

Penn State Berks Senate

Monday, September 22, 2008

1:00-2:30 PM, Multi-Purpose Room

Agenda

- **Call to Order**
- **Additions, Corrections, and Approval of Minutes of the April 28, 2008 meeting**
- **Announcements by the Chair**
- **Reports of Officers and University Senators**
 - Vice Chair Dunbar
 - Secretary and Senator Zambanini
 - Senator Aynardi
 - Senator Bowers (**Appendix A**)
 - Senator Nasereddin
 - Senator and Parliamentarian Romberger (**App. A**)
 - Student Senator Karazsia
- **Comments and Announcements by Administrators**
 - Chancellor Speece
 - Associate Dean Esqueda
- **Unfinished Business**
- **Motions from Committees**
 - Approval of Senate Meeting Dates, Executive Committee (**Appendix B**)

- Approval of Senate Committee Chairs, Executive Committee (Appendix C)
- **Informational Reports from Committees**
 - Committee Charges, Penn State Berks Senate, 2008-2009, Executive Committee (**Appendix D**)
 - Academic Affairs Committee (AAC), Minutes for September 5, 2008 Meeting (**Appendix E**)
 - Minutes of Physical Facilities and Safety Meeting, September 4, 2008 (**Appendix F**)
 - Student Life Committee Minutes, August 25, 2008 (**Appendix G**)
- **New Legislative Business**
- **Forensic Business** – First Year Engagement Plan, Executive Committee (**Appendix H**)
- **Adjournment**

Penn State Berks Senate
Monday, April 28, 2008
1:00-2:30 PM, Lion's Den

Attendees: Ali Alikani, Mohamad Ansari, David Aurentz, Martha Aynardi, Dave Bender, Amy White Berger, William H. Bowers, Maureen Dunbar, Bob Forrey Hassan Gourama, Bruce Hale, Jennifer Hillman, Jui-Chi Huang, James Karlinsey, Danny Litvin, Cesar Martinez-Garza, Ray Mazurek, Randall Newnham, JoAnne B. Pumariega, Jianbing Qi, Andy Romberger, Jeanne Rose, Daniel Russell, David Sanford, Alice Shaparenko, Ike Shibley, Dong-Hee Shin, Steve Snyder, James Walter, Christian Weisser, Bob Zambanini (Faculty); Pradip Bandyopadhyay, Kim Berry, Mary Lou D'Allegro, Paul Esqueda, Ken Fifer, Walt Fullam, Janelle Larson, Dennis Mays, Blaine Steensland (Administration); Kat Staargaard (Student); and Fagan (Service Dog)

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Minutes of the Preceding Meetings – The minutes of the Senate meeting of March 31, 2008 and the Special Senate Meeting of April 21, 2008 meetings were *approved*.

3. Announcements by the Chair

- The Chair read a report in its entirety into the record regarding his directive to address the ROTC issue from the March 31 Senate meeting at the April 1 Administrative meeting. This report appears at the end of these minutes.
- The Chair congratulated the Secretary on his reelection.

4. Reports of Officers and University Senators

• **Vice Chair Dunbar – No report**

- The Vice Chair thanked the Chair for the leadership that he has provided the Senate during the past year. She also thanked the Committee Chairs for their hard work and their contributions to the Senate.
- The Senate is now in the process of establishing the Senate Committees for next year. Those who are interested in serving on a Committee should reply to the Vice Chair via e-mail.

• **Secretary and Senator Zambanini**

- On March 31, the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Mohamad Ansari as Senate Chair for the 2008-2009 Academic Year and for Maureen Dunbar as Senate Vice Chair, also for the 2008-2009 Academic Year.
- Some minor formatting problems on the Senate webpage will be corrected as subsequent meeting minutes are posted.
- Based on the sense of the Berks Senate at the Special Senate Meeting of Monday, April 21, 2008, University Senator Zambanini will vote in favor of the proposed University Senate Legislation on the First-Year Seminar at the upcoming University Senate meeting, barring significant amendments to the legislation on the floor of the University Senate.

• **Senator Aynardi**

- Senator Aynardi echoed Senator Zambanini's comments regarding the upcoming University Senate Legislation regarding the First-Year Seminar.
- Any Intra-University suggestions should be brought to Senator Aynardi for consideration.

• **Senator Bowers**

- There were no new issues to report.

- **Senator and Parliamentarian Romberger**
 - The University Senate will be considering a revision to Senate Policy 47-70 regarding mid-semester evaluations. The proposal is to amend the policy to include all new students in the first and second semesters and to expand the evaluation to be open for faculty input from the third to the sixth week of the semester.
 - Students will now be included on Senate Council.
 - A thorough report on faculty salaries will be posted on the University Senate website.
- **SGA Senator (Zachary Karazsia, in absentia for Matthew Werner)**
 - SGA President Karazsia reported that he will be serving as the Berks Student Representative on the University Senate for the 2008-2009 Academic Year.

5. **Comments and Announcements by Administrators**

- **Chancellor Speece – No Report (Not Present)**
- **Associate Dean Esqueda**
 - The Admissions Junior Visitation Program was held on Saturday, April 26. It was a success, as over 500 participants attended.
 - The Employee Recognition Luncheon will be held on May 15, 2008. Faculty members are encouraged to attend.
 - The Student Awards Ceremony was held yesterday. Faculty support was acknowledged.
 - The Celebrating Teaching Colloquium will be held on May 18. The topic will be undergraduate research. Bob Forrey, Laurie Grobman, and Sadan Kulturel will be faculty presenters.
 - Commencement will be held on May 17, 2008. Faculty members are again encouraged to attend.

6. **Unfinished Business – None**

7. **Motions from Committees**

- **Amendment to the Standing Rules of the Penn State Berks Senate, Executive Committee (Appendix A)**
 - The purpose of the amendment is to increase the number of faculty members on the Student Life, Physical Facilities and Safety, and Strategic Planning and Budget Committees from one per division to two per division. This amendment was motivated by the fact that the number of faculty members as well as overall faculty interest in serving on committees has increased.
 - A vote was called and the *motion passed with 84% in favor and 8% opposed (8% abstained)*.

8. **Informational Reports from Committees**

- **Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Notes of March 17, 2008 (Appendix B) – Maureen Dunbar**
- **Joint Informational Report from the Physical Facilities and Safety and Student Life Committees, March 8, 2008 (Appendix C) – Dave Aurentz (for Sadan Kulturel)**
- **Strategic Planning and Budget Committee Minutes, April, 2008 (Appendix D) – Laurie Grobman**
- **Strategic Planning and Budget Committee Informational Reports, April, 2008 (Appendix E) – Laurie Grobman**
 - To save time, the Chair stated that these documents would not be discussed unless a specific question or concern arose concerning them.
 - In particular, Dr. Dave Aurentz mentioned the following regarding his report, since the Committee was charged to summarize their progress to date:
 - The Committee has not made any recommendations for furnishings for hallways and areas outside of classrooms because much of these concerns have already been addressed, especially in the Franco and Luerssen buildings.
 - There does exist a need for dedicated computer space for students. Four computers have been placed in the Multi Purpose Room and two elsewhere.
 - The Committee was not justified in making any other recommendations even though there is a need for more.
 - Penn State Berks has hired consultants to design dedicated student space.

