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## University of Northern Iowa Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, October 9, 1978

University of Northern Iowa. Faculty Senate.

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SENATE MINUTES

October 9, 1978

1239

1. Remarks by Vice President Martin.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

2. Request from Associate Registrar Glenn for input concerning the final examination schedule for Spring 1979. Approved motion to institute a four consecutive days exam schedule for Spring 1979.

DOCKET

3. Consultative session with Dr. Joseph Meeker on inter-disciplinary studies.

The University Faculty Senate met at 4:10 p.m. on October 9, 1978, in the Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Harrington.

Present: Crawford, Gillette, Gish, Glenn, Harrington, Hovet, Metcalfe, Schurrer, Schwarzenbach, D. Smith, M. B. Smith, Tarr, Thomson

Alternates: LaRue for Bro, Fortgang for Brown, Hermanson for Hendrickson

Absent: Strein, Wiederanders, Wood (ex officio)

Members of the press were requested to identify themselves. Jeff Moravec, Cedar Falls Record, and Julie Bowman and Linda Levad of the Northern Iowan were in attendance.

1. Vice President Martin reported to the Senate that the University is in the middle of a legislative contact program. The Vice President indicated that owing to the opinion by the Attorney General concerning lobbying efforts the university has adopted a new approach for legislative contact. Dr. Martin expressed his appreciation for the efforts of Chairpersons Wood and Harrington in this contact program. Dr. Martin informed the Senate that a new brochure showing the historical relationship of the general state budget in relationship to the expenditure of funds for education has been devised and is used as part of this contact program.

#### OLD/NEW BUSINESS

2. Senator Glenn rose and addressed the Senate asking for its advice concerning the final examination schedule for Spring semester 1979. Senator Glenn, who is the Associate Registrar for Scheduling, indicated to the Senate that he was in the process of finalizing the Spring Schedule of Classes. Senator Glenn pointed out that it was possible to distribute the examinations over a four day period as had previously been done over a five day period.

Senator Schwarzenbach inquired if this change in schedule would create any problems for students with multiple examinations on the same day. Senator Glenn responded by indicating that there should be no difficulties and that the provisions for students rescheduling examinations would be the same as in the past.

Senator Schurrer inquired which day of the five day period would not be used. Senator Glenn responded by indicating the last day, Friday.

Senator M. B. Smith said that he would like to know how the students felt in this matter and asked for input from a representative of UNISA.

Mr. Jim Davies, Administrative Vice President of UNISA, rose and addressed the Senate. He indicated that he was in favor of compressing the examination schedule to four days, but that he would prefer that the one day off should be scheduled in-between, such as Wednesday, rather than at the end of the examination period.

Gillette moved, Crawford seconded, that the University adopt a four consecutive day examination schedule for Spring semester 1979. Motion passed.

#### DOCKET

3. Chairperson Harrington indicated that the item of business before the Senate related to the motion passed at the Senate meeting on September 25, 1978, (see minutes #1236) concerning docket item 188. Chairperson Harrington indicated to the Senate that members of the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee and Dr. Joseph Meeker were in attendance in response to that motion.

Tarr moved, Thomson seconded, that the Senate move into consultative session. Motion passed.

Senator M. B. Smith inquired of Dr. Meeker as to his thoughts regarding the psychological effect of interdisciplinary degrees in terms of the "less than scholarly syndrome."

Dr. Joseph Meeker gave an outline of programs that degenerate and fall in this category. Such programs he said are staffed the first year by some of their best faculty on campus but by the fourth year become staffed by junior faculty exclusively. He indicated that after a few years these programs degenerate from interdisciplinary to general studies, and soon after such programs are terminated.

Senator Daryl Smith made the observation that in his contact with students, they often believe that the study of a single discipline is the natural order rather than contextual studies.

Dr. Joseph Meeker addressed the Senate. He indicated that interdisciplinary studies as an academic response is related to societal reaction. He stated that interdisciplinary studies is a necessary step in education and that it is not a current fad. He stated that interdisciplinary studies grew out of the necessity to rectify the complications of a highly specialized society. He stated that interdisciplinary studies is a response to the felt need for synthesis towards greater intellectual flexibility. He stated that such studies are a means to establish complexity versus complications.

Dr. Meeker relayed to the Senate the results of a research study conducted by San Francisco State College that resulted in the following outline of the six major causes of failure of interdisciplinary studies programs.

1. When interdisciplinary studies maintains a separate curriculum from the regular university curriculum.
2. Faculty vulnerability--when faculty become separated from the main stream of status, structure, and support of the university.
3. The problems that students have transferring such interdisciplinary credit and the difficulty that students encounter with employers who do not understand the titles and/or content of interdisciplinary studies.
4. Instruction may become highly fragmented because of borrowing of faculty from other groups. There is a lack of continuity and integration because of the use of itinerant scholars.
5. The tendency towards isolation. There may be present a failure to discuss, to evaluate, and to communicate with themselves and others in the university structure.

