

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENATE ASSEMBLY

Minutes of Regular Meeting, September 15, 1980

ATTENDANCE

Present: Bacon, Barnard, Barritt, Baumgarten, Beck, Berg, D.B.Brown, D.R.Brown, K.Brown, M.Brown, Browne, Burdi, Cares, Cassidy, Crane, DeKornfeld, Dixon, Eckert, Esteban, Flener, Friedman, Frost, Gordon, Green, Groves, Hildebrandt, Hinerman, Holland, Hollinger, Hultquist, Kelsey, Koran, Loup, Lynch-Sauer, Maassab, McClendon, Nelson, Millard, Mosher, Nagy, Naylor, O'Meara, Parkinson, Romani, Root, Rowe, Rush, Senior, Sisman, Tek, Vinter, Weiner, White, Wyers, Wynne.

Absent: Ackley, Bishop, Carpenter, Cohen, Duderstadt, Fearn, Fraser, Gray, Gull, Haddock, Hilbert, Kahn, Kirkpatrick, Leipman, Lynch, Nisbett, Pollock, Powers, Verhey.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Senate Assembly meeting of June 23, 1980 were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Chairperson Naylor announced that a Presidential Lecture Series will be held this year, beginning on September 22, 1980, in the Rackham Amphitheatre. The first speaker will be Dr. Ralf Dahrendorf, Director of the London School of Economics.

2. Professor Naylor informed the Assembly that SACUA was aware of the concerns of the faculty about many facets of the Marwil case, and indicated that SACUA intends to study these concerns, particularly the issue of faculty grievance procedures.

STUDENT
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Chairperson Naylor recognized Professor Morton Brown, SACUA vice chairperson, who reviewed the three-part SACUA proposal on student evaluation of instruction, and said that Professor Loren Barritt's proposal of September 4, 1980, would constitute the fourth part. Part one of the resolution was moved and seconded. Professor Naylor opened the floor for discussion.

Professor Herbert Hildebrandt noted that it is mandatory that all faculty in the School of Business Administration should be evaluated by students. He was concerned that his

colleagues in that school be apprised that there should be no prejudice against these faculty members in the School who do not wish to be evaluated. He offered the following amendment to part one for the purpose of covering those who do not wish to participate in student evaluation.

"And further, that should any instructor not participate in the evaluation, the instructor's unit will react without prejudice to that action."

The motion was supported. Discussion on the amendment ensued.

Professor Elias Baumgarten felt that instructors should submit themselves to student evaluation because it is the only major way of evaluating teaching.

Professor Jesse Gordon disagreed that student evaluation was the only major way to evaluate teaching. He felt that student evaluation is infrequently employed that it is an easy way to evaluate teaching but takes the burden of responsibility for evaluation off those who make use of evaluation results.

Professor Donald Brown favored the general purpose of the amendment, but did not believe that prejudice or non-prejudice can be legislated.

Professor Norman Weiner expressed his view that student evaluation is only one component of evaluation of instruction. He suggested that if an instructor, for example, for whatever reason, did not wish to participate in student evaluation, it would be incumbent upon that instructor to propose an alternate method of evaluation.

Professor Nicholas White was in general agreement. He said that there has to be an evaluation of teaching, and that there are certain areas where student evaluation is useful. He felt that student evaluation, however, is a poor method of overall evaluation, and that a balance of methods should be used.

Professor William Root asked what the effects would be if the resolution was passed by the Assembly.

Professor Naylor thought that the resolution would have a definite effect because the Regents Bylaws give the Senate and schools and colleges a great deal to say about academic matters, and this issue is an academic matter.

Professor Root responded by saying that he was opposed to any resolution which suggests to any administrative unit

a way to fire faculty.

Professor M. Brown returned to part one of the proposal, and warned against attempting to legislate how individual units should initiate their student or other types of teacher evaluation. Previous experience has shown that such attempts have failed because the large number of various issues in such a proposal were not appropriate for each unit. He said that the issue of part one is essentially to protect jobs - that it is meant to give the instructor the safety that it would not be a condition of employment that the instructor submit to student evaluation.

Professor Barritt replied that in his opinion all faculty should be willing to be evaluated by students, as well as by others. He felt that in many units, student evaluations are the only evaluations of instructors and he believes that they have value. Although he favors student evaluations, he doesn't want them misused by administrators. He felt that the three statements of the proposal are not balanced, and that is why he proposed a fourth statement.

Professor Hildebrandt said that in his view, the faculty administration, students, and the public at large will be interested in student evaluations. As a member of the faculty he agrees that evaluations of the faculty are necessary, but is concerned that when the administration receives this type of document it may use it even though the faculty has agreed to participate in student evaluation, but some have refused. He felt that the administration will receive more clout from the document than the faculty, but that we must protect those persons who do not wish to participate.

Professor Weiner asked for clarification of part one of the proposal. He asked if not a provision of employment, is it a provision of promotion or salary? What happens if someone does not participate? Professor M. Brown responded by stating that his understanding of the intent of the proposal is that simply, student evaluation is not to be made a condition of employment. It was not meant to protect a faculty member in a promotion decision.

