

KEAN

FULL SENATE MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2023
3:15 pm-4:15 pm.
Zoom Webinar

Senators in attendance:

•Ahlawat, •Anderson, •Boateng, •Bonillas, •Boyd-Jackson, ex-Brandwein, •DiVirgilio, •Donovan, Dowdell, •Evans, •Farrokh, •Gover, ex-Gubi, •Halper, •Mack, •Marks, •Martinez, •Mayhall, •Pena, •Pintado-Casas, •Roebuck, •Rodriguez, ab-Rosa, Rosen, •Sanchez, •Sargent, •Verdi, •Webber, ab-Wetzel, •Yucetepe

Student Representative:

Glynis Tan

Guests: Castiglione, Moskovitz, Salvatore, Sarnoski, Stoudmie

[•=present ex=Excused absent=ab]

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ahlawat at 3:20 pm.

I. Minutes – January 24, 2023
A. Motion made, Motion seconded
B. Motion carried by voice vote
II. Curriculum Items for Notification-Notification and Vote or None
A. Minor in Drone Piloting and Applications
III. New Business-
A. Chair: Continuing the tradition of detail in the meeting minutes. We can move to less detail in minutes. Senator: It depends on what everyone wants. Chair: I'm hoping for volunteers for meeting minutes. Senator: It would be helpful if the motions for resolution were in bold, in big letters, or capsulated. Chair: Great idea. Thank you. Motion to approve minutes. Motion passed.
B. Next item: A minor in Drone Piloting and Applications was approved by UCC.
C. Chair: Next for discussion is the ' course outline revision policy. ' College and department curriculum chairs and senators responded to a Qualtrics survey. About 65% of the respondents felt a 5-year or 5-year cycle tied to program review is better. 81% felt course outlines should be revised at least every ten years. 66% feel program

faculty determine when a course outline needs revision. 85% felt the course outline should identify the course elements revised—no consensus on whether a sample syllabus should accompany a course outline. A three-year revision cycle helps meet market demands and keep up with disciplinary shifts. However, the majority feel it is burdensome and inefficient. I open it up for discussion.

Senator: In one sense, it's good for the departments to make their policy. There is this tendency with the five-year or three-year policy that we'll do that when we get there even though it would be better if we did it immediately. A blanket policy might influence our behavior in ways we might not like. What do the rest of the Senators think about that?

Senator: Well, my idea is to put a finishing date there, but courses can be revised earlier if needed.

Chair: I suggest combining course outline revisions with the program review. The departments would certify course outlines have been reviewed, indicate which ones did not require modifications, and revise the remaining. Of course, departments or programs may modify the course outlines earlier if needed. Several respondents felt the focus should be on syllabi as that's what the students see.

Senator: The syllabi issue is complicated as it is updated by individual faculty. A look at syllabi across the university shows many don't follow course outlines.

Senator: The course outline revision policy needs to be more moderate.

Senator: Is coinciding with the program review a great idea? Program reviews are already a lot of work. Departments could review course outlines the year before the program review.

Chair: Program reviews are every five years. The policy can state that in preparation for the program review, all course outlines be reviewed in the year preceding the program review.

Senator: Or Don's suggestion that outline revisions after the program review, so revisions reflect the findings from the curriculum.

Chair: I'm good with offering both options.

Senator: Five years is a good policy.

Senator: I support the five-year review. It's essential to coincide the course outline revisions with the program review in any manner that best suits each department. I'm also in a program that is on an eight-year cycle and takes three years to get there. Five years is timely enough as long as we don't forget the syllabus issue, which is more severe.

Moskovitz: Point of information concerning syllabi. The Simple Syllabus draws from the Colleague system informed by the curriculum documents. The expectation is that department chairs, executive directors, or coordinators have approved the Syllabus posted and published to students. We can revisit the syllabus issue going into the next cycle to ensure that when a syllabus is submitted, it's being reviewed and approved.

Chair: We can revisit the syllabus issue in the Fall if necessary. If everyone agrees, I can prepare a policy change suggestion suggesting a five-year review cycle. The departments determine course outlines needing revision and certify which ones don't need to be revised.

Senator: Would that be the policy for the departments?

Chair: Well, the Senate would make a recommendation to Dr. Birdsell.

Senator: The language should be minimally before or after the program review but within five years. Right?

Chair: Also add that the course revision highlight the revisions? In the past, we went through the motions of outline revisions just to comply with the policy.

