

university

SENATE

April 21, 2004

Meeting convened at 4:20 p.m.

[Notes from the faculty meeting that preceded this Senate meeting are attached to these minutes]

Present: J. Aina, A. Echevarria (for W. Boelke), M. Dever, N. Dworkin, J. Burrell (for D. Grasso), W. Druschell (for J. Gravius), C. Hawkes, R. Hirshfield, K. Ierace, K. Koza, T. Kuther, P. Lyons, L. Marcone, D. Moser, J. Munz, F. Muska, J. Pohl, C. Rocca, J. Schlicht, P. Secondo, R. Veneziano, C. Kukk (for R. Whittemore), K. Wiss, E. Wong, M. Wright, K. Gutzman

Visitors: Eugene Buccini, Irene Duffy, Joe Mingachos, Chuck Mullaney, Paul Simon, Linda Vaden-Goad, Carolyn Fensterer.

President: Vijay Nair

I Announcements

Sen. Pres. Nair: Prseident Roach has approved the March 17th resolution regarding the labeling of general education courses.

II Minutes of the March Meeting

Not yet available.

III Old Business

A. The Strategic Plan

Sen. Pres. Nair reviewed for the Senators actions they had already taken with regard to the Strategic Plan: on March 17th, the Senate President appointed an *ad hoc* committee of the Senate to convey the senators' dissatisfaction with the Plan. This committee reported to the University Planning and Budget Committee, whose members addressed the Senate's objections and returned the Plan to the Senate for its approval.

Motion: THE SENATE RECOMMENDS THAT THE CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PLAN, WITHIN THE PARAMETERS ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE UNIVERSITY'S OBLIGATIONS TO ALREADY APPROVED PROGRAMS. (Aina/Munz) Passed with one opposed and one abstention.

B. Children and pets at work

Sen. Schlicht asked for a definition of a child. Sen. Pres. Nair thought that individuals up to the age of 12 could be considered children, but acknowledged that he, in fact, did not know what the author meant. Sen. Lyons asked whose responsibility it was to remove disruptive pets and children.

Motion: BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT REGARDING THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN AND PETS ON CAMPUS SHALL BE ADOPTED BY WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY:

Western Connecticut State University aspires to remain a productive educational institution where faculty, staff, and students as well as the public can benefit from an accommodating and humane environment.

In some instances, the accommodation the university extends to its members and visitors may be inadvertently misunderstood, especially with regard to the presence of children and pets on campus. Therefore, the following shall be university policy.

- 1) Children and pets on campus must be accompanied by a responsible parent, guardian, or custodian. The parent, guardian, or custodian shall be responsible for the safety and welfare of the child or pet at all times while on campus.
- 2) In the event that visiting children or pets of members of the university community or of visitors create a disturbance sufficient enough to diminish the working effectiveness of others, the responsible parent or guardian may be asked to remove the child or pet from the university's facilities or grounds.
- 3) No one who is working in precarious physical circumstances or who is handling hazardous materials, or whose work is requiring exposure to dangerous chemical or biological substances, will host or act as the guardian of children or as the custodian of pets on the university campus.
- 4) Pets must be under strict control of their custodians at all times. A member of the university community who feels endangered by an animal's presence or behavior may request that the pet's custodian remove the animal from the premises.
- 5) Anyone who feels that his or her working effectiveness or participatory membership in the university life has been impaired by the presence or

behavior of children or pets and whose request for amelioration of the situation has not been satisfactorily answered by the action of the parent, guardian, or pet's custodian may request intervention by the appropriate supervisor or department chair. In the event that the issue of impaired working effectiveness is not resolved, involved parties may refer the complaint to the Dean of Human Resources for review and resolution. (Whittemore/Munz)

Passed with five opposed and three abstentions.

C. Faculty Development and Recognition Committee bylaws revision

Sen. Pres. Nair said that he had not received the revised version of the by-laws.

D. White Hall air quality survey

Sen. Marcone, Director of Health and Public Safety Management, reported on a limited environmental survey of the basement of White Hall in response to several complaints, concerns: "limited" in the sense that 5 or 6 specific areas that are representative of areas in the entire basement. This survey was thorough in both where it searched and what it looked for. Also, a health survey was taken by the faculty and staff whose offices are in the basement of White Hall. All the tests were performed by an independent environmental lab using nationally and locally recognized methods. In a couple of areas higher than expected levels of certain bacteria and certain fungus spores were found. In three specific situations there was an elevated number of a particular spore: cladosporium. In the report, pages 6-8 contain the conclusions; page 8 lists five recommendations.

