

**Minutes of the Academic Senate
December 3, 2009**

1. The meeting was called to order at by Chairperson Tom Poundstone at 3:00 p.m. on December 3, 2009. Roll was called and the following Senators were present: Chair Tom Poundstone, Vice Chair Steve Cortright, Past Chair Brother Charles Hilken, Tomas Gomez-Arias, Laura Heid, Sam Lind, Keith Ogawa, Marty Rokeach, Ed Tywoniak and Parliamentarian Michael Barram, substituting for David Bird. Absent was Phil Perry.

Also present were: Brother Michael Avila, Vice President Michael Beseda, CTO Ed Biglin, Jerry Brunetti, Joel Burley, Dean Tom Carter, Kris Chase, Provost Beth Dobkin, Emily Elliott, Monica Fitzgerald, President Brother Ronald Gallagher, Leo Guardado, Charles Hamaker, Sue Hooks, Larisa Genin, Chris Jones, Christa Kell, Associate Dean Guido Krickx, Ryan Lamberton, Megan Low, Phylis Martinelli, Sue Marston, Mary McCall, CFO Pete Michell, Dean Frank Murray, Marie Pagliarini, Mari-Anne Rosario, Jim Sauerberg, Associate Dean Chris Sindt, Elizabeth Smith, Vice President Carole Swain, Dean Russ Tiberii, Ted Tsukahara, Roy Wensley, and Dean Steve Woolpert.

2. Minutes of the November 12, 2009 meeting were accepted as submitted.

REPORTS

3. Chairperson's Report – Chair Poundstone reported that he received a brief report on the Campus Facilities Planning Committee from the faculty representative, Rebecca Jabboor. Joe Kehoe and Bill Sullivan are working on a draft of indoor air quality standards and ways to communicate information about campus standards and practices. The space behind the faculty/staff dining hall will temporarily serve as an unimproved parking lot. The Art Gallery is hoping to take over that space in the future.

Chair Poundstone reported that a resolution, received from Senator Rokeach, that chairs of College committees submit a report each year regarding the quality of faculty service by candidates under review for tenure or promotion, will be considered at a future Senate meeting but that he thought that it should be discussed extensively before being brought to the Senate floor. Also to be considered at the January meeting is a proposal to restructure the January Term Committee.

Chair Poundstone took a moment to invite commemoration of faculty colleague, Gerry Capriulo, who passed away suddenly in November. He announced the memorial service, to be held Friday, December 4, 2009, in the chapel. Gerry, who served on the Senate several times over the years, was “larger than life.” All will remember his zeal for academic ideals and standards at SMC. Many disagreed with Gerry, but he was a model of civil discussion. Senator Lind spoke about what a wonderful professor Gerry was. Past Chair, Brother Charles, spoke to Gerry's character and to how dearly he will be missed at SMC. Senator Tywoniak said he will always be indebted to Gerry for the time, energy, and boundless spirit Gerry invested in promoting the ideal liberal arts college he imagined.

4. Vice Chair Report - Vice Chair Cortright reported that the Committee on Committees had submitted a proposal for a restructuring of the Collegiate Seminar Governing Board, to be discussed under New Business.

5. Provost's Updates - Provost Dobkin reported that an open meeting of the Campus Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) is scheduled for Friday (December 4) at 11:30 a.m.

6. Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) – Senator Lind reported: at the November 16 meeting of the UEPC a proposal for a new “Technical Theatre/Design” track in Performing Arts, the Psychology Department's proposal to reformat Psych 104 with a title/description change, and a Theology and Religious Studies experimental course, “American Metaphysical Religion, from

Emerson to Oprah,” were approved. The UEPC Met with John Knight to discuss information required for the UEPC review of the discontinuance of SIMS.

Senator Lind said the UEPC is uncertain whether meetings regularly scheduled meetings, and meetings specially scheduled, at which discontinuance of a program is considered, should be uniformly open. The UEPC wants Senate advice on the matter. He added that, ordinarily, issues discussed by the UEPC do not bear immediately on personnel issues and there is no reason to have closed meetings.

Chair Poundstone responded that when the discontinuance model was followed by the GPSEPC, for the Graduate Liberal Studies Program, last year, individual fact-finding sessions were held privately, and open faculty sessions were scheduled later that day. Many, he noted, have asked that all meetings at which faculty business is transacted be held publicly.

