

**Faculty Senate Minutes, Penn State Worthington Scranton  
February 22, 2011  
Sherbine Lounge**

Meeting called to order at 12:05 pm by Dr. Gail Keating, Faculty Senate Chair

**Approval of Minutes**

The January 2011 minutes were approved.

**Announcement of Election Results:**

Dr. Gail Keating congratulated the following members of the Faculty Senate:

Faculty Senate Chair Elect: Joe Fennewald, Head Librarian;

Faculty Senate Secretary Elect: Professor Sue Harper;

University Faculty Senator: Dr. Pat Hinchey, with Dr. Durell Johnson serving as the Alternate.

**Administrative Reports**

**1) Chancellor:**

Chancellor Dr. Mary-Beth Krogh-Jespersen reported the following:

- Last weekend's THON charity event was very successful and generated more money than ever before.
- Census: This semester's Campus Census was down by 4 students. This number still represents an improvement given the current trends toward lower enrollment.
- Eastern Alliance (EA): The EA consists of five Penn State University College campuses: Hazleton, Lehigh Valley, Schuylkill, Wilkes-Barre, and Worthington Scranton. The EA is currently offering a new program, the BSB degree. This is a pilot program. If the program is successful, the EA may add other programs.
- Director of Continuing Education John Drake has put together mid-semester courses, primarily for the adult learner audience.
- Our campus has received approval to host international students. The first two students will come to our campus through the India Initiative, a program that allows students to take the first two years of computer science in India, and to complete an IST degree on our campus after two additional years of study.
- The Chancellor would like to learn more from the faculty about the ongoing discussion regarding the ESL questions on campus.
- The Housing Study has been delayed. However, it is already clear that offering on-campus student housing would be rather expensive: it costs about \$ 100,000 per bed to build a new college dorm. To put this in perspective, the Chancellor reminded the faculty that the last building built on campus, the Business Building, cost \$ 6 million, which would pay for a 60-person dorm. The situation is further complicated by the fact that our five leading feeder schools are located within 10 to 20 miles from campus. The students we accept, many of whom already need scholarships to attend, would likely be reluctant to spend additional money on on-campus housing. A future detailed discussion of the housing study will follow (date to be announced).

**Questions:**

Dr. Dale Holen asked if administration was considering weekend and evening programs to grant

degrees. To do so would allow our campus to compete with Keystone College, for example.

Dr. Krogh-Jespersen clarified that the BSB program was such a degree program, offered through blended courses. For example, Dr. Bill Sciacca teaches an online class. The EA campuses are collaborating on the campus instruction within the program. Furthermore, Penn State Worthington Scranton will not pursue an approach of direct competition with Keystone College, as there is a concern that this approach might take the Penn State brand down. However, administration will review the progress of the EA programs and make adjustments as needed.

Dr. Philip Mosley asked if there would also be seven-week residential courses on campus.

John Drake explained that mid-semester courses are meeting on nights and weekends, with concurrent sections for both adult learners and traditional students.

## **2) Interim Director of Academic Affairs:**

Dr. Molly Wertheimer reported the following:

- The new seven-week mid-semester classes are also a retention tool. Students who would drop below a full course load if they dropped a class could register for a mid-semester course to maintain their full-time standing.
- Dr. Wertheimer thanked the faculty for filling out the Early Progress Reports (EPR's). The next step should be that advisors contact advisees who did receive an EPR. Advisors could discuss strategies for improvement such as using the Learning Center, meeting with faculty members, and meeting with advisors. Therefore, the EPR's serve as an important retention tool.
- Faculty Activity Reports (FAR's): Dr. Wertheimer has met with eighteen faculty members so far. A new component of the FAR is the review of the instructor's syllabi. While some syllabi Dr. Wertheimer reviewed resembled "a piece of scholarship," some appeared to look more " cursory and abbreviated." In some cases there were acceptable reasons for the latter version of syllabi. Other syllabi, however, had not been prepared carefully enough, featuring information such as wrong dates, percentages for performance evaluation that did not add up to 100%, as well as contradictory information on the number of exams given in a class. Dr. Wertheimer asked faculty to review their syllabi by proofreading carefully, as a well-written syllabus is one way of establishing and maintaining credibility in the eyes of our students.
- Advising: the correct way of evaluating a faculty member's work as an advisor remains undefined. The Advising Committee will begin to hold focus group meetings to find out how to evaluate the quality of advising.
- Fall schedule: Assistant DAA Dr. Durell Johnson and Registrar Allison Burns are working to make the Fall 2011 schedule "efficient and exciting." Faculty are encouraged to consult the University course bulletin as a source for ideas for new courses they might offer in the fall.
- Dr. Krogh-Jespersen, Dr. Wertheimer, and Mary Lance attended a session on bullying in the workplace. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen might bring the workshop to our campus, and Dr. Wertheimer encouraged all to attend.
- Dr. Wertheimer is preparing for an upcoming DAA meeting and asked that faculty bring any questions they wish to see addressed to her.
- Dr. Wertheimer asked that to schedule their FAR appointments, faculty should NOT email Mary Lance. Rather, telephoning her would greatly simplify setting up the appointment.