6. A lack of intellectual content may occur from over-generalization and failure to identify the centers of inquiry.

Dr. Meeker then outlined to the Senate seven characteristics of successful programs of interdisciplinary studies.

1. An important element for success is when a topic is chosen for research and teaching that carries a genuine interest to many disciplines and is viewed by the general public as important and having interest.
2. Permanently involving the best and most respected minds on campus and rewarding them for their efforts.
3. Where programs have educated the university-at-large and the surrounding public for improving the quality of knowledge and public involvement.
4. Where programs have encouraged faculty skills and insight beyond their own disciplinary efforts.
5. Where programs emphasize education and skills and thinking and form relationships to meet new work patterns and vocations. Where programs create a new and meaningful way to face the new realities. Where programs create the ability to retool and the ability to integrate and face changes for students and faculty and therefore allow the faculty to grow beyond their limited graduate disciplines.
6. Where programs encourage faculty to learn from other faculty members through taking courses from one another and thereby expanding content and leading to the reorganization of curricula.
7. Where programs provide opportunities for faculties to fill new roles. Where the professor fills the role of expert learner and thereby makes the students and faculty members colleagues in learning.

Senator M. B. Smith asked Dr. Meeker how to solve the dilemma of the renaissance professor who believes that they do not need any learning and how the programs are able to retread these renaissance professors to become the new expert in learning.

Dr. Meeker responded by indicating that mature faculty members are ready to extend their thoughts beyond their own disciplines, and that this principle is valid for all faculty members who are competent and confident in their fields.

Senator M. B. Smith commented that he believed one of the keys to success is the flexibility of administration to allow this growth to happen and reward it.

Dr. Meeker stated that security for faculty members must remain or interdisciplinary studies is doomed. Conditions must exist that allow for security and encourage freedom to grow. He stated that it is his experience that not one single structure guarantees this happening.

Senator Fortgang asked Dr. Meeker about the relationship between intellectual flexibility and intellectual rigor. He continued by asking does changing and adapting training lead to a lack of quality?

Dr. Meeker responded by stating that one must expect quality, fight irrational change, and encourage rational change.

Dr. M. B. Smith asked Dr. Meeker to explain the difference between intellectual adaptability and intellectual prostitution.

Dr. Meeker stated that there is a difference between finding ecological niches and specializations towards non-essential functions.

Senator Hovet asked Dr. Meeker to speak to the academic program rather than about faculty changes towards growth.

Dr. Meeker responded by stating that academic programs are often a matter of academic convenience containing artificial constrictures to study parts rather than wholes. He encouraged faculties to deal with a body of knowledge as if it is an organic whole. Dr. Meeker continued by stating that for a campus to have a strong interdisciplinary program there must already exist a strong disciplinary program which takes the specialized knowledge and then integrates the parts.

Senator Gish asked Dr. Meeker to speak to the model presented by UNI and asked if Dr. Meeker felt it was a viable model.

Dr. Meeker responded by stating the UNI model was a very standard organizational chart and that he did not find anything to foster true interdisciplinary integration. He also inquired as to where was the rest of the body of the curriculum of the university in relationship to this model?

Senator M. B. Smith inquired where does our model meet our needs for growth?

Professor Loree Rackstraw rose and addressed the Senate. She stated the committee's calling the model a college implies stricture which was unfortunate. She continued by stating the university must start with self-education and to begin slowly.

Professor Murray Austin rose and addressed the Senate. He stated that as the university grows it tends to create greater fragmentation.

Dr. Meeker responded by stating that wisdom is knowledge in context and is an integrated view of reality.

Daryl Smith moved, Schwarzenbach seconded, that the Senate rise from consultative session. Motion passed.

Daryl Smith moved, Schurrer seconded, that the Chair appoint a committee to develop and implement symposia to discuss major issues related to the interdisciplinary committee's proposal. The committee will present a similar report of recommendations regarding interdisciplinary committee proposal no later than September 15, 1979.

Senator M. B. Smith spoke against appointing a further committee and suggested that the Senate simply ask the existing interdisciplinary committee to report back to the Senate periodically on its progress.

Professor Loree Rackstraw stated that the committee has been reduced to four members because of leave of absences and other considerations. She stated that it is very important that the committee be given a specific direction.

Senator Gish stated that the motion is premature in relation to the fact that the Senate has not discussed the material presented to us in docket item 188.

Gish moved, M. B. Smith seconded, to table the motion before the Senate. Motion passed.

Crawford moved, M. B. Smith seconded, to adjourn. Motion passed. The Senate adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip L. Patton, Secretary

These minutes shall stand approved as published unless corrections or protests are filed with the Secretary of the Senate within two weeks of this date, Thursday, October 19, 1978.