

Arts and Sciences Senate

Minutes of November 15th, 1999 Senate Meeting

Secretary: Robert Bloomer

The Meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m.

I. Agenda. The tentative Agenda was approved.

II. Minutes from the CAS Senate Meeting on October 18th, 1999. The Minutes from this Meeting were approved.

III. Report of the CAS Senate President (Hugh J. Silverman). All five of the CAS Standing Committees have now met, elected their Chairs, and are effectively functioning. We have heard reports so far this semester from Elizabeth Stone, Chair of the Curriculum Committee (CC); from Bernie Maskit, Chair of the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC); and from Erich Goode, who along with Mark Setton chaired the Committee on Academic Standing and Appeals (CASA) last year. Everett Waters, Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee (PTC), will give his report today on activities in the PTC last year and make comparisons with previous years as well. Nancy Hollingsworth (Fall 1999) and Marci Lobel (Spring 2000) are the Co-Chairs for CASA this year. Harvey Cormier was elected Chair of the Academic Judiciary Committee (AJC) and will give his report next semester.

The President clarified that Senators in the CAS Senate are thereby also Senators in the University Senate and are expected to attend both sets of meetings. The three meetings of the CAS Senate during the Spring semester 2000 are on:

Monday, February 21st, 2000

Monday, March 13th, 2000

Monday, April 17th, 2000

These meetings will take place at 3:30 p.m. sharp in the Javits Room on the 2nd Floor of Melville Library.

IV. Report of the Acting Provost and Academic Vice-President (Robert McGrath). Before proceeding to his report, Robert McGrath called for a special report from Mark Aronoff on our response to the Trustee's Resolution on General Education Requirements in SUNY. According to Aronoff, the major issue is the American History requirement. He met with the Directors of Undergraduate Studies and with the CC, and reported that the CC has approved slightly new wording for our Category K of the D.E.C. Category K, previously called American Pluralism, has been relabeled The American Experience in Historical Perspective. About 12 courses in K that do not have some historical perspective will either be dropped from that category or will have to be revised in order to be retained. Also, there are four 100-level courses in Categories H, I, J, K combined that have to be removed because we want to tell Albany that all courses in those categories must be at the 200-level or above. That will lend more legitimacy to our own version of

the American History requirement, which excludes our 100-level American History survey courses.

For his report, Provost McGrath handed out USB's Five Year Plan for 2000-2005 along with the Table of Contents of the Five Year Plan for 1995-2000. While the latter emphasized improvements in undergraduate education, the former searches for ways to enhance graduate education. In 1994-1995, the provostial budget allocation was greater than could be sustained, and in 1995-1996 freezes began to take place. Since 1996-1997 through the present academic year, the budgets in the academic area have been going up. For instance, in the provostial area, the operating budget has gone up about 5.8% plus negotiated salary increases. In the Colleges, budgets have gone up about 5.4% in addition to salary increases. Meanwhile, enrollments from the 1994-1995 year through an estimate for 1999-2000 have been going up, with an increase of 4% in the CAS and with much greater increases in Engineering and Harriman. But in the CAS, graduate enrollments have been dropping by more than 10% over that five-year period. The main reason for wanting to increase enrollments is that, according to the RAM methodology, we get more money if we have more students, whereby the amounts depend on the level of students. But the question is whether this will also be true for next year. Several problems that must also be considered when attempting to increase enrollments are residential hall capacities, staffing, the quality and length of TAships, and retention strategies.

V. Report of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (Paul Armstrong). In the Fall of 1998 we had 539 new full-time graduate students, whereas in the Fall of 1999 we experienced a decrease to 466. In Social Science Departments, applications are down this year as opposed to last year (887 to 747). In Life Sciences, the number of applications went up (411 to 464). Comparing this with national trends in graduate applications by field from 1986 to 1997, one finds that Biological Sciences is one of the few areas in Arts and Sciences where there has been an increase. In the Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, and in the Humanities and Arts, decreases took place. Two programs on this campus that have experienced increases in applications by more than 25% from 1998 to 1999 are Genetics and Philosophy. There are several programs in Arts and Sciences where the number of applications has decreased by more than 25% from 1998 to 1999. From 1987 to 1999, the number of TA/GA lines has decreased in the CAS from 587 to 544. But in the past couple of years, we have done well in maintaining a high rate of new TAs per line allocated for the College, even as the number of lines has gone down. In 1997 there was a 0.82% yield and in 1998 it was 0.80%, but in 1999 it dropped to 0.68% per line.

If we attempt to increase graduate enrollment, then the trends will have to be reversed. One concern is having the faculty to deliver the courses to students, which could detract from the research excellence in some departments. One thing we might do is ask whether we have all the graduate students we might be recruiting for the research faculty that we have. There is probably not one answer for the entire CAS, but rather different answers for different departments. There is also the question of capacity, and of how we can recruit new graduate students, since current stipends are too low in most disciplines. Another problem is the length of support. All of these issues will have to be considered.

Lawrence Martin, Dean of the Graduate School, added that we have too few TA lines, too few graduate students, and we pay them not nearly enough money. If SUNY continues to allocate funds based on enrollments, then the additional money we receive is substantial, and there is a significant number of graduate programs that feel they have the existing intellectual capacity to pay more students than they currently have. They also have existing or can obtain the grant support to increase the size of their graduate program without having to hire new faculty. Where we have those opportunities, money can be made by supporting graduate students for the first year or the first couple of years. This is also true in the Humanities. So it doesn't make fiscal sense to constrain the size of graduate programs below what the faculty would like to have them and what is possible.

VI. Report of the CAS Senate Standing Committee on Promotion and Tenure (Everett Waters, Chair). Due to lack of time, this report was tabled until the next Senate Meeting.

VII. Old Business: There was no old business.

VIII. New Business: There was no new business.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.