

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
ACADEMIC SENATE

Minutes of the ACADEMIC SENATE
Tuesday, July 13, 1993
UU 220, 3:00-5:00pm

- I. Minutes: none
- II. Communication(s) and Announcement(s): none
- III. Reports:
 - A. Academic Senate Chair: none
 - B. President's Office: none
 - C. Vice President for Academic Affairs: none
 - D. Statewide Senators: none
 - E. CFA Campus President: none
 - F. ASI representatives: none

IV. Consent Agenda:

V. Business Items:

Diversity: The Chair made introductory remarks and asked that all faculty and students present introduce themselves. Three broad areas within the diversity discussion were identified: the need for faculty sensitivity to minority student issues, the low enrollment of underrepresented students, and the low number of underrepresented faculty at Cal Poly.

Phil Bailey stated that one-hour, student-run programs would be given in each college during fall quarter to help address the need for sensitivity. Attendance by faculty at these meetings will be strongly encouraged, but not mandatory. He felt that Academic Senate support of these programs would be very helpful. Some of the students present showed strong concern that faculty who needed most to attend the workshops would not attend.

Student comments included:

I feel I'm made invisible by the majority of faculty and students at Cal Poly. I think students should have the names of faculty who don't attend these workshops so they can plan their curriculum around them.

We're here to create new and innovative ways of resolving this matter. One-hour workshops are only a pacifier. We need a way of sending a stronger message.

Seminars don't cut into the real problem. We need to get into what happens in the classroom.

Looking at the makeup of the Senate, most of the faculty are old and their attitudes won't change. Hiring practices should only allow individuals who don't have these attitudes.

Coming to school is like coming to a battleground. People are sometimes purposely trying to trip you up. "We can't passively let these things keep happening."

I want to be treated fairly in the classroom. I want my ideas to be allowed to flourish. It would be good if the workshops to be held would emphasize "fairness."

The Chair felt the effort should start at the department level. Gish felt the Senate needed to find innovative ways of addressing this matter. Faculty who once taught at Cal Poly have been cited in reference books as to how unappreciated they felt while at Cal Poly. He felt it was the existing faculty's responsibility to make minority faculty feel welcomed. Gamble stated that new minority hires are often made to feel like outsiders within their own department. A student asked if one or two individuals within a department were designated as leading the effort to educate other faculty in matters of diversity, what circumstances would they be encountering? Would they be taking risks?

Waller indicated that these same issues exist with staff on campus. It is a issue of climate. Many minority staff feel that if they want to advance they will have to go elsewhere. Minority individuals coming to this area are used to having cultural communities around them. Coming here is coming into isolation. The problems need to be approached from many angles.

One student was critical of the Affirmative Action program because it did not require that new hires be biculturally educated. He wanted to see changes in curriculum which would require faculty to be bicultural in order to teach them. Another student who had taken courses at Cal Poly in 1974 indicated that the same material (in her history courses) which was taught here 20 years ago is still being taught in the same way--it wasn't correct then and it isn't correct now. Another student asked why three courses of European history are necessary? Why couldn't other cultural histories be taken.

Fetzer noted that "attitudes" are the hardest thing to change, but "behavior" can be affected more easily. A mechanism which takes resources and moves them to areas where change is occurring and pulls resources from areas where it is not can be helpful in bringing about changed "behavior."

Gish requested the Academic Senate to take a proactive role in expanding the Cultural Pluralism requirement. Waller suggested having the Senate look at the GE&B history requirement to be more inclusive.

Attention was redirected to the issue of hiring. McDonald stated that the hiring issue was difficult because the budget did not allow much hiring at this time although she affirmed the need to change the present hiring mentality. Wilson added that the work loads at Cal Poly cause minorities to go elsewhere. This was not a nurturing environment for any faculty member. Other campuses have much better diversity programs.

It was agreed that the three areas where concentrated effort would be made are:

1. hiring minority faculty
2. expanding the curriculum to be more inclusive
3. educating/sensitizing existing faculty to the needs of minority students

The following suggestions were made:

Hiring: Bailey suggested having students talk to screening committees to discuss their concerns. Russell added that the Senate does not witness the hiring that takes place. This happens at the department level. At the hiring committee level is where student information is needed. There are some things that come from the students that can't be represented by a faculty member. Decisions are made at the department level, so this is where the focus should be. Fetzer suggested having a minority student on each hiring committee. Scott felt it would be good to have the Academic Senate set out the expectations and tone for hiring practices--what is valued in new hires?

Charge the GE&B Committee and Curriculum Committee to take a proactive role in revising the curriculum requirements.

Support the EOAC resolution which proposes that diversity considerations become an integral part of the RPT process.

Find ways to have faculty develop and adapt their courses to meet the U.S. Cultural Pluralism requirement.

Work closely with ASI and its clubs to find ways of infusing this spirit of inclusion into the greater student body.

When employees of color leave, have an exit interview to find out the reasons they left.

Have conversations within each college as to how to bring people of color into the specific learning of those disciplines.

At the July 20, 1993 Executive Committee, having this issue be the number one priority for the 1993-1994 academic year will be submitted to a vote. A working group of three students and three Executive Committee members will meet over the summer to draft a resolution that articulates concerns and proposes actions that address the concerns. These three faculty members will be selected at the July 20 meeting. The students in attendance will choose three representatives from among them and submit those names to the Ethnic Studies office.

VI. Discussion:

VII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm.

Recorded by:



Margaret Camuso, Academic Senate