

11-8-2010

University of Northern Iowa Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, November 8, 2010

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UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

11/08/10 (4:00 p.m. to 4:57 p.m.)

Summary of main points

1. Courtesy announcements from Provost **Gibson**, Faculty Chair **Jurgenson**, and Chair **Wurtz** (no press being present)
2. Minutes ready for approval for 10/25/10 and approved with one correction
3. Moved into quasi-committee of the whole and named Senator **Terlip** (**Terlip / Soneson**) as a member of the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence Committee, as informal consideration item.
3. The following items were docketed from the calendar:

1063 961 Receive (and implicitly approve each action and recommendation or explicitly reject specific item/s) the LAC Capstone Category Review, dated 20 October 2011 (2010) for 2002-2010 (Chair: Professor **DeBerg**) (**Smith / Bruess**), regular order for 13 December 2010.

1064 962 Consultative Session, Associate Provost Arthur, et al., on UNI Diversity Initiative, for 10 January 2011 from 3:25 p.m. to 3:55 p.m. (**Soneson / East**)

1065 963 Approve recommendations from the Educational Policy Commission regarding guidelines for study abroad courses (Commission Chair: Dr. Gayle **Rhineberger-Dunn**), regular order for 13 December 2010. (**Bruess / Moore [for Neuhaus]**)

1066 964 A request to review the reply from the Educational Policy Commission regarding changes to the University Policy on Attendance and Make-up Work (Commission Chair: Dr. Gayle **Rhineberger-Dunn**), for 13 December 2010. (**Breitbach / Balong**)

4. Docketed items

959 (Corrected by the Chair from 958) Request for approval of recommendations by the University Calendar Committee for 2012-2018 from Registrar **Patton (Funderburk / Terlip)**. Passed.

960 (Corrected by the Chair from 959) Request to receive the LAC Annual Report for 2009-2010 from Committee Chair **DeBerg (Terlip / Bruess)**. Passed.

Adjournment

***FULL MINUTES OF THE
UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MEETING
11/08/10***

ATTENDANCE

Present: Megan Balong, Karen Breitbach, Gregory Bruess, Forrest Dolgener, Phil East, Jeffrey Funderburk, Deborah Gallagher, Gloria Gibson, James Jurgenson, Julie Lowell, Susan Moore (for Chris Neuhaus), Michael Roth, Jerry Smith, Jerry Soneson, Jesse Swan, Laura Terlip, Katherine Van Wormer, Susan Wurtz

Absent: Betty DeBerg, Doug Hotek, Michael Licari, Marilyn Shaw

CALL TO ORDER

Chair **Wurtz** called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

COURTESY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PRESS IDENTIFICATION

No press were in attendance.

COMMENTS FROM PROVOST GIBSON

Provost **Gibson** asked that all faculty try their best to show up for the Open Forum tomorrow morning with Team Representatives from the Higher Learning Commission who are on campus. She would greatly appreciate senators encouraging faculty colleagues to show up. She reported that this morning over 100 staff showed up for their meeting with the Higher Learning Commission representatives. This afternoon less than 30 faculty showed up. These scheduled Open Forums are for all members of a unit. Tomorrow's opportunity for faculty is at 9:30 in Maucker Ballroom A. She noted that the Team may interpret lack of attendance in a negative way. Other than that, things are going as well as can be expected. She thanked the senators for their attendance and for encouraging others to attend.

COMMENTS FROM FACULTY CHAIR JURGENSON

Faculty Chair **Jurgenson** stated that he seconded Provost **Gibson's** comments and certainly encouraged all faculty to attend tomorrow's Open Forum at 9:30.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR SUSAN WURTZ

Chair **Wurtz** added her ditto to both the comments by Provost **Gibson** and Faculty Chair **Jurgenson**.