In response to Mr. Marcone's presentation, Dr. Veneziano asked about faculty being relocated from the basement of White Hall. Mr. Marcone acknowledged that "there are a number of faculty offices which because of fear, concern, whatever, had been relocated." Dr. Veneziano countered, "Because of symptoms, not fears or concerns, because of symptoms." He said that after he had moved his office to the first floor of White Hall, he no longer suffered symptoms, despite the fact that the survey showed "findings are similar throughout the building, whether it is a renovated space or not a renovated space," according to Mr. Marcone. Dr. Veneziano then asked why it was necessary to clean up, since no pathogens were found. Mr. Marcone said that pathogens cause disease; non-pathogens could cause symptoms because of hypersensitivity or allergic reactions.

When asked by Sen. Schlicht what he wanted of the Senate, Mr. Marcone listed two things: (1) support from the Senate to have faculty offices thoroughly cleaned bi-annually (2) support from the Senate to form Air

Quality Control committees in each building. Dean Vaden-Goad asked if it would make more sense to clean the whole building thoroughly rather than doing it piece-meal. Sen. Wiss asked if an epidemiological survey had been done. Mr. Marcone responded that the survey done in conjunction with our health service could not be considered “enough of an epidemiological survey,” adding that his chief concern is trying to match particular symptoms with particular contaminants.

Sen. Schlicht asked if the report could be made more user-friendly.

E. Entering grades online

Irene Duffy, Registrar, explained the necessity of faculty entering their grades online: due to retirements University Computing and the Registrar’s Office no longer have the personnel to enter faculty grades: “it is a lot easier for you to enter 2 or 3 or 4 class lists and enter your grades instead of having one person do 500 classes.” In response to a question, Registrar Duffy acknowledged that some faculty may not be able to enter their own grades and that her office was prepared to deal with those few exceptions.

IV New Business

A. Guidelines for missed classes

Dr. Paul Simon, Chair of the Student Life Committee, reported that his committee, for the past three or four years, has been looking into the issue of students’ missing classes because of their involvement in activities as representatives of the University: for example, as members of student organizations or athletic teams. Though most faculty allow for students’ absences because of their involvement in University-sponsored activities, some faculty penalize students for absences beyond their control. Dr. Simon presented a draft form that could be used to inform faculty of a student’s participation in a University-sponsored activity. In the great majority of the cases, this notification would be in advance of an event; in some rare instances, faculty would be informed after the fact, as when the women’s soccer team was snow-bound in Vermont and, therefore, team members were not able to attend Monday classes and, therefore, missed some tests. The form would give assurance to the faculty member that a student’s absence was legitimate; it would also provide some guidelines for faculty.

Dr. Wiss said that she had a series of problems with this whole procedure, adding that she was not clear whether or not a discussion of those problems was proper at this juncture. Dr. Simon said that his intention in bringing this to the Senate was for information only; he went on to say that, though not speaking for his committee, he would not object to these guidelines becoming policy. In response to a question by Dr. Wiss, Dr. Simon said that the

guidelines apply only to members of a team, not to spectators. Dr. Wiss went on to say that she thinks it is double talk to say that academics come first and then prove the opposite by officially sanctioning students' missing classes. She went on to say that, by definition, a class cannot be made up; that she did not know what "reasonable accommodations" means; that she would "hate to distinguish between student who have to take their sick grandmother to the airport or people who work. . . . If students are responsible, they make choices about whether to come to class or not."

Sen. Pres. Nair called for a motion to accept the *guidelines* thereby making them university policy.

Motion: THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR MISSED CLASSES. (Lyons/Munz)

Dr. Simon assured several senators that the reason for the coach's signature on the form is to guarantee that students will not take advantage of faculty. Sen. Koza expressed a concern about the vague language of the Guidelines that might lead to abuses. Dr. Simon asserted that coaches and advisors of organizations recognize that the classroom comes first and that his group is in the process of educating coaches and advisors to prevent abuses.

