

REGULAR MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

December 7, 1998

SENATORS EXCUSED: John Anderson, Thomas Church, Costel Denson, Joseph Glutting, Janet Johnson, John Kraft, Susan McGeary, Rudy D'Souza, David Teague, Carolyn Thoroughgood, Gregory Weight

SENATORS ABSENT: Mark Amsler, Cynthia Brown, Gary Ebert, Tuncay Saydam

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the November 2, 1998 meeting of the Senate were approved as distributed.

III. REMARKS BY PROVOST SCHIAVELLI

Provost Schiavelli did not have any remarks.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Keefe made three announcements. 1) He noted corrections to previous minutes: At the October 5 meeting, Senator Scott was marked absent but was, in fact, in attendance; and Senator Thornton's absence at the September meeting was excused.

2) President Keefe drew the Senators' attention to two additional items placed inside their name folders that should have been included in the Summary of Agenda. The first of these was additional information supporting the proposed revisions in the Consumer Economics curriculum, adding that the agenda item is not only a name change for the major as noted on the agenda, but also includes curricular changes. The second of these was a list of provisional programs that are delinquent in applying for permanent status. President Keefe noted that some of these programs have their reviews underway; it is also possible for programs to ask the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee for an extension of 1-2 years to complete their application for permanent status. It is the responsibility of the program to conduct the review in a timely manner. 3) President Keefe noted that the agreement between AAUP and the UD Administration concerning non-tenure faculty appointments and promotion procedures will be added to the faculty handbook.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR CHALLENGE

The following were approved without challenge: Revision to the B.A. in Educational Studies; and change in name of the major Consumer Economics to Leadership and Consumer Economics, including curricular changes to the Leadership and Consumer Economics major.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Proposed revisions to the Policy and Procedures for Informal Student Course Complaints, as recommended by the Faculty Welfare and Privileges Committee with the concurrence of the Senate Executive Committee, were presented by Leslie Goldstein. The two major provisions of the proposed policy included the obligation of the chair/director to promptly notify a faculty member of informal student complaints which he/she feels is substantial enough to warrant corrective action; and a due process procedure which notes that faculty cannot be negatively sanctioned by a chair/director on the basis of unwritten student complaints about which the instructor has not been notified in a timely manner nor had the opportunity to be heard. Senator Wenger offered a friendly amendment to remove the word "corrective" from the phrase "corrective action," which was accepted (see above). The proposed revisions were approved by the Senate as amended. The text of the resolution and of the amended Policy and Procedures for Informal Student Course Complaints follow:

WHEREAS the Faculty Welfare and Privileges Committee has perceived a need to formalize policies on students' course-related complaints; and

WHEREAS it also perceives a need to protect faculty rights against being judged negatively on the basis of informal student complaints that may lack foundation; and

WHEREAS UD policy should encourage faculty to bring about timely improvements in a course so that students in the course (as distinguished from students who take the course in the future) can benefit from the professor's complaint-stimulated improvement of the course; be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Faculty Handbook be amended as follows:

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR INFORMAL-STUDENT COURSE COMPLAINTS

1) Insert the word "formal" in II-4 (section dealing with grievance-style student complaints that involve personal mistreatment by a faculty member) so that it would read:

4. FORMAL Student Grievance Procedure

a. Definition of a FORMAL Student Complaint

FORMAL student complaints fall into categories

2) Add a new section, III B-2 (to precede section on Sexual Harassment Policy) in the general category Faculty Personnel Policy

III.B-2

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON INFORMAL COURSE-RELATED STUDENT COMPLAINTS

1) POLICY:

In general, it is UD policy that faculty members be apprised as promptly as feasible of informal course-related complaints that students have made to department chairs or program directors in face-to-face or in written, signed statements, whenever the chair/director judges the complaint substantial enough to corrective action. A chair or director shall not negatively sanction a professor on the basis of such complaints unless the chair/director has notified the faculty member about the complaint in a timely fashion as described below:

2) PROCEDURES:

A) When the chair/director receives a face-to-face or written and signed complaint about an outgoing course (e.g., a complaint about inappropriate course requirements, about faculty in-class behavior, etc.), the chair/director should encourage direct communication between the student and the faculty member. If this does not prove feasible due to student reluctance, it is the responsibility of the chair/director to notify the faculty member promptly concerning any complaint that the chair/director considers substantial enough to warrant action.

I. The general guideline for the chair/director is to honor a student's desire for confidentiality, but to notify the professor of the problem as soon as is feasible within this constraint, so that the professor can take corrective action. (Many such complaints can be readily communicated to the professor without revealing particular student identities.) For a complaint that is well-grounded, this obligation of prompt notice should facilitate the faculty members' attending to the problem while the course is still running, whenever feasible.

II. Faculty members are entitled to elemental due process: No professor should be negatively sanctioned by a chair/director on the basis of an unwritten student complaint about the professor's course concerning which the professor has not been notified and given an opportunity to be heard. The professor must be given an opportunity to confront the accusation so that the chair/director can judge fairly whether the complaint has any foundation.

B. If the complaint is about personal mistreatment of an individual student, see section II-4 Formal Student Grievance Procedure, for formal guidelines.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. A resolution concerning the Dual Degree GPA Calculation was presented from the Coordinating Committee on Education, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee. The motion, the text of which follows, was approved by the Senate.

WHEREAS the University awards degrees based, in part, upon attainment of a satisfactory grade point index, and

WHEREAS the University currently calculates one cumulatively averaged grade point index, even when students return to pursue a second baccalaureate degree, and

WHEREAS it would be preferable to calculate separate grade point indices for consecutive degree programs, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the following wording be added to the policy on grade point index calculation:

If a degree has been awarded previously from the University of Delaware and then the student returns to another academic degree program, a separate grade point index will be calculated for the second program. However a single grade point index is calculated for students who elect to pursue more than one degree concurrently.

B. President Keefe asked if there were other items of new business, reminding the Senate that such proposed items could not be acted upon until the next meeting. Hearing no proposed new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Karen F. Stein, Secretary
University Faculty Senate