UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Presiding Officer Robert Wilson called the 692nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate to order on February 25, 2010 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall, Room 227.

A. ADDRESS BY SENATOR STANLEY ROSENBERG
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)
(see attached)

Senator Richard Bogartz stated that he felt we need a raise in taxes.

Senator Rosenberg answered that Senator Bogartz’s opinion is duly noted. He noted that he voted for a state income tax increase when the sales tax bill was on the floor. He was one of eleven in the forty-member Senate to vote for the increase.

Randall Phillis, President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors, said he is thinking about public higher education funding. Should there be significant cuts? Higher education administrators are left with a fairly finite number of choices including fee increases where students and their families are burdened beyond their present levels, or rather dramatic programmatic cuts at the University, or some mix therein. He wonders if there is any sense among Legislators about which of those are reasonable or viable? At what point do student fee increases become unpalatable? At what point do they think there should be programmatic cuts?

Senator Rosenberg said he does not know of any Legislators that seriously discuss that issue beyond the Higher Education Committee. Even there, he does not see them really discussing that. The national trend is toward higher student charges, a high-cost, high-aid model which we all know is a variation on the private higher education model. The trend is reducing state appropriations and coming out of recessions not bouncing back to a previous level or even higher. This used to happen prior to the 1970’s. Since the 1970’s, we do not recover, adjusted for inflation, before the next recession.

We are in the process of privatizing public higher education in America and that is just the reality. It is not a plan. We are backing into it; we are just doing it. When Senator Rosenberg was a student at this campus, 85-90% of the budget for the campus’ educational services came from the Commonwealth. By the time that he became a State Legislator, it was 2/3 and now he has been told that it is less than 25%, depending upon which campus you are at in the University system. Worcester has been at 7.75% for quite awhile now, by their choice. This issue of funding is not even being discussed.

The other thing to think about is that in Massachusetts, unlike so many other states, the overwhelming majority of Legislators are college educated, but at private colleges. From their point of view, some of them puzzle why we should pay that much. After all, they had to work their way through college. They paid off their loans. Why should they be concerned with this situation? It is not discussed. This is not a plan. We did not stand up or have a debate one day and say ‘this is what we are going to do over the next 20 years,’ but that is essentially what has now happened.

None of the key leaders are providing any dynamic leadership in any other direction. Nobody is standing up and saying ‘this is outrageous.’ Who has the bully pulpit for higher education or an executive office? Senator Rosenberg does not see any momentum to change this trend. He noted that he has tried twice in his career to put forward plans to fully fund the formulas. Neither of his plans won the dynamic support of necessary constituencies. Even within the higher education system, people could not agree that whatever little sacrifice they might have to make for the greater good of the academy and enterprise was worth making. Everybody kept trying to advance their interest within the community as opposed to saying ‘let’s organize the million people who have a vested interest in this and then the Legislature cannot say no.’ PHENOM has been organized and this is useful, but it is being organized when we are already below 25% state funding. Is their job to keep it from going to 20% or is their job to get it to 35%?

President Phillis answered yes [it is their job to get funding back up to 35%].
Senator Rosenberg noted that he has already seen a generational difference. He noted that he had a chat with someone in the audience, and he said that he would not name the person in the room in case he should not give this up. He said to the person, ‘I sense a generational difference: people who want it the other way and keep asking when are we going to go back to where we should be are people who are over a certain age. The faculty and staff who are below a certain age essentially have come into this reality and think that this is the way it is and maybe this is just the way it should be.’ Maybe he missed the transition because he has been fighting so long for public funding for public higher education that he has lost track of the fact that the rest of the world has gone by him and believes that this is the way of the past and the new way is exactly what is happening.

W. Richards Adrion, Delegate to the Board of Trustees, said that the debate he was about to bring up always mystified him, particularly with the recession. You read in the newspaper all the time that the savior of the budget will be casinos. Is that ever going to happen?

