Chair’s Report  
Academic Senate General Meeting  
Thursday, 10 February, 2011  

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for Director of the Core Curriculum  
Pursuant to Senate Action S-10/11-12, the Chair and Vice Chair will represent the Academic Senate on the nominating committee for the first Director of the Core Curriculum, joining two members of the UEPC and two of the CCIC, yet to be announced by those bodies. An e-mailed announcement, soliciting nominations for Director of the Core Curriculum, was sent to all members of the faculty on 19 January, 2011. Nominations remain open through 18 February, 2011, and may be forwarded to the Chair, Academic Senate.

REMARKS ON THE AGENDA FOR 10 FEBRUARY, 2011  

In re: 4. REPORTS

A. 1. Meetings of the Board of Trustees

In the absence of Past Chair, Tom Poundstone (abroad with his January Term class), the Chair represented the faculty at sequential meetings of the Trustees’ Academic Affairs Committee (January 6) and of the full Board (January 20–21). Reports submitted to the AA Committee and full Board appear as Appendices I and II, respectively, to this Report.

The Academic Affairs Committee, Chaired by Trustee Russ Harrison, heard and reacted to reports from each of the Deans of Schools and from the Provost, as well as from the Senate. The Committee members present evinced particular interest in six matters of moment to the College:

1. the potential for the College’s recent recognition in arts, debate, and like competition, to raise the College’s public profile;
2. the immediate and intermediate term implementation of the Academic Blueprint;
3. preparations for the up-coming WASC institutional capacity assessment;
4. continuing, timely progress toward institution of the revised undergraduate Core Curriculum;
5. attainment of AACSB accreditation; return of SEBA faculty to the main campus;
6. progress by the Faculty Salary Task Force toward a Report and recommendations, principally in light of salary policy’s implications for recruitment and retention of a distinguished faculty.

In the event, Mr. Harrison’s General Session report to the full Board touched on each of the six, but he drew special attention (a) to the “serious, collaborative character” of the Faculty Salary Task Force’s work, to which he wished to attest as a member; (b) to institutional capacity concerns, on-going in the spheres of library resources and physical facilities, and emergent in the sphere of academic technology; (c) to progress on the revision of the undergraduate Core Curriculum.
Much of the General Session concerned financial matters, in particular the FY 2011–12 operating budget, as reported by Br. Ronald (24 January). Two further developments from the General Session should interest members of the faculty: Trustee Russ Harrison, now Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, has been nominated to succeed Mr. Peter Kelly in the Chair of the Board of Trustees; Br. Charles Hilken, FSC, delivered to the Board a statement registering the unanimous judgment of the Christian Brothers on campus on the future cultivation of St. Mary’s Catholic-liberal-Lasallian character.

C. Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC)

Meeting on the 24th of January in regular session, the UEPC completed consideration of the proposed Learning Outcomes and accompanying Rationales for the new undergraduate Core Curriculum. The resulting language constitutes the object of Senate action under New Business, B., of the Agenda. Thanks are owing to Asbjorn Moseidjord, Chair, David Gentry-Aiken, Vice Chair, and their most diligent Committee.

With the 21 February meeting, UEPC will commence work on the backlog of ordinary business pre-empted by the Core project.

D. Academic Administrators Evaluation Committee (AAEC)

AAEC is scheduled to meet 7 February; the Chair will deliver a brief report viva voce to the Senate.

In re: 5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution Amending 2010–11 Senate Rules of Procedure

Pursuant to Senate Actions S-10/11-12 and S-10/11-13, the Academic Senate will periodically confirm nominees for Director of the Core Curriculum and for membership in Core Curriculum Working Groups. This resolution aims to establish ad hoc provision in the 2010–11 Senate Rules of Procedure for deliberation over nominees’ merits in closed session, along the lines already recognized for Senate committees, as, e.g., the UEPC/GPSEPC sitting to evaluate sabbatical applications. A motion and a second ad libidum from among the Senators will be required. This motion leaves the question whether amendments to the Handbook language governing the Academic Senate are in order to later consideration.

B. Adoption of the Learning Outcomes for the New Core Curriculum

The Senators have in hand the “Agenda and Procedure” document, which details the Chair’s intentions by way of conducting the faculty’s business in this matter (members of the faculty will find the document posted on the Senate webpage with the General Meeting Agenda).

Respectfully submitted,

S. A. Cortright, Chair
Academic Senate
Two matters of overriding importance to, respectively, the undergraduate College and the College at large preoccupy the Academic Senate’s agenda, and will continue to preoccupy the agenda through the balance of the present academic year: I, revision of the Undergraduate Core Curriculum; II, faculty compensation.