BUSINESS

Chair Wurtz asked for any objections to moving into quasi-committee of the whole. Hearing no objections, the meeting moved into quasi-committee of the whole. The task at hand was to select a senator to serve as a representative on the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence Committee. She had asked the senators to come prepared with nominations and reminded those present that self-nominating is allowed. She called for nominations. Discussion followed concerning the amount and timing of the work of this committee, establishing that: the work occurs in the spring semester, as directed by the chair of the committee, but generally early in the semester; that the work load varies according to the number of applications received; and the members can schedule for themselves when they do the bulk of the work – reading the applications. . Senator **Terlip** asked when most of the work of committee would occur, wondering if there is a known time-frame? **Wurtz** thought that the recommendation goes to the Regents in the Spring. **Terlip** replied that she would self-nominate, if the work would largely be in the Spring but that she could not

take on one more thing this Fall. **Jurgenson** stated that he also thought most of the actual committee work occurred in the Spring semester. Senator **Smith** offered that he served on the committee last year and that they met in February or March with most of the work done prior to that in early Spring. Parliamentarian **Swan** said that it would be up to the Chair of the committee this year but that that was typical—to read the files in January for meeting in February but also being prepared to meet for a second or third time, if necessary. Senator **Breitbach** added that she has served on this committee before and that there was a lot of flexibility in terms of when members go and read the files, doing their homework for upcoming meetings. Others quietly spoke of their thoughts on the process, and **Swan** filled in that reading time required depends upon the year, the number of nominations, and the debate among committee members. Sometimes several meetings are required to come to consensus. Fewer applications and more unanimous feelings of committee members means less time spent and fewer meetings—perhaps even just one. Senator **Soneson** seconded **Terlip**'s self-nomination, who responded that she had really hoped the offer would just die. Amid laughter **Wurtz** called this motion and second passed by acclamation and thanked **Terlip**, with great appreciation, for volunteering. **Soneson** voiced his appreciation to **Terlip** also.

Soneson was next given the floor to speak about his idea, e-mailed earlier to senators, of recognizing former Secretary to the Faculty Senate, Dena Snowden, for her many years of hard work. He noted her politeness and willingness to work diligently under pressure and when times were difficult and called her “a wonderful, wonderful secretary to the Senate.” He thought perhaps a plaque of some sort could serve as a recognition of her wonderful service to the UNI Faculty Senate. **Wurtz** added that other plaques will soon be ordered for outgoing senators and that perhaps all could be ordered by Nuss at the same time. **Wurtz** called for any objections to official recognition by the Senate for former Secretary Snowden. None heard. Nuss will order a plaque (with input from some senators as to wording).

Terlip was given the floor to announce a Hearst Lecture tonight by John Stauber in Lang Hall on “Toxic Sludge Is Good for You: How Propagandists Manage Democracy.” The speaker will be interviewed on Iowa Public Radio tomorrow for those interested who cannot come to hear him tonight. He also has written the 2003 New York Times Best Seller *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War in Iraq*. Again, 7:30 tonight in Lang Hall where he will also be signing his book.

The Senate rose from quasi-committee of the whole and moved forward into regular session.

MINUTES

The Chair noted that the senators have received a draft of the minutes for 10/25/10 and asked for any corrections. Senator **Gallagher** stated that the unsure portion on page 12 (underlined word “reportedly”) should have been “important.” Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Minutes of the meeting of 10/25/10 stand approved as corrected and accepted. They will be posted on the new Faculty Senate website soon.

CONSIDERATION OF CALENDAR ITEMS FOR DOCKETING

Consideration of Calendar Item 1063 for Docket #961, a request to receive (and implicitly approve each action and recommendation or explicitly reject specific item/s) the LAC Capstone Category Review, dated October 2011 for 2002-2010 (Chair Professor **DeBerg**), for December 13, 2010. **Jurgenson** questioned the date of October 2011 for this Review, and **Wurtz** noted that that is obviously incorrect and will be corrected to October 2010. **Smith** moved to docket in regular order; 2nd by **Bruess**. No discussion. Motion passed.

