University Senate Meeting  
October 23, 2008 3:30PM  
Gordon Aubrecht, Senate Scribe

The meeting was informational. No Senate business was transacted. There were reports from Dick Gunther, chair of Faculty Council, Heather Allen, chair of Steering, the three student organizations, and President Gee.

Chris Zacher, Secretary of the Senate, welcomed senators and guests to the thirty-seventh year of the University Senate. Zacher mentioned that Briggs Cormier (now an OAA Program Manager) had volunteered to be Parliamentarian and that Gordon Aubrecht had volunteered to be Scribe. Zacher noted that in the near future audio from Senate meetings should be available. Zacher also said that Rules books will be available soon from the Board of Trustees and accessible digitally on both the Senate’s and Board’s websites. He said the Senate had a busy year in prospect.

President Gee announced that Zacher had been reappointed for another term as Secretary of the Senate.

Faculty Council chair Dick Gunther gave an update on three initiatives.

1. Faculty Leadership is exploring the idea of a nonvoting faculty member sitting on the Board of Trustees. This would be a person who could infuse a faculty perspective on important issues as they are being developed. President Gee is aware of the idea and is supportive.

2. There is discussion about reestablishing the office of ombudsman. The previous ombudsman had a portfolio including staff. The new ombudsman would work solely with faculty to try to forestall difficult situations and direct faculty where to go with a grievance. The person would not be an additional link in a bureaucratic chain; he or she would serve in an advisory capacity.

3. Semesters. Gunther pointed out that he had been a ringleader of the opposition to semesters the last two attempts; now, however, the issue is not pedagogy (there are no net advantages for either format); things have changed, and it’s about the altered political circumstances. In the past, OSU was often treated poorly by the political leaders in Ohio. Over the past two years, there has been a big change. There were substantial budget increases and a tuition freeze became possible. Chancellor Fingerhut has recognized explicitly that OSU is Ohio’s flagship university. There is strong pressure from the Chancellor to move state schools to a single academic calendar. This change will have manifold effects across the university. Whatever the merits, internal considerations are different from earlier times. There will be a new ad hoc committee to explore the change. Faculty Council vice chair Tim Gerber (who will become Faculty Council chair in a year) will be the committee’s chair in order to assure continuity. Gunther listed many committees and student organizations that would be represented. He noted that there had to be some balance between inclusion and keeping the number of committee members within reason. Gunther announced that Faculty Leaders in consultation with the Provost and President would be appointing the committee soon and it would report before the end of Winter Quarter on whether we should proceed to semesters and, if so, what a semester schedule would look like.

Gunther asked select Senate Committee chairs (CAA, CESP, Fiscal, and Athletic Council) and student organizations to submit three nominees to Chris Zacher by Monday. When asked about how to choose nominees from Regional Campuses, Gunther after some discussion asked Gordon Aubrecht, chair of the
Regional Campus Faculty Council, to arrange for the Regional Campus Faculty Council to nominate three faculty by the deadline.

Gunther was asked about the Chism Committee Report from 2001. He said that it had been presented to Faculty Council, that 54% voted to recommend going to semesters, and that it had 14 conditions attached. President Kirwan removed it from the Senate agenda because such a change needed a working Student Information System (SIS). Faculty Council could today accept the Chism report, but there are many changed circumstances and there is a desire to look at the latest information on fiscal implications. There is also a desire to revisit the fourteen conditions attached when this issue was last considered. Both the Chism and Verzar reports will be used for informational purposes, but should not straitjacket the ad hoc committee.

Heather Allen, chair of Steering, highlighted issues she sees as important in the coming year. She listed the Arts and Sciences reorganization, the campus greening initiative [involving both short- and long-term goals for energy conservation and recycling as well as a change in OSU's throwaway culture involving the Committee on the Physical Environment (COPE)], the University System of Ohio and the Ohio Faculty Council, faculty diversity and coordination of the Senate and the president's diversity committees, faculty retention issues [including the Talent Acquisition, Retention, and Engagement (TARE) Committee and retirement plans-almost 30% of new faculty choose the alternative retirement plan; this would involve FCBC, CAFR, the URC, and Larry Lewellen's office], oversight by CAA and CESP to assess the GEC, meeting with the police chief about safety, interdisciplinary doctoral program implications, and helping the URC to improve tech licensing and commercialization.

Peter Koltak, president of Undergraduate Student Government (USG), highlighted USG initiatives. These included safety and wellness (USG is giving more money for AIDS, for example), a Kirsten's story rape event, outreach with diversity (to fight the stereotype), and taking recycling off campus. He noted that OSU Votes handled 2200 requests from students. On election day, USG is trying to get students out to vote. USG intends to examine the University System of Ohio report. There is a test prep lower-cost option for students taking LSAT, MSAT, the GRE, etc. USG is working on. Thirty frosh have been involved with USG.

Koltak was asked about alcohol awareness. He stated that USG has not so far addressed this issue, but is working with game day initiatives.

Jason Marion, president of the Council of Graduate Students (CGS), said that CGS had five priorities. The two top CGS priorities are improving internal communications and improving compensation and benefits. There have been advances in engaging constituents; there are currently about a hundred delegates, more than in recent years. CGS believes in shared governance and wants to be involved. Grad students are students first, but they also can live a life. CGS is working with other graduate students across the state.

President Gee mentioned that IPC and CGS hold an annual Halloween party. Last year, when he tried to get in and said he was OSU president, he was told that there were several others already there in that costume. So, who was he? The Senate greeted this pronouncement with appropriate laughter.

Theodore Bauer, president of the Inter-Professional Council (IPC), spoke about the new IPC website launched last month. He referred to the Halloween party (at the Patio Bar this year). Last year there were 1500 attendees. The party supports IPC and a designated charity. He said the IPC sponsors a case
competition in Winter Quarter tackling some world issues, which this year would be chosen by web vote. According to IPC records, the case competition involves six teams, with one member from each discipline, who work together over the winter to develop a written and oral presentation answer to a question. In Spring, IPC mounts a big service day with CGS. Bauer wants to emulate UGS and combine resources among professional students. He pointed out that there are course overlaps among the colleges with professional students; IPC'd like to make this more efficient by combining the courses into one and "sharing the pain" more equally.

IPC wants to revise the SEI; Bauer stated that it does not work well as courses are organized. IPC wants to reinstate a general body meeting. IPC was asked to sponsor a Habitat for Humanity house project for next year. During the question period, Bauer was asked to contact the university's SEI Advisory Committee.

The Senate Secretary's report was approved.

President Gee noted that he had just delivered an address last week, so he had little to add. We are living in tumultuous times. Earlier today, Gee had met with the governor's chief of staff and the governor himself. He told Governor Strickland that OSU wanted to be partners and earn the trust of the people of the state. He is working constructively with faculty leadership. A group of master planners is currently visiting; we want to align building plans and academics at OSU. Facilities Operations and Development (FOD) will report to the Senate soon. OSU wants a whole new housing system for students (so frosh and sophomores live on campus). OSU needs to use its assets more cooperatively.

We are in competition with UC Santa Barbara; while we don't have an ocean, we need to be a place people want to come. President Gee noted that Ann Hamilton had received the Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities. [According to the Heinz website "Ms. Hamilton's installations create immersive experiences that respond to the architectural presence and social history of their sites."] Hamilton told him that we need to think about campus as a palette.

The meeting adjourned.