

SPECIAL MEETING

SENATE ASSEMBLY - FEBRUARY 28, 1977

NOTICE OF
MEETING

The following Notice of Special Meeting was distributed by Campus Mail:

Senate Assembly will meet in special session on Monday, February 28, 1977, at 3:15 p.m., in Rackham Amphitheatre, to discuss the procedures being proposed in possible cases of "Discontinuance of Academic Programs."

A final draft of these procedures will be presented to the Regents for approval at their meeting of March 18, 1977. For the Assembly to participate in the review of this important document before its official adoption, it is necessary that we meet as soon as possible and in advance of the next meeting of the Regents.

Draft copies of the proposed procedures were distributed at a regular meeting of the Assembly on February 21, 1977. For those members who were unable to attend that meeting, copies are enclosed with this notice.

SACUA will prepare, for Assembly consideration on February 28, emendations to the draft document dated 2/10/77.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Members Aupperle, Browder, Christensen, Cohen, Cornell, Crawford, Crichton, Diamond, Downen, Eisley, Goldman, Gordon, Gray, Harris, R., Hildebrandt, Lechlitner, Johnson, Caldwell, Lands, Leary, Lehmann, Lindberg, Lytle, Millard, Heers, Nesbitt, Fowler, Portman, Rabkin, Scott, Seger, Sherman, Simonds, Votaw, Weeks, Winans, Colburn, Williams

Absent: Members Adams, Angus, Baublis, Bornstein, Brazer, Cartwright, Child, Coon, Corpron, Cosand, DeKornfeld, Deskins, Edwards, A., Edwards, O., Elving, Faulkner, Fekety, Flynn, Browne, Harris, J., Jones, Kachaturoff, Kish, Livermore, Merte, Murphey, Proctor, Soucek, Stross, Northcutt, West, Zorn

Guests: Associate Vice-President Carolyne Davis
Professors David Starks and Richard Park, Co-chairmen,
Program Evaluation Committee
Vice-President Henry Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Professor Brymer Williams called the Special Meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. He introduced the topic of the meeting, Discontinuance of Academic Programs, by noting that two draft documents were available for the review of Senate Assembly members. One draft, dated February 10, 1977 was distributed at the last Senate Assembly meeting and the second, dated February 23, 1977, was distributed at the opening of the Special Meeting. Professor Williams said that three areas of concern had been expressed by SACUA and the advice of the Assembly was needed before SACUA recommendations could be formed. The areas of concern are: (1) the role of the financial situation in program closure, (2) the role of the faculty in program discontinuance, and (3) the proper sequence of review procedures.

Professor Williams introduced the Co-Chairmen of the Program Evaluation Committee, Professors Richard Park and David Starks, who were present for the

discussion. He also introduced Associate Vice-President Carolyn Davis who came to the lectern to discuss the background of the document and to review the latest version of the draft. (February 23, 1977)

ASSOCIATE
VICE-PRESIDENT
DAVIS

Dr. Davis opened her remarks by expressing regret that University business had taken Vice-President Rhodes from campus and made it impossible for him to attend today's Special Meeting. She thanked the Assembly for their interest and then moved to an explanation of why and how such a document was developed. She noted that the financial difficulties of the recent past made it inevitable that review of academic programs would be required if we were to maintain the integrity of our total educational objectives. Across-the-board cuts have been made in the past, but even with differential cuts between units in the past two budget years it was apparent that even more financial problems faced us in the future which could cause an erosion in academic quality of programs. In turn this might lead to decisions to close programs. She described the formation of a small "in house" committee from the Office of Academic Affairs charged to put together a draft of procedures for bringing about program closure. The committee was composed of Dr. Edward Dougherty, Mr. Charles Allmand, and Associate Vice-President Davis. Within two months of the initial work of the Committee, two recommendations for program closure were received in the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. These recommendations made the urgency of writing procedures for closure apparent. Procedures were drafted and numerous reviews were afforded various groups. Careful screening "in house" took place and groups such as SACUA, the Committee on Program Evaluation, and the Academic Affairs Committee were consulted and asked for recommendations. The Board of Regents was provided a draft of the document (draft February 10, 1977) at its February meeting. Since that time another draft has been prepared, dated February 23, 1977, and it is that document which is now before the Assembly for discussion.