Consideration of Calendar Item 1064 for Docket #962, a consultative session with Associate Provost Arthur et al. on the UNI Diversity Initiative, for January 10, 2011 from 3:35 p.m. to 3:55 p.m. **Soneson** so moved; 2nd by **East**. No discussion. Motion passed.

Consideration of Calendar Item 1065 for Docket #963, a request to approve the recommendations from the Educational Policy Commission regarding guidelines for study abroad courses (Commission Chair: Dr. Gayle **Rhineberger-Dunn**), for December 13, 2010. **Bruess** moved to docket in regular order; 2nd by **Moore** (for Senator **Neuhaus**). No discussion. Motion passed.

Consideration of Calendar Item 1066 for Docket #964, a reply and a request to review this reply from the Educational Policies Commission regarding changes to the University Policy on Attendance and Make-up Work, for December 13, 2010. **Breitbach** so moved; 2nd by **Balong**. No discussion. Motion passed.

Chair **Wurtz** offered a note of information that Docket #954, the informal discussion of Faculty Oversight of the UNI Athletics Program, has already been docketed for the December 13 meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF DOCKETED ITEMS

Chair **Wurtz** moved into the business of the day, items docketed.

Docket #959 – University Academic Calendar.

Senator **Funderburk**, having made the motion to docket, was given first opportunity to speak. He declined comment at that time, and the floor was opened for discussion on the merits. **Bruess** asked Registrar **Patton** whether, in addition to the week off at Thanksgiving, any discussion had occurred about a mid-term break for Fall semester around October 15. He noted that other schools are beginning to do that and feels it seems logical. **Patton** replied that UNI has “been there and done that.” He stated that it really goes back quite a few years, perhaps as many as 15 years, where there occurred a break of 1-2 days right at the end of the half-semester. He did not find in his notes at hand just when that last occurred, but noted that they are today trying to coordinate the number of instructional days to be the same in both terms. If the Senate wants to discuss in the Spring an “Academic Holiday,” or whatever it might be called, he suggested they bring it up and the Committee can bring it back to them, if that is what they want. But the brief history is that it has been there in years past and has been taken out. No further discussion. Motion passed. **Patton** thanked the senators.

Docket #960 the LAC Annual Report, dated October 13, 2010, for 2009-2010, **Wurtz** noted that this committee was chaired by Professor **DeBerg** who was unable to attend today. The original motion to docket this was made by Senator **Terlip** with a 2nd by Senator **Bruess**. The floor was opened for debate of the merits and was offered to **Bruess** who declined. **East** requested confirmation that approval of this would just be that the committee would continue working. This was confirmed. **Smith** noted that he has served on the LAC Committee, and a topic has been discussed by the Committee as well as in the meeting with the HLC team this morning. This topic concerns the need for stronger faculty governance of the Liberal Arts Core. He wondered if perhaps the Senate needs to talk about this in the future. He understands that the new administrator to be hired will no longer be called a coordinator but a director, so the title has been upgraded. He noted that lots of faculty have said over the course of years that there is concern that that program

does not have a strong enough representation in administrative circles to be sure that good teaching occurs and to be sure that that program meets the needs of the University. The RSC (?) has been concerned primarily about the curriculum, but they have also noted that this program needs administrative change and bulking up on the administrative side. He is concerned that it just will not be much better in the future than it has been in the past. One way to address that is for the faculty, through the LACC, to be more assertive and aggressive in managing the program. Historically, he said, that this has not occurred nearly as strongly as it could. He feels that it would be beneficial at some point for the Senate to discuss this or to ask the LACC or recommend to the LACC that it take on a stronger role. The role is described in the report, but how things happen is another story. To summarize, he stated that this program has not been managed strongly on the administrative side, and he thinks the faculty need to step in and take a stronger role.