Senator Rosenberg answered that we will have a casino debate. He is the point person in the State Senate for the issue. He has been appointed by the Senate President to be the neutral arbiter of conflict on expanded gaming. He is supposed to sort through the studies, the policies and the issues that have to be debated to determine where the truth lies or where the range of truth lies. From the discussions they have been having, he thinks the debate the Legislature is likely to have in the next six to eight weeks will be the first real debate on casinos and that it will be a serious debate. If anyone thinks that casinos will be our savior then they believe what they are seeing in the newspaper as opposed to the reality. The reality is that we would be state number 37 coming into a region that is reasonably well – what is the term to use?

Marilyn Billings, Acting Secretary of the Faculty Senate, suggested saturated.

Senator Rosenberg replied that it is not saturated. All of the major casino companies want Massachusetts to allow casinos because we are not oversaturated. But, we will be the last in line. They believe that Massachusetts can compete quite favorably with Connecticut. The point is that there is a belief by the people who would have to invest the billions in this industry that there is money still to be made even though we are state number 37 and the region is reasonably well built-out. The range of revenue is in the $300-$500 million range once they are fully up and operating. $300-$500 million on a roughly $20 billion revenue package will be absorbed into the budget very quickly. It will be absorbed over roughly a 3-4 year period, depending upon whether we allow racinos or go directly to resort casinos. The probability of having more revenue than $300-$500 million is very slim and its impact on either the deficit, hopefully we will be through with deficits by the time they open, if they open, is going to be minimal or nonexistent and the impact on the budget overall will be extremely modest. We are still at about $26 billion, so $300-$500 million on that base is not quite coffee money, but is not going to save anybody.

B. PRESENTATION BY MICHAEL MALONE
VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT
“FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE - RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY”
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)
(see attached)

Senator Andrew Donson reminded the Faculty Senate that at one time UMass had a world-class Library. If you look at the books from the 1970's and 1980's, all the important monographs are there. Now there is almost nothing. He is concerned that, in Vice Chancellor Malone’s presentation, nothing was said about the state of the Library. For us, the Library is like our electron microscope. If you take it away, we cannot do our research.

Vice Chancellor Malone said that the world is being digitized at the same time our budgets are going down. He knows that Jay Schafer has given a lot of thought to this. We are looking at some ways to use electronic approaches to provide better access to information. He does not feel that we will build ourselves into an archive for every published volume under the sun. He just does not think it is fiscally reasonable and thinks we can do better on the information technology area.

Senator W. Brian O’Connor praised Vice Chancellor Malone on an excellent presentation. Senator O’Connor explained that he served as the Faculty Delegate to the Board of Trustees for almost thirteen years before Rick Adrion graciously agreed to take his place. It always amazed him at the Trustee meetings that research was never talked about. He does not think an awful lot of people realize that. To him, former Trustee and local Amherst resident John Armstrong basically started the Science, Technology and Research Subcommittee of the Trustees. He thinks this
Subcommittee is a godsend to the Trustees because it really makes them appreciate what is going on at the University in terms of research. In all honesty, he does not believe they did understand it in the past. Do you foresee this changing? He said he knows Vice Chancellor Malone has given several presentations to them and they have all been very well received.

Vice Chancellor Malone said they had a very good exchange at the last meeting. There were some very good and insightful questions from the Chairman and a number of the other committee members went away with ways they could help us. One thing that Subcommittee Chairman Johnston asked was about our approach to getting faculty involved in Congressional Testimony, to inform State Agencies about research areas such as climate - all of the important things that people are struggling with. We have done this on an anecdotal basis and he thinks we would do well to do that more systematically.

Senator Ralph Whitehead noted in Vice Chancellor Malone’s presentation that, due to our success with the stimulus funds, our research base grew by 44%. Do you have the equivalent figure for the 10 AAU peers?

Vice Chancellor Malone said that he does not yet but he is on the alert to get those figures. People still have some proposals pending, like we do. There will be no shortage of post-mortem on the stimulus package. We are paying attention to that and trying to get some data. He does not have anything more sophisticated just yet.

C. ANNUAL REPORT


Carol Barr, Co-Chair of the Athletic Council, said that she is pleased to represent the members of the Faculty Senate’s Athletic Council in providing their Annual Report from 2008-2009 to the Faculty Senate. She is representing Rod Warnick, her Co-Chair on the Athletic Council, as well. She apologized that the 2008-2009 Annual Report is now coming to the Faculty Senate in February 2010, but there is a reason for this. The gender equity numbers provided in the report must be certified by the NCAA and that does not take place until the fall after the academic year. Also, John McCutcheon, the Athletic Director, would have liked to have been here, but he is out of town on business.

