

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, April 1, 1998
1:00 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Judith Martin (chair pro tem), Elayne Donahue, Gordon Hirsch, Robert Leik, Kathleen Newell, Palmer Rogers, Tina Rovick, William Van Essendelft

Regrets: Laura Koch, Thomas Johnson, Craig Swan, Gayle Graham Yates

Absent: Avram Bar-Cohen, Darwin Hendel, Adam Miller, Kevin Nicholson, Jessie Jo Roos

Guests: Tom Cook (sitting in for Vice Provost Craig Swan)

[In these minutes: 2000-2001 calendar; degrees with honor and degrees with distinction; Twin Cities academic undergraduate policies and practices

1. 2000-2001 Calendar

Professor Martin convened the meeting at 1:00 and drew the attention of Committee members to the proposed 2000-2001 calendar. The only issue that had arisen was whether there should be a full week break between the end of spring semester and the beginning of the Intersession (which is part of Summer Session). Committee members, in an email ballot, had voted overwhelmingly in favor of having a full week break, as proposed. With that settled, the Committee promptly and unanimously approved recommending the calendar to the Senate.

2. Policy on Degrees with Honors and Degrees with Distinction

Professor Martin then asked for approval of the draft policy establishing standards for degrees with honor and with distinction. The policy had been in front of SCEP for at least two years, revised several times, and now seemed to be ready for action, in light of the recommendations from the Zetterberg and Hudleston groups reviewing Twin Cities campus policies.

One Committee member urged removal of reference to percentages of students who would receive degrees, saying that it was not logical in light of the GPA standards set in the policy. If SCEP determines that there are too many degrees with honors or with distinction being awarded, it can later revise the policy.

The Committee took note of Professor Johnson's email message questioning whether the GPA standards for degrees "with distinction" (set at 3.75) and "with high distinction" (3.9) were too high, but decided after discussion that it was comfortable with those standards.

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With this amendment accepted, the Committee thereupon unanimously approved the policy for recommendation to the Senate.

3. Twin Cities Campus Undergraduate Educational Policies

Professor Martin then asked that the Committee review for the last time the policies that had been considered in numerous previous meetings; attention would be focused only on those items where a question had been raised.

The subject that received the most discussion was whether colleges could place restrictions on the number of credits students could accumulate towards degree credit in any one area (e.g., CLA restrictions on music or physical education). The Hudleston report recommended that colleges not be permitted to do so, because "electives" are not then really electives. Committee members concluded that the question applied primarily in the case of CLA, because most of the other colleges' undergraduate degree programs have significantly more requirements for the degree. One argument was that it was unfair to CLA to require it to abandon a policy its faculty believed was appropriate for a bachelor of arts degree; another was that students should be completely free to choose among any and all courses, once major and liberal education requirements had been met. One suggestion was that CLA could set up a different category of credits/classes and require students to select from among them (in addition to major and liberal education requirements). There was agreement that a college may restrict the number of credits taken outside the college. The proposals concerning restrictions on credits was withdrawn, and the Committee will revisit them.

The Committee also accepted a suggestion from the Council of Undergraduate Deans that ACEP be delegated authority to make changes in the policies, subject to the requirement that all such changes be presented to the Assembly for information and that no such changes could take effect UNTIL they had been presented to the Assembly.

Professor Martin said she would bring the revised set of proposals to the Assembly Steering Committee, for review and placement on the Assembly docket for April 16. She then adjourned the meeting at 1:50.

-- Gary Engstrand