9. New Legislative Business – None

10. Forensic Business – Free Speech on Campus (Appendix D)

- Dr. Randy Newnham led a discussion on concerns regarding use of the campus by groups (such as political groups, student organizations, and the general public). In particular, concerns were raised made about the limited number of “free speech zones” and the process by which groups can petition to access those zones.
- After a lengthy discussion in which Dr. Blaine Steensland mentioned the University’s policies on these matters, Dr. Martha Aynardi asked if the Chair could place discussion of this item on the agenda of the Administrative Council. The Chair replied that such action was not in his purview; however, the Senate could form an ad-hoc committee to investigate these concerns. After it was agreed that such a committee should be formed, the Chair then began to solicit volunteers for this committee, whose membership will be announced at the next Senate meeting.

11. Adjournment

**Report of the Senate Chair on the March 31 Senate Directive
Regarding the ROTC Issue
April 28, 2008**

In follow up to the March 31 Senate directive, I addressed the ROTC issue at the April 1 of Administrative Council meeting. The Senate has received the Chancellor's response in her April Musings. In response to faculty concern and need for additional clarity on the subject, I wrote to Dr. Robert Pangborn, Vice President for Undergraduate Education. The following is our email communication:

Dear Vice President Pangborn:

Recently, the Campus Registrar reported to the Berks Senate "the ROTC program will be returning to campus in the Fall." In response to faculty's concern regarding lack of consultation, I addressed the issue at the Administrative Council meeting and Chancellor Speece has issued a response to the faculty.

Based on the Chancellor's response and the University's P:CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES, I am of the understanding that since this program was not officially phased out, its reinstitution does not warrant Senate Protocol. With great appreciation I look forward to receiving your confirmation on this matter.

Respectfully,

Mohamad A. Ansari, Chair

Berks Senate

I will check in to this, but my first reaction is that this does not fall under the P policies since ROTC is not a degree program. It may involve offering selected courses, but that is at the discretion of the campus. I will get back to you with more information.

--Rob

Dear Dr. Ansari,

Dr. Pangborn asked me to reply to your query regarding the procedures for offering these courses at Berks beginning in the Fall. I've spoke with Dr. Esqueda and understand from him that the courses that Berks plans to offer are:

ARMY 101 U.S. Army Organization and Functions (2) Introduction to U.S. Army and ROTC: their organization, missions and functions; customs and traditions; leadership laboratory.

ARMY 203 Army Operations: Tactics and the Principles of War (2) Organization and operation of Army units; fundamentals of unit tactics; leadership laboratory.

ARMY 301 Advanced Principles of Leadership and Management (3) Principles of military leadership; military skills development; land navigation; physical fitness; leadership laboratory.

Since these are already approved Penn State courses, the decision to offer them is an administrative decision that is determined by factors such [as] having sufficient student interest to offer the courses and having faculty available to teach the courses. There is no involvement of the Faculty Senate in such decisions since the involvement of [the] Senate comes during the course/program approval process and not in the course offering process. In addition, the P policies would not apply in this situation since you are not planning on adding a degree program, option, or minor.

I hope that this information helps. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best,

Yvonne

Yvonne Gaudelius

Assistant Vice President and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

(Appendix A)

Senator Bower's Report

Our Faculty Affairs Committee meeting dealt mostly with the committee and subcommittee charges for the coming year. Our work will focus on the following issues:

- HR-64 Academic Freedom policy - Continued work on intellectual property Issues for online teaching: a) Contractual labor, b) Responsibility for quality, revision, and future use, c) Open educational resources
- Best practices report: a) recommendation on one-semester off for tenure-track faculty for research or teaching development b) mentoring entering faculty to teach better (perhaps promotion of Schreyer Institute programs) c) tenure-track faculty mentoring and orientation
- Reimbursement of child/dependent care expenses during participation in professional conferences (currently not allowed even if within regular travel funds allotment).
- Reciprocal agreements for tuition reduction at other universities for staff with children who do not choose to attend PSU (last time this options was examined in FA—about 15 years ago—PSU was not in Big Ten; other schools currently do have these agreements in place
- The role of assessment in promotion and tenure decisions.
- What proportion should fixed term faculty be of the total faculty? What effects does an increasing number of fixed term faculty have on tenure?
- The effect of IPAS on faculty

We had a joint meeting of FAC and CIS with senior IT people from University Park to discuss the IPAS plan to scan University owned computers for personally identifying information (PII). The presentation and discussion encompassed the same issues and concerns as were raised in the full Senate meeting that afternoon.

Senator Romberger's Report

Senate Council Report of August 26/, 2008 and University Faculty Senate Meeting Report of September 8, 2008

- Senate Council agreed to the discontinuance of the Associate Degree in Dietetic Food Systems Management.
- The Senate meeting heard an informational report on Computer Security and Protecting Privacy as well as a strong objection from a computer systems security faculty member. (More from our other senators.)
- The Senate approved a revision to the credit by examination policy 42-50 essentially dropping the Proficiency Exam portion of the policy and making the examination a pass-fail decision with no grade assigned.
- A lengthy document on the Promotion and Governance of Fixed-Term Faculty was passed. The intent of the document is to promote best practices.
- Several informational annual reports were received including one from the Joint Committee on Benefits. Two new items from the Joint Committee of Benefits: 1) Vision care will move from NVA to a subsidiary of Highmark in Jan. 2009, and 2) the university is moving ahead with investigating proposals for long term care coverage for faculty and staff.

Please read the Senate Agenda on line at <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/agenda/index.html> and the Senate Record at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/record/index.html> for more information.

(APPENDIX B)
Penn State Berks Senate Calendar 2008-2009
(Approved by the Berks Senate Executive Committee, June 9, 2008)

Senate Meetings
1:00 to 2:30 PM
Perkins Multi-Purpose Room

Fall 2008

Monday September 22, 2008

Monday October 20, 2008

Monday December 1, 2008

Spring 2009

Monday February 16, 2009

Monday March 23, 2009

Monday April 20, 2009

Executive Committee Meetings
1:00 to 2:30 PM

Fall 2008

September 8, 2008; T 145

October 1, 2008; T 145

November 19, 2008; F 109

Spring 2009

February 4, 2009; T 145

March 4, 2009; T 145

April 1, 2009; T 145

(APPENDIX C)

Summary Information of Penn State Berks Senate Executive Committee, Committee Chairs, and Committee Members, Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

(Approved by the Berks Senate Executive Committee, June 9, 2008)

PENN STATE BERKS SENATE MEMBERSHIP

The Berks Faculty shall include:

- (a) All full time faculty including librarians (**CURRENT TOTAL = 109+4 = 113**)
- (b) The following members of the Administrative Staff
 - Chancellor (ex officio)
 - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (ex officio)
 - Division Heads of EBC, HASS and Science (ex officio)
- (c) Other members of the Administrative Staff as appointed by the Chancellor
- (d) One senator elected by the professional assistants from among their ranks.

