

CORRECTED

MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 18, 1994

Ferguson Forum

3:30 p.m.

Members absent and not represented by an alternate: Harold Selesky, Drury Caine, Gene Byrd, Michael Murphy, Barney Cargile, Trevor Bain, Kevin Whitaker, Ruby Morrison, W. David Harrison.

The minutes for [September 1994](#) were approved, with the correction that Ginny Raymond was not absent from that meeting.

President's Report

The written report was attached to the agenda. Joe Benson also reported that at its September meeting, the Board of Trustees hired architects to work on plans for the expansion of Ferguson. Cost estimates so far have been based on square foot estimates of the building. Some offices have been targeted to move into the new space, but nothing is firm yet.

The president also reported on a response from President Sayers to the Faculty Senate resolution of September. Dr. Sayers expects that a document on the Discontinuance and Merger of Academic Departments will be settled soon.

Reports from Senate Committees

Academic Affairs talked with Dr. Taafé about the policy to merge departments. Dr. Taafé expected to report progress later in October. The committee is considering a proposed change to the Faculty Handbook policy on conflict of interest with regard to instructional material selection. The current wording addresses authorship apart from financial considerations. The committee proposes to eliminate considerations of authorship alone, while leaving the wording on financial gain.

The **Financial Affairs** committee met with Bob Wright, Vice President for Finance. They discussed the increase in parking fees, which was instituted to pay for new parking deck at Ferguson. Some options considered to soften the impact were using a sliding scale or regular payroll deductions.

They also discussed the University health benefits plan. (See pages attached to agenda.) The reserve fund, usually on the order of \$1 million, is low and must be increased. Under the new plan, single employees must for the first time contribute something toward medical coverage.

The possibility of proration was discussed, and predictions change from day to day. Wright does not expect any decision until after the election in November. The effects of proration should be ameliorated by the \$4.5 million

held back from the last budget increase.

The early retirement program was seen as successful. It might be repeated at some future time.

For **Planning & Operations**, Chuck Hobby reported on conversations with Drs. Taaffe and Crump concerning the Discontinuance and Merger policy. The Council of Deans wanted several changes, and modifications are currently being made to the proposed document. Dr. Taaffe seems to be ready to make a decision, and the amended document should be presented to the Council of Deans in the next week or two.

Research & Service is considering questions of University support for research. Last year a new policy mandated that FTE credit be given for faculty directing theses. There is some evidence that different colleges have implemented this in different ways, and in some cases it may not have been implemented at all. There is also concern about the role of service in promotion and tenure, and in merit raises.

The committee is working towards a recommendation for determination of the overall faculty load, including evaluation of service loads. Most of the information currently comes from personnel actions forms which have budgetary information, may not be informative with regard to actual time and work allocations.

Chuck Hobby suggested that the University should follow its own rules with regard to what constitutes a full time load. For example, 12 hours is 1.0 FTE, but at least one college suggests that there is up to 20% of other duties which should also be considered in addition to that.

Student Affairs is discussing several issues including student retention and a proposed new student honor code and student honor court.

Matt Winston reported for **Senate Operations**. The constitution and by-laws are unclear on what constitutes a quorum of senators for ordinary business in a Senate meeting. It has been decided that a simple majority will constitute a quorum.

A second issue brought to the Senate Operations committee involves faculty with residency in two colleges. Can such a faculty member run as a senator in both? This leads to a similar question: Senate representation is based on the number of faculty members in each college. Are these folks counted twice? If so, is the Senate representation accurate?

Reports from Senators on University Committees

The University Curriculum Advisory Committee met and discussed the new plus-minus grading system. As a result of the meeting, two motions were put forth.

1. To ask the faculty to vote again on this issue. It was argued that some faculty members did not keep the memos on the issue and so may have misunderstood the issues at hand. Also, faculty members may have understood the new policy as an option rather than a requirement.
2. Should the policy be suspended, or should some students be grandfathered in? If certain students are grandfathered in, the faculty would turn in grade sheets with plus and minus grades, and the computer software would automatically remove the pluses and minutes for appropriate students.

Dr. Taaffe has requested the Faculty Senate provide some input on these issues.

Pieter Visscher reported on the Parking & Traffic Committee meeting. The question of a sliding scale parking fee was overwhelmingly voted down. The non-faculty committee members were unanimously against it.

Chuck Hobby reported that the Faculty Handbook committee is stumped by a difficult problem: Service performed by faculty members is never evaluated, yet it is supposed to be evaluated for tenure, promotion and merit raises. We probably won't get a revised handbook until this problem is solved. Nick Stinnett raised the question of internal service *vs.* external service, and whether they should be evaluated differently. Others raised the question of delineating between internal service and normal academic citizenship.

Old Business:

Leah Lievrouw, Vice President of the Faculty Senate, will be unable to serve in the Spring. The Faculty Senate needs to elect a replacement, preferably at the November meeting.

In November, the Faculty Senate must elect two new members to the Mediation and Grievance committee. No more than two faculty members from any college may serve. A quick count showed that the complement from A&S is full, but new members may come from any other college. Any faculty member can serve, but if someone has served previously, they must wait at least 2 years before they are eligible to serve again. Senators were asked to be ready to nominate candidates for this committee next meeting.

New Business:

Since the request from Dr. Taaffe for assistance on the plus-minus issue came too late to be put in the agenda, the rules had to be suspended to discuss the issue. Nick Stinnett moved that the rules be suspended and the motion carried.

The initial discussion concerned the possibility of grandfathering students by entrance date: If students entered the University before Fall 1994, they would not be subject to the plus-minus. Concern was expressed that faculty may want to know which category a student falls into as they assign grades. Senators felt strongly that assignment of grades is a faculty responsibility and a faculty prerogative.

Several senators were concerned with the appropriateness of the Senate voting on this issue: If the Senate speaks for the faculty, how can the Senate overrule a vote of the faculty? On the other hand, the faculty vote expressed a desire to move to plus-minus. It did not specify how or when the move would be implemented. If grandfathering is seen as an implementation issue, it would be appropriate for the Faculty Senate to express an opinion.

Jerry Hoffman proposed a resolution, and small changes were offered by various senators. The modified resolution reads:

"It is the sense of the Faculty Senate that the decision whether or how to grant exemptions from the plus-minus grading policy which was approved by the faculty is a matter of implementation and properly lies with the administration."

The resolution passed with 1 dissenting vote.

The second issue that the Senate was asked to consider was the request that the faculty be polled quickly to

determine a consensus on this issue.

Many senators felt that the original faculty vote should stand unless there were significant procedural problems. About 500 faculty voted in the Spring 1992 referendum. The reasons given for invalidating that vote could be raised for any election: Some did not understand the issues, and some discarded relevant information before voting.

Jerry Hoffman proposed a resolution which also had small amendments offered by other senators. The final resolution reads:

"It is the sense of the Faculty Senate that no legitimate reason exists to revisit the faculty's decision of Spring 1992 to institute a plus-minus grading system."

The resolution passed with 1 opposed and 3 abstentions.

There being no further business, the Senate adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcus Brown, Secretary