Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
Monday, April 3, 2006  

Minutes  

Present:  Abbas Aminmansour (Chair), Thomas Berfield, Loren Bode, Stephen Boppart, Michele Crockett, Joe Danavi, Bo Fernhall (ex officio), Bettina M. Francis, Phillip Geil, Joseph Goldberg, Kristi Kuntz (ex officio designee), Faye Lesht (ex officio), Carol Malmgren (observer), Keith Marshall (ex officio designee), Lucy Rich (observer), Leslie Struble, Kenneth Watkin, H. F. Williamson, Chet Zych (ex officio)  

Absent:  Linda Beale, Karen Carney (ex officio), Karen Chapman-Novakofski, Stuart Karaffa, Melissa Kennedy, Kelly Tappenden, Jason Webber  

Guests:  Douglas Kibbee, Professor, French Department; Ann Mester, Assistant Dean, LAS Administration; Bruce Williams, Director, Institute of Communications Research; Barbara Wilson, Head, Speech Communication; Ronald Yates, Dean, College of Communications  

A regular meeting of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy convened at 1:10 p.m. in Room 232 of the English Building with Chair Abbas Aminmansour presiding.  

I. Approval of the Minutes  

Revisions to Item III were made as follows.  

EP.06.16, Proposal from the College of Engineering to merge the Departments of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics and of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering and Renaming the Combined Department the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering  

The Chair reported that he had met recently with members Crockett and Geil regarding TAM courses. Crockett reported that they did an item by item analysis on the projected class schedules if the TAM proposal does not go forward and also if merger is approved and that they were satisfied that the classes would be taught by degreed faculty. Geil reported they were in receipt of a letter of clarifications from Ilesanmi Adesida offering additional information on the proposal and relating that six faculty members had left TAM prior to Dean Daniels leaving the University and that the merger would offer broader opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students. The Committee members held a question and answer discussion with Dean Adesida. Francis shared concerns that damage has already been done to students and feared that new applications have plummeted. Chapman-Novakofski said she has found that graduate students will come to Campus to work with a particular faculty member. Boppart thought the proposal was in the best interest of TAM and that it was necessary to follow the trend and move on. Francis thought it was necessary to deal with the process of which has brought us to this point. Chapman-Novakofski thought perhaps that was a separate issue that needed to be discussed at another time. Aminmansour explained that it is not the charge of this Committee to send a political message; however, it is our responsibility to evaluate this proposal based on its merit. He pointed out that there appears to be no violation of the procedures. Watkin reminded members that the merging of the departments of Kinesiology and Community Health proved to be very successful and gave merging faculty a chance to blossom. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal. (The vote was: Yes-8; No-6; Abstention-1; absent members-2; Chair did not vote.)  

The minutes of the meeting of March 13, 2006 were approved as amended.  

II. Remarks of the Chair  

Chair Aminmansour reported that he had accepted an invitation to attend a meeting of the Illinois Student Senate last Tuesday evening. At that meeting, a suggestion was made that the EPC consider submitting a request to the Senate to delay a vote on the TAM proposal (EP.06.16) until the April 24 Senate meeting. He noted that this would give students an opportunity to have a dialog with our committee as a courtesy. Williamson pointed out that he had cleared his schedule today to vote on this particular item. Struble was disturbed by the current “us versus them” attitude and thought it a bad idea to delay the vote any further. The following motion was made and seconded: We move to take no procedural action, but to leave any action on EP.06.16 entirely in the hands of the Senate; we ask the Senate to proceed on this issue as it sees fit. The motion was approved (Yes-8; No-1; Abstention-1; the Chair did not vote).
III. EP.06.35, Proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to create the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics — Discussion with guests

It was pointed out that it will be necessary to hold a public hearing on the creation of a new School; therefore, EP.06.35 will not be forwarded to the Senate anytime prior to fall 2006. Geil indicated that the proposal appeared to be adding another layer of administration. In response, Professor Kibbee gave an overview of the background of the proposal and described it as having a complicated history; a one page handout describing the eleven units of the proposed School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics was distributed. Kibbee reported that according to the Bylaws, a faculty vote in favor (61 to 7) of the proposal was taken in October.