The report was received.

D. NEW COURSE

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MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the course ENGLISH 307, as recommended by the Academic Matters Council.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

E. NEW BUSINESS


MOVED: That that the Faculty Senate approve the Exchange Agreement between the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA and Technische Universität Berlin, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 10-026.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate adopt the 2012-2013 Academic Calendar, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 10-027.

Senator John McCarthy stated that in looking at the calendar, specifically the Summer Session, he sees that the Summer Session III final grades are due on August 19th and the first day of classes is not until September 4th. He is wondering why the three Summer Sessions could not have been made a bit longer to take advantage of those last ten days of August. The more time you have to present one of these courses, the higher your rate of student completion. It simply works out better having a few more days, especially with that first Summer Session which is quite brief.

John Lenzi University Registrar, explained that these were the dates that CPE submitted to the Calendar Committee which were approved by the Calendar Committee.

A CPE Representative explained that these are the dates for sessions but individual courses can be longer than this. These courses are called dynamically-dated courses. These dates are just for the majority of courses but they can go until September 2nd or even further.

Senator McCarthy moved to send the 2012-2013 Academic Calendar back to the Committee for further study.

The motion to send the Academic Calendar for the year 2012-2013 back to the Academic Matters Council for review was seconded and adopted.

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Principal Administrative Officers

John Cunningham, Deputy Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education, provided an update on the freshman class for next fall. He said it is a little like calling the election with 1% of the vote in hand. There are over 31,000 applicants this cycle, a 5% increase over our highest previous mark. That is good. This includes over 900 additional out-of-state applicants over last year. It is a good crop in terms of numbers of students applying to the University. For the early decision cycle, we have already admitted many students. This has included 400 more out-of-state students and 700 more in-state students in the early decision cycle than in the past. That is over 1,000 more students who have been offered admission to the University.

Remember, our freshman class is targeted to go up by 300 students in the fall. There are a lot of things that have to occur now in terms of those students who are in the regular decision pool. Those are being worked on right now. Thousands of letters of admission will go out in batches of a couple thousand per day, all going out throughout the country. We will have all of our admissions on the table and our financial aid packages will follow very quickly during March, hoping then that students will choose the University and give us some idea by May of our freshman class. Most of the actual deposits for the freshman class come in the last week of April and the first few days of May with the May 1st deadline. You get the postmarks that come in by check later.

We will not know too much about the yield and the class until late April or early May. We do have a lot of yield enhancement activity going on starting with offering merit scholarships to out-of-state students which we have not done in the past. In the past, we have offered some to students that were entering Commonwealth College or had that profile. We offered 250 last year. This year, in the early action pool, we offered over 1,700 merit scholarships and, in the regular decision pool, we offered additional ones as they came along. We have a lot of incentive out there for students to look seriously at the University.

We have had virtual touches from the Schools and Colleges to all the early admitted students via e-mail. We will have those same virtual touches to the regular decision students starting next week as those decisions roll out. We have the open houses that we always have in the spring. The first two open houses that were scheduled for early action students are already filled to the gills. We have already had to expand the Friday session by finding a larger venue and we sent an e-mail out saying we were filled up and closed but that we could now accommodate a few hundred more students.
Throughout March and April, many, many visitors come to campus looking us over. He knows your departments will be in contact with students who have expressed your major, working on yield enhancement. In a ballpark sense, we need to increase the out-of-state yield by 3% or 4% to get the 300-student increase in out-of-state students we want to have. We actually have to net 500 out-of-state students because we have a large graduating class versus our entering class last year. A net increase of 500 out-of-state freshman will keep us on pace. That requires a 3-4% increase in the yield of the students that we admitted who deposit and come to the University. That is essentially getting from an 11% yield to a 14% yield. It may sound like a lot, but, if we really have enough admissions, we just have to show what we have, and explain who we are and get the students to appreciate us and come to campus. So, in late April or early May, Deputy Provost Cunningham will bring the story to what happened to all those admitted students in terms of the yield enhancement and some numbers of students coming to our new student orientations.