Chairperson Naylor then called for a vote on the amendment. The amendment was defeated.

Attention was then turned to the original motion (part one of the SACUA document on student evaluation).

Professor Robert Green asked if the motion required

each unit to check as to whether or not each instructor has expressed his wish to be evaluated by students? Professor M. Brown replied that the motion does not address the issue. Professor Gordon added that because each unit might implement student evaluations differently, it would be difficult to establish such procedures in the document. Professor Friedman agreed, saying that it would be an administrative nightmare to ask for such permission, and in his opinion, the motion as written gives one license to decline to participate in such evaluations if they so wish.

Professor John Romani suggested that when one reads all three proposals, there are ways in which faculty members may decline to submit to student evaluations. Professor Hildebrandt said that the issue is clear as it stands.

Professor Barritt asked if it was the intent of the drafters of the proposals that the students were absolutely denied the opportunity to evaluate certain instructors, and is it a civil liberties issue that faculty members can demand that there will be no student evaluations?

Professor M. Brown answered by reiterating his understanding that the purpose of the proposal (part one) was to protect the individual who decides that he/she does not wish to be involved with student evaluation. A discussion ensued as to whether the document would prohibit any evaluation by students in the classroom without the permission of the instructor.

Professor Baumgarten remarked that he had heard that there were methods used to evaluate teaching other than by students, but had not been informed of any methods that were actually used. Therefore, it seemed to him that the first proposal (part one) means that as a civil liberties matter the instructors have a right not to have one aspect of their work evaluated, their teaching, unless there are actually other methods used to evaluate teaching.

Professor Root challenged those remarks by stating that students can exercise their civil liberties by evaluating teaching by any methods they devise. He added that there are many ways to evaluate teaching, such as reading the teacher's publications, listening to seminars, working with the same students, communicating with the teacher, etc. so that teaching can be evaluated without the use of the popularity contests of student evaluation.

Professor Hollinger related how the History Department

employs an active program of teaching evaluation. Instructors are visited by department faculty in the classroom many times during their assistant professorships. It is a peer review system that does not involve student evaluation. He spoke in favor of the resolution as written.

Professor Gordon said that in all of the material he has seen from the CRLT on student evaluation of instruction, he sees no evidence that such evaluations have any validity.

Professor Glen Berg said that based on personal experience with the use of student evaluations, he believes that the validity of the quantified measures from student evaluations are highly suspect.

Professor Hildebrandt moved that debate on the motion be closed and the motion brought to a vote. His motion was supported and the Assembly voted in favor by a voice vote. Chairperson Naylor then called for a vote on part one of the SACUA document on student evaluation of teaching.

1. "No academic unit may require that a student evaluation of instruction in a course be made without the permission of the instructor of that course and no in-class student evaluation shall take place without the permission of the instructor."

The motion was passed. (Yes 39, No 7, Abstain 5).

Professor Brown then moved that part two of the SACUA document be voted upon. The motion was seconded and chairperson Naylor brought the motion to a vote after asking for discussion.

2. "Explicit consent of the governing faculty of a unit shall be required for the adoption by the unit of a system of student evaluation of instruction."

The motion carried. (Yes 53, No 0, Abstain 0).

Professor Brown moved that part three of the SACUA document be brought to a vote. The motion was seconded and the floor opened for discussion.

Professor White was still concerned that the entire three-part resolution was narrow in scope in relation to the document's preamble. He said that if this is the last word from the Assembly on the subject of student evaluation, it is inadequate. Professor M. Brown responded by reviewing

the history of former attempts by the Assembly to accept resolutions on student evaluation of teaching, which were rejected. He said this document is an attempt to define a set of minimal rights for faculty to enjoy while discussion continued on the subject. He had no knowledge of plans to formally continue the discussions however. Professor White felt that the Assembly should continue to address the issue.

Professor Weiner thought that the resolutions as written could be interpreted to mean that faculty could decline to participate in student evaluations with no consequences. Professor White agreed with Professor Weiner and offered an amendment to part three which would add the words, "...alternatives to participation and possible consequences of non-participation...." The amendment carried. (Yes 30, No 17, Abstain 4).

The amended part three of the original motion now read as follows:

"If a unit adopts a system of student evaluation of instruction, policies governing the collection of information dissemination of results, uses of findings, alternatives to participation, and possible consequences of non-participation shall be explicit, and shall have the consent of the governing faculty."

Chairperson Naylor then called for a vote.

The resolution passed as amended. (Yes 48, No 1, Abstain 2).

Professor Naylor recognized Professor Barritt, who moved his resolution which would become part four of the overall resolution on student evaluation of teaching. The motion was supported.

"None of the above safeguards are intended to suggest that faculty members should avoid student evaluation of their teaching. Student evaluations can be helpful in the improvement of instruction and when used with other data are an appropriate source of information about faculty member's teaching competence."