East agreed that **Smith's** idea is a good one but doubted that it would be possible within the current structure where a very small committee provides oversight for the program but where individual departments sponsor the curriculum, rather than a Liberal Arts Core faculty. He thinks that this will continue until there is a Liberal Arts Core faculty. He thinks that there must be some ownership of the Liberal Arts Core among the university faculty rather than among departments. Departments will look at things that are good for the department as much as or more than things that are good for the Liberal Arts Core. He told **Smith** that he shares the concern but that he sees no solution under the current structure

Gallagher noted that she did read the report and wanted a clarification on the Capstone course, asking why not draft the teaching award-winning faculty and the research award-winning faculty—use people who produce to teach the Capstone courses? She did not feel they needed to come from particular Colleges and wondered if this made sense. **Wurtz** stated that this line of thinking is not part of the business being conducted right now but that it certainly can be something the Senate could put together in a proposal.

Smith stated that, other than the ETS (Environment, Technology, & Society) sections of Capstone, the other courses offered are from faculty who made a proposal, and those often are very well-taught courses by people who are really committed to the Capstone idea. **Gallagher** agreed as he spoke. He continued that he felt more drafting of faculty were needed instead in the other LAC courses, rather than in Capstone, because it happens that some department heads put their better faculty into their departmental courses and that teaching LAC courses is considered the dirty work. He noted that some faculty do a really good job but that also

departments tend to dump their less-capable faculty and adjuncts into the LAC program. **Gallagher** said that that makes no sense to her because the award-winning faculty are busy doing their work and perhaps just waiting for someone to ask them to do this, to ask would they be interested in this teaching. She feels that that aspect is neglected, the finding out of who might be very well-suited for this type of teaching. **Soneson** sought to clarify if she meant teaching in the LAC? **Gallagher** replied, "Yes."

East stated that it seems there is no mechanism to see that certain faculty teach LAC courses, unless the Provost will direct Deans and Department Heads to identify those award-winning teachers and to take them out of teaching majors courses. Not all departments have Liberal Arts Core courses or teach LAC courses, and in some cases those award-winning faculty have a load of courses that they are specifically prepared to teach already and which the department cannot offer without them. He thinks it is a neat idea but wonders how that might occur. **Gallagher** replied that it just seems an obvious way to beef up or improve the LAC and wondered if he were just saying that there is not enough faculty to go around. **East** replied, "Possibly."

The Chair recognized Provost **Gibson** who indicated she has a response to make to the statement that "less-capable faculty teach the LAC." **Smith** stated that people who are not particularly good teachers often teach LAC. **Gibson** asked if that is how faculty are viewed? "Is that a reflection of the perception of your colleagues?" she asked. **Smith** replied that his perception is that there are variations in the teaching ability of faculty, yes, and **Gibson** agreed. He continued that there is variation in the research productivity of faculty, yes, and that when looking at the incentive structure, if a department is concerned about their majors, then the best teachers are kept in the majors courses with much less concern about the LAC. It is just basic economic rationality to put the less-capable teaching faculty in the LAC. He stated that he has heard this often enough from enough places that he has to believe it is going on.

Soneson noted that his department is one of the departments that is deeply committed to the LAC. His department's faculty teach about two-thirds of their load in the LAC, and they think it is really very important. He also has done a lot of thinking about this current issue under discussion, and he has come to realize that there is a real structural/organizational problem that underlies this. The first priority or obligation of those who assign courses, the heads, is to protect their programs and their budgets. That means that they will focus a great deal of their attention on their majors, developing the majors, cultivating major students, and if it is a choice, they will assign the best faculty to the major courses rather than to the LAC, because

there does not seem to be any benefit for the department which would lead a head to have the same commitment to the LAC as to the major courses. In part, he said, this is a result of the fact that no one leads the LAC who has any significant power. They cannot say that a particular person cannot teach in the LAC or that the very best faculty need to be placed in the LAC. There has been a power vacuum. And it turns out that too much of the time—not all of the time, because there are some very good faculty in the LAC—but in a large major with 400 or 500 students with more faculty, then a head has more choice. He reported that he has heard it said that a head has said, “This person cannot teach in our major. He is too bad a teacher. He has to teach in the LAC.” **Soneson** continued saying that this has to do with the structural/organizational problem. It is not that the head was a bad head but that this head was following the logic of the structure and did not want to turn students away from the major, which that head had primary concern with, because of a teacher that really was not their very best.