### **University Faculty Senate Report:**

Senator Dr. Dale Holen reported the following:

- President Spanier informed the University Faculty Senate that according to projections, Penn State expects 200,000 applications this year. The number of applications has grown.
- There was no news on the budget. There will likely be a \$ 10 million vertical cut, mainly in administrative offices. Furthermore, there had been department eliminations and mergers in case of programs that did not generate enough credits.
- An online tutorial regarding students who behaved in a threatening manner or who were emotionally disturbed is available on the Penn State website.
- Dr. Holen is serving on a UFS committee charged with recommending best practices for placing diversity advocates on hiring committees. While Worthington Scranton has had diversity advocates on its hiring committees, there are only two campuses who have implemented the practice. Most campuses have been remiss in adopting this practice.
- A promotion and tenure symposium workshop for new faculty this year will focus on diversity-related research and service.

### **Questions:**

Dr. Alan Peslak asked if there was any news regarding the state's budget for Penn State. Dr. Holen said there was no new information. Dr. Peslak asked if there was any communication about the issue, since he had only read about it in the newspaper. Dr. Holen explained that the question had not come up during the last Senate meeting.

Senator Dr. Patricia Hinchey reported the following:

- The Curricular Affairs Committee on which she serves is working on taking courses that have not been taught in the last five years out of the bulletin. In the University College, this concerns only a few courses, mainly in occupational therapy, a degree no longer offered.

### **University Faculty Council Report**

No report at this time.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **University Undergraduate Research Committee:**

- Dr. Hai Wang reported that this year's Undergraduate Research Fair would be held on April 25, 2011. An email will be sent out. The committee will use a \$ 200 budget for the event.
- New this year is the creation of categories in which students can win awards.
- The committee has decided to rotate the position of chair each year. It already had two new members, and Dr. Wang pointed out that it would be a good committee for new faculty members. Interested faculty may contact him about joining.

### **Questions:**

Dr. Wertheimer asked if the newly created categories for the Undergraduate Research Fair

included an award for creative accomplishments. Dr. Wang stated that currently, the committee was focusing on the “hard sciences” only. However, categories could be finalized later. Dr. Wertheimer recommended that both research and creative accomplishments be recognized.

Curricular Affairs Committee:

- Chair Dr. David Byman reported that the committee was unable to meet yesterday due to the snow. The meeting has been rescheduled for a date in about two weeks. The goal was to develop a standard attendance policy for the campus. However, this may be difficult or even impossible, given the many gray areas of the University policy.
- Dr. Byman is looking for input from all faculty members regarding particular problems they may be facing when implementing an attendance policy. Furthermore, the committee welcomes suggestions on the issue from anyone. Faculty members should contact him with ideas, suggestions, or specific cases.

**Questions:**

Dr. Philip Mosley asked that the committee should consider the distinction between a student’s absence from a class and absence from an exam, rather than treating both equally. In his class, he has a policy that students must complete all formal assignments to get a grade for the course.

Dr. Dave Byman agreed that both class and exam attendance should be addressed.

Dr. Dale Holen added that the policy called for reasonable opportunities to make up exams and that this aspect of the policy could cause problems.