The total number of senators from categories b, c, and d shall not exceed 10% of the full time faculty including librarians.

- (e) SGA President and elected student senators *not to exceed 10% of the full time faculty including librarians.*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(10 members, 7 unique, 7 voting, quorum = 4)

Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
Mohamad Ansari	Chair	396-6129	maa4@psu.edu	2009
Maureen Dunbar	Vice Chair	396-6328	med18@psu.edu	2009
Bob Zambanini	Secretary	396-6178	raz3@psu.edu	2009
Mohamad Ansari	Immediate Past Chair	396-6129	maa4@psu.edu	2009
Andy Romberger	University Faculty Senator	396-6199	abr1@psu.edu	2011
Bob Zambanini	University Faculty Senator	396-6178	raz3@psu.edu	2009
Bill Bowers	University Faculty Senator	396-6278	whb108@psu.edu	2010
Martha Aynardi	University Faculty Senator	396-6228	mwal@psu.edu	2012
Mahdi Nasereddin	University Faculty Senator	396-6311	mxn16@psu.edu	2012
Andy Romberger	Parliamentarian (non-voting)	396-6199	abr1@psu.edu	2009

Chairs of the Penn State Berks Senate Committees

Committee	Chairperson	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
Academic Affairs	Maureen Dunbar	396-6328	med18@psu.edu	2009
Executive	Mohamad Ansari	396-6129	maa4@psu.edu	2009
Faculty Affairs	Dan Litvin	396-6144	u3c@psu.edu	2009
Physical Facilities and Safety	Leonard Gamberg	396-6124	lpg10@psu.edu	2009
Strategic Planning and Budget	Steve Snyder	396-6277	sjs29@psu.edu	2009
Student Life	Ike Shibley	396-6185	ias1@psu.edu	2009

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (11 members, 8 voting)

Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
James Walter	Representatives from EBC Division	396-6456	jaw7@psu.edu	2010
Shiyoung Lee		396-6211	sul28@psu.edu	2010
Jayne M. Leh	Representatives from HASS Division	396-6413	jml53@psu.edu	2010
Joanna Garner		396-6099	jkg122@psu.edu	2009
Maureen Dunbar (CHAIR)	Representatives from Science Division	396-6328	med18@psu.edu	2009
Tami Mysliwicz		396-6274	thm2@psu.edu	2010
Deena Morganti	Library Representative	396-6246	djm12@psu.edu	2010
Bob Zambanini	University Curricular Affairs Representative	396-6178	raz3@psu.edu	2009
Paul Esqueda	Associate Dean (non-voting)	396-6417	pue1@psu.edu	n/a
David Bender	Registrar	396-6090	dsb@psu.edu	n/a
Bob Isaacson	Student Rep. (non-voting)	570-691-5649	rbi5001@psu.edu	2009

FACULTY AFFAIRS (8 members, 7 voting)

Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
James Shankweiler	Representatives from EBC Division	396-6327	jps23@psu.edu	2010
Mitch Zimmer		396-6334	miz1@psu.edu	2010
Jeanne Rose	Representatives from HASS Division	396-6213	jrm38@psu.edu	2010
Mike Riley		396-6159	mdr1@psu.edu	2009
Dan Litvin (CHAIR)	Representatives from Science Division	396-6144	u3c@psu.edu	2009
Hassan Gourama		396-6121	hxg7@psu.edu	2009
Bill Bowers	University Faculty Affairs Representative	396-6276	whb108@psu.edu	2010
Paul Esqueda	Associate Dean (non-voting)	396-6417	pue1@psu.edu	n/a

PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND SAFETY (8 members, 7 voting)				
Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
Khalid Abdou	Representatives from EBC Division	396-6173	kka1@psu.edu	2009
Sudip Gosh		396-6346	sxg23@psu.edu	2010
David Ackerman	Representatives from HASS Division	396-6333	dma11@psu.edu	2009
Paul Frye		396-6376	paf11@psu.edu	2010
Leonard Gamberg (CHAIR)	Representatives from Science Division	396-6124	lpg10@psu.edu	2009
Jennifer Arnold		396-6273	rad12@psu.edu	2010
Kim Berry	Campus Chief Operating Officer (non-voting)	396-6260	krb11@psu.edu	n/a
Nick Yeager	Student Representative	484-274- 3297	dcy5002@psu.edu	2009

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BUDGET (9 members, 7 voting)				
Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
Rungun Nathan	Representatives from EBC Division	396-6170	rnn13@psu.edu	2010
Bob Buczynski		396-6186	rjb4@psu.edu	2010
Steve Snyder (CHAIR)	Representatives from HASS Division	396-6277	sis29@psu.edu	2009
Rosario Tores		396-6408	rzt1@psu.edu	2010
Cesar Martinez-Garza	Representatives from Science Division	396-6438	cxm58@psu.edu	2009
Jianbing Qi		396-6132	jxq10@psu.edu	2010
Dennis Mays	Campus Chief Financial Officer (non-voting)	396-6042	dym9@psu.edu	n/a
Mary Lou 'Allegro	Planning, Research, and Assessment Officer (non-voting)	396-6389	mad23@psu.edu	n/a
Timothy Hillert	Student Representative	917-757- 3129	toh5004@psu.edu	2009

STUDENT LIFE
(9 members, 7 voting)

Member	Title	Phone	e-mail	Term expires
Jui-Chi Huang	Representatives from EBC Division	396-6454	jxh74@psu.edu	2010
Tom Gavigan		396-6181	thg2@psu.edu	2010
Cheryl Nicholas	Representatives from HASS Division	396-6168	cln12@psu.edu	2010
Eric Lindsey		396-6182	ewl10@psu.edu	2010
Ike Shibley (CHAIR)	Representatives from Science Division	396-6185	ias1@psu.edu	2009
James Karlinsey		396-6282	jmk48@psu.edu	2010
Blaine Steensland	Director of Student Affairs (non-voting)	396-6066	bes2@psu.edu	n/a
Bruce Hale	College Representative on University Athletic Committee (non-voting)	396-6156	bdh1@psu.edu	n/a
Mary Lou 'Allegro	Planning, Research, and Assessment Officer (non-voting)	396-6389	mad23@psu.edu	n/a
Tyler Washburn	Student Representative	610-597- 6239	taw5059@psu.edu	2009

(APPENDIX D)

Committee Charges, Penn State Berks Senate, 2008-2009

(Approved by the Berks Senate Executive Committee, June 9, 2008)

Committee Chairs are expected to report directly to the Senate. Specifically, all Committee Chairs are required to submit to the Berks Senate a mid-year progress report and an end of the year progress report as is being practiced by the University Faculty Senate. Reports should be submitted to the Secretary of the Berks Senate, Bob Zambanini (raz3@psu.edu). *All items that need Senate approval must be presented as a Legislative report and must include a motion.* Motions will be discussed and voted on by Senate. Unless otherwise specified, the reports below should be considered Informational Reports. Any committee can decide to create an Advisory or Legislative report.