I
To date, the Senate’s Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC), and the latter’s select Core Curriculum Implementation Committee (CCIC) have delivered two major pieces of the revised Core to the Senate, which has responded with prompt action. Senate Action S-10/11-8 (11 November, 2010) amended the “Model 1” plan for Core revision: acting affirmatively on advice of the CCIC, the Senate re-wrote four of the model’s Learning Goals. The effect: eased implementation of the new Core and an enlarged set of undergraduate options. Senate Action S-10/11-9 adopted, with substantial amendment, UEPC’s recommendations on the membership, structure and charge of the permanent Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), the standing committee which will inaugurate, and thereafter continuously oversee and assess, the Core.

In immediate prospect: the Senate is in receipt of the CCIC-UEPC draft of a position description for the Director of the Core Curriculum, who will chair the CCC and act as the Core’s administrator. This draft is on the Senate Agenda for the General Meeting of 12 January, 2011. Its adoption would complete the Core’s governing structure, enabling election of the initial CCC membership and appointment of the inaugural Director in the up-coming Spring, 2011, election cycle. Also in immediate prospect: CCIC-UEPC have submitted the Core’s curricular outline—viz.: Learning Outcomes for the twelve Core Learning Goals and the Rationales that will guide the CCC as it approves Core courses and curricula—for review by the faculty at large at two general Senate fora, January 11 (evening) and 12 (noon). In light of faculty comment, UEPC will forward final language on the Outcomes and Rationales for Senate consideration at the successive General Meetings of February, March and—if necessary—April, 2011. In sum: the Senate is on pace to have the Undergraduate Core’s guiding curricular language and administration ready to commence assembling Core curricula with the opening of AY 2011–12.

II
The Senate is awaiting a report and recommendations from the “Building on Strengths”—mandated Faculty Salary Task Force. The Executive Committee has reserved time on the Agenda for April or May (or both) to consider proposals from the Task Force. In the meantime, the Senate registered the urgent concern of the College faculty at large by adopting, unanimously, Senate Action S-10/11-3, a resolution of the Senate’s Faculty Welfare Committee, calling for restoration of College TIAA-CREF contributions to 8.25% of salary. It registered, as well, the faculty’s grateful satisfaction with the Board of Trustees’ decision to restore the contribution, despite continued economic volatility. The Senate joins the faculty at large in the hope that the Task Force will offer actionable suggestions for relief, in the near and long term, from a multi-year scale freeze and accompanying erosion of real compensation, the result of increasing out-of-pocket insurance costs and local price inflation.

Respectfully submitted,

S. A. Cortright, Chair
Academic Senate
Good morning!

The business dominating faculty attention, and certainly dominating the agenda of the Academic Senate, through the Fall semester, has been revision of the undergraduate Core Curriculum. I propose to use my time to flesh out—concisely—the outline, provided by Trustee Harrison in his Academic Affairs Committee Report, of where we stand in the revision process.

On January 12, just after the Academic Affairs Committee meeting of 6 January, the Academic Senate passed amendments to the Faculty Handbook which established an elected Core Curriculum Committee, and the position, Director of the Core Curriculum.

The former, Core Curriculum Committee, will constitute an elected body of tenured faculty drawn from each undergraduate school, and charged with overseeing the Core Curriculum: policy, content, and assessment. In particular this committee will oversee the evaluation and acceptance of courses and co-curricular undertakings proposed by College departments and individual faculty for inclusion in the Core Curriculum.

The latter, Director of the Core Curriculum, will be a tenured member of the undergraduate faculty, nominated to, and confirmed by the Academic Senate, to act as Chair of the Core Curriculum Committee, as the Committee’s liaison to the Provost (through the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics) and to the College's academic departments, and as the day-to-day administrator of the Core Curriculum.

A call for nominations for Director of the Core Curriculum has already been issued. The faculty election cycle, commencing February 8th, will include the election of the six-member Core Curriculum Committee, whose terms (and the Director’s) will commence 1 July, 2011.

On Monday up-coming, 24 January, the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee of the Academic Senate will meet to recommend final language specifying the Learning Outcomes which must be met by courses or co-curricular exercises, if they are to be included in the Core. This work is already well advanced; it is expected that final recommendations will be forwarded to the Academic Senate for decisive votes in a series of Senate General Meetings, February 10, March 3 and March 24.

Bottom line: the administrative structure of the new Core Curriculum has been determined; by July 1, 2011, a Core Curriculum Committee and Director will be in place and will—we are confident—have in hand final language for the review, evaluation and acceptance of the first “wave” of core undergraduate courses. That review should commence over the summer of 2011, and be complete in time for publication of the 2012-13 undergraduate Catalog. The leadership of the Academic Senate are confident that freshman of the class of 2016 will benefit from that first wave of core courses, as we begin—on time!—the four-year phase-in of the revised core.

I would be happy to take the members’ questions.

Respectfully submitted,

S. A. Cortright
Professor of Philosophy
Chair, Academic Senate