Roth in commenting about the LAC said he wanted to reflect the views in his department which he feels very strongly about. He thinks that the LAC courses are some of the most important things they do, because in those courses the students may have their only taste of your field that they will get in their lives, that is their foot forward. The only non-physics courses that they have recruited majors from were Physics in Everyday Life. So in the LAC, PEL has been incredibly important. He verified that **Soneson** was not advocating that head's position—and **Soneson** was quick to agree that he was not advocating but rather lamenting that there is not a greater balance of the majors and the LAC in terms of organizational power. **Soneson** continued that he would like to see a little shifting of that power. He thinks that the LAC is among the very best and most important of the University programs but that it is also the program in which it is the hardest to teach, because students do not come into that program with a great desire for learning the material of the courses. They have to sell students on the information as well as teach well, and it is a wide variety of students, too, and not those just interested in one thing. So they are the hardest courses to teach, and he thinks they are among the very best and most important courses at the University. He wondered, however, how that structural/organizational imbalance can be overcome? **Roth** relied that it is that same imbalance that says, “Oh, if you can't make it in your major, just go be a teacher.” This really cheapens education majors, he noted, but many people have that paradigm. He says this is a generalization of the dysfunctional structure.

Provost **Gibson** offered that the question that comes to her mind is that if we have faculty who do not teach well, what do we do about that? **Soneson** replied that that is where a Center for Teaching is important. **Gibson** said that that seems to be the

heart of the issue, that if we have faculty who are not being productive, who do not teach well and do not know how to teach well, then that is an issue that needs to be addressed. She added that the search committee did come to her and asked about upgrading the job description and the title for the new LAC position. The Committee had a range of titles, everywhere from Dean to Associate Provost—it was a wide range. She did agree that the position is more important than a coordinator title. At this point, she could not consider a Dean's title or Assistant Provost's title or any title at that level, so they agreed on the Director's title for now. She thinks they did go back and try to give a little bit more teeth to the position. She stated that she understands the importance of the position and that she also understands the importance of faculty teaching the LAC. Both of these things are crucial to the retention of students. And of the education of students, **Soneson** added.

Funderburk stated that for his area he wanted to take exception to the idea that LAC are taught by less-capable faculty. In fact, he knows that often in his area there are very capable faculty who have been assigned something for which they have had absolutely no preparation whatsoever. They are outside of their area of comfort and outside of their area of specialty, and they have absolutely no support whatsoever to do it. It has often been the case, he continued, that assignment to an LAC course is seen as a punitive measure because of something—whether you did not recruit enough students or you did not do something. If you do not do this, you are going to get that, it has been said. It is not the kind of sign that will send faculty looking to do that kind of teaching. At the same time, he noted, they have very good people, very committed people who are interested in doing that, but in their specialized area where they have people who have spent all their lives learning to do something, to teach one-on-one, and suddenly giving them a class of 50 students, no matter how good they are, they have maybe never had those skills, and we do not offer any resources to help them out.

