

The University of Arizona

Proceedings of the Faculty Senate

Meeting of Monday

March 7, 1966

PRESENT: Bartlett, Beattie, Blitzer, Brewer, Carlson, Damon, Delaplane, Forrester, Gegenheimer, Gries, Hall, Harris, Harshbarger, Harvill, Hillman, Johnson, Joyner, Kruttsch, Little, Lynn, McCarthy, McCaughey, McMillan, Myers, Patrick, Picard, Quinn, Rappeport, Rhodes, Robinson, Roy, Shields, Simonian, Sorensen, Stanislawski, Steelink, Stromberg, Svob, Tucker, Voris, Wilson, Windsor, Yoshino.

ABSENT: Blecha, Chadwick, Cockrum, Coleman, Coulter, DuVal, Gaines, Hull, Lyons, Marcoux, McDonald, Paulsen.

DR. CECIL ROBINSON AS MEMBER OF SENATE, WELCOME OF: President Harvill welcomed Dr. Cecil Robinson as a member-at-large of the Senate. Dr. Robinson had been elected at the February meeting to fill the vacancy created when Mr. Robert S. Svob, who had been serving as a Senator-at-large, became automatically a member of the Senate because of his new position as University Dean of Men.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSES AND TEACHING, APPROVAL OF: Dr. Joyner asked for the floor and said he would like immediately to place a motion before the Senate which read as follows: "I move that the Faculty Senate recommend to the faculty that they cooperate with the Associated Students of the University of Arizona in their proposed evaluation of courses and instructors. Passage of this motion is not to be construed as either approval or disapproval of course and faculty evaluation or the technique to be used by ASUA." The motion was seconded by Dr. Wilson.

Dr. Joyner said that he had been impressed during the past year by the interest members of the student body had demonstrated in a number of subjects. He said he had observed a marked increase in the general awareness of students, in a sense of greater involvement in affairs around them. It is admirable, he said, for students to want to become involved in the affairs of the University. He said he hoped the Senate would see fit to approve the motion.

Dr. Tucker said he saw no reason for the Senate to take such action as was proposed. He said if a faculty member wanted to cooperate in a student evaluation of courses he could permit distribution of questionnaires in his classes without Senate action.

Dr. Quinn said he had read the questionnaire student leaders had proposed be used in the course evaluation (as distributed at the February meeting), together with an accompanying statement distributed by the students at the same time. He said he had noted that these documents contained a number of grammatical errors. He said he hoped the Senate would not go on record as approving anything indicating ignorance of basic rules of grammar.

Dean Rhodes pointed out that Dr. Joyner's motion did not refer to any particular questionnaire. He said he also had been encouraged by the students' indication of interest in affairs around them. Further, he said he was impressed by the fact that the students desired faculty support of their effort rather than wishing simply to strike out on their own.

Dr. Blitzer said he would like to react to Dr. Tucker's comments. He said if the Senate does nothing more than indicate good will by approving Dr. Joyner's motion, this would be worthwhile. He said he as a teacher thought that any effort aimed at improving teaching was something worth supporting.

Dr. Stanislawski referred to an evaluation of teaching made at the University of Washington. He felt that the results of the evaluation there did not correctly evaluate the quality of teaching or the individual instructors concerned. He said it seemed to him the Arizona students' main reason for wanting Faculty Senate approval of their proposed project was that getting necessary financial support would be easier to come by if the Senate had approved the project.

Dr. Joyner said that while the students may have felt that financial support (from student funds) might more easily be available if the project enjoyed the status of approval by the Faculty Senate, what the students particularly wanted was the good will of the Senate in their effort.

Dr. Tucker said he would like to state again that the students can do anything they want in making their evaluation, either in conducting a survey or in publishing the results. He said he thought Dr. Joyner's motion was meaningless.

In answer to a question Dr. Joyner said he thought the students' plans were, if all went well, to conduct the evaluation survey during the first week of April, approximately, with the results to be published in late August. The question was asked what would be the purpose of publishing the results just shortly before fall registration. Dr. Joyner replied that the purpose would be two-fold. First, the students would like to know which teachers their peers consider to be the better teachers. Further, and probably of second importance in the average student's mind, the student leaders genuinely believe that this evaluation will contribute to a general improvement of the quality of teaching on this campus. He then read several quotations from educators on other campuses, commenting on the value of the fact that students are now showing interest in the quality of instruction at their respective institutions.

