Chair’s Report
Academic Senate General Meeting
Thursday, 30 September, 2010

Announcements

Senate Membership

In my report for the General Meeting of 9 September, 2010, I noted that all tenured members of the SEBA faculty who are prima facie qualified to assume a Senate seat and who are neither seated for AY 2010 – 11 on a faculty committee nor coming off AY 2009 – 10 service on a high workload committee had declined appointment to the SEBA seat vacated by Phil Perry. As promised, since September 9, I have contacted all members of the group of SEBA faculty who are (1) qualified prima facie, are (2) not coming off “high-workload” assignments from 2009-10, but are (3) presently elected or appointed to a Senate/faculty committee not designated “high workload.” From one I have not had the courtesy of a response; all others have declined. I shall now contact all tenured, qualified members of the SEBA faculty with a final appeal.

Committee Memberships

I am still seeking a tenured member of the graduate faculty to fill a seat on the Library Committee, in this, a year when that committee will pursue planning for a new library building, and may play a leading role in the search of a new Dean for Academic Resources and Director of the Library. Interested ranked—not necessarily tenured—members of the graduate faculty are, once again, cordially invited to apply.

Remarks on the Agenda for 30 September, 2009

Reports

In re: B. I have asked the Provost to include in her Up-date remarks on only one among 2009-10’s Senate Actions, viz.: Senate Action S-09/10-25: Revised Preamble to the External Speaker and Public Event Policy, approved at the General Meeting of 13 May, 2010 and sent to the Provost on 18 May, 2010. In her response to the action, 7/1/2010, the Provost observed:

I have begun initial discussions of the “New Preamble for the Speaker Policy” with the President, and I understand that he does not wish to be quoted in the Faculty Handbook. Therefore, I support Senate Action S-09/10-25 with omission of the third paragraph, beginning “That is also the charge of a university.”

And she continued:

Of course, further consideration of this action depends on the response of the President and action of the Board, if the President decides to forward it to them for approval.

The Provost has agreed to up-date the Senate as to what further discussion, if any, has occurred or is in train to move the unobjectionable paragraphs to the Board.

For my part, I would point out to the Senate that the Provost’s consideration that further action on the Revised Preamble hangs without qualification on the response of the President is not wholly accurate. Upon consideration of the Provost’s remarks, the Senate might elect to move a
resolution under Handbook 1.6.1.2.10 at 3, which would be in order under the rules for a General Meeting.

On all other Senate Actions but one—viz., those appearing immediately below—the Provost registered her acceptance without comment.

Business Agenda
S-09/10-1 Implementation process, Core Curriculum Implementation Committee
S-09/10-2 External Speaker and Public Event Policy
S-09/10-4 AARC, Proposed Handbook revision, 1.7.4.8 (add advising oversight to role of AARC)
S-09/10-6 Three-year Academic Calendar
S-09/10-7 Collegiate Seminar Governing Board: Revised Membership to provide for faculty election to the Board, FH 1.7.3.8
S-09/10-11 January Term Committee: Revised membership to provide for faculty election, FH 1.7.4.11
S-09/10-13 January Term Committee membership: Revision to Handbook language, FH 1.7.4.11
S-09/10-14 Staff Council: Proposal for improving Faculty-Staff Relations
S-09/10-16 Sabbatical Protocols & Timeline for Consideration, FH 2.10.1.4; Deferral Policy, FH 2.10.1.4 at 9.; Revised Sabbatical Forms A, B & C
S-09/10-19 Commendation for Brother Gabriel Carlos Gomez-Restrepo, FSC
S-09/10-23 Senate Charge to the Collegiate Seminar Governing Board in re: Core Curriculum Revision

Consent Agenda
S-09/10-5 CA New Course Proposal: Liberal & Civic Studies 123: Modern Global Issues
S-09/10-9CA Performing Arts, Theater: Proposal for Technical Theater/Design track
S-09/10-10CA Psychology 104: Proposal for Change of Title and Description
S-09/10-12CA Anthropology: Curriculum Revision
S-09/10-15CA Performing Arts, Theater: Revised Theater Minor
S-09/10-19CA Environmental Science & Studies Program: Revisions
S-09/10-20CA Center for International Programs: Proposal for Studies Abroad, Fudan University, China
S-09/10-21CA School of Education: Masters in Teaching Leadership Program (MATL)

By way of accepting Senate Action S-09/10-22, “Proposal Concerning .25 Credit Courses,” the Provost noted that a change in College billing practices, namely, to discontinue applying 0.5 (unused) credits against additional (e.g., fifth v. sqq.) 1.0-credit courses, is implied in the Senate language and would be implemented with the Proposal. The Provost’s interpretation jibes with that of the (then) Senate majority, rendering further comment superfluous.