Past Chair, Brother Charles, suggested that all meetings should be open. Christa Kell recalled that past Educational Policies Board meetings were open, but the subcommittees generally did not hold open meetings; when the restructuring took place, the issue of open or closed meetings was not resolved. Ted Tsukahara averred: when the restructuring proposal was approved by the Senate, it was intended that all agenda, minutes, and committee meeting schedules be posted; it is in the spirit of the faculty to have open discussion of all issues. The counterpoint was raised by Senator Heid that the UEPC and GPSEPC meet jointly each fall to review sabbatical proposals and the meeting is not open.

Dean Murray suggested that the Senate may consider the difference between a regularly scheduled committee meeting, devoted to normal business, and circumstances under which a committee might be exploring delicate issues that might require discretion. On that basis, the Senate might give the chair latitude to hold nonregular meetings. The intention of the restructuring was that regular public meetings of all faculty bodies would correspond to open meetings.

Chair Poundstone noted that he had never heard of the Program Review Committee hosting an open meeting, from which he concluded that though he favored as open a meeting structure as possible, at this time a one-size-fits-all declaration for Senate committee meetings did not seem appropriate.

7. Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee (AARC) – Senator Tywoniak reported that the AARC met on Oct 18 and received a report from the Registrar: she will be conducting an external review of academic records, looking into the multiple areas in which records are kept in order to streamline the process. The AARC also met on November 18 to finalize the academic advising proposal, which was approved by the Senate at the November meeting. A seven-point overview of the scope of the subcommittee will be posted online. He hopes the subcommittee will meet before the Christmas break to set the agenda for the spring.

Under discussion by the AARC is the process to assess the summer school program, in particular how it affected graduation rates, especially athletes’ graduation rates.

Vice President Michael Beseda presented a proposal to have the National Association for College Admissions Counseling audit how SMC would benefit, should the College make SAT scores optional for admission. A report was distributed, which is being reviewed; more conversations are to be scheduled.

Senator Tywoniak reported that he will serve as the AARC representative for the Dean of Admissions search. AARC’s next meeting is scheduled for January 13.

8. Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) – Senator Tywoniak reported that the TAC, meeting on November 19, heard several updates from CTO Biglin: a selection process for implementing the College’s new digital portal, the password implementation project, the completed implementation of

“Gael calendar,” and the conduct of the “Gael alert” test. The TAC is looking into the implementation of the strategic plan and revising the vision statement. All TAC reports are online.

Senator Ogawa commented that, although TAC has been working on the SMC website for ten years, he does not think it meets standards: much time and money has been spent with no improvement. Vice President Beseda responded that SMC has maintained different web properties—as SMCNet and the external web page—and is now bringing a portal in to eliminate SMCNet and create a more tailored experience for our internal audience. The College is also in the process of redoing the external site and creating a system that will allow the College to manage content better. CFO Biglin said he would like to see faculty more involved in the process of the next iteration of the website.

Provost Dobkin said the strategic plan is coming to an end: it is time to assess what faculty needs technology to do for them in the classroom and in research. Looking forward to the next five years, what do faculty need technology to do for them?

NEW BUSINESS

8. Collegiate Seminar Board Membership Proposal (CSGB) – Vice Chair Cortright introduced the following proposal. He explained that the proposal originated with the CSGB; the Committee on Committees (CoC) has unanimously agreed that the proposal merits Senate action, without taking a stance for or against its adoption.

Proposal: Collegiate Seminar Governing Board: Composition and Terms

Composition

- A) Three positions elected by and from the ranked faculty with staggered terms
 - 1) A representative from the School of Liberal Arts
 - 2) A representative from the School of Science
 - 3) A representative from the School of Economics and Business Administration
- B) Three *ex officio* positions, with voting privileges
 - 1) The Director of the Collegiate Seminar Program (serves as chair)
 - 2) The Director of the CS Informal Curriculum
 - 3) The Liaison with Critical Perspectives
- C) Six positions elected from the faculty by the Governing Board.
 - 1) A second representative from the School of Liberal Arts
 - 2) A representative from the School of Education
 - 3) A representative from the Christian Brothers
 - 4) A representative from the Integral faculty
 - 5) A representative from the Adjunct Faculty
 - 6) A representative from the Part-time Faculty
- D) A Student representative appointed by the CS Director in consultation with the ASSMC.

To be eligible under categories A) or C), a faculty member must have taught a minimum of 3 seminar courses, including the initial co-teaching appointment. Openings for positions in category C) will be announced to the full faculty with a request for nominations. The Governing Board will then elect new members from those nominated. In selecting members under C), the Governing Board will provide for appropriate continuity of membership.

