

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 25, 2008
2:30 pm.

Senate Conference Room
140 McFall Center

Present: Alden Craddock, Keith Bernhard, James Evans, Emmanuel Guillory, Ben Muego, John Waynick, Ellen Williams, Rich Hebein

Guests: Kristie Foell and Nancy Patterson, Concerned Faculty; and Mark Gromko, Interim VPAA, and Paul Hofmann, Director of International Programs

NEW BUSINESS

Submitting Resolutions to Senate

In response to a request from Williams, Parliamentarian Pauken reviewed the ways that items and motions could be considered on the floor of the Senate. Regarding traditional meeting agendas, SEC as the agenda setting body for Senate can put resolutions on the agenda [IV.F 1.b (3)], or any senator can discuss a topic under Issues and Concerns. However, a motion put forward on a topic raised under Issues and Concerns cannot be acted on until two-thirds of those present and voting agree to do so [Bylaws, Part B]. In addition, ten faculty members can petition SEC to call a special meeting of the Senate to discuss a particular item or motion. If SEC does not grant the request, the item/motion automatically comes up under New Business at the next regular meeting.

International Students' Tuition and Fee Waivers

Discussion started with Attachment #1 to the agenda, a draft of a letter to Interim President Cartwright, which described alleged abuses of international students with regard to their tuition and fee waivers. Discussion turned to Attachment #2, wherein Gromko and Hofmann corrected what they saw as factual errors. Patterson said that there was not much difference between the two versions and asked if they could address the issues. Foell pointed to the list of twelve students from the African People's Association who were all in good standing in their eight or ninth semester and had holds on their bursar accounts that, Foell said, the students believed CIP would pay. At this point, they cannot pay the amounts, register for classes or get a transcript.

Foell said that the University should pay. She said that the VPAA's web site said that all commitments were being honored. She said that the twelve entered in 2006 on the understanding that they would be funded to graduation and that they should be grandfathered. The principle that students may graduate under the rules in force when they enter or when they graduate should be applied here. She said that there is precedent for funding students beyond eight semesters; she said that only 38% of A&S students graduate in four years. She added that some of the courses for nursing students were available only during summers. She asked that SEC send Attachment #1 to Senate for endorsement and approval.

Hofmann said that there was no abuse of immigration law and that the university is dedicated to following the rules. He disagreed that commitments had been made to these students, some of which had their fees rescinded anyway.

Gromko said that the central issues were: 1) Does the university have a responsibility to honor a contract? And 2) What is the evidence for it? He said that we would continue to honor our commitments and that now we have no outstanding commitments. Some students say that they have verbal contracts, but there is no evidence. He said that he supported the USG compromise. This is an alternate version to the letter to Cartwright based on a resolution recently passed by USG.

Foell said that she had heard that the Office of Development had offered money to pay for these students. Gromko said that this would open the door for many other students. There was some discussion about the amount of money needed. Gromko observed that paying their bills would not give them an incentive to finish. He said that we needed a reasonable approach and a mechanism to limit liability. There was some discussion and disagreement over whether a signed I-20 form constituted a contract.

Evans said that he believed that we could limit the solution to these twelve students; Gromko thought that this would be unfair. Muego acknowledged that there could be a dispute over the number of students involved and asked approximately how much money was involved. Hofmann said potentially \$1.3 million. Gromko said the money didn't exist. Foell said that the twelve were exceptional because they were so close to graduating even though they have outstanding Bursar bills. Gromko pointed out that the students were told that summer wouldn't be covered before they registered. Foell said that that wasn't fair because they presumed that they would be covered.

Williams complimented Foell and Patterson for their motivation, Gromko and Hofmann for their extensive work and Waynick for trying to work on a resolution. Hebein suggested that one side saw the issue as one of fairness and the other saw it as one of evidence. He suggested that they put out a call for all who feel eligible to step forward and then get them together to determine the cost.

Muego moved, Evans seconded to forward Attachment #1 to Senate. The motion passed by consensus with two abstentions.

SENATE AGENDA

As the meeting was breaking up, the group agreed to put the Senate officers' proposal on ntuf on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Williams adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Hebein, Secretary