3. The Chair of the Rules Committee

*John McCarthy, Chair of the Rules Committee,* noted that at the last Senate meeting, he challenged the administration to supply the TA resources that are needed to support the changes in the General Education curriculum that the Senate voted on in September. He is delighted to say that they have come through, thanks to John Cunningham and the Provost. It is very great news. We even had a little more news that the Graduate School is allocating a few TA’s for diversity courses. It is nice to be able to acknowledge when something happens that is needed.

4. The Faculty Delegates to the Board of Trustees

*W. Richards Adrion, Faculty Delegate to the Board of Trustees,* reported that since the last meeting, there was a meeting in Boston of the Board’s Subcommittees and, yesterday, there was a meeting in Worcester of the full Board of Trustees. He could go on for most of the evening talking about what went on there. To summarize, the first question he had was why the campus closed both times he had to drive to Boston? At the Subcommittee meetings a few weeks ago, the Committee on Administration and Finance concentrated on capital plans. There was also a meeting of the Advancement Committee. The good news out of the Advancement Committee is how well our endowment is doing. Apparently, according to the President, our endowment is ranked 7th in the country in terms of its increase and 53rd overall. It is up considerably, up to $500 million from what it was 5 years ago at somewhere around $100 million. The meeting yesterday was pretty lacking in major events. Trustee Karam filled in for Chairman Manning. A number of the Trustees were away on travel. There was a report from Paul Reville, Secretary of Education, on education reform, Race to the Top, and readiness. Adam Thomas of the Boston Classified Student Union made a presentation on changing language related to some LGBT issues. The BA in Computer Science passed and a number of other items from the Subcommittees passed.

G. QUESTION PERIOD (10-Minute Limit)

*Marilyn Billings, Acting Secretary,* asked John Cunningham where we are currently with the Gen. Ed. program going from the 3-credits to 4-credits, and what is it looking like for fall, specifically for faculty concerned about the TAs?

*Deputy Provost Cunningham* noted that it is a good thing that we are going to 4-credits so that we will have extra capacity for a larger number of students on campus. All of the work of reviewing proposals is now complete. There are a few cleanups, but the courses that have asked to be 4-credit courses have been reviewed and have been approved. Registrar Lenzi has to know by March 1st so we can have students sign up for courses and use them in continuing registration at the end of March.

We have converted 177 courses and now have a large number and a good capacity of 4-credit courses. They have various ways of fulfilling the fourth credit. In the cases where there were additional TA resources, we made the decision to allow it when they were needed to teach at the increased capacity. We will see how the students migrate into those courses during this first year of offering the 4-credit courses. We do not want to tell someone to limit their capacity when they would have been a student-preferred course. We will let it sort out and ‘equivilate’ over the first year. Those who are correct at their capacity will be relatively increased. We will keep ‘recoursering.’ In the instances where students are not choosing courses in the numbers anticipated, we will taper the resources of those courses back down. We want to get to a new steady state of student demand and course capacities.
It has been going very well. The faculty have been fully engaged and did everything on time and proposed really excellent fourth-credit additional work for students such as team learning, community service and all sorts of variations. The faculty panel reviewing them found them to be great and they are just about on the books. Registrar Lenzi will nod yes, they are just about on the books. We are ready. 300 extra freshmen versus the 3-4 credit shift with keeping the higher capacities will probably complement each other very nicely. When we do the enrollment management meetings, we have Housing and Administration and Finance and University Relations on board with us talking. There is this other question of residence hall spaces when we bring in 300 extra freshman and still try to bring in 1,000 transfer students (which is our current plan). The student body goes up by a few hundred and, in a 12,000-bed residential life program, that 300 might not seem like a lot, but it is a 12,000-bed program that is fully-saturated already and this will put a little more stress on them. They have been working hard at that end to decide how to accommodate that increase in terms of upper classmen, temporary ‘hoteling’ and so on.

The 692nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate stood adjourned at 4:52 p.m. on February 25, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Billings
Acting Secretary of the Faculty Senate