

Minutes \*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy**  
**Wednesday, January 15, 1997**  
**1:00 - 3:00**  
**Room 327 Coffman Union**

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Corey Donovan, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Elayne Donahue, Robert Leik, Judith Martin, Kathleen Newell, Tina Rovick

Regrets: William Van Essendelft, Cleon Melsa, Tom Johnson, Gayle Graham-Yates

Guests: Elizabeth Grundner

[In these minutes: 1999-2000 calendar; Graduate School policy on program change; policy on classes, schedules, and final examinations;

**1. The 1999-2000 Calendar**

Professor Koch welcomed Elizabeth Grundner to the meeting, who led a discussion of the 1999-2000 calendar. She brought a copy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Calendar, which has already been adopted by UW.

Possible dates for Spring Break were discussed. The idea of having the break coincide with the public schools was brought up, but it was noted that the schools have different breaks, so this idea would not be feasible. The Law School, Crookston, and Morris will follow a different calendar, starting one week earlier, but they will end at approximately the same time. The Law School needs more instructional time and an extended exam period for accreditation purposes. Morris needs more time as it does a fair amount of interchange with Morehead State and North Dakota, so the coordinating group gave Morris and Crookston the option of going with an earlier calendar. There would be a second calendar, but it hasn't been developed yet. Spring Breaks would probably be the same, and the end of the semester will be the same, but there will be different days of instruction and a different study day.

Semester grades would normally be due within 3 days of administering the final exam, but the Registrar will determine when they will be due under the semester system. It was asked whether or not it was desirable to have the Spring Semesters for Minnesota and UW-Madison on the same schedule. It was felt that if there were coordinated courses it would be easier if the schedules were similar. It was noted that the Spring Semester will begin on the day after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. This will not be true for the exempted units (Crookston, Morris, and the Law School).

It was noted that the Fall schedule loses a Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving and another Thursday and Friday for Study Days at the end of the semester; the Committee discussed whether it would be feasible to follow a schedule similar to that of the Law School to make up the days lost. The Law School

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compensates for that by making a Thursday a Monday and a Friday a Tuesday. However, it was thought that this would be too complicated.

The Committee noted that it would like to take the schedule before the Senate in February, and needs to make a final decision at the next meeting. One Committee member wished to further examine the UW schedule before making a decision. Assuming that the University has to be aligned with Wisconsin because of the coordinated curriculum, it was asked if the University knew how much coordination was occurring in terms of a physical presence, as opposed to on-line or television.

## **2. Graduate School Policy on Program Change**

Dean Leik presented a brief history of the issue, saying that about a year ago, Graduate School Dean Mark Brenner was told that the Graduate School would have to eliminate 20 doctoral programs. He indicated that the administration would be satisfied if programs were merged instead of eliminated, noting that there was a fair amount of duplication of programs and classes across campus, depending on the college. One of the concerns about small programs is that there are so few faculty and students that the experience is limited and thus the quality is rather poor.

The Graduate School has developed a draft policy on the merger or discontinuance of programs which outlines the principles, criteria, and procedures used in determining the feasibility of continuance of programs. It was asked if the focus was on degree programs as opposed to specialties. It was noted that the focus was on programs in general. Dean Leik indicated that in the case of Ph.D. students, who have a specific focus within a degree program, the preferred term would be a track rather than having a new degree label. It was noted that tracks in different degree programs might appear to be very similar, yet the degree program will be quite different. The draft currently in circulation is meant to stimulate a yearly check into the programs, and is not intended to be a standard against which the continuance of programs is based.

It was asked how this proposal fit into the national discussion on the over-production of Ph.D.s. The top tier of universities are actually producing fewer Ph.D.s, but the lower tier are producing more, so the University is in a situation where in terms of quality, it needs to be aware that it would not be appropriate to slow down production of Ph.D.s simply because there are more being produced in total, because the overall quality of the Ph.D.s may be lower.

The question of undergraduate program review was brought up, and it was noted that it was most common to review undergraduate programs within the review of the graduate programs. The idea of student participation was also discussed. There is a proposal floating around to develop and test a graduate-student automated, email-based survey, which would come in automatically tallied and run through SPSS at the touch of a button.

## **3. Policy on Classes, Schedules, and Final Examinations**

There is a minor change in the Policy on Classes and Scheduling. One section was eliminated as requested by a member of the Senate. The language removed had said that the University should not encourage students to take classes that have overlapping final exams. One Senator was opposed to that provision, saying there isn't much the students can do to avoid this situation if presented with it.

There were a couple of questions regarding the policy: 1) on both policies, under the heading "standard class times," it says that classes will end at 17:05. The original policy that went before the Senate had classes that started at 17:20, and the next ones started at 18:30. It was understood by one member of the Committee that classes would end around 17:00. The later times should be removed; 2) under the 50-minute class period, there are two questions about whether the University should have classes begin at 16:00, and if it is a 75-minute class, it would get out at 17:15. That could be a problem.

#### **4. Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee**

Professor Koch changed some of the wording so that the TCUCCC would assist the college curriculum committees, as opposed to taking over their duties. The actual review will be done by the curriculum committees. The proposal for program review was left in. Without the TCUCCC, decisions will be made solely by the provosts, and possibly without faculty participation.

#### **5. Class Period**

Another item for the Senate is the length of the class period; it should be changed to read 50 minutes.

#### **6. Graduate/Professional Teaching Award**

The Committee has been asked to put together an award for professional and graduate school faculty/staff who make outstanding contributions to the graduate/professional student experience. It will parallel the Morse Alumni award that the University gives for contributions to undergraduate teaching. The Committee needs to think about this. Vice President Brenner and the Alumni Association have expressed interest in this award. The question is where the money would come from; such an award is fairly expensive. One idea is to take the Morse-Alumni policy and rework it.

The Committee needs to consider what outstanding contributions to graduate/professional education would be defined as. Professor Koch asked for volunteers to develop a policy. She asked that Committee members look at the Morse-Alumni policy and make suggestions at the next meeting.

Professor Koch then adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Dana Swanson