Executive Committee

- Sponsor the Forensic and Legislative Reports from the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on First Year Seminar.
- Sponsor the Informational Report from the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on Free Speech on Campus.

Academic Affairs

- Review procedures for proposing programs (degree proposals) and courses (course proposals) and send a legislative report to the Berks Senate. Amend this document to include minors and options and submit a Legislative Report to the Senate.
- (Joint with Student Life Committee) Report on the progress being made by the Academic Recovery program (Office of Student Support Services is point of contact) and send an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.
- Review the Retention Measures for At Risk Students and send a legislative report to the Berks Senate.
- Review and submit an Informational Report on Mass Delivery on Online Course offerings.

Faculty Affairs

- Review the current compensation rate for part time instruction and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate with an appropriate recommendation.
- Review the current policy on summer compensation for courses with enrollments between 6 and 10 students compensation rate for full time instruction and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate with an appropriate recommendation.
- (Joint with Strategic Planning and Budget Committee) Review the University Faculty Senate Informational Report on Faculty Salaries, Academic year 2007-2008 (<http://www.senate.psu.edu/agenda/2007-2008/apr29-08agn/apph.pdf>) as it relates to the Berks Campus and send an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.

- Review the current policy on the distribution of annual faculty salary merit increases and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate with an appropriate recommendation(s) in accordance with the annual faculty ratings.
- Review the Berks Campus Promotion and Tenure Guidelines as they relate to time off after having served a full two-year term on the College or Division P&T Committee and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate.
- Review the Berks Campus Promotion and Tenure Guidelines as they relate to fulfilling unfilled terms and immediate eligibility for subsequent election to the same P&T Committee and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate.
- Review the HR 23 Rainbow Sheets as they relate to the reporting of Undergraduate Research in the Dossier and send an Information Report to the Berks Senate.
- Review in consultation with the Campus Assessment Officer the efficacy of the current questions on the SRTE Student Comment Sheets and send a Legislative Report with any recommended changes to the Berks Senate.

Physical Facilities and Safety

- (Joint with Student Life) Send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate recommending additional furnishings and accommodations in the Franco, Perkins, Beaver, and Luerssen buildings for the Berks Campus commuting students.
- Review the office spaces on campus and send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate on Providing Space for Emeritus Faculty consistent with the University Policy on Emeritus Faculty.
- Review and provide an Information Report on General Safety concerns.

Strategic Planning and Budget

- (Joint with Faculty Affairs Committee) Review the University Faculty Senate Informational Report on Faculty salaries, Academic year 2007-2008 (<http://www.senate.psu.edu/agenda/2007-2008/apr29-08agn/apph.pdf>) as it relates to the Berks Campus and send an Informational report to the Berks Senate.
- The Senate plays an important role in setting priorities for the college especially as they relate to the Strategic Planning Process. Develop ways to promote active faculty participation in the 2008–2013 Strategic Planning process. Send an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.

Student Life

- Promote active faculty participation in student-sponsored events and promote ways to better publicize such events. Provide an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.
- (Joint with Physical Facilities) Send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate recommending additional furnishings and accommodations in Franco, Perkins, Beaver, and Luerssen buildings for the Berks Campus commuting students.
- A University wide Student Satisfaction Survey has been completed. The survey covered virtually all areas of the campus experienced by students. The committee should review the

results and determine if there are any areas of interest or concern that need to be addressed. Provide to the Berks Senate an Informational or a Legislative Report as needed.

- The committee should review the status of athletics and its future needs as NCAA members.
- Identify any student life needs or issues that should be considered as part of the strategic planning process. Provide an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.
- (Joint with Academic Affairs Committee) Report on the progress being made by the Academic Recovery program (Office of Student Support Services is point of contact) and send an Informational Report to the Berks Senate.

APPENDIX E
Academic Affairs Committee (AAC)
Minutes for September 5, 2008 Meeting

Members in Attendance: David Bender (Registrar), Maureen Dunbar (Chair), Joanna Garner, Bob Isaacson (Student member, non-voting), Shiyong Lee, Jane Leh, Tami Mysliwiec, Deena Morganti, James Walter, Bob Zambanini

The first item on the agenda for this meeting was to discuss the charges and duties assigned to the Academic Affairs Committee. One of the charges to the committee involves reviewing the Academic Recovery Program and preparing an informational report to the Senate. Maureen Dunbar (Chair) mentioned that the Academic Affairs Committee was charged with reviewing this program last year. However, after some discussion regarding this charge at the first Senate meeting of 2007, the charge was moved to the Student Life Committee. Maureen said that she would bring this issue up at the next Executive Committee Meeting. (Note: Executive Committee discussed this charge on September 8, 2008. Because this program involves both academic as well as student life issues, it was decided that this will be a joint charge to the Academic Affairs and Student Life Committee's).

The second item on the agenda was to review the course proposal procedure that was approved by the Penn State Berks Senate last year. Because several members of the committee are new this year, some time was spent discussing the procedure for the approval of new degrees and the role of the Academic Affairs Committee in that process. David Bender suggested that we need to change the document to include minors. Maureen was not sure if this is an editorial change or whether this would be a formal amendment which would require a legislative report to the Senate. Maureen will check with Executive Committee. (Note: At the Executive Committee meeting it was decided that any change to this document would require an Amendment to the Senate approved document. Academic Affairs will make the necessary changes and submit a legislative report to the Senate.)

The committee also discussed the role of the Academic Affairs Committee on the development of the First Year Engagement plan. Maureen mentioned that an Ad Hoc Committee was formed to develop the first year engagement plan, and as of right now the AAC will not be involved in that process. Maureen Dunbar, Paul Esqueda, Tami Mysliwiec and Bob Isaacson are all on the FYEP Committee, and they will keep the Academic Affairs Committee updated on the progress of the FYEP.

(APPENDIX F)

Minutes of Physical Facilities and Safety meeting

9/04/08, Thun Library room 145, 1-2:30pm

Members Present: Khaled Abdou, Jennifer Arnold, Kim Berry, Leonard Gamberg, Sudip Goush

Meeting Agenda

1) Introductions

2) Discussion of meetings

3) Address, " (Joint with Student Life) Send a Legislative Report to the Berks Senate recommending additional furnishings and accommodations in the Franco, Perkins, Beaver, and Luerssen buildings for the Berks Campus commuting students".

