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Minutes from the January 21, 1975 meeting of the University of Montana faculty

University of Montana (Missoula, Mont. : 1965-1994)

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
FACULTY SENATE
MINUTES
January 21, 1975

1. A special meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:10 P.M., January 21, 1975, on call of Chairman Howard E. Reinhardt.


Senators Absent: Banaugh, Cummings, DeFrees, Flightner, Heliker, Lange, McBroom, Medora, Perrin, Schaill (in class), Steensland, Van Horne and Whiteman.

Ex-officio members present: Bain, Bowers and Landini

Guests: Other faculty, Staff Senators and reporters

2. Chairman Reinhardt introduced President Bowers who presented his 'State of the University' message:

"During the past several weeks, as I've contemplated what I should say in a 'State of the University' talk, I have concluded that it is very difficult, after an association of only six months to assess the state of a university - or to fully understand it - especially since an institution as complex as a university can only be understood through a thorough knowledge of its history. But I have been here long enough so that I can no longer claim ignorance of too many things. And so I will attempt to give you some of my assessments of the University and my thinking about what its priorities should be. In addition I want to make some comments about the budget requests currently before the legislature, the administrative reorganization I announced in November, collective bargaining, and the perennial topic, athletics.

First let me bring you up to date on the budget requests that have been made to this point.

There have been two Board of Regents' budget requests. The first of these was adopted by the Board of Regents in September and was predicated on enrollment projections which have subsequently been revised upwards because of the unexpected increases in enrollments during the current year. The revised budget has just been released and in addition to the changes due to the revisions in enrollment projections, it provides for a considerably larger percent salary increase for faculty and staff than did the first Regents' budget request. In addition the Executive Budget submitted to the Legislature is different from either of the two Regents' budget requests. We have prepared a summary of these budget requests for your information. These show the breakdown of the total budgets by the programs employed in
the formula used by the Commissioner's Office. As you can see, the Executive Budget request calls for an overall increase of 21.9% during the first year of the biennium followed by an increase of 7.3% in the second year of the biennium. Whereas the revised Regents' request would provide for a 28% increase in the first year of the biennium and a 4.2% in the second year of the biennium. Not shown on these summaries is the difference between the two budgets in terms of salary increases. The Executive Budget request would provide for a 7% salary increase retroactive to January 1, 1975 plus a 10% average salary increase for 1975-76 and an approximate 5% average increase in the second year of the biennium. On the other hand, the Regents revised budget would provide for a 20.1% average faculty salary increase in the first year of the biennium followed by a 5.75% increase in the second year of the biennium. With either budget, we could implement the proposed increases in salary floors for the various ranks plus have available significant amounts for merit increases.

There is also a difference between the Regents' Capital Budget request and that of the Governor. The Regents requested $8.5 million for Capital projects at the University of Montana for the coming biennium including $6.5 million for a new science building. The Executive Capital budget request has in it about $3.3 million in Capital projects for the University of Montana but does not include the new science building. Rather it contains $2.3 million for remodeling of the Chemistry-Pharmacy building, something which in the opinion of the University should occur subsequent to the construction of a new science building.

Finally regarding budgets, I would indicate that from everything I have observed, I conclude that the Board of Regents is well aware of the financial plight of the institutions of higher education in Montana and will work diligently to actually realize its budget request. At the last meeting of the Board of Regents a strongly worded resolution was passed reaffirming the Regents support of its revised operating budget request and original Capital Budget request.

Since so many of my public statements have had some relation to our athletic program, I'd really prefer not to comment further about athletics today but because of the continual controversy in this area I feel compelled to make some statement concerning my thinking in this area. Let me repeat some of the things I said in a statement on intercollegiate athletics made in early November to the Board of Regents:

Since my arrival at the University of Montana, I have felt that there has been a dark cloud hovering over the entire University community. The cloud I refer to is the multifaceted controversy over intercollegiate athletics.

It is, in my opinion, an extremely divisive thing, having impact upon the entire university community. It would be impossible, I think, for a new president to fully understand the roots of this controversy. Nonetheless, I have attempted to become as well acquainted as possible with the issues involved...

I have concluded that we should make every legitimate attempt to preserve intercollegiate athletics at the University of Montana and respond
as rapidly as possible in bringing our support for women's inter-
collegiate athletics to a level commensurate with that of men's inter-
collegiate athletics. And in this regard I am convinced that if we are
to preserve intercollegiate athletics we should be seeking ways to re-
duce expenditures on a national basis rather than looking for new
sources of revenue.

I intend to work within the Big Sky Conference and the National Col-
legiate Athletic Association towards the elimination of athletic scholar-
ships that are not based on financial needs.

