

## University Senate

April 17, 2013

## Members Present

Members present at the meeting: 82

## Call to Order

Senate Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 3:22 p.m.

### Videotaping Request

Smith notified the Senate that she had received a request from a Journalism student to videotape portions of the senate meeting. She stated that per Senate guidelines, the Senate must vote to grant permission to anyone requesting to do so. She called for a vote.

Senator Gullickson, Faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, asked for clarification on why the student wanted to record the Senate proceedings. The student responded that she was doing a Journalism project on the smoking ban and wanted some background footage for the piece.

The result was 54 in favor, 11 opposed, and 3 abstentions. **The student was granted permission to videotape the proceedings.**

## Approval of the Minutes

Chair Smith asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the April 4, 2013 meeting. Hearing none, she declared the minutes approved as distributed.

## Report of the Chair

### Corcoran

Smith explained that the administration is currently working on establishing the task force that will review the potential Corcoran partnership.

### Committee Volunteer Period

Smith explained that the volunteer period for Senate standing committees was still open. She encouraged senators to reach out to the campus community about participating in shared governance and encouraged the campus community to volunteer to serve on a committee by going to [www.senate.umd.edu](http://www.senate.umd.edu). She especially encouraged faculty to volunteer and encourage other faculty to volunteer. The deadline to volunteer is April 19, 2013.

### Remaining Senate Meetings

Smith reminded Senators that this was the last business meeting of the semester for any outgoing Senators. She asked them to stand and be recognized for his/her service.

The May 2, 2013 transition meeting will be for all continuing and incoming senators. Vin Novara will begin his term as Senate Chair, and the Senate will vote for its next chair-elect and elected committees. The names of candidates running for the various committees and their candidacy statements were distributed to incoming and continuing senators on April 10, 2013. The agenda and any additional materials for that meeting will be sent out on April 25, 2013.

## **Committee Reports**

### **2013 Campus Safety Report (Senate Doc. No. 12-13-48) (Information)**

Smith stated that the Campus Safety Report had been provided as an informational item from the Campus Affairs Committee. She thanked the committee for its work on this important issue.

### **Request to Modify the Membership of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee to Include a Representative of the Office of the Registrar (Senate Doc. No. 12-13-47) (Action)**

Devin Ellis, Chair of the Elections, Representation, and Governance (ERG) Committee, presented the Request to Modify the Membership of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee to Include a Representative of the Office of the Registrar and provided background information about adding an ex-officio seat and changing the committee's quorum.

Smith opened the floor to discussion of the proposal.

Senator Gullickson, Faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, stated that she opposed the change because it is not necessary to have the Registrar's representative be a voting member of the committee. The committee should consult with the Registrar to ensure that policies can be implemented. However, the Registrar should not be involved in making the policy. The representative should be a non-voting member or the committee should just consult with the Registrar.

Ellis responded that the ERG Committee considered the precedent of how senate committees operate. The 12 standing committees have 59 ex-officios representing administrative units. Of those 59 seats, all but seven are voting. The Senate Bylaws state that unless there is a specific rationale for it, ex-officio seats should have voting privileges and that the mandate was therefore pre-

existing. If there are broader institutional concerns about how we handle the relationship between committees and administrative offices that could be considered by the committee if it was charged to do so. Going against the mandate in the Bylaws would be discriminatory to the Registrar because all other ex-officio seats are voting. Committees sometimes ask for an ex-officio seat so that there is an established relationship and expectation that the representative will be in attendance at meetings. This, in turn, allows them to be in a better position to provide continuity of feedback.

Senator Gullickson, Faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, responded that this is a policy decision not a practical one. The practical need can be met without the representative being a voting member of the committee. This is not a matter of policy making but of the establishment of procedures.

Ellis stated that the ERG Committee is obligated to follow the guidelines in the Senate Bylaws. He further explained that the committee ensured that it was not possible for the committee to have a quorum with only ex-officio members by altering the quorum.

Dean Hamilton, Undergraduate Studies and Member of the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee, stated that her ex-officio representative was the Registrar for several years. Many procedures and standards under APAS's purview relate directly to the Registrar. The committee deals with issues where the Registrar is consulted on more than a few occasions, and often needs guidance from that office.

Senator Gullickson, Faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, reiterated that the committee needs to consult with the Registrar but the Registrar does not need a vote.

Ellis reminded the Senate that a vote against the proposal would be a vote against a seat, not whether that seat is voting or non-voting—unless there is an amendment.

Chair Smith reminded Senators that amendments to the Bylaws require a 2/3-majority vote to pass.

Smith called for a vote on the proposal. The result was 44 in favor, 17 opposed, and 9 abstentions. Smith clarified that Robert's Rules state that abstentions are excluded from the calculation of the 2/3 vote. The required number of favorable votes based on 61 total votes is 40.66. **Because there were 44 votes in favor, the motion to approve the proposal passed.**

### **Review of the Coursera Program (Senate Doc. No. 12-13-06) (Action)**

Wolfgang Losert, Chair of the Educational Affairs Committee, presented the Review of the Coursera Program and provided background information about the committee's work and its recommendation for the University to continue explore Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Smith opened the floor to discussion of the proposal.