The Student Life Committee has met and drawn up a draft legislative report. Leonard met with Ike Shibley (8/29), Chair of Student Life on this "joint" agenda item. Ike is sharing the draft with us for our consideration.

OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

4) Future Business

Meeting discussion highlights:

- Kim reviewed the present and future space constraints for commuter and residential students as they relate to the "so called" new building and the Luerssen redesign.
- Khaled and Kim update us on similar discussions from Physical Facilities meetings last year (both were members of the committee).
- Kim, Jennifer, and Sudip highlight issues surrounding needs of commuters and resident students (space for lounges, space to gather socially, study space etc...) as they relate to faculty needs (classroom space, office space, laboratories etc...) in relation to the new building and Luerssen redesign.
- Kim discussed many near term (versus long term) options to address the space constraints for both commuter and residential students, in particular with regard to the Beaver Community Center's redesign.
- Kim points out we could do a better job communicating to the PSU Berks community such "friendly spaces" in order to address space constraints for students in the near term.
- We will attempt to get our schedules up on Oracle for organizing future meetings: Please see email from Karen Badinger on 9/05 or forwarded from Leonard to committee members.
- Kim offers to give committee members tour of Physical Facilities.

APPENDIX G
Student Life Committee
Minutes, August 25, 2008

In Attendance: Mary-Lou D'Allegro, Jui-Chi Huang, James Karlinsey, Eric Lindsey, Cheryl Nicholas, Ike Shibley, Blaine Steensland, Tyler Washburn

The first meeting of the Student Life Committee involved prioritizing charges, discussing the Legislative Report on Commuter Student space, and preparing for discussion of student surveys (satisfaction survey and NSSE). Prior to discussing the charges the issue was raised as to whether this committee should receive a report concerning free speech. Since the ad-hoc committee will report to the Senate, and since the issue is larger than Student Life, the committee will not ask to be involved in the free speech issue.

The charges to be examined this year, in prioritized order are:

1. Student space for commuters
2. Surveys involving student satisfaction
3. Promotion of faculty and staff involvement in student life
4. Division III athletics
5. Matters pertaining to the strategic plan.

A Legislative Report was created on the space dedicated to commuter students. The report will be circulated via e-mail for any additions/corrections and then sent to the Physical Facilities committee since the report will be a joint report. Tyler reported to the committee that the library has become the 'hang-out' spot on campus which means that quiet space to study is hard to find. James emphasized that the issue of commuter space will have a positive impact—should additional spaces be created—for *all* students. The suggestion was made to suggest a patio area adjacent to some of the buildings with an overhang that could cover vending machines. Picnic tables and chairs could be used to create additional space that could be used when the weather permits. A question was raised about lounge space in Franco and Perkins. Because the Perkins building is a Student Center additional commuter space in that building would seem appropriate. The committee will explore the possibility of creating lounge space from classrooms if additional classroom space could be created during the renovation of the Luerssen building. Student groups such as the student newspaper and various clubs and organizations would benefit from space to have an office. The idea of a radio/TV station has been discussed and additional space might help students create such a station.

Mary Lou announced that the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results were in so she agreed to present the executive summary at the next committee meeting. Blaine will send an executive summary of the Student Satisfaction Survey to the committee and will answer questions concerning that report. The committee will then draft an information report that summarizes the student survey data.

Two additional concerns that were raised involved the student facilities fee and the discount that commuters receive on food. Ike will serve on the facilities fee committee and will report to the

committee after the first meeting. The issue of discounts for resident students (65%) versus commuter students (10%) on food seems to raise issues involving commuters. This issue may be able to be more fully addressed in the informational report from the surveys of students.

Committee meetings for the semester have been established. The committee will meet on October 6 and November 3. If an additional meeting is necessary that can be scheduled in November or December.

(APPENDIX H)
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON FIRST YEAR ENGAGEMENT PLAN

(Forensic)

Introduction

The concept of a “first year” experience for incoming students is not new to higher education. For more than 20 years, colleges and universities alike have created innovative and effective ways to support student success during the most critical, first year of attendance. Approximately 90% of all colleges offer a first year seminar, course or experience to their entering class.

Why would a college wish to devote its faculty, staff and resources to this effort? The answer is quite simple and compelling. Well designed, first year experiences increase the probability of students successfully completing their first year of study and their probability of graduation. This fact is good for our students as more become successful in their academic and personal endeavors. It is also good for Penn State Berks because we will retain more of our students. We want our students to experience success in all aspects of their lives, graduate and be productive citizens. One of the most commonly cited statistics of higher education is that the majority of students, who begin at a college, never graduate. This is not true at Penn State Berks where approximately 56% graduate within a 6 year period. Significant potential exists to assist more students complete their educational plans. A quality first year experience is the critical first step.

There is a considerable body of national research that helps to inform discussions about the most effective ways to introduce and positively engage first time students to college life. Small class size, direct involvement of faculty, peer mentoring, linked courses and content that includes:

- (a) academic skill development
- (b) experiences that reinforce the academic rigor of college study
- (c) psycho-social development

are but a few of the many characteristics of successful programs. Penn State Berks has now been presented with this chance to thoughtfully examine its approach to the first year experience of students. The outcome should benefit all.

Background

On April 29, 2008, the University Faculty Senate ratified the following legislation (Appendix B):

The existing FYS requirement will be replaced as follows: Each University Park academic college, each of the 19 Commonwealth campuses, and the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), all of which are called “units” for the purposes of this report, shall submit a *First-Year*

Engagement Plan for achieving the goals and objectives of first-year engagement, as stated in the 1997 report of the SCGE, for baccalaureate, associate degree, and provisional first-year students enrolled within the unit. To restate, these are as follows:

Goals

- To engage students in learning and orient them to the scholarly community from the outset of their undergraduate studies in a way that will bridge to later experiences in their chosen majors,
- To facilitate students' adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.

Objectives

- To introduce students to university study,
- To introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students,
- To acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State,
- To provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them, and
- To introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community.

Berks Initiative

In May 2008, Mohamad A. Ansari, the Berks Senate Chair, appointed an ad-hoc committee to draft a forensic report for consideration by the Senate in September. This report will serve as a prelude to a Legislative Report on the First Year Engagement Plan (FYEP) for the Berks Campus.

In June 2008, the Ad-Hoc Committee administered a survey to full-time faculty and students. The respondents were asked to participate via the faculty and student list-serves. Sixty (54.5%) full-time faculty and 102 students (3.9%) completed the survey. These response rates are reasonable considering that the intent of the survey was informational and two-thirds of the survey items were open-ended.

