

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE**

MINUTES: Presiding Officer Frank Hugus called the 604th meeting of the Faculty Senate to order March 28, 2002 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall 227.

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Secretary Ernest May announced that volunteers are needed for the various Senate councils and committees, and that anyone willing to volunteer should contact Anne Benz in the Senate Office. He then mentioned the newly approved changes in the requirements for Commonwealth College, stating that such revisions require campus approval, and urging departments to propose this type of formal revision if they are streamlining majors and concentrations.

Secretary May concluded his announcements with a statement about the Chancellor candidates. He stated that review forms handed out at each of three public meetings with the candidates would be reviewed by members of the search committee, the search firm, and President Bulger himself. He urged senators to attend the public meetings and provide useful input on the evaluation forms. He then yielded the remainder of his announcement time to Bill Israel of the Journalism Department.

Professor Bill Israel, Chair Information Technology Task Force announced that the proposal for an Information Technology Minor has been approved by the Academic Matters Council. He explained that 28 IT courses that will count toward the minor are already being offered this semester, and that 25 will be offered in the Fall. He then thanked all present who were supportive of the program and asked them to stand for recognition. He added, "I thought it was time you heard some good news. I also want to add something more. Three years ago when Norm Sims first talked to me about coming to UMass, he said, 'Watch out, people who come here stay for 30 years. People who come here like it so much they don't want to leave.' I want to say, I understand now what he meant. Even now, under the most dire budget circumstances, I'm proud to be a faculty member at UMass Amherst."

2. The Chair of the Rules Committee

Rules Committee Chair Roland Chilton announced that the Rules Committee would be meeting with Professor Israel and also with the faculty and students concerned with the closing of the daycare center at their next meeting.

3. The Representative of the Massachusetts Society of Professors

MSP President Ron Story announced that there would be a *Save UMass* rally April 25 in Boston at the State House, and urged all to attend. He explained that the MSP has made a financial contribution to the rally, and asked that MTA do the same. He also asked that people who attend pay a \$5 fee to help defray the cost, and that any other contribution would be very helpful.

B. QUESTION PERIOD

Senator Roland Chilton asked the Provost's Advisory Committee which academic changes the committee has asked about or given advice on so far.

Senator Hugus replied that the Committee has not been asked to look at any specific programs or departments on campus. The charge to the Committee was to come up with suggested criteria by which decisions would be made.

Senator Chilton asked if it was true that changes being made now are not the result of the Committee's work.

Senator Hugus replied that ongoing changes are not the result of their work.

Senator Eric Einhorn expressed concern for the public debate about the problems at the University and in higher education. He stated that he's seen statements by top politicians in the paper about massive increases in funding that no document on this campus has ever portrayed, and that the President's Office hasn't attempted to provide a factual database for the public to put those remarks in context. He wondered if there was a public relations strategy for the current situation to inform the public about what has really happened to the funding on the campus.

Interim Chancellor Marcellette Williams stated that historical information is available and if it would be helpful to track allocations to the campus over time as a percent of the tax revenue base of the state it would be possible to do so.

Senator Jane Giacobbe-Miller noted that the campus was going to be taxed 3.75% for next year, and then 7.5% after that for its online courses. She wondered if the Amherst campus would be protesting the tax like the Lowell campus and if the tax would have a negative impact on revenue projections for next year.

Interim Chancellor Williams stated that the tax on online courses was decided almost three years ago, when the trustees voted to proceed with UMass Online, to help pay for its start-up costs. She then explained that the tax will not interfere with revenue projections for the coming year, and that rather than organizing a protest, the Amherst campus has been taking advantage of the offer to discuss, debate, and negotiate the payback of loans for UMass Online.

Senator Chilton asked if the Office of Information Technologies is using this period of review and reevaluation to develop a no-fee system for assigning every enrolled student an OIT account and user number.

Deputy Chancellor John Dubach replied that OIT will be proposing a mechanism for that to happen, but that it wouldn't be in place for September.

C. GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATION

MOVED: 24-02 That the Faculty Senate approve the designation for UNIV 190I as a General Education Interdisciplinary (I) course, as recommended by the General Education Council.

This motion was seconded.

A motion to postpone the motion until the next meeting, since nobody was available from the General Education Council to answer questions, was seconded and adopted.

D. ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Report of the University Writing Committee, 2000-01, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 02-029.

This report was received.

Professor Brian Ogilvie, Co-Chair of the University Writing Committee stated that the report was approved by the current Writing Committee at its last meeting, and that the recommendations made had emerged from discussions and the review that they conducted of the first-year writing program last year. "We think the Writing Program does a very good job with the limited resources it has. I was a skeptic when I joined the writing committee last year because I've encountered students in many of my courses who don't write as well as I think they ought to. But the work that I did in the review convinced me that the Writing Program does a very a good job and needs the resources to do an even better job. Our students are not generally good writers, and a one-semester writing requirement in the Freshman year is already a minimal requirement. We think that, at the very least, the University Writing Program should have the resources to do a better job with that minimal requirement. By reducing the size of classes and by providing somewhat better facilities, as well as by encouraging faculty to use the writing techniques developed in that course in other courses."

