Minutes of Regular Meeting

Meeting

Regular meeting of the full senate, 3:15 p.m., Kendall Cram Room, Lavin-Bernick Center.
Presiding: The chair, President Cowen.

Attendance

Ex Officio: Cowen (pres./chair), Long (vice chair), M. Bernstein (SVP, provost), Lorino (CFO), Y. Jones (COO), Barrera (chair, SAC), Mackin (secr), Wiese (parl)
Deans: DeNisi (ABF),Query (Libraries), Schwartz (Arch.), Fitzmorris (proxy for Marksbury, SCS), Ponoroff (Law), Haber (SLA), Buekens (SPHTM), Altiero (SSE)
A. B. Freeman School of Business: Sujan, McFarland
Newcomb-Tulane College: Kalka
Architecture:
Continuing Studies: Green, McLennan
Law: Nowicki, Davies, Overby
Liberal Arts: Balée, Masquelier, Cole, Rothenberg
Medicine: Reitan, Mushatt, S. Landry, DeSalvo, Voss
Public Health and Tropical Medicine: Hutchinson, Webber, Rose
Science and Engineering: Schmehl, Diebold, Walker, Tasker
Social Work: Pearlmutter, Lewis
Student Senators: Leverson, Aronson
Staff Senators: Earles

Senators at Large: Robins, Hoeffel, Parsley (proxy for Tornqvist), Langston, Carroll, Purrington, Wilson
Invited Guests: McMahon (vp, IT), Maczuga (assoc vp, tech transfer), Hogg and Mitchell (assoc provosts), Banker (spec asst president)
Absent Senators: Sachs, Clinton, MacLaren, Marks, Page, V. Jones, Bernhard, Horowitz, Maveety, Bunnell, Doucet, Wendt, Blainey, Hayes, Parker,

Introduction of New Senators and Guests

President Cowen introduced two new student senators: Donald Leverson, USG president, and Lauren Aronson, USG vice president for student life.

Minutes

The minutes of the April 6 meeting were approved without change.

Elections

Committee on Committees
Martin Davies was elected to the committee as Law School representative.

President’s Report

President Cowen updated the senate on several topics he had addressed at the last meeting. Fall 2009
student enrollment stood at 1,516 deposits. He said that number would change over the next few months because of “summer melt and the wait-list phenomenon.” Quality was essentially the same as last fall. He noted that 57 percent of deposits were from women—an all time high. A couple of big states came in strong, including in the Midwest, California, and Texas. Vermont was the only state not represented. On the other hand, 16 students from New Hampshire made deposits. He said that the numbers looked good for fall, but as Registrar Retif would warn, those numbers could change.

He then asked Provost Bernstein to discuss the results of his request for proposals for new doctoral programs. The provost said his office was close to completion of the first phase of the project. His office received 13 proposals for innovative programs in doctoral education and reinvention of programs that had been suspended. The Graduate Council reviewed the proposals rigorously, getting input from a variety of sources. Three programs had been selected for immediate starts: a doctorate in French studies, another in linguistics, and a third in aging studies. These programs will begin recruitment of students in the upcoming academic year for matriculation in Fall 2010. Several other proposals were asked to revise and resubmit because of a variety of questions ranging from strategic to operational. Those submitting these proposals were given feedback from the Graduate Council and from outside evaluators. A handful of proposals were rejected. He said he would not give the identity of these other proposals because his office wanted to insure it had notified all the members of the constituent teams making the proposals. Overall, he said he was very pleased with the process so far. He added that the process would cover several years, and he looked forward to receiving new and revised proposals.

President Cowen said he had read all the proposals and believed the provost's office and the Graduate Council had done excellent work.

Senator Sujan asked about a recent op-ed piece in the New York Times that had criticized graduate education in general. Provost Bernstein said that piece questioned the value of merely producing the next generation of assistant professors. While the provost hoped Tulane's doctoral programs would do that in the years ahead, he also expected them to train graduates to take up roles in government, in NPO and NGO organizations, and in the private sector as a result of their multi-disciplinary training.