I would add only a few things to these prior remarks. I have spent a
great deal of time examining athletic budgets and have concluded that the
current budget of about $700,000, including coaches' salaries, is appropri-
ate if we are to maintain the sports we currently have and remain in the
Big Sky Conference. At the present time we realize about $350,000 from
ticket sales, guarantees and contributions. Thus, to maintain our current
program will require about $350,000 from general funds. To appreciably
reduce this would require a drastic change in our athletic program - a
change that would most likely require us to relinquish our membership in
the Big Sky Conference. This I do not intend to do.

In early November, I announced plans to carry out certain administrative
reorganizations. Since then, I have received a variety of feedback related
to the reorganization, including a number of concerns about which I'd like
to speak. One of these concerns is that the reorganization does not recog-
nize the primary importance and centrality of the academic division of the
institution. To be sure, the organization chart does not fully show my
actual intention in this and, in effect, perhaps apprehension on this will
not disappear until such a time as this administration clearly demonstrates
its commitment to have the academic division in a central policy-making role.

In making my announcement of reorganization, I indicated that it was
based on my recognition of four basic divisions of the University, academic,
fiscal affairs, Student Services, and Management Information Services. The
latter three are service divisions - not policy-making units. However, the
chief administrator of each of these divisions will have the responsibility
of working closely with the academic area to ensure that the best possible
services are being provided. Although the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs,
the Director of Student Services and the Director of Management Information
Services will not report through the Academic Vice President, I want to
emphasize here that the Academic Vice President, along with the President
are the chief administrators of the University and the person occupying the
position of Academic Vice President will be the primary advisor of the Pres-
ident. The weekly meetings of those who report to the President will continue.
The function of this group is to coordinate the administrative affairs of the
University - not to determine policy - although clearly on matters which re-
quire a presidential decision I will seek counsel from the members of the
group. However, votes are not taken - so concern that the Academic Vice
President has only one vote in the Presidential Staff Meetings is ill-founded.
Another concern that has been expressed is that the elimination of the position of Vice President for Research signals a de-emphasis on research. This is certainly not my intent. Rather, I wish to gather all academically related programs - and these include teaching, research and public service - within the academic division of the University under the Academic Vice President.

Where are we in the reorganization process? Search Committees for the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and the Director of Management Information Services, with representation in each case from the faculty, student body, and administration have been formed and are, I believe, ready to begin advertising nationally for individuals who might be interested in becoming candidates for these positions. The committees are chaired by Professor Talbot and Professor Fessenden, respectively. It is my hope that both these positions can be filled by July 1, 1975.

As soon as the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs position is filled, the position of Administrative Vice President will be eliminated. I have indicated to Mr. Mitchell that I would be happy to have him remain on as Legal Counsel and he has indicated that he will probably do so. If he elects not to, then a search for a Legal Counsel will be initiated.

I would conclude my remarks on reorganization with the following observations. The complexity of the University of Montana and the increasing need to have mechanisms for providing accountability dictate that we move ahead as rapidly as possible in strengthening our fiscal control and information flow both internally and externally. When I speak of strengthening our fiscal control, I am not suggesting increasing red tape. On the contrary, we should develop systems which provide adequate controls and at the same time make our fiscal procedures more efficient and less cumbersome. For these reasons it is critical that we find as highly qualified individuals as possible for the positions of Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and Director of Management Information Services.

One of the most urgent issues on this campus today is that of faculty collective bargaining. On a number of occasions when I have been asked to speak to this issue I have demurred because I feel the decision as to whether or not faculty collective bargaining should occur is a faculty decision. Yet I feel that some of you would sincerely like to know my position on this issue. I wish I could step out of my role as President and say - as a faculty member, 'I feel this way about collective bargaining', - but we all know I can't do that. So I would indicate to you both as President of the University and as a faculty member that I am not in favor of faculty collective bargaining. My position is based on my belief that the traditional collegial shared governance, which I believe provides strength to a University, will be adversely effected by collective bargaining.

Beyond this I do want the faculty to know that should faculty collective bargaining come to the University, as President, working with the faculty, I will do everything I can to preserve and enhance the traditional collegial shared governance concepts and procedures on this campus.
Finally now I get to the most important parts of my remarks - academic programs and priorities. Before making any remarks in this area let me indicate to you a concern I have about my commenting on these things. On the one hand, I feel very strongly that responsibility for academic programs fall primarily to the faculty and academic administrators - chairpersons, directors, deans, and the Academic Vice President - yet I believe the President must provide leadership for the University. So I feel I should speak out on certain issues. What I hope is that as a result, serious consideration will be given to these issues by the appropriate bodies.

I have yet a great deal to learn about our academic programs but what I have learned would indicate that by and large our academic programs are very sound - and a number are of very high quality. This does not mean, however, that we should be at all complacent. We should do everything possible to improve the quality of our academic programs,

But saying this I have some concerns.