IV. Discussion with the Dean of Communications, Head of Speech Communication, Director of ICR (Institute of Communications Research), and Representatives from LAS regarding potential merger of Speech Communications and ICR (preliminary discussions)

Chair Aminmansour stated that in an effort to communicate our past experience with mergers and possibly avoid any future problems, he had invited those individuals involved in a potential merger that is presently in the initial stages of discussion. Dean Yates reported that a committee was appointed to work out the details and consider any possible ramifications of a merger between Speech Communication in LAS and the Institute of Communications Research presently in the College of Communications. Yates mentioned that there are many questions, most importantly what happens if they do lose a unit. He reported that Interim Provost Delia had met with each unit involved, and had also met with each individual faculty member. Yates also reported that although no official faculty vote has yet been taken, a lot of questions and issues have been raised; however, he is most concerned about procedural issues.

Bruce Williams reported that this issue has been discussed at ICR faculty meetings; a vote to proceed was almost unanimous. Williams presented a little of the background of the Institute of Communications Research pointing out that it is the oldest program in the USA as its Ph.D. was started in 1947. Originally, ICR faculty members were not given teaching assignments. Since the 1970’s, ICR has come to behave more like a department; faculty members are on reoccurring lines with State money.

Bode injected that by the time a potential merger comes before the EPC it has become a very emotional process; therefore, he stressed the importance of directing that process through faculty governance, perhaps by putting the Bylaws in place for the proposed department. Williams reported that he had reviewed the recently approved proposal from the College of Applied Health Sciences merging the departments of Community Health and Kinesiology (EP.04.38) and was using it as a guide. He cited historical reasons for not merging Speech Communication and ICR earlier and thought the boundaries that had been established fifty years ago no longer existed. Yates shared his concerns regarding the likely loss of Media Studies; however, he described a new initiative called Future Media which will include blogging, pod casting, and ways that newspapers may reinvent themselves. Marshall stressed the importance of the merger proposal being a complete package, that it be explicit in covering all aspects of the merger, the more information the better. Francis thought the merger should be well-communicated and that faculty should be involved in the process.

V. Old Business

EP.06.21, Proposal to Establish the BSLAS in Earth Systems, Environment, and Society in LAS

Sponsors will be attending meeting scheduled for April 10th.

VI. New Business

EP.06.32, Proposed Guidelines for Multi-Institutional Degrees (USC OT-218); letter from Elliot R. Kaufman, Chair of University Senates Conference

Discussion on this item has been postponed until after the 10th.

Subcommittees:

Subcommittee A

EP.06.33, Proposal from the College of Applied Life Studies to Terminate the Teacher Education Minor in Physical Education

Crockett questioned as to why this proposal is still in subcommittee as she found it to be very straightforward. Goldberg made a motion to approve; Crockett seconded the motion.

The proposal was unanimously approved to forward to the Senate.
EP.06.40, Proposal from the College of Fine and Applied Arts to establish an undergraduate minor in Art History. Kuntz pointed out that while this proposal is in Senate format it is not in “minor” format.

Subcommittee B

EP.06.37, Proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to revise the Major in the Science and Letters Curriculum for Anthropology. Zych pointed out minor typographical errors on pages five and six of the proposal.

The proposal was unanimously approved to forward to the Senate pending clarification.

Subcommittee C

EP.06.35, Proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to create the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics

EP.06.36, Proposal from the College of Business to revise the undergraduate curriculum for the B.S. in Finance. The EPC is still awaiting departmental response; apparently some issues are yet to be worked out.

VII. Pending Items (Waiting to hear from sponsors.)

Subcommittee A

EP.05.03, Proposal from the Colleges of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences; Applied Life Studies; Business; Education; and Engineering to establish a Leadership Minor. Kuntz advised that EP.05.03 be withdrawn from the EPC agenda; a completely revamped proposal will be forwarded in the near future.

EP.06.29, Proposal from the College of Education to establish graduate majors that correspond to the names of each six departments that currently offer programs leading to graduate degrees

Subcommittee B

EP.06.20, Proposal from the college of ACES for approval to drop the Minor in Fiber Science currently offered by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES)

Subcommittee C

EP.06.25, Proposal from the Graduate College to revise the program leading to the Master of Social Work. Goldberg reported that despite a request for revised coursework to meet certification requirements of the Council on Teacher Education, the subcommittee has not received a response from the School of Social Work; however, he will send them a reminder.

EP.06.31, Proposal from the College of LAS to establish a new M.S. and Ph.D. in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology. The committee was in receipt of proposal revisions (distributed at the door) from the department in response to clarification of minimum requirements. A motion was made and seconded for approval.

The proposal was unanimously approved to forward to the Senate.

VIII. Other Business and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Diana Morris, Secretary
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Approved as written.