Associate Vice-President Davis next went through the February 23, 1977 document page by page explaining the rationale for each of the four major sections of the draft. The four sections reviewed were:

1. Who Should Decide?
2. What Criteria Should be Used?
3. What Safeguards Should be Given to Faculty?
4. Safeguards for Students

Associate Vice-President Davis spoke for approximately thirty minutes in her review of the document. She carefully outlined the development of each section and discussed the review comments received to date on the document. She closed by inviting further comment and review.

COMMENTS &
QUESTIONS
FROM THE
FLOOR

The floor was opened for comments and questions and Professor Gray asked whether peer review was envisioned to be "in school" or "out-of-school" review. Associate Vice-President Davis said that no one plan was recommended. She noted however that in most reviews outside people are utilized in the evaluation procedure.

Professor Goldman commented that he was concerned about the language of the document in two separate sections. The first area of concern had to do with the wording of the first step in Recommended Procedures, page 3 of the document. Professor Goldman felt that the notion of "appropriate"

assessment and review should be incorporated into the first point. He also felt that the section dealing with Safeguards for Students, especially sub-section two, should be more specific on the matter of admissions. Dr. Davis noted each of Professor Goldman's concerns and agreed with the necessity to change some of the wording in these two sections.

Professor Simonds said that he wanted to speak to the "decision-making cycle." His analysis lead him to the belief that, one, there should be specified points of time for various decisions to be made in the review process and, two, that the type of review being conducted must be noticed so that the faculty is made aware of all circumstances. He then carried his point one step further and argued that there must be a linkage between the established timetable and the kind of review under way. A second area of concern expressed by Professor Simonds had to do with the provision of budget information. He felt that budget information must be made available for the review of the governing faculty.

Dr. Davis said that she was aware of the timing matter. She said she appreciates the concern; however, she noted that so many factors impinge on decisions of closure that specified timetables are difficult to establish. She said the securing or expiration of a large federal grant for example is not always predictable.

Professor Weeks joined the discussion at this point to bring it back to the point about the faculty being able to review the budget. He said it was clear that the AAUP Guidelines advocate the need for early and meaningful review of matters such as program evaluation. He said it was his opinion that information regarding budget was needed so that a meaningful review could be conducted.

Professor Nesbitt moved to a problem of wording and a point of difference on one of the policies spelled out in the document. On the matter of wording Professor Nesbitt said that the sentence on page one which begins, "If it is decided that a program should be eliminated..." should be changed to read "If elimination of a program is being considered..." The policy difference had to do with how much notice should be given to tenured faculty when their program is being discontinued. Professor Nesbitt argued that at least a two year notice be given rather than the one year notice as proposed.

Professor Gordon took the floor to make the following comments. He said that AAUP Guidelines define financial exigency in terms of the total University budget. This point was made to relate to earlier remarks concerning faculty review of all budgetary information. He next moved to the point of how the current document had evolved. He was especially concerned about the February 10 draft being sent to the Regents before SACUA was given an opportunity to comment upon the substance of the document. Both Dr. Davis and Professor Williams explained that it was true that the earlier draft was sent to the Regents prior to the discussion and comments of SACUA; however the draft now in the hands of the Assembly did reflect the input of SACUA. Professor Gordon then moved on to discuss the role of the governing faculty. He said he was concerned with the wording of Bylaw 5.03 and further that the document as a whole was a bit misleading as to the role of the faculty in the process. He argued that the primary initiative for program review should rest with the governing faculty. His last point was that according

once again to the AAUP Guidelines reviews of program quality and financial exigency are two entirely different matters. Therefore, he said that two separate documents were needed. Associate Vice-President Davis responded to the last point by saying that thought was given to the formation of two documents but that upon close analysis the two matters were so intertwined that they could not be separated.

The role of the Budget Priorities Committee was a concern of Professor Caldwell. He said that it was his opinion that they are the ones to make reviews for program closure. Dr. Davis answered that a University Committee should not supersede the control of the budget of a school or college by its Dean and Executive Committee. Professor Caldwell followed by saying that program closure represents a problem for the whole University. Dr. Davis maintained her earlier position that the Budget Priorities Committee cannot act in the place of the Deans and Executive Committees. She said that if the Budget Priorities Committee took an active role it might be viewed as too much central control.

Professor Scott asked whether or not the document when finalized was to apply to all campuses. Dr. Davis said that the procedures were developed for the Ann Arbor campus but could be used at Dearborn and Flint if the faculty and administrative officers choose to implement them.

