, [Unknown].

Prepared by Sheila Brothers on February 1, 2007.

* Denotes an absence explained prior to the meeting.