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Faculty Senate Monthly Packet January 1986

Portland State University Faculty Senate

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The Faculty Senate will hold its regular meeting on January 13, 1986, at 3:00 p.m. in 150 Cramer Hall.

AGENDA

A. Roll

*B. Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 1985, Meeting

C. Announcements and Communications from the Floor

D. Question Period

1. Questions for Administrators

   Question for Vice President Dobson, submitted by Barbara Alberty:

   a. Does the State Board of Higher Education have guidelines for the development of minors?

   b. Does PSU have guidelines in place for the development of minors? If yes, what are those guidelines?

   c. What is the role of minors at Portland State?

2. Questions from the Floor for the Chair

E. Reports from the Officers of Administration and Committees

   1. Winter Term Registration Report -- Blumel

   2. ARC Progress Report regarding Lists of Approved General Education Distribution Courses -- Dressler

F. Unfinished Business

   *1. EPC Writing across the Curriculum Proposal -- Matschek

G. New Business -- None

H. Adjournment

The following documents are included with this mailing:

B Minutes of the December 9, 1985, Meeting

F1 EPC Writing Across the Curriculum Proposal -- Matschek**

** Included for Senators and Ex-officio Members only
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Minutes: Faculty Senate Meeting, December 9, 1985
Presiding Officer: Robert Jones
Secretary: Ulrich H. Hardt


Alternates Present: Kashoro for Badi'i, Roseberry for Dunkeld, Lockerby for Newberry.


Ex-officio Members Present: Dobson, Edgington, Erzurumlu, Hardt, Harris, Heath, Leu, Miller, Pfingsten, Schendel, Toulan, Trudeau, Williams.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the November 4, 1985, meeting were approved as circulated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WILLIAMS noted that this would be Jim Heath's last Senate meeting in his role as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Senate gave Heath a warm round of applause.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND COMMITTEES

1. SESTAK presented the annual report of the Curriculum Committee.

2. SHERIDAN presented the annual report of the Graduate Council.

3. ROSEBERRY presented the annual report of the Library Committee. A. JOHNSON observed that Library Committees of the past have drawn attention to the severe space problem in the PSU library and asked what could be done about it to insure that someone would finally listen. PFINGSTEN pointed out that the action needed to take place between now and next year; ten million dollars are necessary for the 1987-89 biennium. He also said that it helped to have this listed as "The first, and urgent" recommendation. MOOR wanted to know the University's view of the urgency. DOBSON replied that it was of highest priority and that the Chancellor and newly appointed Associate Chancellor Bill Lemman had been made aware of our needs. The question is always whether
the money will be there and whether senators will propose budget items like these. In recent times the state has chosen items that sold easily, such as economic development.

RODICH asked if private funding would be available for the Metroloan program. JONES wanted to know if the Oregon School of Professional Psychology through its new association with Pacific University now access our library. PFINGSTEN said that it could, but he also pointed out PSU was watching for abuses and had not observed problems. KIMBRELL thought the Senate needed to have facts from the library regarding the effects of the loan program; often our own students cannot find materials that are being used by other schools, including high school students. JONES invited Kimbrell to meet with the Steering Committee in order to talk about the matter as a future agenda item. PFINGSTEN said in closing that it was reassuring to recognize that no other librarians in the area wanted their budgets reduced because of PSU's holdings.

4. RODICH presented the annual report of the Scholastic Standards Committee. He said that next year's committee would deal with the problem of late fees. OLSON wondered why approvals granted for petitions were up this year. RODICH thought it could be due to the fact that petitions were more carefully screened before they came to the committee, or that the committee members were more liberal or kind hearted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SP 425 grad was approved.
BST 305, 306 and 424 grad were approved.
These CLAS courses had been carried over from the November meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

SESTAK reported that the Curriculum Committee had recommended that all course changes, additions and deletions be approved. A motion to that effect was made and passed.

