

ARTS AND SCIENCES SENATE

Minutes of meeting of October 12th, 1998

Meeting called to order at 3:40PM

I. The Agenda was approved, along with President's request for change in agenda to accommodate M. Aronoff's presentation of SUNY-wide Student Assessment Initiative.

II. The Minutes of the April 20, 1998 Meeting of the A&S Senate were approved.

III.. President's Report: Hugh J. Silverman thanked Michael Marx for his past service as President of the A&S Senate and then: introduced the new Senate Executive Officers:

Joan Kuchner, Vice-President

Daniel Monk, Secretary

Michael Marx, Past President

The Senate President:

A. reported on the status of the College of Arts and Sciences Senate standing committees --at time of the senate meeting on Oct.12: Curriculum Committee (Elizabeth Stone, Chair), PTC (Wolf Schaefer, Chair), and Academic Judiciary (Rolf Sternglanz, Chair) are staffed (with elected chairs as listed); Committee on Graduate Programs (CGP) and Committee on Academic Standing and Appeals (CASA) remained to be filled.

B. suggested that the A&S Senate Executive would attempt to institute procedures for recruiting committee members as early as February 1999 to avoid delays of committee work in following academic year.

C. Indicated that in this year's sessions, he would like to focus on questions of interdisciplinarity and what that means, procedurally, for students and faculty.

D. noted that aims of A&S Senate in 1998-9 would be to encourage broader participation, energize that participation by focusing on important topics for action, presentation, and discussion.

IIIA: Insertion of Aronoff's report, prior to Agenda Item IV:

Aronoff reported on the SUNY Central Provost's intention to make each campus in the system undergo a common evaluation process. The [SUNY-wide] Provost's interest in General Education intended to learn whether the campuses are providing 'value added' education. He requested SUNY-wide Senate to cooperate in this initiative, and it refused. He has now announced that an outside firm would attempt to develop an 'instrument' to assess general education, measuring incoming freshmen vs. rising juniors.

SUNY Stony Brook Provost Rollin Richmond and University Senate President Robert Kerber asked M. Aronoff (new Associate Provost) to convene a task force to review Stony Brook's own Gen-Ed, including the DEC, with the aim of arriving at an internally generated assessment. The Task Force has now been formed by Aronoff as a Joint University Senate-Provostial Committee.

Responses: Norm Goodman described the SUNY Central initiative as 'nefarious.' He referred members to the

SUNY Senate Faculty Bulletin. He expressed the view that behind this is the idea of a 'single test' for the whole of the SUNY system, and an imperative to arrive at a single core curriculum through that test. He expressed the view that this was an assault on multiculturalism. He further informed the CASS that the SUNY-wide Faculty Senate made it clear to the SUNY-wide Provost that it is not against assessment, but proposed campus-based assessments that would recognized 'mission differences.' It urged campuses not to participate.

Joan Kushner: Asked if there was room for an authentic assessment beyond the single test.

Judy Wishnia: SUNY Provost has other 'nefarious' plans. Evaluation of faculty in this procedure, whereby the top 1/3 would receive extra moneys... by campus. She indicated concern that a student's 'enjoyment' in the course would be a key factor.

Norm Goodman: indicated that results of such assessments would inevitably get out, and affect budgetary allocations under the new RAM, since 85% of RAM is enrollment driven. This pits one campus against another. He suggested that this initiative be opposed in meetings with the administration.

Hugh J. Silverman: noted that the University Senate has already expressed opposition to the SUNY Provost's initiative.

IV. Proposal to Change the Status of African Studies from a Program to a Department.

The President noted that it is mandated that all changes in departmental status, departmental name, and departmental identity in the CAS be voted on in CAS Senate. He noted that the Dean of the CAS had recommended the approval of the change in status of African Studies from a program to a department. The President referred those in attendance to the written letter of recommendation from the CAS Dean Paul Armstrong. The President asked William McAdoo, Director of Africana Studies, to give a summary of the program's current status.

The Africana Studies Director did so, and distributed a written proposal to the senate. The President called for a motion to accept the proposal to change the status of Africana Studies from a Program to a Department. It was so moved and seconded. Following a brief discussion, debate was closed and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Topic of the Month: Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Majors and Programs

A. Robert Harvey presented the Humanities Interdisciplinary Program, and distributed a handout indicating the program's revised requirements and structure. Program includes approximately 35 Majors. He also noted that revisions to the Major have been made to tighten the major, simplify its categories, and add a senior seminar. Elizabeth Stone and Kathleen Breidenbach indicated that these revisions have now been approved by the Curriculum Committee for the 1999-2001 Bulletin.

Responses: David Burner suggested that the language courses should not be in a language that the student already knows. Several members responded that this should not be presented as a program requirement, but as a matter for faculty advisers.

B. Eli Seifman presented the SSI Interdisciplinary Program and handed out a description of its requirements. He noted that this is an advisement intensive major, and that it is the second largest academic major. He further noted that the problem with SSI-interdisciplinary is that it relies on many part time faculty.

Responses: In response to W. McAdoo's question, E. Seifman noted that there are no minors in the SSI interdisciplinary Program. In response to Christina Bethin's question, E. Seifman noted that most students declare in the Junior year, and that many are transfers and returning students (allowing them to use credits

from other schools).

C. Judith Wishnia presented the Major in Multidisciplinary Studies.. She also distributed a handout of the program's req's and structure. She noted that it is the third largest major in the university after Biology and Psychology. Similar to item B, it is advising intensive, has a high proportion of transfers, that it has no academic 'home,' and that it presently has no 'capstone' seminar.

Responses: In reply to Robert Kerber regarding what constitutes an area of concentration in this major, J. Wishnia responded that it may be thematic, i.e., 18th Century. .. An element of integrity along some dimension: historical, disciplinary, etc. In reply to D. Burner's question regarding where the 15 credits that are not in the A and S come from, and whether interdisciplinarity was by plan or by default, Judith Wishnia responded that they come from business, pre-nursing, and computing. In response to D. Burner's query regarding the acceptance rate of majors into graduate programs, Kathleen Breidenbach answered that Law schools in particular like the major. Judith Wishnia noted that it serves an interest that the university doesn't serve. Bob Kerber stated that the major would benefit from a capstone seminar.

The President pointed out that the Humanities Interdisciplinary Major and the Social Science Interdisciplinary Major can also be taken in combination with a departmental major. This is not possible for the Multidisciplinary Major (which draws upon concentration in two or three fields).

VI. Annual Report of Curriculum Committee, 1997-1998.

The President suggested, due to the lateness of the hour, that the Senate defer the next agenda item [Curriculum Committee Report] to the next meeting.

VII. No Old Business

VIII. No New Business.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15

Respectfully submitted by Daniel Monk