Professor Lehmann said that he wanted to comment upon several matters raised during the discussion. He said that SACUA had been concerned about the specific wording of the document and was anxious for Assembly input. He noted that SACUA had not been given enough time to review the document and that this had caused some difficulty. Further, he said that SACUA had discussed the role of the governing faculty and had proposed that one way to clarify the issue was by the inclusion of Bylaw 5.02 in the document. His final observation had to do with the review of budgetary information. He said that it may be that University-wide committees, such as Budget Priorities, should be involved in program reviews.

At this point Professor Park of the Program Evaluation Committee took the floor to explain the role of the Committee. He made two points. First, he noted that his Committee was a planning group and not an "evaluating" group. Second, he argued that by whatever means available the faculty should be given assurance that on matters of program discontinuance fair and full hearings will take place.

Professor Rabkin told the Assembly that he was "very troubled" by the document. He said that while it has been intimated that the document was in accord with AAUP Guidelines this was clearly not the case. It was his opinion that the role of the governing faculty was not as prominent as it should be in matters of such grave consequence. In his view, the Vice-President is creating a right which "in fact rests with the faculty." He said that those who recommend tenure must also be given the right to withdraw tenure. Dr. Davis responded by saying that the role of the Vice-President is not confused in the document. The Vice-President is to make recommendations to the Regents. The Regents have final authority.

Professor Goldman was next to speak and he expressed his concern over the clarity of the language in the document. He argued, for example, that it is not clear who is to initiate review procedures and what grounds they are to use to begin review. Dr. Davis said she recognized some of the difficulties but asked all to appreciate the fact that the document is in draft form.

The issue of why we were moving so quickly was raised by Professor Cohen. He asked, "Why the urgency"? He continued by saying that he was beginning to feel that the issue was larger than we might first believe. He said that the concept of tenure seemed to underlie the present document. Dr. Davis said that the review of two programs currently underway necessitated the formulization of procedures. She said that the Office of Academic Affairs wanted to be sure that guidelines they were following were acceptable as policy procedures. She hoped the Senate Assembly would understand that a delay in final policy guidelines means that the Office of Academic Affairs will utilize the draft interim guidelines as the procedures to follow with the two proposed program closure recommendations.

The relationship of ending and beginning programs was a point of concern expressed by Professor Crawford. He urged some clarification of this matter.

Professor Cornell was anxious to return to an earlier point of discussion. He said that who may initiate review proceedings and when they may do it was unclear. He also argued that if the procedure was clarified then related matters such as proper notification and full faculty discussion of closure could be insured. Lehmann said that SACUA was in agreement with Professor Cornell's observations. He said that SACUA would pursue this concern.

Professors Gordon and Nesbitt again brought up the matter of how the University should handle tenured faculty when a program was closed. Professor Gordon stated that "everyone should go before tenured faculty members", and Professor Nesbitt observed that the document was "light in its handling of tenured faculty members." Dr. Davis referred to the sentence in the document which read, "Every effort will also be made to assist in relocation and retaining of staff affected by discontinuance of a program." Professor Nesbitt again took the floor to say that "no guarantees were afforded" tenured faculty members. Dr. Davis said that he was correct. Professor Goldman added to the discussion by saying that the matter of severance pay which had been included in the February 10 draft was now deleted. Dr. Davis said his concern would be reviewed.

At this point a series of points were repeated by members of the Assembly. Professor Johnson took the floor and attempted to alleviate the concerns by saying that faculty concerns would be voiced before the Regents in the form of a jointly agreed upon document written with the Office of Academic Affairs or in a document prepared by SACUA alone.

Professor Portman said that the safeguards of students must not be overlooked. He said that students must be given top priority in a document of this nature.

Again several issues were repeated by various members of the Assembly. The final one being a concern for the faculty being involved in reviewing the final draft of the document. This led to a motion proposed by Professor Gordon and seconded by Professor Weeks. The motion was refined by several attempts to reword and an amendment. In its final form the motion read:

That Senate Assembly asks SACUA to request that the Board of Regents not take final action on the proposed guidelines on Discontinuance of Academic Programs until they have been submitted to the Senate Assembly for approval.

This motion passed unanimously.

With passage of the motion the Special Meeting of the Assembly was concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

C. William Colburn
Secretary