Senator Kalka asked if the provost's office had a total number of doctoral programs in mind. Provost Bernstein replied that he had no fixed number in mind but was focused on the cogency and intellectual worth of the proposals. Money, of course, was a limiting factor.

President Cowen then continued his report by discussing the status of the review of the development fund-raising function at the university. Before Hurricane Katrina the development office included 130 people; afterward, it dropped to as few as 60. The administration hoped to build a fund-raising platform for the future that would be capable of supporting a campaign of a billion dollars. Initially, the administration had considered deferring the rebuilding of development until after the economic downturn, but decided that would not be wise. The investment in development was expected to yield a return of four or five times the cost. He said he would be reviewing the results of the study of development with the board at its May meeting. He expected that the rebuilding of the development function would take place over several years so that it would achieve full capability as the country recovered from its current recession. He repeated that putting funds into development was a very good investment. Within limits, a correlation existed between the size of the development staff and the funds raised, and development offices around the campus and at the central office were seriously understaffed. With increased emphasis on development, other aspects of the central function would undergo reorganization. This reorganization would occur during the next 60-90 days.

The president next addressed the issue of residential housing, which had been raised at the last senate meeting. The administration was considering at least one new residential community. The project was expected to be self-financing, with funds provided by bonding, not fund-raising. He mentioned that at the last meeting the question was raised how the university could afford to build a building but could not afford to raise salaries or hire new personnel. The answer, he said, was that the financing was very different. A building was a one-time capital investment and, if done right, would finance itself. So, capital investments are viewed differently than ongoing costs. The administration was therefore seriously considering the possibility of building a new residential college or two.

Saying he would defer discussion of the 2010 budget to Senator McFarland of the Budget Review
Committee, the president concluded his report and opened the floor to questions. Senator Kalka noted that many other staff functions besides development were suffering; he asked if the administration had plans to address those other areas. President Cowen responded that the university was not able to address those other areas under current financial circumstances. Development was different because of the type of return it could provide on the investment. One reason for phasing in that investment over several years was that it gave the administration a chance to evaluate whether it was receiving that planned return.

Senator Schmehl asked about the possibility of new housing for graduate students. President Cowen acknowledged that the Papillon complex was insufficient. He hoped that new undergraduate housing would free up residential space for graduate students.

Senator Rose said that in a conversation with a colleague from Rand Corporation at a recent conference, he learned that Rand Corporation was hiring. Rand Corporation believed that the current situation was an ideal time to hire because of the talent available when many universities were not hiring. He asked whether the administration had considered the return on investment in intellectual capital that could be achieved in the current economic climate. The president said that in fact, the stabilization program had never been a hard freeze, especially in faculty positions. The university had done a considerable amount of hiring to take advantage of the talent available. Each of the deans had identified positions where unique opportunities existed. Hiring was taking place in every school on campus. Not all of the approved slots had been filled. The university would continue to try to fill those slots and then take time to reevaluate where it stood in the fall.

Senator Schmehl said that the shortage in staff positions was leading to increased tension between faculty and staff. He noted that the office of research was understaffed and, as a result, had increased the lead times required for proposals. Those lead times made it more difficult for faculty to prepare proposals, resulting in more tension between faculty and research staff. President Cowen said that hiring in the sciences normally included a package of staff members, often at a ratio of three staff members to each faculty member. He acknowledged that research administration was stressed, especially because of the government's stimulus program, but he said the administration had provided additional funding to research administration to increase the staff, at least temporarily. He noted that most university presidents were concerned about managing the stimulus program. While appreciative of the current opportunities for research, they were worried about what could happen in several years when the stimulus funds ran out. Universities could find themselves with larger research faculties and staffs but no funding for them. Management of the funds was a difficult problem.

Senator Sujan asked what the impact would be on the university if the incoming freshman class turned out to be 1,400 students instead of 1,600. The president answered that the administration would adjust the totals with admissions of transfer students. Senator Tasker followed up by asking if 1,600 was the target number. President Cowen answered yes, including new freshmen and transfer students. The number was limited by housing and other infrastructure issues.

