University SENATE
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November 28, 2007
Midtown, Warner 103
Meeting convened at 3:37 p.m.

Guests present: Robin Flanagan, Bernard Kokinchak, William Joel

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. SCHEDULED COMMON HOURS

Under New Business: Scheduled Common Hours, there is a proposal from Professor Joel. I’d like to preface this first by discussing the history of this idea of common course hours. This isn’t the first time the idea of some common hours for faculty and students to meet has come up. The most recent time this question of common course hours has come up was in the 2004-2005 Academic Year. In December, 2004 the student life committee submitted a proposal requesting that common hours be set. The proposal was that a common hour be created and set on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3-4 PM on both campuses for the purpose of giving students and faculty common (inaudible). Now this was a proposal put out in December, 2004 by the student life committee and we discussed it here and in the December, 2004 Senate minutes it comprises eleven pages of discussion. What concluded is the following: first we asked the Student life committee to take this proposal back and to look at the feasibility and to collect data from the Registrar’s office and that was postponed until February, 2005. The second thing that we did, though, is we passed a motion that supports the idea of this common time. The motion that we passed was Resolution 041209”The Senate supports the creation of a common time for the purpose of giving students and faculty a common and open time to meet (Inaudible) action on the postponed resolution. So, the result of that meeting back in December, 2004 was that we support this idea of the common time. The student life committee proposal was to be discussed in February, 2005 and then it was postponed until March, postponed until April, and the paper trail ends there. So, this is the history.

Motion to accept the proposal for common hours (Schlicht/Gladstone)

Sen. Munz – Has anyone spoken to the Registrar to see the feasibility of it and the effect on the scheduling of regular classes?
Prof. Joel – To my knowledge no one has (inaudible) before we get into the criteria of the why and why not one version or another, if this could work, if you notice the language I’ve used I didn’t specify day, I didn’t specify time, what I said was that (inaudible) to establish a common hour and that the time and days for the common hours would be decided by the Senate for discussion. Before we get into the Registrar, could this be done? It may not be easy, it may not be that it’s been done in the past, those are questions for later on.
Sen. Secondo – As a department that offers laboratories, we teach labs from 9 in the morning
until 10:00 at night and then on Friday we have labs until 4:00 in the afternoon.
In terms of finding a common time, unless we want students in laboratories until 11:00 or midnight at any point Monday through Thursday, I don’t think the feasibility is really there, it becomes an issue especially when laboratories are long. They’re scheduled every hour pretty much.

Sen. Lightwood – I was curious about this issue and I went to Banner. There’s information in Banner, I don’t know what it means, I don’t know how much I trust it. I entered the information to find all classes anywhere within the reach in Banner between 3:00 and 6:00 on Monday and Friday. There was one class, a Psychology class, offered between 3 and 3:50, so then I said well, maybe it was just bad information so then I looked earlier and I went into 2:00, just Monday, Friday and a couple of things popped up. There were a lot of TBA’s, Music and Justice and Law and a couple of others but I don’t

Sen. Koza – I teach Monday from 2:00-4:30. It’s a Marketing 301 Survey class
Sen. Lightwood – That was not in there, so this just makes me, I just thought I’d convey it.

Unidentified – Maybe those are the only free spots left.

Sen. Lightwood – No, I went earlier and later and various classes popped up but evidently not all of them.

Sen. Maskel- I have three comments – the first is I teach Monday from 1:00 to 4:00 and we have other labs in the department from 1-4, second, if there is one common hour, I’m not against this in principal, I’m not sure in practice if I’m for it or not, but if there is one common hour everybody is going to want to schedule their meeting there and if you’re on five committees I’m not sure having one common hour is going to help anything. Even if there’s 3 common hours a week that are unscheduled for classes I’m not sure that’s still going to accommodate all the problems because of the number of committees people are on. The third thing goes back to what Paula Secondo was saying with labs it’s very difficult and not only is it because we have labs but because we have only one section of the required courses that you have to take. It’s hard enough to coordinate the Chemistry/Biology and PAM department schedule so that students who need to take courses can get in their required courses but when there’s one section of it that they can choose from then these labs all have to be at different times so it’s the lecture and the lab and it’s a nightmare with just those three courses let alone everyone at the university.

