

## 2009-2010 University Senate

Friday, May 14, 2010, 11:00 am, LC 4

(Continuation of May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting)

Michael Range, Chair

### Minutes

**Present:** Heidi Andrade, Hassaram Bakhru, Brea Barthel, Jeffrey Berman, Daryl Bullis, James Castracane, Richard Collier, Edward Cupoli, John Delano, Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Susanna Fessler, Elizabeth Gaffney, Robert Gibson, Andrew Haas, Allen Israel, Donald Keenan, Ryan King, Kajal Lahiri, Hamilton Lankford, Eric Lifshin, John Monfasani, Robert Nakamura, Julie Novkov, Michael Range, Carlos Rodriguez, Joan Savitt, John Schmidt, Daniel Smith, Lawrence Snyder, Kabel Nathan Stanwicks, Daniel White

**Guests:** Dwight Williams

The meeting convened at 11:03 am.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Suspension of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences BA: (UAC/UPPC)**

The Chair noted that before a quorum was called on the previous Monday, a member of the Senate complimented the very clear and cogent rationale attached to this proposal and said this should be noted in the minutes. It was noted this major is left over from the old undergraduate Earth Science Teacher Education Program which hasn't existed for years. The bill was passed unanimously.

#### **Deactivation of Chemistry Programs: (UAC/UPPC)**

**Materials Chemistry Major Track BS:** It was clarified that this is the Materials Chemistry track in the B.S. program in Chemistry, that no one is or has been pursuing this track, and that several other tracks are available and regularly pursued by around 50 students. Furthermore, because of retirements, the department no longer has faculty with appropriate expertise in this subdiscipline. The bill was passed unanimously.

**Chemistry BS 3-2 Chemical Engineering Program with RPI:** It was noted that it has been years since any student expressed any interest in this program and that RPI had "forgotten about the agreement" with UAlbany to provide some of the coursework and any continuation would have to be renegotiated. The bill was passed unanimously.

#### **Suspension of Minor in Public Health: (UAC/UPPC)**

The bill was introduced by UAC Chair Savitt. Chair Range welcomed Professor Dwight Williams representing the School of Public Health for this discussion. A Senator pointed out the "slippery slope" if this bill were passed, since other departments could sacrifice their minor programs to bolster the major. Other faculty noted that since students are required to have a minor to graduate, other departments would have to pick up the slack if this minor were eliminated. Another Senator noted that all units experience major resource problems and that the response

should be discussed in a broader forum, for example in the context of the strategic plan, rather than have units jump ahead and have the university deal with the consequences later. It was also noted that the SPH minor was introduced just a few years ago and that it has been very successful in achieving the desired goals, so it does not appear reasonable to suspend it now. In response to a question if every undergraduate major program is supposed to offer a minor, it was pointed out that when “second fields” were changed to “minors” Social Welfare was allowed not to have minor because of upper division coursework involving social work clients.

A Senator objected to the proposed starting date, immediately excluding current students who had not completed three SPH courses, since this would be an ex post facto restriction on current students. The proposal indicates the plan to increase the size of the introductory courses in the future, suggesting some student may not have had prior opportunity to enroll in three of the courses. Implementing such a restriction to apply to students currently enrolled is against Senate precedent and would be inconsistent with the principle that changes in the Bulletin should not apply retroactively. A Senator pointed out that last year’s bill to add admission standards to the minors in Education was approved with the requirement that it would apply only to students who matriculated in fall 2009 and thereafter.

An amendment was therefore proposed and seconded to change the implementation date on the Public Health bill so that if approved, it would apply only to students who matriculate in fall 2010 and thereafter. The amendment was approved.

Professor Dwight Williams was asked to clarify what impact the change would have. It was noted that the current minor requires 12 to 15 credits of courses offered by SPH, which appear to be usable in the major (and would be more readily deliverable to majors and minors alike if the lower level courses were expanded). Professor Williams said the major requires 21 credits of courses offered by the school. While sympathetic to financial exigencies when demonstrated, it was not clear how the proposal would assist the program.

One Senator suggested that the huge popularity of the minor and the relatively small enrollments in the major might rather suggest that the *major* be abolished and the minor preserved. Professor Williams was asked what are typical majors of students who elect this minor; he indicated they were scattered among many disciplines. A Senator commented that the large number of minors may be a source for some of the majors the school now attracts; another Senator noted the minor could attract students to SPH’s graduate programs.

The motion was made to “postpone indefinitely” and it was seconded. The motion was defeated. A Senator noted that there are other ways to limit enrollment in a minor without eliminating the entire minor. Last year’s bill restricting the Education minor was mentioned as an example. After some additional discussion a Senator called the question; the motion was seconded and approved by more than the required 2/3 majority. The bill was then put to a vote and overwhelmingly defeated, with two Yes votes and two abstentions.

Professor Williams asked the Senate for advice. It was noted that minors could seek admission requirements but would need to justify them, and explain the relevance of the courses and grade minima proposed. Alternatively, certain upper division courses could be limited to majors only.

### **Q & A Regarding the CERS Proposal:**

In response to a question, CERS Chair Monfasani said a sticking point seems to be the proposal’s language which protects the complainant’s rights, freedom of speech, and ability to judge conflict of interest. Since these are all in the current CERS rules of operation and since these are important to CERS members, if they do not appear in the final CERS policy and it is not approved, they will be preserved. There was general assent and comment on the importance to the academy, scholarship and research of preserving these rights for the complainant.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Collier  
University Senate Secretary