In re: E. Members of the Mission Assessment Task Force (appointed January, 2010 by the President), charged under the San Francisco District Mission Assembly Action Plan and BoS 1.8 to develop an instrument and process for assessing SMC’s effectiveness at pursuing the College’s Mission, will report to the Senate at the 30 September General Meeting. Copies of the MATF’s document “Criteria Related to Broad Mission Outcomes” have been distributed to the Senators; the document is posted on the Senate webpage for perusal by interested members of the faculty. The Chair will reserve time ad libidum for the members of the Task Force to take evaluative comment on the document from the members of the Senate and, time permitting, from faculty at large.
Old Business

At the General Meeting of January, 2010, in response to queries from (then) Chair of the UEPC, Hoang Vu, and from the floor, the Senate passed a motion, Senate Action S-09/10-8, calling upon the Executive Committee to issue a clarifying statement on the open status of meetings of Senate/faculty bodies. The Executive Committee has duly drafted an:

Executive Committee Statement
Open Status of Faculty Meetings

The faculty’s public business should be conducted publicly. General Meetings of the Senate will always be open, as described in the Handbook, 1.6.1.2.9.1 at 2 (General Meetings) and 1.6.1.2.13 (Voice). The meeting schedules of Senate committees—including the Senate’s Executive Committee—will be posted, and interested members of the faculty will be admitted normally as auditors or, at the discretion of the chair, as speakers.

Not all of the faculty’s business is public business. Where the Senate or one of its committees has a duty to render a judgment of merit which could be unduly influenced by the presence of interested parties or by the likelihood that deliberations could be reported (or misreported) to interested parties, its deliberations may be closed precisely in the interest of the good conduct of the faculty’s business. One such regular duty devolves yearly upon the UEPC and GPSEPC when they meet jointly to consider the merits of sabbatical proposals. But since the duty to undertake judgments of merit may arise adventitiously, responsible officers of the faculty, including the chairs of Senate committees, must be allowed, for good cause, to close all or part of the deliberations over which they preside. The very fact that sensitive deliberations may arise adventitiously entails that the only reasonable rule governing the ad hoc closure of meetings is that faculty officers give cogent reasons for their rulings, to their deliberative colleagues, to the Senate, and to their faculty colleagues at large.

New Business

_In re:_ A. “A Resolution from the January Term Committee” was advanced to the Agenda by unanimous decision of the Executive Committee; the Chair will introduce the resolution and the Past Chair will move it on behalf of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee are acting at the request of the January Term Committee (JTC), to address implications arising from recent, extraordinary administrative intervention into the JTC’s sole responsibility, under Handbook 1.7.4.11, to “review proposals for courses offered during [January] term.” The Chair, at his instance, has met with the Director of the January Term and with the JTC, at that Committee’s instance.

The Executive Committee lay the following facts before the Senate: the Provost has directed JTC to reverse the results of its review of a course proposal. As communicated to JTC, that directive rested neither on new evidence concerning the proposal’s merits nor on any credible allegation of inadequate or otherwise improper consideration on the part of JTC; and, in fact, the Provost had already advised JTC of having found no cause for grievance arising from the Committee’s original decision.
JTC has addressed a letter to the Provost disclaiming, among other matters, that the course’s appearance among the 2011 January Term offerings either implies the Committee’s approbation or warrants the inference that it meets ordinary standards for inclusion.

The Executive Committee note that the case in point appears in the character of mere fiat, and to that extent affronts the principles of shared governance on its face. The directive abrogates the action of a faculty committee in matters that fall, by explicit Handbook provision, under that committee’s principal competence. The directive is not advanced on grounds of dereliction by the committee. Rather, it appears merely to substitute an administratively desired result for the deliberate, public judgment of the Committee: that is the very pattern of arbitrary governance. In the view of the Executive Committee, the January Term Committee resolution properly censures this instantiation of arbitrary governance and correctly evaluates its continuation’s predictable effects on the institutions of shared governance.

In re: B. Vice President for Finance, Pete Michell’s, report that increased enrollments will put the FY 2010 – 11 operating budget “solidly in the black” raises the possibility of mid-year amendments to the spending plan. The resolution from the Faculty Welfare Committee looks to put the faculty on record in favor of prioritizing the restoration and enhancement (in effect, the recouping) of TIAA-CREF contributions, drastically reduced (to 2% and, since 1 July, “raised” to 3% of salary, a level that leaves SMC “an outlier even among the outliers”) beginning in FY 2008-09.

Respectfully submitted,

S. A. Cortright, Chair
Academic Senate