Terms

Each member in category C), except for 6), will serve a 3-year term, at the end of which each may decide, in consultation with the Director, to step down or serve an additional 3-year term. Each member in category A) may stand for re-election for an additional term. No member in those categories will serve more than two consecutive terms, but may return to the Board after leaving it for a minimum of 3 years. The member in C 6) may serve two consecutive 1-year terms and may return after an absence of 1 year.

Commentary from the Committee on Committees:

(1) Under C), faculty-wide nominations will be solicited by Collegiate Seminar Governing Board (no new duties accrue to the Committee on Committees). The Committee on Committees would conduct elections pursuant to Category A (new duties accrue to the Committee, including determining eligibility lists).

(2) The composition of Category C makes possible “double-dipping.” That is, *e.g.*, since a majority of full-time, teaching Christian Brothers currently serve as Integral Curriculum tutors, it is quite possible that a single individual would fill the Christian Brother seat and the Integral faculty seat; again, a single individual might fill the adjunct faculty and School of Education seat, *etc.* The Chair, Committee on Committees, and Director of the Collegiate Seminar are expressly agreed (the CSGB membership are tacitly agreed) that the resulting flexibility—*i.e.*, the capacity for the CSGB to fill a *de facto* “at large” seat under Category C, when two prescribed criteria are met by a single member—is not objectionable. Some members of the Committee on Committees would wish to eliminate the possibility of “double-dipping.” The possibility is, however, a consequence of CSGB’s decision to retain the long-standing system under C), by which distinct ways of “owning” the seminar mode (hence, *e.g.*, representation from an academic program, the Integral Curriculum, in which something very like the original World Classics reading lists is still preserved) have a “voice” on the CSGB. Accordingly, all members of the Committee on Committees agreed to advance the proposal for Senate action, without a recommendation, as noted above.

Vice Chair Cortright amended the proposal as follows (delete language with strikeout and new language bolded): A) Three positions elected ~~by and~~ from the ranked faculty **by schools**, with staggered terms.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Cortright and **SECONDED** by Senator Tywoniak to adopt the proposal.

Arguments were made to move the second SOLA representative and the SOE representative into Section A, to be elected. Vice Chair Cortright accepted this as a friendly amendment. It was also specified that each school representative is to be elected by the entire faculty.

There was discussion regarding the possibility of “double-dipping” (for example, a Christian Brother could also represent a school or the Integral faculty) and the possibility that the CSGB could fill a seat under Category C when two prescribed criteria are met by a single member. How would it be determined which specific membership is ‘open’ and which seat is taken by the double-dipping faculty member? Some expressed concern with the fact that a replacement for an elected position could be appointed by the CSGB, outside the normal replacement process for an elected position. Vice Chair Cortright recommended that we allow the CSGB to deal with the issue *ad hoc*. Provost Dobkin found the process unclear, the purpose of the positions ill-defined. She wondered: are positions being created merely to enable the Governing Board to appoint someone it wants?

Chair Poundstone asked if there were any other academic committees on which Christian Brothers have a seat and a vote? Vice Chair Cortright answered that there are not. Vice Chair Cortright said the membership described in Section C is an unusual case of educational craftsmanship: the units represented have special relationships, some historical rather the programmatic, to the Collegiate Seminar. Ted Tsukahara said it appears there are interpretation issues that the CoC, in its wisdom, can continue to work with the CSGB to execute.

A vote was taken on the proposal, which was approved by a hand vote of 8-0 with one abstention.

9. Open Discussion of Continued Budget Constraints – Chair Poundstone introduced CFO, Pete Michell, to describe the continuing fiscal restraints under which the College is laboring.

CFO Michell noted 88% of revenue to the operating budget is student related: the budget is tuition-driven. On the expense side, nearly two-thirds of the budget is devoted to compensation. When revenue fluctuates, only so much can be done to limit expenses without impact on salaries and benefits. This constraint was felt last year, and it is operating again, this year. What options are available to fill the (projected) \$2.4M deficit for 2010–11? By way of illustrating the problem’s magnitude: the

Budget Committee does not think it is possible to raise tuition at the rate we have in the past. Currently, SMC is looking at a 4% undergraduate tuition increase, but it would take a 7.5% increase to close the gap. Another option is to increase the endowment spending rate from 5% to 23%. On the expense side: savings from staff salary sufficient to close the entire gap would cost 36 staff positions and from faculty, 26 positions (in both cases, at average salary and benefits). To restore the pension contribution would double the deficit.

The Budget Committee is at the point in the budget process where it is looking at all options, trying to make base assumptions regarding enrollment, financial aid packages, and making decisions on the expense side.

