



Jersey City, New Jersey 07305-1597

University Senate – P336

MINUTES OF SPECIAL SENATE MEETING

April 15, 2013

ATTENDANCE:

Presiding: Dr. Joseph Riotto, President University Senate

DEPARTMENTS PRESENT: A. Harry Moore, Darlene Britt; Alumni, Jane McClellan; Biology, Ethan Prosen; Chemistry, Robert Aslanian; Computer Science, Thomas Liu; Criminal Justice, Bill Calathes; Early Childhood Ed. Regina Adesanya; Economics, Ivan Steinberg; Elementary/Secondary, John Bragg; English, Alina; ESL, Anne Mabry; Gharabegian; Fire Science, Kevin Malley; Fitness, Exercise and Sports, Cheryl Swider; Geography/Geoscience, John O'Brien; Health Sciences, Lilliam Rosado; History, Rosamond Hooper-Hamersley; Library, Min Chou; Literacy Ed., Mary McGriff; Mathematics, Freda Robbins; Media Arts, Kathryn Dalessandro; Modern Languages, Alberto Barugel; Dept. of Multicultural Ed., Donna Farina; Music, Dance & Theatre, Marc Dalio; Nursing, Denise Branchizio; Philosophy/Religion, Sabine Roehr; Physics, Alberto Pinkas; Political Science, Joseph Moskowitz; Professional Security Studies, Bill Soo Hoo; Psychology, Patrice Dow-Nelson; Sociology/Anthropology, Max Herman; Special Education, Carol Fleres; Women's & Gender Studies, Catherine Raissiguier.

DEPARTMENTS ABSENT: African/Afro American Studies, David Mulumba; Art, Brian Gustafson; Business Administration, Bob Matthews; Educational Leadership & Counseling, Yumiko Agawa; Educational Technology, Laura Zieger; Latin American Studies;

SENATORS-AT-LARGE PRESENT: Deborah Bennett, Cindy Arrigo, John Collins, Christopher Cunningham, Jack Egan, Marilyn Ettinger, Robert Golinski, Karen Ivy, Joseph Riotto, Rubina Vohra,

SENATORS-AT-LARGE ABSENT: Basanti Chakraborty, Patricia Yacobacci.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF SENATORS-AT-LARGE PRESENT: Bette Goldstein, Naomi Wright, Cynthia Vazquez,

PROFESSIONAL STAFF SENATORS-AT-LARGE ABSENT: None
STUDENT SENATORS PRESENT:

STUDENT SENATORS ABSENT: Jennifer Melgar, Melany Ledezma, Ugo Agomoh, Alvert Hernandez

STUDENT SENATORS-AT-LARGE PRESENT: Christian Diaz

STUDENT SENATORS-AT-LARGE ABSENT: Jan Aguilos, Ernesto Espin

University Senate Meeting Minutes
University Senate Special Meeting
Monday, April 15, 2013, Gothic Lounge

The Senate President, Dr. Joseph Riotto, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Dr. Riotto introduced University President Dr. Sue Henderson, who made opening remarks, discussing the challenges of implementing new general education programs. She noted that elements of the programs are continuously evolving and being refined and revised as they are implemented and evaluated. Dr. Henderson welcomed this opportunity to hear discussion regarding strengths and concerns about the proposed program.

Dr. Riotto introduced the meeting by stating that the meeting was called to discuss and vote on approval of two proposals that had gone through and been approved by the required Senate committees: undergraduate minimum graduation requirements, and the general education program. He reviewed the ground rules for speaking.

A concern was raised that the agenda had not been approved in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. A vote on the agenda was subsequently called for and seconded. The agenda was approved, 21 – 8.

I. Undergraduate Minimum Graduation Requirements

Discussion items included the following observations and concerns:

1. Some major programs already require students to take more than 128 credits; how will the change impact them? The concern was voiced that it would be misleading to students to state that a minimum of 120 credits is required for graduation, when in actuality, most programs require more than the current 128 credits. Also voiced were concerns about potential waivers of credits for major programs.

Jo Bruno stated that the proposed change is a minimum, and will not impact number of credits required for particular programs. No waivers regarding courses for major programs are ever issued. Dr. Bruno also noted that assessment is being incorporated to evaluate course, program and university goals, and that academic quality needs to be balanced with student needs and efficient achievement of learning goals.

2. How will this reduction in credits affect achievement of student outcomes?
3. An increase in number of credits, rather than fewer credits, may be required for students to graduate with the appropriate skills and knowledge. We need to understand what is in the 120 credits.

4. Have factors other than comparisons to other schools been examined by the Academic Standards Committee? How will lowering the number of credits improve the graduation rate? Dr. Chen responded that some universities with lower credit requirements were contacted directly, and all had provided positive feedback regarding student outcomes and graduation rates.
5. More is not necessarily better. It will be up to faculty to make programs and courses more effective, to ensure students obtain a quality education. After the change is made, data should be collected and examine data over the next 3-4 years to evaluate.
6. The suggestion was made that we lower tuition to ease the financial burden on students rather than reduce the number of credits.

A motion was made and seconded to table this motion until after discussion and vote on the new General Education proposal. The motion carried, 28-1.

II. General Education Program

Dr. Riotto introduced discussion of the Gen Ed Program by reviewing the process and participants in the four-year development of the program. Discussion items included the following observations and concerns:

1. It is not clear if the Senate is looking at the latest version of the Gen Ed proposal with changes proposed by the Planning, Development and Budget Committee (PBDC). We should not look at it until the final version is issued and approved by the PBDC.
2. The PDBC report on the proposal included eight recommendations for consideration. The committee would like to see a response to the recommendations and potential revisions to the proposal; the chair of the committee has not signed the proposal. A motion was made to table the discussion until the final version is available.
3. There needs to be meaningful discussion of the concerns of faculty regarding the proposal. Concerns were voiced about the scheduling of this meeting.
4. Dr. John Grew read a statement at the request of the department chairs of the College of Arts and Sciences regarding concerns about the Gen Ed proposal. Department faculty support the reduction of Gen Ed credits to 45-48 credits, and the tiered approach. However, the department faculty have concerns about the proposed program, including a lack of discipline-specific content, omission of key disciplines, alignment of the tiers, assessment and the oversight process. Dr. Grew, on behalf of the department chairs, requested postponement of the Senate discussion and action until a meeting with the Dean of Arts & Sciences and the

VP of Academic Affairs takes place to address their concerns and increase the acceptability of the program to Arts and Sciences faculty.

5. Questions were raised about the impact on articulation agreements and transfers of students with Associates degrees, and impact on other programs.

The proposal will be sent back to the proposing committee to review and make the changes suggested by the PBDC.

Concern was expressed that there needs to be a meaningful, substantive discussion about the proposal.

The motion was made to adjourn the Senate meeting, and immediately convene a University meeting to discuss the proposal. The motion carried 26-3, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM. Dr. Riotto noted that a special meeting of the Senate will be called for April 29th if the proposal comes back from the proposing committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Bette Goldstein