Dean Clark, School of Public Health & Chair of the Provost's Commission on Blended & Online Learning, stated that while MOOCs are an important aspect of technology-based education digital tools for learning have a broad landscape. She added that the commission, working in parallel with the Educational Affairs Committee, is looking at the issues associated with blended and online learning and is really talking about the importance of engaged discussion about how technology can enhance students' learning and achievement. Faculty can also learn a lot through these new pedagogies that can be enabled by online resources, and these changes might be compared to the transition from transparencies to PowerPoint presentations. UM needs to figure out how to embrace these new technologies in ways that enhance pedagogical strategies and think about ways in which they might enhance our students' experiences here. The commission's review showed that these new media tools really work for some courses but will never work for others. Some students raised concerns about not having face-to-face interaction with faculty. Seminars and small discussion will still be here. This platform is an opportunity for students to make up work or enhance the discussion in ways face-to-face meetings may not afford. Shortly, the commission will report to the Provost. Clark concluded by saying that she is a big supporter of shared governance and applauded the work of the committee.

Senator Lathrop, Faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical & Natural Sciences, stated that while technology in our educational programs is pivotal in changing the way we do things, the question of MOOCs is very different matter from other technological innovations. Difficult to see is whether the costs are justified by the value that MOOCs offer. Our mission is to create new knowledge and mentor a new generation of scholars. Mentoring of scholars does not mean an anonymous interaction from people thousands of miles away; it means engaging young minds. If we are going to invest in educational programs, we need to invest in programs that increase the quality of our undergraduates' experience. When the Provost speaks about the importance of undergraduate research and engaging our undergraduates on an individual basis, resources should be put towards that. Investment in massive online courses will deviate from the resources and the discussion. MOOCs are not important enough to what we do. Lathrop concluded urging the Senate to vote against the proposal.

David Colon-Cabrera, Non-Voting Ex-Officio, President of the Graduate Student Government, stated that he supports the recommendations. As an anthropologist, his view is that this is an opportunity for us to reflect on the current educational practices in higher education. Times are changing quickly, and rethinking our educational delivery systems gives us an opportunity to refresh our outlook and discover what we are doing well and where we need to improve. MOOCs complement our education and mission in different ways. As an example, Colon-Cabrera explained that he took a Coursera course offered by Stanford University about writing in the sciences. He had been trying to get his department to develop a grant-writing course, but this Coursera course allowed him to get that experience in just eight weeks. So MOOCs are not a replacement for our educational experience but enhance it. Continuing to look into MOOCs will allow us to reflect on our own methodologies and the changing landscape of online learning.

Senator Farshchi, Undergraduate, Robert H. Smith School of Business, stated that MOOCs might not have a direct impact on our undergraduates but can bring our university to another level. MOOCs will have a global impact and will increase the image of our institution and make us a top-tier public institution. MOOCs will integrate us into the evolving world, increase our image, and bring top talent to this University. Maryland should be leading the way on this, not following.

Losert commented on the issue of resources. He explained that currently there are five courses being offered and that the resources invested in these courses are relatively modest. When the courses are offered again, the investment will decrease because the course has already been developed. We are not considering offering hundreds of courses and reallocating large numbers of faculty.

Senator Gullickson, Faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, wanted to know more about the resources involved. How much money are we talking about? How much does it cost to put together and offer one of these courses? How much does grading cost? That kind of breakdown is necessary before making a reasonably informed decision regarding MOOCs. Gullickson expressed concern that the proposal is not neutral but instead endorses MOOCs. She is not ready to move beyond just exploration because if we move forward, it might well be money wasted. She opposed the proposal in its current form.

Elizabeth Beise, Member of the Educational Affairs Committee, stated that we are inline with the other institutions involved in Coursera. The courses are not for credit so we offer a small stipend for development (\$5,000) and a small overload for a graduate student assistant. Through such assistantships, MOOCs are valuable to the graduate student experience as well. By participating, students get professional development opportunities. The small investment that we have made thus far has been good for the university. We do not have the infrastructure

to do more than a handful of these a semester, which is the case for most institutions—only 3-5 courses are offered. However, many of these institutions do find value in acquiring the student data and learning how to create videos to use in for-credit courses.

Losert stated that Educational Affairs recommends that an established separate committee continue to evaluate the benefits and risks for the University and so is endorsing a continued discussion of our involvement in MOOCs. We need to think strategically about the potential impact on the University rather than think of this as an endorsement of a particular platform or learning model. Rather, it is one of continued review.

Smith called for a vote on the proposal. The result was 52 in favor, 15 opposed, and 4 abstentions. **The motion to approve the proposal passed.**

### **New Business**

Senator Gabriel, Faculty, A. James Clark College of Engineering, raised concerns and asked for clarification about the funding model for the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS). He does not feel like the current model makes economic sense. He suggested that shuttle bus users be charged for use versus charging all members of the campus.

Senate Chair Smith stated that DOTS is a self-support entity but suggested that he submit a proposal through the senate website to consider this issue.

### **Adjournment**

Senate Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 4:16 p.m.