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Prof. Joel – Maybe if I give a little background as to why I started this. At one of the schools I taught before we had a common hour. We also had blocked scheduling for all classes. Instead of having the crazy quilt patchwork of start/stop times for courses as generally found in the front of the course listing book which meant every time you come towards, you know, (inaudible) it drove me crazy. We have blocked schedule, we had one of those blocks set aside for a common hour and it worked. We’re talking about a school that was oh, maybe 3500-4,000 students, Marist College. It worked very, very well. They had Science classes, they had Chemistry and Biology and Physics and it still all worked. When I hear anyone say we have labs, we can’t fit it in, (inaudible). My background is in Chemistry, I know what it means to have labs. Another part of me, when you don’t have the right resources for size we had before to have X number of classes, I don’t know. I can’t really comment completely on that. One of the things which I know is is that the more organization we can add to several things like when the courses are scheduled, and when we have set aside three hours just for meetings, clubs, etc. the easier it makes the rest of our hectic lives as faculty and having a common hour, in my mind because now I’m sharing (inaudible) and I’m running into the (inaudible) of that also, if I had a common hour, I’d say well I know that I’m not in scheduled classes in these two slots during the week or three slots during the week, whatever it is, I know could I have time there that (inaudible), let’s say it’s Monday, Wednesday, Friday, we know the first Wednesday is for department meetings across campus, the third is for senate, the first Monday is for this, the second Monday is for this, in
other words we could lock in slots for specials so you avoid a conflict and the rest of the slots are open. If you do this three days a week, 4 weeks in a month, that's twelve slots, total, that you can set aside for some special purposes and sometimes open. And yes, not every student is going to want it. I don't think you could find a, what's the expression? You can please some of the people some of the time but not all of the people, all of the time, etc. etc. You can't please all of the students, but it's a rational approach to dealing with the organization, for example, we have blocked scheduling, you know in advance every semester when the final period is for that block. If you have common hour, then you know in advance times, during the week, you know it's available for meetings, you don't have to run around, the only thing you may have to worry about is that person may have another meeting they have to go to but you don't have to worry juggling class schedules and everything else. You know which blocks are free.

Sen. Kosa – I agree with you in theory, it does sound wonderful what we're dealing with in the Business School, particularly in Marketing Dept, I can speak for is that we juggle resources and one of the prime resources are technology classrooms that our higher level marketing classes have to operate out of. We schedule a large number of our upper level marketing classes in one technology classroom that we have to share, we're using it every day of the week.

Prof. Joel – You schedule it Friday, also?

Sen. Kosa – The Ancell School doesn't run Friday classes.

Prof. Joel – Why don't you have Friday classes?

Sen. Kosa – it was a decision made before I came on board

Prof. Joel – That's a whole other day of time that can be used for classes.

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Sen. Kosa – it was a day that was set aside for Ancell meetings. That's when we have our Ancell meetings.

Prof. Joel – So, why don't you move classes to Friday and then move that free time across the week and then you don't have to worry about resources?

Sen. Kosa – We use the Fridays for our scheduled meetings.

Prof. Joel – I know then you could use the common hour for scheduled meetings.

Sen. Kosa – I know we go until 10:00 all the time in the Ancell School Monday through Thursday and we utilize those resources from 8 in the morning so even on Wednesday we’re running right through, someone was in those technology classrooms.

Sen. Schlicht – I just want to make a comment about a practical advantage to having blocked schedule meeting times, it tells you how long the meeting is going to be and that's kinda nice, so that you can say it's over at 2, we gotta go. I like that.

Guest Bernard Kokinchak – It's a good idea for students because 1) it will allow for logical things, 2) we talked about (inaudible) I have probably never seen the class (inaudible) at 8 AM in the morning. I would like to see like the old expression early to bed and early to rise. I would personally like to see more morning classes this way we won't have the problems with these night classes going to 7, 9, 10, 11:00 at night.

Pres. Kuther – OK, let's just stay with the discussion regarding common hours, however it does sound as though blocked scheduling is tied to the discussion of common hours. Further discussion?

