



FACULTY SENATE

CONNECTION

April

1996

THE CHAIR'S NOTES

Information is not Learning

We are being told daily by politicians and pundits that technology will change the way we teach. I find most of this rambling interesting, especially when typified by our new governor making the asinine statement that "one good teacher can now teach calculus to 5,000 students". As educators, it is imperative that we explain to people that although you can certainly present information, often in entertaining ways, to 5,000 students using technology, this is a big difference from teaching 5,000 students. Information, such as encyclopedias, has been around for quite a while without shattering the idea the Universities were centers for learning. The Learning Channel is a great source of information, but I doubt that after watching Magnum, PI explain the heavens for six hour-long episodes if you have learned as much as you would in one hour of a University astronomy course.



Many of these new ideas I hear on reforming higher education rely on some dubious concepts about learning, such as: 1) a perception that all learning takes place during a scheduled course or lab (I'm glad to hear that, so now I guess I can take those office hours and tutor sessions out of my schedule -- don't worry, I'll give participants my e-mail address instead); 2) a campus experience is not important (we should be "accessible", hopefully teaching them in their living room so the only other person they have to interact with is the Pizza Hut delivery person -- you never see students working together on anything useful on campuses, do you?); and 3) Universities don't have a lock on information (true; however, for the most part we do have the lock on creating new ideas and information -- but who needs new cures for diseases or new art -- we have more than we can handle with the neat stuff already on the www).

I do not wish to sound anti-technology. As an ecological modeler, I have more experience than the average college professor with computers -- I've written interactive programs that help students learn. I hope faculty get the resources, time, and money they need to create new teaching tools. Although technology can have benefits, we have to insure that it is used to enhance the quality of the learning experience -- not just because we can make the words spin on the screen. For example, how many meetings have you been to recently with a colorful Power Point presentation that could have just as easily been done with conventional color overheads? Computer technology is a new tool, just as overheads, slide projectors, and videos were once. Technology is not a replacement for a human being, in a small class or lab, interacting with students on a daily basis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Policies Committee

The Academic Policies Committee has focused on two issues this semester: classroom conditions and distance learning.

The Committee conducted a classroom conditions survey to assess the adequacy of the instruction facilities on the MSU campus. The survey looked at a number of factors

including noise level, seating, availability of electrical outlets, and access to AV equipment and computers in individual classrooms across campus. Results of this survey will be forthcoming.

The second major thrust of the Committee was to look at the quality of distance learning nationally and at MSU. The Committee's activities on this front include reviewing the

literature on the topic; looking at the requirements for submitting a distance learning course proposal; meeting with Dr. Marc Glasser, Dean of Graduate Programs; and meeting with Autumn Grubb-Swetnam, Director of Distance Learning, to discuss what is currently being done on this campus. The Committee also plans to visit the Distance Learning Center before the end of the semester. Dr. Charles Patrick, who chairs the Academic Policies Committee, emphasizes that the Committee fully supports distance learning, but wants to ensure the quality of the program at MSU.



Evaluation Committee

Two subcommittees of the Faculty Senate Evaluation Committee have been formed: Faculty Satisfaction Survey and the Faculty Evaluation Plan.

The Faculty Satisfaction Survey subcommittee, which consists of David Olson, Laradean Brown, Richard Shepard, and Jennifer Schuler, analyzed and revised the 1995 survey, and distributed the 1996 survey and will be presenting the results to the Faculty Senate on May 2.

The responsibilities of the Faculty Evaluation Plan subcommittee, which consists of Tom Klein, Steve Tirone, and Jane Ellington, include meeting with department chairs to discuss administrative problems with PBSI evaluations based on current FEPs. Suggestions for FEP guidelines will be developed.

Professional Policies

The Professional Policies Committee addressed PAc 17: Sabbatical Leave at the February 22, 1996 meeting. Dan Fasco was invited for this meeting.

The committee and Dr. Fasco discussed the concerns associated with PAc 17. The issues addressed:

☞ No Research or Creative Productions representatives on the Professional Development Committee (PDC).