**Committee Reports**

**Budget Review**

The chair of the Committee on Budget Review, Senator McFarland, said his committee had not yet received the FY 2010 budget to review. He requested that the senate delegate authority to review the budget to a joint meeting of the Committee on Budget Review and the President's Faculty Advisory Committee. That meeting would take place before the board meeting on May 14.

Senator Carroll expressed concern that the full senate have the opportunity to consider the budget. The president assured her that the budget would be reported to the senate when it returned in the fall.

The motion to delegate authority for budget approval to the joint committee was approved unanimously by the senate.

**Educational Policy**

Vice Chair Long, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy presented the committee’s report on the academic calendar for 2010-11, which had been distributed to the members of the senate. He noted that Spring 2011 was unusual because Mardi Gras and Easter occurred late, resulting in no classes after Easter Break. The committee could find no viable alternatives.

The committee considered the balance of...
Monday-Wednesday-Friday and Tuesday-Thursday classes in light of accreditation requirements. Many students were unhappy about Saturday makeup classes when either type of class fell short of requirements. He said this calendar was balanced in that dimension. The short study period of two days in the fall was discussed in committee. Placement of fall break was not discussed this year, although it had been discussed in previous years when the break was instituted. The question of changing the fall break from Thursday-Friday to Monday-Tuesday or even Friday-Monday had since been raised in e-mail exchanges. The committee therefore sought more information from the registrar. The data showed that Fridays have less instruction time scheduled than any other day of the week, suggesting that the current break schedule reduced instruction time the least. The committee recommended retaining the break as scheduled.

Senator Walker asked why the calendar continued to schedule the start of classes in August when the community had gone through five hurricane evacuations in August and early September. Vice Chair Long replied that a later start would push the semester into January.

Senator Tasker argued that each week the start of classes was delayed would reduce the probability of evacuating by some amount. Senator Langston, who had previously chaired the Committee on Educational Policy, recalled that after Hurricane Katrina, the committee had discussed the issue of delaying the start of classes. They reviewed data from the National Hurricane Center with the registrar and concluded that no statistical advantage of avoiding serious storms could be gained by delaying the start of classes for several weeks. President Cowen added that Registrar Retif's analysis showed that the probabilities of being hit by a Category 3 storm in the period before mid-September and the period after mid-September were roughly equal. The conclusion was that changing to a quarter system would be the only way to significantly change the probabilities of evacuation.

Dean Ponoroff offered another perspective on why he believed postponing the start date was misguided. He believed Tulane was fortunate in Hurricane Katrina's timing coinciding with move-in day. If Tulane's move-in day had been weeks or months later, he did not believe very many students would have returned.

Senator Rothenberg said she took all the statistical studies with a grain of salt, but as she understood it, moving the start date would make Tulane look too different from its peer schools. Incoming students are uncomfortable waiting around when their friends have all started college. She said she was not sure what weight that reasoning should be given. President Cowen said that Registrar Retif believed that moving the start date would be a competitive disadvantage. He added that the issue had been thoroughly discussed after Katrina and he did not think the relevant facts had changed, but he had no objection to CEP reconsidering the issue.

Vice Chair Long said that, in this iteration, the committee had not gone back to reconsider the underlying assumptions behind the calendar because that had been done after Katrina. If the senate wished, the committee would revisit the data and array the arguments.

Senator Purrington said that, while it was possible that a few more years of data could lead to a different conclusion, at this point changing the basic calendar was impractical. The issue could be revisited in the future.

Vice Chair Long, on behalf of the committee, then moved adoption of the calendar as presented, with the proviso that the registrar add another day to the Fall 2010 study period if feasible.

Senator Lewis asked whether the committee had considered the effect on service learning of the calendar for Spring 2011. Vice Chair Long said the committee had not addressed the question of service learning specifically, but he pointed out that the total number of class days was no different from other semesters. He acknowledged that those class days were distributed differently.

The committee motion to adopt the calendar was then approved unanimously.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Mackin, Secretary

Secretary's Note: All written reports mentioned in the minutes, together with the full text of approved Handbook revisions and other policy changes, will be available on the senate Web site, http://www.tulane.edu/~usenate/