Sen. Schlicht asked what would happen if a faculty member refused to sign the form. Dr. Simon responded by saying that the faculty member is in charge of the classroom. Sens. Koza, Schlicht, and Wiss repeated their objection—that the language of the Guidelines is too vague. Dr. Buccini, Academic Vice President, recommended that the Senate should look into what sort of mechanism should exist for students who encounter faculty who are unreasonable, not just in the case of University sponsored events, but events in their personal lives. Dr. Bernstein, Vice President of Student Affairs, said that there is a need for such an appeals process. A member of the Student Life Committee said that the language in the Guidelines was deliberately left vague so that faculty could use common sense in applying them. Sen. Kuther mentioned the process already in place for students who challenge a final grade for a course, asking, however, how often such a process is used. Dr. Wiss reasserted her point that student must learn to take responsibility for their choices.

It was proposed that any further discussion should be postponed and the *Guidelines* should be sent back to the Student Life Committee to consider comments made during this discussion.

Motion: THE SENATE SHALL POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF THE MAIN MOTION. (Rocca/Schlicht) Passed with 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

B. Proposed split of CTA into Communication and Theatre Arts.

Motion: THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL TO SEPARATE THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS. (Lyons/Schlicht)

Sen. Pres. Nair explained that since the motion was a matter of policy the Senate could not act on it until the next meeting, unless a motion was passed to suspend the rules. No such motion was made.

C. Center for Professional Development – bylaws revision.

Motion: THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSED REVISION TO THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BYLAWS. (Schlicht/Munz)

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D. SUOAF AFSCME role on the University Senate

Sen. Pres. Nair said that notes on the meeting to discuss the amendment to the University Senate’s constitution would be issued along with the minutes of the present meeting.

Sen. Marcone made the point that in 1980 the Faculty Senate became the University Senate. The result of that, he said, should be that administrative faculty should have a fair voice at the table when it is time to talk about the Senate’s constitution. He thinks that Sen. Pres. Nair misinterpreted the constitution, particularly the preamble by saying that “faculty,” without any qualifying word, refers to AAUP members only. Such an interpretation would allow AAUP members to vote SUOAF members off the Senate. Sen. Muska, recalling the origins of the Senate in the AAUP contract, said that AAUP members should have the ultimate say on academic issues and that a certain “watering down” of the Senate would cause the loss of academic integrity.

A discussion followed on who would be allowed to vote on this issue. Sen. Hawkes suggested that someone research what happened the last time changes were made to the Senate constitution. Sen. Lyons suggested that a small subcommittee be established to comb through the constitution looking for ambiguous phrasing of the type that had been discussed all afternoon and come back to the Senate with a report.

Motion: IN THE WCSU SENATE CONSTITUTION, WHEREVER THE WORD “FACULTY” OCCURS, IT IS TO BE READ AS “GENERAL

FACULTY” AS DEFINED IN 1.A. OF THE CONSTITUTION
(Marcone/Lyons)

Sen. Pres. Nair explained that 1.A. defined “general faculty” as all unclassified personnel other than the President of the University.

Motion was defeated: 5-11-5

E. Annual reports

Promotion and Tenure Committee. No questions or comments.

P & T Subcommittee on CSU Professorship. No questions or comments.

Westside Nature Preserve. No questions or comments.

V. Other business

Sen. Wright announced that WCSU's security and technology courses were nationally recognized by the Committee on National Security Systems of the National Security Agency. WCSU is one of only 89 institutions in the U.S. to have received such recognition.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Maripuu, Recording Secretary

Peter A. Lyons, Secretary to the Senate

WCSU SENATE RESOLUTIONS
APRIL 21, 2004

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS THAT THE CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PLAN, WITHIN THE PARAMETERS ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE UNIVERSITY'S OBLIGATIONS TO ALREADY APPROVED PROGRAMS. Passed with 1 opposed and 1 abstention. R-04-04-01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT REGARDING THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN AND PETS ON CAMPUS SHALL BE ADOPTED BY WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY.

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Passed with 5 opposed, 3 abstentions (R-04-03-03)

THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR MISSED CLASSES. (R-04-04-02)

THE SENATE SHALL POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF R-04-04-02. Passed, with 1 opposed and 1 abstention (P-04-04-02)

THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL TO SEPARATE THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS. Policy - no action (R-04-04-03)

THE SENATE SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSED REVISION TO THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BYLAWS. Policy - no action (R-04-04-04)

IN THE WCSU SENATE CONSTITUTION WHEREVER THE WORD "FACULTY" OCCURS, IT IS TO BE READ AS "GENERAL FACULTY" AS DEFINED IN 1.A. OF THE CONSTITUTION. Defeated, 5 yes, 11 no, 5 abstentions. (R-04-04-05)

April 21, 2004

Notes on the faculty meeting for the proposed amendment to the University Senate Constitution
to add one representative from AFSCME Clerical Union Local 562 to the Senate membership.