Senator Einhorn stated that one problem he has encountered as departmental junior year writing director, is that students feel that English 112 and the associated courses are very useful, but they don't seem to spill over into social science and political science-type courses. He wondered what the Committee is doing in response to that. He also asked if the budget problem was going to make things much worse for the Program.

Professor Ogilvie replied that the Committee did make a recommendation that students in the first-year writing course be provided with more opportunities for expository writing.

Marcia Curtis, Acting Director of the Writing Program stated that they have developed the *Original Text-Wrestling Book* for use by all first-year students in the program in order to give them more practice writing in relation to other written texts. The book has helped offset the budget cuts by creating revenues of \$10-12K per year in addition to their state budget. She noted that cuts in the budget have not hurt them terribly, but that they haven't been able to reduce class sizes to 20, which has long been a recommendation.

Professor Ogilvie stated that a number of students enrolled in English 112 and 113 reported that they would like to write better papers in other courses, but they don't have the time to apply the methods that they've learned in 112 and 113. One student reported receiving a 20-page paper assignment one week in advance, and given those deadlines, students say they are unable to draft and revise and solicit peer comments, even informally, from other students. Recommendation 2 urges faculty in other departments and other programs to structure writing assignments around methods learned in those courses.

Senator Brian O'Connor stated that usually by the fourth of nine summer counseling sessions on campus, English 112 is closed and students from then on are told to enroll in the course in the spring semester. He wondered if there was a way to predict how many students would be around in the spring since the fall mean enrollment in 112 is 23.7 while in the spring it's 20.8.

Deputy Provost John Cunningham stated that the courses generally run at 95-97 percent occupancy.

Senator Joseph Donohue suggested that the writing program take a poll across campus to find out what prevailing practices exist when student writing is assigned--how much time is given, and what kind of feedback do instructors give to students once they are in the process of reading their papers.

Professor Ogilvie stated that last year's Writing Committee did consider a survey of faculty in departments about their perceptions of the aims and effectiveness of the writing program and the ways in which they use writing in their own courses. The survey was never conducted because they were understaffed, but during the next year and the three-year review cycle he hopes to take a serious look at ways in which the information gap can be filled.

Professor Charles Moran stated that every year, every freshman who takes the course answers the following question: *In the past semester in my other courses, I have had no writing, written one paper, written two papers, written three, written more than five.* The last time he looked at those statistics, more than half of the students had answered none.

Professor Richard Bogartz: That may explain why, by the time they get to my junior year writing course, maybe about half of them have forgotten what it takes to make a paragraph.

Special Motion by the Rules Committee

**MOVED:
25-02** **That the Faculty Senate endorse the four recommendations of the University Writing Committee as presented in Section 12 (pp. 19-20); and also recommend that any resources required not be subtracted from other academic programs.**

This motion was seconded and adopted.

E **NEW BUSINESS**

Progress Report (oral) of the Provost's Steering Committee: Program Assessment, Strategic Directions and Resource Allocation. Janet Rifkin and Frank Hugus, Co-Chairs.

Senator Hugus reported that since the last Senate meeting the Committee has met once. They have formed several subcommittees to look into ways in which programs may be assessed in quantitative and qualitative ways so that they can present the Provost with a way to fairly assess each of the programs on campus.

Senator Einhorn asked if the Committee could borrow from the earlier experiences of assessing programs by others and form some type of template by which present and future evaluations might be conducted.

Senator Hugus replied that the Committee has looked at various templates that have been used in the past. Some mechanisms will be used and others thrown out since earlier efforts were less than perfect.

Senator Chilton asked if the Academic Priorities Council was involved at all with the assessment.

Senator Hugus replied that the Chair of the APC, Professor David Loomis, has been meeting with them regularly, as well as APC member Senator Bogartz.

Senator Marta Calas asked if, in the evaluation, the Committee was using information used by other universities or if it was another idiosyncratic activity within the university.

Senator Hugus stated that the Committee has looked at what other universities have done, but they are also looking to accreditation processes and AQADs to get as many different sources of information as they can.

Senator Calas stated that with all of the discussions of the University as an institution in a global world, she thought that the question of how programs are assessed should be looked at in a new global framework.

Senator Bogartz reiterated that the Steering Committee is conscious of attempting to get faculty input into the assessment process, so there will be opportunities for faculty to make comments and suggestions.

Senator Hugus stated that the Committee is very conscious of the global nature of education, and that aspect is going to be playing a larger role in the assessment criteria that the Committee comes up with.

Senator Robert Wilson stated that the Committee is intentionally setting up a process where departments and programs will be able to say, "What you have come up with so far doesn't really allow us to measure or assess our specific program. These are the things that we think you should look at." They're attempting to allow the faculty as much input as possible in the assessments.

The 604th meeting of the Faculty Senate stood adjourned at 4:30 p.m. March 28, 2002.

**Respectfully submitted by Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate
The proceedings of this meeting are available on audiotape at the Faculty Senate Office
dated March 28, 2002.**