The purpose of the survey was to:

- (a) ascertain student and faculty perceptions about the first year seminar,
- (b) determine if the First Year Seminar (FYS) should be offered,
- (c) identify campus resources that would help meet the UP FYEP goals and objectives, and
- (d) solicit additional comments and suggestions about the FYEP at Penn State Berks.

The executive summary of the survey is attached as an Appendix A.

Models for Senate Consideration

The Ad-Hoc Committee's objective is to develop a model which best serves our students to gain real value from the First Year Engagement Plan. To this end, the following models are being proposed for consideration by the Senate. These model's objectives are:

- Professional development activities should be incorporated to improve the abilities of faculty and staff to empower first year student success.
- Academic advising is critically important to success within the first year.
- Orientation programs should be developed that help students make a successful transition to college.
- Health and wellness programs should be incorporated into FYEP.
- The most successful first year programs include an extensive collaboration and partnership between student affairs and academic affairs.

Model A

Retain the current First Year Seminar with an "improved" course program and with "added value and reasonable consistency and flexibility."

- Option 1: FYS continues to be offered for all new students. The FYS course will be a blended theme/skills based seminar course:
 - Have academic content,
 - Introduce students to University study,
 - Introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of studies and areas of interest available to them,
 - Acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State,
 - Provide opportunities for the students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in academic areas of interest to them,
 - Introduce students to their responsibilities as members of the University community,
 - FYS courses generally meet at least 1 hour per week/academic credit,
 - Integrate Common Reading into the FYS curricula (10% of FYS assessment),
 - Use the co-curricular workshops to stress academic success
 - Students will attend a minimum of 5 co-curricular of workshops.

Option 2: FYS retained as an option for first year students in discipline-specific majors. Other FYEP, created and staffed by both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Units, would be designed for all other students.

Model B

- Make the FYEP a sequence of workshops or modules of 3 contact hours plus mentoring and advising; each will be delivered through the first semester. Some modules may be offered on line. Students would be required to complete all modules in a single semester.
- An academic orientation module should be delivered before the third week in the semester. This module could cover two objectives: "To introduce students to university study" and "To introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community."
- Faculty members could specialize in specific modules and each time they deliver a module they get 1/4 credit or extra compensation. If they teach the same module 4 times that would be equivalent to 1 credit towards their teaching load or extra compensation.
- Existing courses could integrate one or more modules.
- The modules would diminish the issues of consistency and uniformity.
- Alternate methods of meeting the FYEP requirements would include discipline based FYS.

Model C

- The FYEP should be a partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
- The FYEP should include an orientation program that introduces students to the campus community.
- The FYEP includes a one-credit first year seminar that ideally would be linked to a 3-credit course. (3+1 model).
- Flexibility: Faculty could choose any one of the following models for the format of the FYS:
 - Social and Personal Adjustment to College
 - Topics based FYS (faculty choice of topic)
 - Discipline based professional type seminar
 - Skills based seminar
 - Faculty can choose which course the FYS would be linked to
- Consistency:
 - Engage the students for the equivalent of one credit
 - Limited to 20 students
 - All seminars must meet the following objectives:
 - Academic success and career awareness
 - Communication (written and oral communication skills)
 - Research and undergraduate scholarship
 - Critical thinking
 - Community building and diversity
 - Personal/Social Wellness
- Peer mentors should be included in FYS.

- Academic advising should play an important role in FYEP.

Workshops should be available to students to address issues not covered within the FYS (alcohol awareness, time management, study skills, etc.)

Issues for Senate Discussion

- Which model(s) for the FYEP should be adopted?
- Should the college reconfigure its common reading program?
- Should Education Opportunity and Academic Success Programs, or other programs that demonstrate the goals and objectives be considered as alternative method of fulfillment for FYEP?
- Are there other needed aspects of students first year experience that these models have not addressed?

Ad-Hoc Committee on First Year Engagement Plan

Mohamad A. Ansari, Chair

Maureen Dunbar, Academic Affairs Committee Representative

Mary-Lou D'Allegro, Director of Planning, Research, & Assessment

Tami Mysliwicz, FYS Coordinator

Paul Esqueda, Associate Dean

Andy Romberger, Science Representative

Bob Buczynski, EBC Representative

Ken Fifer, HASS Representative

Blaine Steensland, Director of Student Affairs

Bob Isaacson, Student Representative

(APPENDIX A)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

- When asked if the input used to develop the FYEP should be either student or faculty focused, over one-half (52.3%) of the faculty and one-half (47.0%) of the students indicated the input should be faculty focused.
- Both faculty and students stated that the FYS should be retained as an option. Specifically seventy-three percent (72.9%) of the faculty and seventy-seven percent (76.7%) of the students indicated yes.

- Unintended consequences of the FYS that were identified include:
 - Negative impact on faculty evaluations,
 - FYS can be time consuming taking time away from other areas of responsibility,
 - Staffing,
 - [Some FYS sections are] not organized,
 - Not integrated with the major, and
 - Wastes student's time.
- Several suggestions were offered to improve the FYS. Among those suggestions were:
 - Emphasize campus resources,
 - Allow students to develop own "learning" plan,
 - Consistency in assignments and student expectations,
 - Help students write at college level,
 - Involve full-time faculty,
 - Set up modules for integrating campus support areas,
 - Involve support service areas in planning FYEP,
 - Consult other campus "best practices", and
 - Integrate skills of FYS into "regular" course work.
- The faculty and staff were asked to identify campus support services and resources to needed to help meet the UP FYEP goals and objectives. Below is a partial list of these support services and resources:
 - Orientation,
 - Student Handbook,
 - Tutoring,
 - Learning Center, Advising Center, Career Services,
 - Peer mentors, faculty mentors,
 - Seniors/alumni talk with Freshmen,
 - Clubs, volunteer opportunities
 - Interaction with faculty,
 - Library,
 - Study groups,
 - Courses,
 - Visits from departments, and
 - [use] history of higher education, history of PSU.

Additional comments and suggestions were varied but mainly focused on content and format of the FYS. Some of those suggestions and comments are listed below.

Content

- Implement writing intensive seminars,
- Design discipline specific seminars,
- Develop a course that emphasizes critical thinking,
- Consider non-traditional student issues and experiences,
- [include] time-management,

- [include] tutoring,
- Introduce students to library resources,
- Have student research on a subject of interest to them,
- Have students explore career options,
- Academic integrity.

Format

- Develop small seminar classes,
- Hold at least one class in an informal environment,
- [make as part] of at least two academic classes in the first semester,
- [sections should have] 20 or fewer students,
- Taught by a student oriented faculty member with appropriate expectations.
- Do much of the Common Reading at Orientation,

Collaborations

- Collaboration between Student-Academic Affairs,
- Develop and Advising Team that organizes presentations & workshops,
- Involve the Writing Center, Learning Center.