Last year was an evolving situation: no one knew what to expect from the recession. It is now looking to be a long recession. Short-term decreases in expenditures are probably not the appropriate way to address the situation. The Budget Committee is now looking at longer term, structural change. Deferring salary increases indefinitely is not viable; we must look to other possibilities.

Opening discussion, Senator Gomez-Arias asked for more detailed, disaggregated figures. CFO Michell answered that on the revenue side, 88% is student income: undergraduate tuition contributes about 50%, graduate and professional tuition about 20%, and auxiliary enterprises (principally undergraduate room and board) 17%. Graduate and professional programs net 25% of revenue. He explained that he did not have details for actual cost allocation program-by-program or department-by-department available, but it can be put together. He does have the expenses department-by-department; the next piece is to match up actual revenue and student class utilization.

Senator Rokeach asked why it is not viable to defer faculty salary increases, or freeze salaries? Is it possible for full professors to take a modest salary decrease? It was noted that those at the top of the scale at rank were frozen last year. Step increases were given, but no cost of living increase was awarded. CFO Michell said the college cannot continue freezing salaries for the long-term.

Senator Lind agreed that temporary decreases are not appropriate, because the structural budget issues long-term need to be addressed. Faculty and staff are willing to do what they can in the short term, but the budget committee does not think the problems are short-term. The College needs to look at ways to restructure. Senator Gomez-Arias added that the budget issues are long-term and that structural budget deficiencies have been developing for a long time.

Provost Dobkin recalled that the step system was preserved last year only for last year. To maintain the step system this year she will need to come up with \$300,000. If we do not offer the step increases, the salary ranges will be off, which causes other problems. The way our budget process works (looking in the fall and having a Board approved budget in January), we do not have the time to address the deeper issues. We need to consider academic quality: class size, course load, courses needed to ensure a timely graduation. How do we ensure students the courses they need to graduate when we are cutting courses? How many courses can students transfer in; should we offer on-line courses? This planning discussion cannot be done within three months. Last year when we had to make reductions, the Vice Provost and Provost met on a regular basis with the chairs of the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) and the Senate. She said she would like to open the process up to the entire FWC. We need to start getting more faculty voices in the conversation regarding academic quality and the kind of restructuring we can and should do to maintain the academic quality of programs. Chair Poundstone added that he has received messages from many faculty wanting to be part of the conversation.

Senator Tywoniak wondered: how the college can make up a \$2.4 million deficit? Are we looking at budget cuts across departments? Layoffs?

CFO Michell said that furloughs are a temporary measure, but could be a consideration in combination with other strategies. Last year, the staff salary pool was reduced \$1.5 million and the faculty salary pool \$750,000, while the pension contribution was reduced from 8.25% to 2%, the College's contribution to health insurance was frozen, and non-salary expenses were reduced 8%. Those options are available again, in proportions very similar to last year.

Senator Ogawa questioned whether relying on student-related revenue for 88% of the operating budget is sustainable? Perhaps we need to restructure our curriculum: turn Jan Term into summer school, so as to move students along more quickly and offer early graduation options? The questions are very complex. CFO Michell responded that, compared to like institutions, indications are that SMC is "high" at 88% student-related revenue. Other schools have higher endowment and gift income. However, other institutions are facing similar budget issues; the impact of the recession is universal.

Senator Ogawa asked about the College's investment strategies. CFO Michell explained: the College has long-term as well as short-term investment goals. At the onset of the 2008-09 financial crisis, the allocation of endowment investments was made more conservative by reducing exposure to the stock market. Since last February, 25% is invested in the money market. Now the Board of Trustees' Investment Committee is considering shifting back in the direction of equities, some international. There are specific targets for asset allocations, driven by return and risk. The Investment Committee is spending a good deal of time on asset allocation, to insure that SMC do not have too aggressive a mix, and to ensure the College's portfolio value remains above the figure (\$110M) required for compliance with SMC's credit covenants.

Joel Burley reported on behalf of the FWC. The consensus among faculty representatives to the Budget Committee (Joel Burley, Chair Poundstone, and Vice Chair Cortright) is that faculty must be alerted to the College's long-term budgeting problems and to the fact that the current way of doing business cannot address the challenges we face. Budget cuts from last year reflect the "new normal." We are looking at a lengthy period of revenue constraint, entailing restrained growth on the side of expenses, with obvious implications for College salaries, benefits, and contributions to pensions. Painful and permanent cuts in expenses will need to be made; the College community must conduct painful discussion leading to painful decisions.