Dr. Gail Keating mentioned that this year, she had submitted many EPR’s with attendance notices. She hopes that the EPR’s will generate discussion in her class about the importance of attending, and hopefully with a positive effect.

*(NOTE: The discussion re. attendance was taken up again at a later point in the meeting.  
For coherence, Part 2 of this discussion follows here.)*

Dr. Mosley asked if attendance in general could be mandated, and Dr. Byman answered that it could not. Dr. Mosley followed up with a question whether faculty members might then stop taking attendance, as it seemed contradictory to do so. Dr. Byman clarified that faculty members must still take attendance.

Dr. Todd Adams clarified that attendance must not be taken for the University; however, for financial aid recipients, the federal resources supplying students with loans mandate that an attendance record be kept.

Dr. Patricia Hinchey shared an experience illustrating the importance of keeping good attendance records. She once was called by the police regarding an alibi one of her students had provided, claiming (s)he had been in Dr. Hinchey’s class at the time in questions. Dr. Hinchey was relieved that she had kept accurate records and emphasized that attendance records can become very important for reasons not directly pertaining to class.

Dr. Alan Peslak pointed out that the policy stated that at the faculty member's discretion, a final grade could be adjusted due to a student's attendance problems. The University needs to change the policy because it does **not** state one cannot factor attendance into grading or that faculty members may **not** have an attendance policy. Due to the contradictory phrasing of the policy, however, the burden is currently on the faculty to determine the legitimacy of absences, and faculty members are put into an impossible position. The current policy cannot continue as is.

Dr. Byman asked if, given the discussion, the Curricular Affairs Committee should even try to formulate a policy, since University Park was not addressing the issue. If the campus Faculty Senate was reluctant to proceed in the matter, perhaps the Curricular Affairs Committee should not go ahead with its project at this time.

Dr. Wertheimer asked if the University College Faculty Council could address the problem.

Dr. Mosley added that as long as the policy was left as is by the University, he would be reluctant to adopt a policy uniform only on the Worthington Scranton campus. Faculty members might be asked to adopt a policy different from their own ideas if Curricular Affairs formulated one for all faculty members.

#### Diversity Committee:

Chair Dr. Matt Mutchler reported the following:

- Project Able will take place on March 14, 2011. The project allows students to learn about living with disabilities.
- On April 16, 2011, the Diversity Committee will celebrate an Indian holiday. Participants will be encouraged to throw paint at each other and should dress accordingly.
- Dr. Mutchler asked all faculty who teach a class fulfilling a general education cultural requirement (e.g., US or International Cultures) to contact the Diversity Committee with suggestions for events that may also help students learn or even earn credit for the class.
- This fall semester will mark the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Dr. Mutchler encouraged faculty to contact the Diversity Committee with ideas for speakers.
- The Community Service Club is currently holding a drive for donations to the Griffin Pond Animal Shelter. Home-made dog biscuits will be for sale as part of the fund raiser. Additionally, there will be boxes placed around campus to donate items for the shelter. The shelter particularly needs kitten food, adult cat food, and cat litter.

#### New Business:

Professor Fred Aebli pointed out the ongoing challenge of students with minimal ESL training and skills in his classes. He asked what could be done to remedy the situation and how other instructors were addressing the problem of teaching students who had only a minimal command of English.

Dr. Holen recommended the local Online Writing Lab as a resource students might use.

Dr. Hinchey suggested that faculty might meet for a discussion of the importance of writing. Furthermore, faculty might discuss setting up an “information clearing house” about plagiarism cases on campus. Perhaps attendance could also be discussed at this meeting.

*[Part 2 of the attendance discussion followed here. See above.]*

**Other Business:**

**Announcements:**

Jill Thoman asked Dr. Keating to announce the upcoming presentation “The Voices of Men,” a discussion of violence against women. It will be held on March 2.

Deb Johnson asked Dr. Keating to announce today’s Founder’s Day celebration in the cafeteria.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

**Next Meeting**

The next Faculty Senate Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 23, at noon in the Sherbine Lounge.

Respectfully submitted,

Éva Tettenborn  
Faculty Senate Secretary