Senate President Vijay Nair called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Mr. Luigi Marcone said that he thought the Senate was misinterpreting the Senate bylaws by interpreting the word “faculty” to mean only AAUP faculty. He said that the present meeting was divisive in nature and went against everything that the Senate represented.

Mr. Nair said that the amendment to the Senate constitution was not the business of the Senate; but rather of the faculty, a term that had two meanings that depended on the presence or absence of the modifier “general,” that all present at the meeting were free to express their opinion, and that the focus of this meeting was on the amendment; not who got to vote on this matter; since the constitution made clear that the AAUP faculty only were allowed to vote.

Mr. Henry Tritter urged members to vote against the amendment because on the face of it, it is discriminatory, admitting only clerical workers and not other groups on campus such as maintainers and police. Joan Harrisson-Boughton took exception to Mr. Tritter’s use of “discriminatory,” saying that those other groups were not excluded by the present resolution: one group initiated a resolution, and other groups are free to do the same. Dr. Francis Muska made the point that because academic decisions are the purview of the faculty he would vote against the present proposal. His position was supported by Dr. Carol Avery. One person pointed out that the Senate deals with much more than just academic issues: working conditions, parking, health care, adding that it is imperative that the whole community at WestConn be represented.

Dr. Norine Jalbert said that traditionally the Senate does deal primarily with academic issues, though other issues may also arise. The present resolution struck her as a major break with the Senate’s traditional representation and role. Wanting to avoid a piecemeal approach to changing the representation in the Senate, she suggested that a thorough discussion about a Faculty Senate vs. a University Senate take place before voting on any such major change. Dr. Chis Kukk spoke in favor of the resolution, saying that the clerical personnel often know more about how things are done than faculty; that leaders who call for more discussion on an issue are often authoritarians, thus delaying change, at times, indefinitely; that the Senate deals with plenty of non-academic matters. Dr. Duane Moser agreed with Dr. Kukk’s point that clerical workers know a great deal about how things work here at the University; he went on to say, however, that he would never ask a clerical worker how to run his class—adding that the Senate is the only forum we have to discuss academic issues as a university community and should be populated by “people in the classroom.”

Dr. Katy Wiss observed that the Senate exists by virtue of the AAUP contract and is part of our shared governance process, within which we remain faculty advising the administration. She added that the Senate was wise to include in its membership both administrative faculty and students. She urged those who would vote on this issue to read carefully the Senate's constitution, adding that she would definitely recommend voting against adding a representative of the clerical workers to the Senate. Dr. Joseph Aina also recommended that the proposal be defeated. Dr. Peter Lyons mentioned that of the nine items on the Senate's agenda for today, only a little more than half are academic, suggesting that we have a University Senate, not a Faculty Senate; he urged all to welcome any and all constituencies that want to shoulder the responsibility of participating in the Senate's work. Dr. Wiss responded that some standing committees of the Senate include representatives from practically every union, including the clerical, so in fact the clerical workers do have "Senate-provided ways for members of other unions to participate." One person responded to this by saying that, following Dr. Wiss's logic, the Senate ought to give up all its non-academic committees (such as Student Life), adding that it is patently unfair to allow members of other unions to sit on committees but not to sit on the Senate. Another person expressed surprise because he was under the impression that the University Senate represented all facets of the University and he was learning that impression was inaccurate.

In response to a question by Mr. Marcone, Mr. Nair said that paper ballots will be sent to AAUP faculty. There was an extended exchange on the matter of who is eligible to vote on this proposal and how to get ballots to the AAUP members who work part-time. Mr. Nair said that the Senate could overrule his interpretation of who was eligible to vote (AAUP members only) by passing a motion appealing the decision of the Chair. Several persons noted that there are certain inconsistencies in the Senate's constitution when it comes to "faculty." Dr. Muska returned to an historical perspective that leads him to reject the current proposal; Ms. Harrison-Boughton, without denying the importance of an historical perspective, urged a more contemporary view favoring the proposal.

This meeting adjourned at 4:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Lyons