Other

- Emphasize “caring” and helpful environment,
- Pair upper class students with freshmen.
- FYS is fine.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Report of the Ad Hoc First-Year Seminar Committee

(Legislative)

Implementation: Upon Approval by the President and Summer Session 2009

On December 11, 2007, and March 18, 2008, Kim Steiner and Patti Mills met with the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education in order to report on the progress of the ad hoc committee in drafting a revision of the First-Year Seminar requirement. In December, the Undergraduate Education committee heard and commented on the ad hoc's goals and the outline of its vision for FYS. In March, Co-chairs Mills and Steiner presented the final report of the ad hoc committee and Undergraduate Education voted unanimously to endorse the proposal. Therefore, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education sponsors the Report of the Ad Hoc First-Year Seminar Committee for inclusion on the April 29, 2008 Senate Agenda.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Robin M. Bower, Chair

Christian M. Brady

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Karen L. Duncan

Caroline D. Eckhardt

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Andrew Tellep

Eric R. White

REPORT OF THE AD HOC FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COMMITTEE

Revision to the First-Year Seminar Requirement

(Legislative)

Implementation: Upon Approval by the President and Summer Session 2009

Background

The current First-Year Seminar (FYS) requirement was created by the Senate in December 1997 as one of ten recommendations by the Special Committee on General Education (SCGE). The rationale for their recommendation focused on “the need to do a better job of engaging our incoming students, quickly and deliberately, in the educational enterprise.” The goals were to:

- engage students in learning and orient them to the scholarly community from the outset of their undergraduate studies in a way that will bridge to later experiences in their chosen majors, and
- facilitate students’ adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.

In addition, the report advanced five objectives for the first-year seminar as guidelines for implementation of the proposed requirement:

- to introduce students to university study,
- to introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students,
- to acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State,
- to provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them, and
- to introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community.

Although the report of the committee was fairly descriptive of its vision for the first-year seminar, the legislation that created the FYS requirement was Senate approval of a simple recommendation: “Establish a first-year seminar experience for incoming, first-year students, provided by each of the colleges and campuses as part of the general education program.” The details of the requirement were left to the General Education Implementation Committee (GEIC) to establish in its implementation protocol.

GEIC’s plan for implementing FYS was presented to the Senate as an informational report in Sept. 1998. GEIC restated the original two goals for the requirement (but not the objectives) and determined that all FYS courses must have academic content and be offered for academic credit; be taught by tenure-line faculty, full-time instructors, or Fixed-Term I faculty; be taught in sections of no more than 20 students each; and be taken by students during their first academic

year. Other than the requirement for academic content, GEIC placed no requirements on content or objectives of FYS courses.

Thus, the original proposal for a 1- to 3-credit first-year seminar experience, with a set of broad yet reasonably concrete objectives, was approved by the Senate in the form of a simpler recommendation to merely establish a first-year seminar, and finally implemented by GEIC with almost no limitations on the course itself other than the circumstances of delivery.

The FYS requirement was one of the major innovations in the General Education Reform of 1997. It represented widespread faculty desire to further the adjustment of freshmen as University students, but the requirement itself, a seminar, was controversial from the outset. Indeed, it was opposed even by some senators who were strong proponents of freshman seminars in contexts other than General Education.

FYS continues to be the most contentious of all General Education requirements. The topic has been thoroughly discussed in dozens of pages of transcript of Senate discussion including, most recently, a Senate forensic session in April 2006 and the debate on the motion that created our committee in Jan. 2007. It has been addressed by at least 6 student surveys, a joint Senate/Administration Task Force to Review the FYS Requirement (a 1-year effort), resolutions and recommendations by CCSG or USG on 3 occasions, and the accreditation team report of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Furthermore, FYS is a continual subject of discussion in visits by Senate Officers to campuses and colleges, as documented in numerous reports to the Provost and Senate. Finally, we note that the Senate action that created our committee was the culmination of 2½ years of deliberation by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education, which was charged in summer 2004 with revising the requirement in ways that would make it more uniformly successful and acceptable across colleges and campuses. Our committee was authorized in the Jan. 2007 Senate meeting as an alternative to eliminating the requirement. The previous motion, to eliminate the requirement, failed by a margin of only 4 votes out of 150.

Following a review of the record of debate and study on this topic, our committee has identified the following as principal weaknesses in the current FYS requirement:

- lack of specific, measurable objectives;
- variability in content, rigor, and format;
- low interest in teaching the FYS template in some units;
- uneven perceived need between University Park and other campuses; and
- difficulty in scheduling FYS for DUS students at University Park.

Of course, not everyone is dissatisfied with the requirement. In some units there is strong support for the requirement from both faculty and students, and evidence suggests that there is broad support within the University for the *idea* of the requirement if not the way in which it has been implemented.

The committee saw its task as identifying a model that would embrace the original goals of the first-year seminar experience as envisioned by the SCGE and endorsed by the Senate, bring more

focus and clarity to the requirement, and provide flexibility in implementation in order to accommodate the varying circumstances of different colleges and campuses. We have sought a model that would fulfill the goals of the requirement, preserve its strengths, and eliminate or sidestep its weaknesses.

Analysis and Rationale

Unlike other General Education requirements, FYS does not represent an institutional declaration of essential skills or knowledge for a University degree. Instead, it represents our commitment that students have a baseline opportunity during their first year of study to become engaged with the faculty in a seminar environment and with academic subject-matter in their general area of interest. In the words of one SCGE member in 1997, FYS was an attempt to “guarantee that all students have access to a freshman seminar.” In effect, it is an obligation the University placed on itself to improve student engagement in the learning process, by means of coursework in small classes with full-time faculty, and the Senate employed the General Education curriculum to ensure that we would follow through.

Although the SCGE laid out a set of laudable educational objectives, these were left out of the implementation of FYS and attention was focused on the delivery characteristics listed above. Thus, although many FYS courses are highly regarded and successfully address the goals of FYS, those qualities may arise principally from characteristics of the courses that are not addressed by the current General Education FYS requirement, *i.e.*, format, content, instructional objectives, and of course the qualities of the individual instructor. In other words, we believe that the structure of the requirement falls considerably short of ensuring that its own goals will be met, and the effectiveness of the courses in meeting those goals depends largely on factors beyond University-level control.

The most consistent thread among factors that influence learning is the powerful impact of *engagement*, defined as the level at which students invest physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual energy in educationally related activities.¹ Obviously, a single course is not a sufficient institutional commitment to achieving student engagement, and every curriculum at the University must certainly address this outcome in many ways, both explicitly and implicitly. Yet successful engagement early in a student’s course of study is critical, and we believe that early engagement is sometimes insufficient at Penn State, where students do not normally “belong” to a major until near the end of the sophomore year and where freshman class sizes are often very large (or taught by graduate students or part-time instructors), especially at University Park.

