

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Room 101, Law Building, Monday, March 2, 1953

The meeting of the Faculty Senate convened in regular session at 3:40 P.M. on Monday, March 2, 1953, in Room 101 of the Law Building. Thirty members were present with Dean Chapman presiding.

The minutes of February 2, 1953, were approved as previously published and distributed to members of the Senate.

SCHEDULE OF HOURS COMMITTEE: Mr. Leshner, chairman stated that the committee was not yet ready to submit a report.

FACULTY RATING PROGRAM, PROPOSAL FOR: Dean Chapman announced that this matter had been reviewed by Dr. Nugent at a meeting of the Advisory Council on February 25, 1953, but that no action had been taken since it was understood that the question would be referred directly to the Senate. He referred to the following excerpt from the Advisory Council minutes:

"FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE: Dr. Nugent reported that a special committee of the Student Body, headed by Mr. Allen Stanton, President of the student group, had recommended that the University again rate the members of the faculty with regard to teaching qualifications. This was a matter which would have to be decided by the Faculty Senate, but Dr. Nugent was interested in having any comments which the Council might wish to make. He reported that the students were interested in conducting a rating plan similar to that which was administered several years ago. It was his thought, however, that a questionnaire should be made available to all members of the faculty but that it should not be compulsory that they submit it to their classes. It was his judgement also that instead of having the completed questionnaires referred to heads of departments and the deans of the colleges, it should be held by the instructor concerned for his own information and guidance. No objection was voiced to the plan suggested by Dr. Nugent. It was understood that this question would be an item on the agenda at the next meeting of the Senate."

In review of previous action by the Senate on this matter, the secretary read the following excerpt from the minutes of May 5, 1952:

"FACULTY RATING PROGRAM, PROPOSAL FOR: President Harvill announced that the student body wish to have the opportunity of rating members of the teaching faculty throughout the University. Since there would not be time this spring, they proposed that this survey be considered for next year, to be conducted by a joint committee of students and faculty. Mr. Leshner read a letter from Dr. Carpenter, Head of the Department of Astronomy, in which exception was taken to accepting student reports submitted anonymously in any attempt to grade the faculty. The letter suggested that there was no real value in such an effort since other means of measuring faculty attainment are always in effect; but it did not oppose the rating proposal as such providing reports were received from students with satisfactory scholarship records with the name of the student included.

"The Secretary also reported the following recommendations adopted by the Advisory Council: 'Upon motion, the Council voted to recommend to the Faculty Senate that it authorize a faculty grading program this spring with provision that the device to be used in grading the faculty be selected by a committee made up jointly of faculty and students but that the procedure and the conduct of the program be the same as that previously employed.'

"Dr. Garretson moved, and Mr. Leshar seconded, that the Senate approve the recommendation of the Advisory Council as read, with the substitution of the words "next year" instead of "this spring", providing for the resubmission of the joint committee's plan for the final approval of the Senate.

"There were various questions raised regarding desirability of students rating the faculty as was done three years ago. Objection was voiced to the principle involved in such a proposal, and emphasis was placed on the fact that there are always means of measuring the attainment of the teaching faculty, and that grading reports as submitted by students are not reliable. It was pointed out, on the other hand, that from the administrative point of view it might be desirable to allow the students to conduct a grading program under restrictions imposed by the Senate.

"The question being called for, the Senate voted against approval of the Council's recommendation."

Mr. Leshar reported that Dr. Nugent's explanation to the Council indicated that the student body officers at this time have in mind their original request which was denied by the Senate and they are presenting it again in the hope that something may be done. Dr. Nugent had made it clear that his plan did not meet with the students approval.

Mr. Marcoux questioned whether the students had been informed of the Senate action of last spring. He saw no reason why the Senate should not take a definite stand on the issue and settle it one way or the other. Mr. Leshar stated that the students were informed of the Senate action, but in response to a question by Dr. Carpenter he said he was not certain as to whether the students had been told of the determination of a considerable number of heads of departments not to read any evaluations submitted anonymously. Dean Roy pointed out that it was the hope of the Senate in postponing action last spring that the students would forget about it.

Dr. Muir stated that he felt there was value to such an undertaking in that instructors could profit somewhat by a well-conducted and systematic series of judgments, and that constantly refusing to allow such only resulted in the students feeling that instructors were afraid to be judged. Continual refusal may result in an independently conducted survey and publication of such as on some other campuses. Deeming it a wise, diplomatic, and professional move to allow some kind of plan to be put in action, Dr. Muir moved that the Senate endorse a rating plan as previously used.