☞ The criteria used for sabbatical application consideration by the PDC are not weighed.

☞ Those serving on the PDC should themselves not be eligible to apply for sabbatical.

☞ Students serving on the PDC should not vote on sabbatical requests.

☞ Sabbatical candidates do not receive feedback, if denied sabbatical, from the PDC.

☞ The 2-year commitment to MSU after taking a 6-month sabbatical leave seems excessive.

Item 2 - PAc's 2 & 27 (Promotion Review & Tenure Review, respectively).

Briefly discussed the linkage of the review process of each with PBSI.

On February 29, 1996 the committee

focused on UAR 116.01 Guidelines Specific to Professional Librarians with invited guests Carol Nutter and Betty Wilson.

The committee voted to accept the proposed revisions and forward the document to the full Senate as a first reading during the 7 March 1996 meeting. A second reading of the proposal occurred at the Senate during the 21 March 1996 meeting.

Governance

The Governance Committee has filled all faculty positions for University Committees for the 1996-97 academic year and members will be notified of their appointments. One hundred sixty-two faculty members returned preference forms for committee nominations; however, only 64 open slots were available. Every effort was made by the committee to honor the choices indicated by the faculty members.

New members of Faculty Senate are:

Physical Science	Mike Adams
Math	John Boardman
IET	Bill Grise
IET	Amad Zagari (1 year)
Nursing/Allied HLTH	Marcia Cooper
Biology	Craig Tuerk
Art	Dixon Ferrell
Communications	Mike Biel
GGH	Yvonne Baldwin
Music	Gordon Towell
Info Science	Deborah Tesch
SSWC	Gabe Wang
ERSE	James Knoll
MNGT/MKT	Roger Carlson
Library	Betty Jean Wilson

The committee is preparing a resolution regarding the establishment of a mentoring program for probationary faculty.

For further information inquires or concerns regarding policies, regulations and practices that affect faculty status, working conditions, advancement and evaluation contact Larry Keenan, Chair, BM 306, Phone 3-2479.

Ballots have been sent out to fill the vacancies on the Planning Committee and Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. Please vote.

In addition, the committee conducted the Faculty Regent election on April 10. Bruce Mattingly was elected for the 1996-97 term.



Communications

The Communications Committee has distributed three editions of the Senate Connection this year, which included details of actions taken by each committee, current goals for the 1995-96 academic year, and future goals for the 1996-97 academic year.

In addition, the committee invited Dwayne Cable and Gary Van Meter to address the Senate regarding issues relating to computer communications and privacy. An article explaining the topics discussed is in this edition of the Senate Connection.

The committee has also begun to investigate issues regarding communication and distance

learning. This issue will continue to be studied during the 1996-97 academic year.



At the request of the Faculty Senate, Dwayne Cable and Gary Van Meter, addressed questions and topics of concern regarding campus computing systems. Topics discussed included: capacity of the system, priority systems, electronic surveillance, information archiving, emeritus faculty privileges, and problems with the log-in procedures for e-mail. The following information was shared with the Senate:

- * There is no priority system with regard to individuals, specific offices or certain programs.
- * No electronic surveillance is executed on this campus. The two members from Information Technology indicated that only 2 or 3 individuals on this campus had the capability to perform monitoring activities; however, no names were mentioned.
- * The projected date for the T1 hardware to be installed is late February or early March and then the campus network will be able to support a graphic browser for the World Wide Web. However, all buildings will not be wired during the initial implementation. A priority system has been established for certain sites across campus.
- * Information Technology indicated that

they were aware of problems with log-in procedures for e-mail and they were working on that program.

- * It was suggested by Faculty Senate that emeritus faculty retain their modem pool privileges and suggested that Information Technology initiate action to ensure that they were not dropped from the pool.
- * Deleted messages on the e-mail system are archived by Information Technology for an indefinite period of time.
- * It was suggested by members of Faculty Senate that a yearly sign-off on computer procedures be implemented at the beginning of every academic year.