Professor Burley opined that President Brother Ronald's message to faculty and Pete Michell's budget report are important first steps. He said he is not sure the Budget Committee is structurally well positioned to face the issues. Budget cuts from last year have become what we are calling "the new normal." It appears that we are looking at a lengthy period of stagnation in salary, benefits, and contributions to pension, and it is important that faculty are aware of that. This has long-term ramifications such as the impact of reducing contributions to faculty's pensions to when faculty retire, effectively costing the College much more if faculty defer retirement. It appears that painful and permanent cuts will need to be made and we have to move toward having difficult discussions about what those cuts and changes should be. The Budget Committee is not heavy on faculty input; it is not a very open process. Faculty were not consulted before the decisions were made last year. There is a weak or fitful connection between budgeting and the institutional goals. Fundamental changes in how the decisions get made are needed, as well as the inclusion of faculty input. The Budget Committee is advisory; it does not make policy. Tweaking a box on a spreadsheet is not the same as deciding to keep or cut a program. Faculty can offer many ideas. Those serving on the Budget Committee, the deans and the Provost, can submit proposals to enhance the academic voice in the budgeting process.

Opening discussion, Jerry Brunetti said now is a time of opportunity for SMC. The state system is not enrolling students for the Spring 2010 semester. Students in the state system have a difficult time graduating in 4 or 5 years, because is it difficult to get the classes that are required. There seems to be an opening for SMC.

Vice President Beseda said his office has been aggressively pursuing transfer enrollments from the community colleges, placing ads in the newspaper and visiting the schools. SMC has a goal to enroll 100 mid-year transfers, which is twice what the normal number has been.

Brother Ronald reported that he is hearing many of the same issues from other colleges. In common with other institutions, SMC did not expect the steep rise in the discount rate for new students that the College has experienced. The rise is an indication of weakness in demand that is likely to persist. SMC needs to think and act creatively: What about cost-saving inter-institutional arrangements? Some places are doing that already, but it has not been our normal way to do business. It is clear that the 10-15 year rate of increase in tuitions is at its end. We can expect a flat recovery. We need to think outside the box, at the curriculum, and ask: since we have less, how can we do more with less so as to retain and enhance students' experience at SMC? We need to think strategically for out-years and work within our constrained resources next year. This will require painful decisions as a community. Chair Poundstone thanked Brother Ronald for opening this discussion with the faculty.

Ted Tsukahara noted that we can forecast costs, but revenue is uncertain. Can we get behind the numbers to begin to set balances? We will have to look at the details, which may be uncomfortable. However, there is a level of detail that will inform us. There is an opportunity to open conversations; we are not alone with our problems. It is an opportunity to look at a different structure of higher education in the region to benefit all. We have to become collaborative.

Jim Sauerberg suggested that we are having a conversation in an information vacuum. The relationship between the Budget Committee and the Cabinet should be looked at immediately. The present budgeting model addresses long-term problems through a short-term process. The Budget Committee cannot cut programs. He expressed his great appreciation for President Brother Ronald's and Vice President Michell's presence to discuss the issues with faculty. Still, he expressed himself unconvinced that the College is taking its budget problems this seriously enough. The budget is due shortly, and if the community were serious about fundamental reform, the conversation should have started earlier. Last year cuts were made by the administration, and in a non-strategic, blanket manner; deep, permanent, targeted cuts were not made.

Senator Gomez-Arias noted he has heard the term "new normal" many times. The "new normal" is what we want to make of it. We need to determine how we make decisions; we require more sophisticated methods. Unimaginative budgeting is a problem in private education in general, but other institutions are turning students away and they are not coming here, to SMC. The challenge is to think what we need to do more of to attract students; cutting is easy, but growing revenue is the way to prosper.

Senator Ogawa noted that faculty are aware of the crisis, because they feel it outside the College. There is opportunity in this crisis as Jerry Brunetti pointed out. We need to make changes, and that may start with the curriculum. What we hold sacred may not work in the future.

Kris Chase agreed that there are many opportunities for SMC. The outside world is ready for higher education to come up with new ideas. We are the only traditional four-year institution in the East Bay. We need to be creative, need to take a look at all that we do.

Chair Poundstone thanked the President, Vice President Pete Michell, Vice President Beseda and Provost Dobkin for participating in the faculty discussion.

Chair Poundstone asked faculty to provide feedback; faculty members of the Budget Committee will relay the information to that Committee.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathe Michalosky
Faculty Governance Coordinator