First-year seminars in small-class settings are one response to the need for better early engagement. A rather large body of research evidence over the past two decades tends to show that participation in first-year seminars has a statistically significant and positive influence on retention and subsequent achievement.² Research indicates that the first-year seminars which

¹ Terenzini, P. T. and R. D. Reason. 2007. Bad rap or regrettable truth? Engagement and student learning at research universities. Pp. 165-185 in R. L. Geiger *et al.* (eds.), *Future of the American Public Research University*. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.

² Pascarella, E. T. and P. T. Terenzini. 2005. *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research (Vol. 2)*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

engage students most effectively have rigorous academic content (the national trend is away from University 101, how-to-be-a-student courses), are taught in a 3-credit rather than 1- or 2-credit format (if a little is good, then more is better), and are optional. The last-named characteristic is grounded in the notion that engagement by force is a poor idea, a point of view that was expressed several times during the debate on the original legislation.³

While we find this logic appealing, there is widespread belief within the University that first-year seminars would largely disappear at University Park if they were made elective. This idea troubles the committee and, we believe, a very large number of others who are concerned about student engagement.

University Park is an order of magnitude larger than any other Penn State campus in the size of its enrollment and, very often, in the size of its classes. In light of this categorical difference, we believe that the logic for a required freshman seminar is compellingly strong for University Park, but less so for other campuses where small classes are the norm and instructors are typically continuing faculty members.

But first-year seminars are not necessarily the only way to engage students, nor are they necessarily sufficient to that purpose. Furthermore, the goal of nurturing student engagement is no less appropriate for Commonwealth campuses, where the long-term attrition of an entering cohort averages nearly three times higher than at University Park⁴, even if the obstacles may be different. It is the conclusion of our committee that although the FYS requirement as implemented within General Education is flawed, the original goals and objectives defined by the Special Committee on General Education for the “first-year seminar experience” are beyond contention and still very much relevant to the University. The specific recommendation of SCGE to implement a first-year seminar requirement was controversial, but the goals and objectives of the recommendation were never disputed on the floor of the Senate and appeared to be accepted as ideals worth pursuing. We believe that the University, in each college and on each campus, should recommit to achieving those goals and to seek other avenues, in addition to first-year seminars, to accomplish those ends.

³ The empirical evidence to support these assertions about course characteristics that promote student engagement is limited. We have relied heavily on an interpretation of the literature provided by Dr. Patrick Terenzini, Distinguished Professor and Senior Scientist, Center for the Study of Higher Education, Penn State, an interpretation that was fully supported by thoughtful emails to Pat (on our behalf) from John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot, both with the Policy Institute on the First Year of College. Informative essays on the topic may be found at <http://www.sc.edu/fye/resources/assessment/essays/Swing-8.28.02.html>

⁴ Warcholak, N. and M. Dooris. 2007. Retention, attrition, and graduation patterns of baccalaureate students. Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment, The Pennsylvania State University.

Recommendation

The existing FYS requirement will be replaced as follows: Each University Park academic college, each of the 19 Commonwealth campuses, and the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), all of which are called “units” for the purposes of this report, shall submit a *First-Year Engagement Plan* for achieving the goals and objectives of first-year engagement, as stated in the 1997 report of the SCGE, for baccalaureate, associate degree, and provisional first-year students enrolled within the unit. To restate, these are as follows:

Goals

- to engage students in learning and orient them to the scholarly community from the outset of their undergraduate studies in a way that will bridge to later experiences in their chosen majors, and
- to facilitate students’ adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.

Objectives

- to introduce students to university study,
- to introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students,
- to acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State,
- to provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them, and
- to introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community.

First-Year Engagement Plans shall be brief and prepared in accordance with the following principles:

- University Park colleges **must** (and other units may) retain at least 1 credit of first-year seminar as a requirement for graduation. FYS courses must explicitly address the desired goals and objectives and possess the following attributes:
 - taught by tenure-line or other regular, full-time faculty members (not staff or graduate students)⁵
 - taught in the student’s college or campus of enrollment
 - taught in sections of not more than 25 students

⁵ The college dean may grant reasonable exceptions, such as for professional practitioners who teach annually but whose appointments are not full-time.

- academic in content, exemplifying the full weightiness and expectations of University-level coursework and ideally satisfying General Education or other College or Major Requirements
- Units may choose to offer sections of regular courses in seminar format for first-year seminar credit as long as they meet the conditions of the first bullet above, and the “S” suffix will continue to be available for such sections. The “S” suffix may be applied to any suitable course, including General Education courses or those that satisfy other College and Major Requirements.
- The committee believes the “gold standard” seminar to be a required, 3-credit course that fully meets the conditions of the first bullet above, and plans that incorporate such courses will suffice as First-Year Engagement Plans. However, a 3-credit course is not always feasible. First-year seminars carrying only 1 or 2 credits should normally be supplemented by other efforts (as described below) to achieve the desired goals and objectives.
- Whether or not units retain first-year seminars as requirements for graduation, all units must describe how small-classroom experiences taught by full-time faculty members are, or will be, achieved under the First-Year Engagement Plan.
- Units may reinforce the desired goals and objectives through a variety of means in addition to first-year seminars and small-classroom experiences, including other courses, special advising programs, intensive orientation experiences, special programs offered by Student Affairs, and other aspects of the first-year experience under the control of the unit.
- Plans by academic colleges at University Park shall describe how DUS students will be accommodated in first-year seminar courses according to anticipated student interest.
- The University Park DUS plan may be prepared under the assumption that at least 1 credit of first-year seminar will be available to each of its students through the academic colleges at University Park.
- Plans must describe the means by which units will assess whether the desired goals and objectives are met through implementation of unit plans.
- First-Year Engagement Plans shall be submitted for one-time review and approval by a special committee appointed by the Chair of the Senate and the Vice-President for Undergraduate Education. It is expected that in five years the Senate, in consultation with the office of the Vice-President for Undergraduate Education, will review the extent to which plans have been implemented in accordance with the provisions of this recommendation and assess their effectiveness in achieving the stated goals based on unit assessment data.
- Unit plans, or an appropriate summary of them, must be published on their Web sites.
- Requirements to take a first-year seminar should normally apply only to first-year students and be waived for students who have been enrolled for at least a year at another campus or institution and have not taken such a course.

Adoption of this recommendation would mean the elimination of FYS as a University-wide General Education requirement, although UP colleges will have to retain FYS as a requirement for graduation and other colleges may also choose to do so.

NOTE: The committee will move that the above recommendation be adopted by the Senate. If this motion fails, the committee will present the following motion:

"The current University-wide graduation requirement for First-Year Seminar shall be terminated Summer 2010."

AD HOC FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COMMITTEE

Bernard Badiali

Ingrid Blood

Sharon Christ

Mark Casteel

Caroline Eckhardt

Angela Linse

Patti Mills, Co-Chair

Rebecca Peterson

David Richards

Kim Steiner, Co-Chair

Ricardo Torres