SHERIDAN corrected one error appearing on the Graduate Council summary sheet; ME 552 should read ME 554. With that change she recommended approval of all course changes, additions and deletions. A motion to accept that recommendation was passed.

Discussion then shifted to the minor in Computer Applications proposed by CLAS. A. JOHNSON wanted to know what a minor was and whether there was a precedent for one at PSU. DOBSON declared that we had a minor in athletic training. SOMMERFELDT asked if the 15 quarter hours "in applications to discipline" would have to be invented. DOBSON replied that most departments already had computer application courses, but details of what would be appropriate for the minor would have to be worked out. Given that information CONSTANS then asked if the Senate could vote on this matter. REARDON explained that advisors would work out details with students as they do in other programs, and JONES added that we would vote on the principle. FEATHERINGILL was not sure what the "declared emphasis" meant.
TINNIN explained that this would allow students outside of CLAS to take the minor; e.g., a business major could take an economics minor with computer science emphasis.

The motion to approve the minor in Computer Applications was passed, but not unanimously.

The new interdisciplinary MS degree in Engineering Management, proposed by the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Business Administration was approved.

The Curriculum Committee recommended that all proposed program changes be approved (i.e., Management, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and the Dance Certificate). The Senate approved them.

The Graduate Council introduced a name change of the existing MA/MS degree programs as follows: MA/MS in Engineering-Civil to MA/MS in Civil Engineering, MA/MS in Engineering-Electrical and Computer to MA/MS in Electrical Computer Engineering; and MA/SM in Engineering-Mechanical to MA/MS in Mechanical Engineering. The motion to approve was passed.

Finally, the Graduate Council's proposed change in requirements to one complete course sequence plus EE 580 and to eliminate the requirement of EE 581 and 582 or at least three common core courses was approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:51.
Writing Across the Curriculum

The Educational Policies Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That PSU encourage development of its students' academic writing skills through writing-across-the-curriculum (WATC) as described in 2(a) through (e) below. WATC is not a requirement for another advanced writing course taught by the English Department.

2. That those responsible for curricular planning in each of the University's degree granting programs establish means by which majors may learn and demonstrate skills to accomplish WATC objectives. Major degree programs may consider the following options (or a combination thereof) for eliciting the desired student performance:

a) A major degree program may require a specific upper-division course within the discipline in which students produce written reports, papers, or other projects appropriate to the discipline. Those teaching the course will be responsible for assessing not only the "content" of student's writing, but also the appropriateness of the "form" in which the content is presented. Such a course might include thesis or research. Guidelines and instructions for written work should be made available to students.

b) A program (or several related programs) may design a new course intended specifically to teach the techniques of professional writing, e.g., writing in the social sciences, reporting research in the sciences, or technical report writing for engineers.

c) A program may incorporate written expression broadly within several required upper-division courses. In this case, the program will specify both the courses and the number of such courses it will require of majors. Such courses may be designated "writing-emphasis courses." The methods used in each course to meet WATC objectives must be detailed. (See attached article, Attachment A, explaining ways in which one discipline has suggested meeting WATC objectives within existing courses.)

d) A program may require one or more advanced writing courses offered within the University but outside the student's major. Any course so required must fulfill WATC objectives.

1 Academic writing skills include but are not limited to the following: a) the ability to think critically to discover ideas and to define issues, b) the ability to read critically, and c) the ability to present ideas and information appropriately for particular writing situations.

2 A writing-emphasis course is an upper-division course in which writing is emphasized to encourage discovery, invention, exploration, and problem-solving; or to demonstrate discovery or learning.
e) General Studies Option I majors must elect any of the above methods of meeting WATC objectives within the departments of the Option I major. General Studies Option II majors must meet WATC objectives by electing any one of the means established by a degree granting program.

3. That each of the University's degree-granting programs develop provisions by which late transfer students may satisfy WATC objectives within the program requirements. These provisions will be included in the program's proposals for meeting WATC objectives.

4. That proposals by individual degree-granting programs be reviewed and approved through the normal University curricular review procedures.