I am bothered by our lack of general education or distribution of requirements at the undergraduate level. True, most students, through their electives, probably are exposed to courses in the sciences, social sciences and humanities - but it is a happenstance process. It seems to me that if we are dedicated to the concept of a strong liberal education for all of our students - and I read this as a long-standing commitment of the faculty at the University of Montana - then, in my opinion, we ought to be about the business of ensuring that every undergraduate, regardless of major, leaves the University of Montana with a broad cultural perspective, analytical abilities and communication skills - having the ability to think critically and be in touch in a humane way with the work around him, both social and physical. It seems to me that only by holding to our liberal education concepts can universities recapture our rightful leadership role in the country's intellectual and cultural well-being.

At the same time we ought to recognize that we are a university. We are in the business of providing for a significant portion of our students, even at the undergraduate level, a professional education. I contend that at the undergraduate level, curricula leading to a professional degree should include both liberal and professional components. It seems to me that a University-wide Curriculum Committee must be responsible for ensuring high quality in the liberal component, whereas the faculty in the particular discipline ought to be responsible for maintaining high quality in the professional component.

A second concern I have, and I've heard this voiced by a number of you - is the increasing tendency towards higher grades. In the fall quarter 1963, the average grade point of the undergraduate students at the University of Montana was 2.34, in 1968, it was 2.52 and in 1973, it was 2.76 - a change of nearly half a grade point in ten years. Of critical importance in this whole issue is the fact that this grade escalation is not uniform among disciplines, so that the bright and conscientious student taking courses in those disciplines where prior standards are being adhered to are being disadvantaged. I think it is time we took a very careful look at this.
We are all aware of the concern on the part of the Montana Commission of Post-secondary Education and the Legislature about unnecessary duplication of programs between the various units of the University System. We must be concerned about this too; but of course the difficulty is in defining the meaning of unnecessary. We would all agree that all institutions of higher education must offer courses in disciplines such as mathematics, English, history, chemistry, etc. But how should we respond to questions such as: Should five out of the six units in the University System offer programs in professional education? Or should both the University of Montana and Montana State University offer doctoral programs in chemistry, microbiology, and mathematics? Or programs in business and home economics? These are but some of the difficult questions we should, and I believe will be forced to address in the coming months and years.

The particular areas in which I think we must define our role especially vis-a-vis Montana State University are: the fine arts, business, education, health sciences, home economics and doctoral programs in the sciences and mathematics.

It is clear, I think, that the distinctive role of the University of Montana has been to provide programs in the liberal arts and sciences and related professional programs. Thus, I think we should insist that the University of Montana maintain and strengthen its programs in the fine arts, and that the development of comparable programs at Montana State University or any other unit of the University System would be unnecessary duplication. Further, the University of Montana has provided leadership in the development of business administration curricula, and such programs should be developed at other institutions in the University System only if it is clearly established that a need, greater than can be satisfied at the University of Montana, exists. It is not clear to me what might constitute 'unnecessary' duplication in the other areas listed. But I think it is critical that we begin to develop a clearer definition of our role in these disciplines and that we ought to strenuously resist any phasing out of programs except when sound academic grounds exist for doing so or in cases where duplication results in inflated programmatic costs.

Finally I would like to list a few of the things which I believe should have high priority during the coming years.

First, I would list five areas which I think should have the highest priority in terms of budget increases. These are: salaries, library acquisitions, equipment acquisitions, travel funds and computer support.

In terms of administration, my highest priority will be to make those changes which will allow us to provide as efficient as possible business and management services to the academic areas and at the same time provide full fiscal control and accountability.

I have already mentioned some of the things in the academic area which I feel require our most serious attention. Attention to the development of
an academic mission statement including the definition of our role in those areas where a potential or actual overlap exists with academic programs at Montana State University is, in my opinion, of very high priority. The work of an ad hoc Senate Committee being formed to address the question of our mission and goals is in my opinion of critical importance.

And finally, I think it is crucial that the University work as hard as it can to restore full confidence of the people of the state - a confidence which, as in the case of most institutions of higher education, appears to have seriously eroded during the late sixties. As I visit through the state I do not find people questioning the quality of our academic programs, but they have serious concerns about 'What is going on at the University'. We have to work very hard, I think, to correct some erroneous images.

A conflict of ideas is inevitable between universities and the public since one of the roles of a university is to seek new knowledge and to challenge existing thought. In doing so we must continue to pay particular attention to the special obligation which academia has to rigorous objectivity.

I am confident of the ability of the faculty to meet these challenges and to fulfill the mission of the University and I look forward to working with you toward this end."

3. President Bowers answered questions from the audience.

4. Meeting adjourned at 4:10 P.M.

Philip T. Bain
Secretary