Bruess stated that, coming out of the College of Education as with the College of Business Administration, there are no costs, except for now where one of those Colleges offers a contribution to the LAC apart from Capstone. So it is problematic when those from those two colleges try to comment on something on which they are less familiar with the operation. But it is just that there are so many of them, and everybody has said it, so he would just like to call the question about how many people are so dedicated to it and people who were hired, such as himself, to teach both in Non-Western Cultures and in Humanities. He has never even heard of such a thing, apart from CNS, where people are punished by assigning LAC. That is not in that core area. He has just never heard of it, and he cannot even fathom the notion of it being done away with, whether it is some sort of bureaucratic

streamlining purpose or some pie in the sky notion of what constitutes a general education program. He thinks the University would be horribly remiss to gut that program for some other purposes, and as all have said today, getting these students at the opening is so important. So he was really sorry to see the LAC—liberal arts education as opposed to—well, in fact, the difference was not understood in the strategic plan. But it is core to the mission of the University, and that is what sets UNI apart from Iowa State and Iowa. Others voiced agreement. Now he called the question.

Smith came back to the issue of teaching performance, saying that, yes, some faculty are better teachers than others. For those teaching a course in the major, a person doing a bad job will find out from the department head and potentially from the dean about it. When teaching a course in the Liberal Arts Core and doing a poor job, no one may talk with the teacher about it, because there is not that level of oversight in many departments. In some departments, there might be this oversight; in others there just is not. He has heard this from enough people. He served for years on the LAC committee and heard it enough that he does not think it is just made up. Then on the issue about how much attention this is given. Everyone always says it is important, and the level of the administrator in charge is raised from coordinator to director, but that person still will not report to the Provost. He/she will report to the Associate Provost, Mike Licari. This is sending a message of how important this is when that person does not report to the Provost, and this indicates the priorities of the University. No money is put into the position; the higher level reporting relationship is not established. It is sending a message that it just is not important enough. Saying it is one thing, but actions speak much louder than the words. Provost **Gibson** noted that she is putting more money there. **Smith** asked if the increment was \$3000? **Gibson** replied “Two months summer.” And **Smith** verbalized this as “Two-ninths, yes.” He suggested looking at how other universities run a program such as this and noted that UNI has run it incredibly on the cheap. He thinks the results reflect that.

Senator **VanWormer** noted that in her program they do take the LAC seriously but that people fight not to teach it because the classes are so big and the rest of the courses are smaller classes, so it is a matter of people not signing up to teach LAC. She would recommend that the numbers in LAC classes be made smaller. **Wurtz** reminded the group that the motion is to accept the report and that the discussion now seems to be things that would go into a future recommendation.

Gallagher told **Bruess** that his point is well taken, as she is in the College of Education, and that she did not mean to go into territory where she should not tread, but in terms of good teachers she is really upset with the idea that students are to get the Liberal Arts Core “over with” and then get into their major. No one can teach unless they have a good Liberal Arts education. She brought this up because she feels so strongly about this (Side A ends; some lost in the transition).....**Gallagher** continued that teaching someone how to teach when they do not know what to teach is a problem. **Wurtz** reminded the group and **Gallagher** that as senators no one is limited to the college from which they come. Senators’ territory is the University.

Provost **Gibson** wished to comment on one other comment made about teaching performance. One of the things already brought up from the review committee is the lack of assessment of the Core. She thinks there are a number of ways to get at teaching performance. One of those ways is to have a well-thought-out, well-developed assessment. UNI is not there yet. **Smith** noted that assessments are used to evaluate courses not teachers. **Gibson** clarified that the LAC needs to be assessed, the program itself, but that faculty are a part of that. **East** stated that he did not hear anyone saying that they wanted to take anything away from the LAC. He interpreted everything here said as attempts to strengthen it, so (someone’s) comment surprised him. He cited several who are strong proponents and did not hear anyone today who wanted to weaken it or take anything away from it. Everyone was just stating opinions that said it needs to be strengthened and that there are problems. **Bruess** said that it will be coming and that he will hold **East** to his statement.

No further discussion. Motion passed.

Wurtz added an editorial comment that she is pleased with the quality of the conversation and stated that she would like to see some specific business arise from the Senate to address the issue.

Wurtz made the motion to adjourn, found a second, and adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:57 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherry Nuss
Administrative Assistant
UNI Faculty Senate