Sen. Ganchev – I want to support this idea, I came late today just because I (inaudible) so I probably would also like to offer my opinion that two hours doesn't seem to be enough. If we have a meeting scheduled from 3:30-5:00, most meetings are on this campus, which means 1/2 hour this way and 1/2 hour the other way, we have to be able to accommodate that.

Sen. Maskel- I don’t mean to belabor this point but when you talk about scheduling labs, it depends on how many lab courses are offered if they can handle the rooms they’re in, etc. to tell whether they can fit into a block of time. I teach my Animal Physics class in the spring at 8:00 AM, not because I particularly want to, but because if I offered it at any other time up to 4:00 it
would, including 1-4 on Friday, it would overlap with another Biology lecture or lab, not even considering Chemistry or Physics. But, every hour in the spring, and that’s why I’m in at 8:00. So, we do have some lecture/lab every hour from 8:00 – 4:00. I’m for this in principal, but I’m not sure, at least from my department, that it would work.

Prof. Joel – There’s an expression if someone’s working on something that’s not quite working right “make it work”. If we are on the principal for this, we could still have our differences as to what our individual departments needs are, but if we are in support of the principal, can we not say we’re going to make it work, we’re going to really do the hard work and maybe we have to juggle some of the times when things are offered to squeeze it in because we know in the end it makes our life much, much easier. If we’re not willing to do the work to make it work, my suggestion this, I’ll throw this off the table, I’ll withdraw the motion. Because any of these changes, are going, for God sakes we’re being asked right now to have common course numbering across all four schools, that’s hard work - talk about a nightmare, but it’s something that is necessary, though. That was a lousy comparison. It’s something we’ve seen before, the first thing you say is, is it important and we’re going to do it and then you say and now we’re going to work as hard as you can to actually make it work. If it at some point you say, you know we really worked hard and we just can’t make it work and then we say ok, we have to stop now, we’ll have to come back to it again in a couple of years. But if people don’t want to really work on something like this I can’t fault you, I mean everyone has their own department needs, I understand that, I just meant this as a very friendly motion to try to help out the school to do something that’s going to make our lives easier.

Sen. Echevarria – Again, I think we were all in favor of this when the last discussions we had back when I think the problem here is may be what we should try and do is maybe find common hours for each school first and then whatever that time release makes available for those committees that are huge and need representation from each school if they run into difficulties and then we can try to resolve that issue, but I don’t know how you’re going to do it for the whole school at this point.

Pres. Kuther – Here’s one suggestion we should consider it seems that many of the comments here concern the pragmatics of this so if you’d like to consider this further, one thing you might consider doing is to set up a senate sub committee and explore the pragmatics of it, is it really possible.

Sen. Hawkes – I think I’d like to support that idea because it seems to me that the idea is very interesting but I think we do need a feasibility study and we need a feasibility study to take into consideration how many courses we have that require long hours, how many committees we have at what level; is it governance, is it school committees, is it a student club, and so on and so forth. We don’t know those things and each department, each faculty member, everybody else they have their own phone books, so if we had an ad hoc committee, that perhaps included the registrar and some other offices for our feasibility study, we can make things work but I think there has to be a possibility of making them work before you really plunge into them otherwise you’ll have to give up some of your priorities and classes have to be our priority over activities because that’s what we are, we’re a university and we don’t want to do that but what do we have to deal with? We don’t really know at this point.

Sen. Murphy – Can I suggest that we go back to the Strategic plan committee that put this into the strategic plan and find out what data or information that they collected and gathered, to put this idea into the strategic plan already because I hate to see us do work that’s already been done. I’d like to see how they plan to incorporate it into the strategic plan.

Sen. Morton – I think at some point we’re going to have to go based on some sort of idea of faith. We’re going to have to consider what the benefits are because if we’re doing this I would like to see based on my background what the benefits are if we’re taking this many hours and it
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Can create this many more potential meetings, what are we really getting out of it, what's tangible? I know all the pros and cons, the four hours and everything else but until we see some very laid out benefits it's very hard to make decisions and I think the sub committee will help us come to that conclusion.

Pres. Kuther – So it sounds like the consensus is to put together a sub committee that will explore this idea in detail. Professor Joel would you like to sit on this? Do I have another? Sen. Moser and Sen. Dwyer. Thank you.