5. That the University establish a University-wide writing center accessible to both day and night students to help those needing improvement in written expression. The University writing center should be staffed by a part-time director and graduate assistants (funded by the writing center) recruited from graduate students in various disciplines within the University.

6. That workshops be provided at regular intervals for faculty who teach courses within WATC. (See Attachment B for an example of a form a faculty workshop might take.)

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Writing Across the Chemistry Curriculum

B. Description of Workshop, Lander College
Writing Across the Chemistry Curriculum

"I didn't come up to speed in writing [from where I'd been in high school]," remarked a chemistry major, "until I began writing lab reports in p chem." Ideally, states the Committee's Guidelines, every course should be an exercise in expressing ideas clearly.

Chemistry courses offer chemistry faculties excellent opportunities to improve students' skills in writing and thinking. Below are several examples that have come to the Committee's attention recently.

• From a course in Chemical Literature: Discuss in 130-200 words the extent to which in your judgment computer-based information systems will replace chemical journals by the year 2000. Cite reasons for your judgment.

• From a course in Industrial Chemistry: Explain in terms of production and use for four selected inorganic and two organic chemicals why the selected chemicals are in the top 50 in production in the U.S.

• From a course in Physical Chemistry: Explain what it means to say that all entropy is entropy of mixing.

• From a course in Inorganic Chemistry: What are coordination compounds? In what sense may all pure substances be viewed as coordination compounds?

• From a course in General Chemistry: Restate in a sentence and give a specific example of what it means to say that "All dilute gases (at the same T and P) have the same population density."

A comprehensive package in writing across the chemistry curriculum at one school in the California State University system1 includes a state-mandated, upper division competency examination in writing skills, extensive written reports in all lab courses, and a detailed written report on undergraduate research. In addition, experiments in an advanced, integrated, analytical-physical chemistry laboratory are used as subjects for reports written in a variety of styles. Emphasis in the reports may be, for example, on: description of a full procedure for performing an experiment (to be used later by other students); careful discussion of experimental results; a concise technical report for a supervisor; a long abstract suitable for a scientific meeting; a short abstract suitable for Chemical Abstracts; a popular science report; a research proposal; a full lab report in standard journal format.2

Chemistry curricula are almost unexcelled curricula for teaching good writing. For, to write well, we need something specific to write about. The more specific the subject the better. No better writing assignment exists, it's been said, than the assignment: describe how something works.3 Attempts to describe clearly and concisely how a chemical experiment "works"—what was done, what was seen, what was concluded—are excellent ways to learn to write and to think clearly.

1. California State University, Fullerton.
DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOP, LANDER COLLEGE

We will train the College faculty selected to participate in the workshops to emphasize writing in their courses. As a result of their attendance at the faculty development workshop, they will plan one new course or restructure one existing course to include a substantial amount of writing and to incorporate writing in the learning process. Two five-day workshops are scheduled for December 1984 and May 1985.

These five-day workshops, each enrolling 18 faculty, will be conducted in part by outside consultants and in part by internal workshop directors. We will invite specialists with experience in writing across the disciplines programs and in workshop consultancies to participate in our faculty development activities. Outside consultants typically bring objectivity and authority, but they also have pre-packaged programs which can accommodate only in a limited way the assignments, essay exams, and student papers which faculty bring to these workshops as models of what they give and what they receive. The consultants will lead the first two days and the workshop directors will conduct the last three days of each workshop. Internal workshop directors are necessary if particular concerns of Lander faculty and students are to be addressed. Our professors' knowledge of the College curriculum, familiarity with Lander students' writing problems, and experience in conducting workshops on this campus make them the logical choice for the internal workshop directors.

DAY 1

Two outside consultants will lead the workshop for the first two days; naturally, the consultants' particular fields of specialization and focus on writing across the disciplines will determine, to some degree, the material covered. In general, however, the topics suggested here are frequently addressed in workshop sessions by consultants in the field.