Dr. Damon said he thought there was no question but that only an evaluation such as that proposed by the students could stimulate the improvement of teaching techniques. He referred to one of his professors during his student days who lectured in a mumble while facing the blackboard, writing mathematical symbols on the board throughout his remarks. As soon as he had finished writing the symbols he would erase his blackboard notes. Such poor technique as this would come to the attention of an instructor only by a student evaluation such as that being proposed, he said. A professor would never learn from his colleagues about such shortcomings. Dr. Damon said he thought student morale was a factor in this situation. He said that he was confident the evaluation would go forward even without Faculty Senate approval. However, student morale would be much better if the students could feel that the Senate had approved this activity. Otherwise students will think that the faculty is afraid of being evaluated or will feel that the Senate believes that the students should not involve themselves in making judgments on the educational process.

Dr. Harris asked if it is correct that in the near future the published Schedule of Hours will not list individual faculty members. Mr. Windsor explained that now that the Schedule of Hours is to be prepared much further in advance of the opening of each semester it would not be possible to list faculty members in the Schedule. However, it is assumed that most departments will post in departmental offices a listing of faculty members for each course each term.

Dr. Steelink said that the point should not be overlooked that freshman students at the present time have virtually no choice in the selection of their instructors anyway. When a student registers depends upon the first letter of his last name, and departments place him in sections taught by student teachers for the most part without his having any option in the selection of his professors.

Dr. Beattie commented that he felt the harm which would result from the Senate's failing to approve Dr. Joyner's motion would far outweigh any disadvantages which might result from the motion's being passed.

Dr. Harvill said he would be particularly interested in Dr. Beattie's thoughts on the motion inasmuch as Dr. Beattie is the Director of the University Honors Program. Dr. Beattie said that he saw considerable harm in any effort to prevent students' proceeding with the proposed evaluation. He said he would prefer to see the evaluation done by Honors Program participants alone rather than by the general student body. In conference with Honors students, he said, he has heard many comments about teaching on this campus and he has been encouraged by such comments because they have reflected in most instances the recognition by the students of the high quality of most of the teaching that is going on here. He said further he would prefer an evaluation carefully prepared and administered with the help and cooperation of faculty members who are experts in such evaluation.

Dr. Tucker commented that he saw as a particular weakness in the proposed evaluation plan the fact that instructors will not receive feed-back, if they are rated as weak, as to where or how they are weak.

Dr. Harris and Dr. Damon asked if Dr. Joyner's motion was actually strong enough. Dr. Joyner said he considered the Senate action proposed by his motion as a first step. If this first step proves worthwhile, he then would like to see an evaluation developed on a larger scale. As a matter of fact, he said, he would like to serve notice to his Senate colleagues that now that he is a member of this body they can expect to hear more and more from him about the matter of teaching in this University, inasmuch as he feels this institution's first and primary job, the one that should receive every faculty member's first consideration, to be the highest level of teaching that is possible. He said he is impressed whenever he reads of the large amounts of money the University is receiving for research, but, he said, he is at the University of Arizona and most of his Senate colleagues are here to be teachers. In short, he emphasized, teaching is the primary function of the University and is the primary function of most of the persons sitting in the Senate chamber. He hoped that later the assistance of the Department of Psychology might be obtained to find ways to upgrade the quality of teaching throughout the University. The evaluation plan proposed by the students is a first step, he repeated.

President Harvill referred to the point that had been made several times, that the students could go ahead and conduct an evaluation survey without official support. He said he thought it was commendable that they did wish faculty backing. He said it is important, further, that the students have the assistance of faculty guidance. Dr. Damon asked if a faculty representative could be appointed to work with the students and advise them, communicating some of the points that have arisen in the Senate, for example. He referred to the suggestion that only students with a certain minimum grade average be among the evaluators.

At this point several calls for the Question were heard and the chair put the Question. The motion carried with many Aye votes being heard and only a few No votes.

Dr. Damon then moved that the President appoint an individual who would be available to work with the students, and communicate to them some of the ideas relating to course and teaching evaluation that had been mentioned in the Senate discussions. Several seconds to the motion were heard.

Dr. Bartlett said he would like to speak against the motion. We should give responsibility to the students, he said. He said he for one was confident they

would accept this. "We can communicate with them and they may ask for counsel, but let us not appoint someone to direct them," he said. This would be to treat them as children.

Dr. Damon said he did not mean that the faculty member should direct or dictate. Rather he should be available to communicate with the students so that there could be a bridge between Senate thinking about the matter and the student project itself. Such a liaison he felt would be helpful. Certainly he did not intend, he said, that a faculty member should restrict the students in this program. The adviser would advise, he said, not dictate.

The Question was then called for and the voice vote was indecisive. On a show of hands, the motion then carried 21 to 16.

Dean Rhodes asked if the motion meant that the students could not consult members of the faculty other than whoever might be appointed adviser on this matter. The President said the students could consult anyone they wished.

President Harvill said that he would like to appoint Dr. Conrad Joyner to serve as adviser to the student leaders in the proposed evaluation of courses and teaching and Dr. Joyner indicated he would accept this responsibility.

David L. Windsor, Secretary