Discussion on the motion involved the question of its broad scope and the necessity of adding it to the three parts of the original document.

Professor Barritt supported his motion by indicating that his was an alternative to put some balance (student rights) into the Assembly's document on student evaluation. He wanted it made clear that this body is not, by its having passed the first three resolutions, against student evaluation of teaching.

Professor Hildebrandt was concerned about the first sentence of the Barritt motion, in that it might weaken the three resolutions just approved by the Assembly. He felt, however, just the other portion of the statement has merit and suggested that it be incorporated into the preamble of the document.

Professor Weiner moved that the preamble be modified as to Professor Hildebrandt's suggestion. Professor Barritt accepted this as a friendly amendment.

Professor Hildebrandt then moved that:

"The Barritt resolution (#4) be made part of the preamble to the preceding three recommendations already approved by substituting and deleting certain portions of the #4 resolution."

"Whereas, the Assembly feels student evaluations can be helpful in the improvement of instruction, and

Whereas, student evaluations when used with other data are an appropriate source of information about a faculty member's teaching competence; now therefore be it resolved that the following procedures be implemented by the academic units."

The amendment was supported.

Responding to an invitation for discussion, Professor White suggested that a series of non-binding whereas clauses could be left for SACUA to formulate. He added that he felt that quantitative student evaluations are not helpful, but are for the most part popularity contests. He felt that the Assembly and SACUA should consider suggesting that written student evaluations be used.

Professor Hildebrandt then made the following procedural motion:

"That the above amendment along with the original Barritt resolution (#4) be referred to a drafting committee, composed of Messers Barritt and others appointed by the chairperson, to draft a preamble to precede the already approved three resolutions."

After additional discussion, Chairperson Naylor called for a vote on referring the combination of the Barritt motion and the amendment to an ad hoc committee. The measure carried (Yes 29, No 18, Abstain 4).

WORKING
PAPER
ON THE
FUTURE
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MICHIGAN

Professor Naylor introduced the topic of University redirection in the 1980's by referring to President Shapiro's speech at the June 1980 meeting of the Assembly. The chairperson indicated that the subject of redirection will be debated in many forums, one of which will be the Senate Assembly. He said that the Assembly will have a special role to play in helping to determine how the redirection should proceed for two reasons. First, the Assembly is a University-wide organization, and second, the Assembly routinely has open meetings that are reported in the press, and therefore we can furnish a public forum for the entire faculty.

Professor Naylor said that SACUA has been discussing this subject extensively, and has developed a broad outline of a possible three-part plan.

1. SACUA believes that the Assembly shall be provided with basic information so that its eventual discussions will be informed (i.e., Working Paper on redirection).
2. SACUA will prepare a report to be presented to the Assembly directing the strategy of the University in the 1980's.
3. This report will be used as a focus for debate on this issue in the Senate Assembly. SACUA's plan is to ask the Assembly to accept or reject the report.

The chairperson then turned to the Working Paper which had been distributed to all Assembly members. He explained that the paper is not a final report, but is an attempt to provide some of the quantitative information that SACUA is trying to gather so that it can be used in future discussions about the recommendations and ideas expressed by President Shapiro in his June address.

Professor Naylor then briefly reviewed the paper and asked for feedback on the suggested three-part plan. He also asked for suggestions on what other kinds of information would be useful for discussions on this subject.

Professor Eckert asked why the number of persons in administration was not listed in the paper. Professor Naylor referred to the Spivey Report which considered this question and found that administrative growth has not been excessive over a ten-year period.

Professor Barritt supported the idea that there be scheduled debates and discussion on this matter. Further, he wished to include the entire university, and even go outside the University and bring in knowledgeable persons for discussions and debate.

Professor Hollinger noted that the document concerns only possible reduction of tenured faculty. He suggested that all areas subject to reductions must be considered.

Professor Cassidy said that the key to understanding the report's tables is the deflation of actual dollars. He asked if more reliable cost of living index could be used.

Professor Hildebrandt said that he would be interested in knowing what our peer institutions are doing about similar problems.

Professor Naylor responded by saying that SACUA is actively trying to get such information, and informed the Assembly about a proposed one-day conference of faculty governance bodies of our peer institutions that would address this question.

Professor Nagy was in general agreement with the three-part plan, but suggested that a sub-group of SACUA be assigned to examine alternative methods of approaching the problem.

Professor Weiner asked if we are going to attempt to help implement President Shapiro's option for reducing the size of the University, or are we going to examine that option to determine if it is a viable one? Professor Naylor said that we will try to determine the consequences of the proposed plan, and also suggest viable alternatives.

Professor Burdi asked how the time schedule for developing our report coincides with the administration's schedule for developing its reports? Will we enter the scene after the fact? Professor Naylor said this was difficult to answer. He felt that this problem will be discussed for several years, and that there will be no dramatic events that will occur suddenly

OLD
AND
NEW
BUSINESS

There was neither old nor new business.

ADJOURN-
MENT

The Senate Assembly meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Charles C. Kelsey
Senate Secretary