Dr. Haury expressed the hope that the question of anonymity would be considered further. It was his belief that it would make the student more responsible in filling out the questionnaire if he had to sign his name. Dr. Carpenter emphasized this point and said that any faculty member who objected to anonymous reports should not be compelled to read the evaluations. Both Dr. Haury and Dr. Carpenter announced that they would pay no attention to, nor willing read, any anonymous ratings of members of their staffs. * Dean Roy

* This statement an amendment as requested in meeting of April 13, 1953.

suggested there was no difference between an anonymous evaluation and a secret ballot at the polls, and that the student's evaluation over his signature could be influenced by his concern over a semester grade. Dr. Carpenter emphasized that there is a great difference between a secret ballot and the requested rating: a ballot is a mere indication of choice; the proposed rating is an accusation of faults, and is equivalent to an anonymous critical letter of recommendation.*

At this point Dr. Hudson seconded Dr. Muir's motion.

Dean Garretson remarked that the interest was not in the individual's evaluation, but in the opinion of the group. Dr. Roberts stated that some values had been apparent in the plan as carried out three years ago. He saw no objection to the plan or to the feature of anonymity. Dr. Lynn pointed out that students are concerned with the manner in which subject matter is taught. She suggested that the questionnaires could be used as the source of material for instructing the faculty on the nature of factors missing in effective teaching. Dr. Barnes raised a question as to whether Dr. Muir's motion as stated meant that the plan would be compulsory on all faculty members, whether the questionnaires would be sent to the heads of the departments, and whether there would be anonymity or not. Mr. Leshar reported that under the plan previously administered all members of the faculty were rated through at least one class, and that the reports were filed through heads of departments with the college deans. There was anonymity insofar as the students reporting were concerned. Dr. Thomas added that as he remembered the previous operation of the plan, the students were not advised of the results of the questionnaire and he presumed that would be true this time.

Dr. Carpenter again questioned whether faculty members would be compelled to read the reports which were anonymous. The general opinion was that there would be no such compulsion. Dr. Roberts and Dr. Rhodes announced that they would not vote for any plan which required an instructor to submit his anonymous ratings to his superior officer if he was unwilling to do so.*

Dean Roy then stated that if Dr. Muir's motion were passed he would recommend that a committee of three be appointed by the President to work out a satisfactory plan. Dr. Brown asked if Dr. Nugent intended to present to the Senate a plan of his own. Mr. Leshar stated that it was his understanding that Dr. Nugent merely summarized for the Council the position of the students and stated that he did not agree with their proposed plan of rating. He felt that the questionnaire should be available to all faculty members but that no one should be required to issue it in any class. He would have the instructors hold the reports and not pass them to heads of departments. He also made it perfectly clear that his plan was not agreeable to the students.

Dr. Carpenter called for the application of By-Law 14 in connection with the vote. Nine members supported his request. Accordingly a roll call vote was taken on Dr. Muir's motion that the Senate go on record as favoring a rating plan of the type previously used. There were 24 affirmative votes, 5 negative, one member abstaining, and 10 members were absent. The record of the vote is as follows: *

Affirmative: W. R. Barnes, W. R. Brewer, A. W. Buchhauser, J. Crowder, J. B. Cunningham, R. C. Ewing, O. K. Garretson, D. Hawkins, G. F. Herrick, P. G. Hudson, E. L. Larson, C. Z. Leshar, K. Lynn, J. F. McKale, E. D. McKee, A. L. Muir, J. C. Park, D. L. Patrick, H. D. Rhodes, L. E. Roberts, F. Roy, M. T. Solve, F. E. Thomas, J. Lyons.

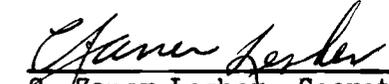
* This statement an amendment as requested in meeting of April 13, 1953.

Negative: W. H. Brown, E. F. Carpenter, E. W. Haury, H. A. Marcoux, H. F. Tate.

Abstaining: T. C. Chapman (presiding as chairman)

Dean Roy then moved, with a second by Dean Garretson, that in view of the general acceptance of the principle involved, that if and when a student petition is presented for a faculty rating, that the president appoint a committee of three from the faculty to work with the student committee to formulate the questionnaire, to outline the method of administering the plan, and to submit a report to the Senate for action". The motion passed.

The Senate adjourned at 4:45.


C. Zaner Leshner, Secretary
Faculty Senate

* The word "action" substituted for "consideration" as requested at meeting of April 13, 1953.