1. Introduction of proposed program. The consultants will introduce writing across the disciplines. They will explain writing programs conducted at their own institutions in order to increase awareness of the possibilities for introducing more writing in Lander courses.

2. Development of standards for written work. The consultants will guide the workshop participants to a consensus on standards for written work. Activities used to achieve this result will include paper-reading exercises and discussion of particular writing problems.

3. Assignment making. The consultants will discuss how to create effective writing assignments. Since the statement of the topic shapes the product received, an understanding of terminology which can be misleading is critical. Writing assignments used by faculty in courses taught prior to the workshop will provide the subject matter for discussion.

4. Work period. Faculty members will work in pairs to create good writing assignments for the courses they are currently revising.

DAY 2

1. Discussion of assignment making. The consultants will begin the second day's discussion by focusing on the specific assignment topics developed during the previous afternoon. In addition, they will help the faculty to create assignments by brainstorming. A discussion of examples of good assignments in various academic disciplines will follow.

2. Defense of the program. The consultants will offer suggestions on how to explain writing across the disciplines to colleagues and students who initially may resist increased writing demands in certain courses. Having helped implement writing programs at other institutions, the consultants will be able to anticipate possible objections to writing assignments in particular fields of study and to offer a rationale for launching a comprehensive writing program.

3. Commenting on papers. The consultants will lead a discussion on the art of commenting on student writing. Offering constructive criticism is crucial to helping students to learn from their mistakes, make good revisions, and gain confidence in their writing abilities.
DAY 3

The sessions held on days three, four, and five will focus on how to apply the ideas and concepts introduced by the consultants to Lander courses. The workshop directors, who are familiar with the College curriculum, will lead the remaining workshop sessions.

1. General discussion of responses and plans. Workshop participants will clarify their responses to the issues introduced by the consultants and discuss possible general applications of these issues to their course offerings. They will also express their preferences for discussion topics for days four and five.

2. Using textbooks. The faculty will discuss how to use textbooks to teach writing as well as course material. They will find examples of writing within their own disciplines that may serve as models of good writing.

3. Term papers. Term papers will be discussed as an activity that improves student writing. The student may be asked to stagger the writing of a term paper, that is, to write it in sections. He may be required to write periodic reports on the progress of his main writing project. He may also be required to hand in an outline and a rough draft for comments and suggestions for improvement before he submits the final draft.

4. Work period. Workshop participants will begin developing syllabi for courses being restructured. These syllabi should show a plan to increase student writing and to monitor the progress of a major term report over the course of a semester.

DAY 4

1. Revision. The workshop will focus on how best to help students improve their performance on their next writing tasks. We will discuss the function of the instructor's comments on a student paper and the student's use of those comments to make effective revisions. Student papers submitted in advance by workshop participants will serve as a text for this portion of the workshop and will illustrate where revision is useful and where it is unlikely to be helpful.

2. Non-graded assignments. Non-graded assignments such as journals, reaction papers, in-class lecture summaries, and critiques will be introduced as ways to improve student writing. These informal assignments, because they register students' immediate responses and thought processes as they consider the course material, dramatize the connection between writing and learning. With some training, teachers will develop the skill of evaluating these responses and processes holistically, rather than doing meticulous grammar and structural grading.

3. Work period. Faculty will continue to work on syllabi for modified courses.

DAY 5

1. Writing good essay examinations. Techniques used to write effective essay exams will be discussed. Focusing the question and controlling potentially misleading terminology will help students to choose carefully the details they will use to improve their assertions.

2. Preparing students to write essay examinations. Faculty will be instructed in techniques used to get students to read questions carefully, organize responses to the questions, and to focus on the questions' directive terminology.

3. Final work period. Faculty should nearly finish their course syllabi. At the conclusion of this work period, each participant may comment on his colleagues' syllabi.

4. Evaluation of workshop. The participants' evaluations of the developmental workshop will consist of group oral evaluations as well as individual written evaluations.

Workshop participants will be invited to eat lunch together each day so that they can talk informally with each other and with workshop leaders and consultants.