Senator: The UCC manual clearly outlines that you must explain and highlight the changes for program revisions. We're asking for same thing with course revision.

Chair: I would draft the resolution and memo based on these discussions. Thank you.

D. **Chair:** Next is the '**i-Sections issue.**' **I-Sections is a major academic policy but was not brought to the senate for approval.** There are 632 students in 265 i-Sections. These are primarily staffed by adjunct faculty, lecturers, and assistant professors.

Senator: How does this align with our enrollment increase?

Chair: I didn't look into that. Initially, i-sections were offered face-to-face in regular classrooms. Faculty compensation is 0.25 credits for each student. There are i-sections in which faculty taught ten students and received compensation for 2.5 credits. Is it really saving the university 2.5 credits versus 3.0 credits? James from KFT is here and can share his thoughts on compensation. I'm concerned about student learning and the integrity of our curriculum. I have yet to find examples at other universities utilizing i-sections.

Senator: In my Master's program, several courses are offered as i-sections. That's because we don't have enough students but need to teach face-to-face because of accreditation. It strains faculty teaching i-sections as they must teach additional courses to compensate for lost teaching credits. Yet, they still do the same amount of work in the i-sections. Something is wrong as we're still charging three credits per student but paying faculty 0.25 credits per student.

Chair: In the Fall 21 semester, there were 276 face-to-face sections. Now modality for them is independent study. My question for the administration is, what is the reasoning behind these? Why do we have i-Sections?

Senator: To some extent, the i-sections allow flexibility and help with processing certifications. But that does not address the issue regarding appropriate teaching credit to faculty.

Chair: Shouldn't we look at how we are scheduling classes and our curriculum? We already have a lot of flexibility through course substitutions and independent studies.

Senator: That's a good point. We need to plan and schedule for multiple semesters so students can progress seamlessly in the program. Also, the reasons Gail mentioned about the appropriate listing on the transcript for certification purposes. This has some benefits, but I think it is probably abused to some extent.

Senator: Independent study is often a way to solve the problem of students graduating in a timely fashion. We have a lot of students in their fourth to fifth year. We have a problem with the senior year in English because most of our majors are in education. They want to teach in high school and have to practice teaching. They're also taking a senior seminar in English, which is a significant research project. We encourage them not to take both simultaneously, as it's virtually impossible. It is a problem of how many credits students can take on average.

Senator: Undergraduate students don't take i-Sections in the content area. It's

graduate programs, where, you know, we're struggling with numbers when we lose the i-Sections.

Chair: The majority of the i-sections (~ 75%) are undergrad classes,

Senator: We'd have to look at this. Is it in education? Or is it in the content areas? It's more in content areas because I do the schedules. Up until this semester, I did the schedule for the whole school. The students didn't have i-Sections.

Chair: Many new concentrations offered by programs might contribute to this issue. Several new courses do not have enough demand. For example, I looked at the analytics concentrations offered in management, the math department, and computer science. Enrollment in those concentrations is very low. For example, this semester, a data visualization course in the math department and a data mining course in the management department is offered as an independent study i-section.

Senator: Catalog says that "under certain situations, low-enrolled courses may be permitted to run as independent study sections with the same student learning outcomes and objectives as a standard course, however, may be offered in different modalities and meeting timeframe. Independent Study course sections are equivalent to the course and fulfill degree requirements and allow for grade recalculation. Independent Study course sections are identified by the letter "I" in the section code. For further information, please contact the Executive Director or Chairperson of the course."

Chair: This definition only appeared two years ago. In the 2018-2019 catalog, there is no mention of i-Sections. *The administration should have presented and sought approval for this policy from the Senate before rolling it out.*

Senator: Somewhere in the last two years, we were getting directions from either the registrar or the academic administrators that if our course had fewer than half the course cap, it would be an i-section with 0.25 credits per student compensation. It just came out of nowhere. It certainly is difficult and unfair when we have small programs on the graduate level, and we only have five faculty in that department. A lot of us are losing money, but we're also losing instruction, or we give it away for free.

Senator: Jane, does that fulfill the faculty member's full-time teaching obligation?

Senator: No, it doesn't.

Senator: It would be a phone call telling us that this course will not run unless you offer it as an i-section. Something changed.

Senator: A common problem exists in English. A student is a double major in English and Education and wants to teach in high school. Many students realize they can't graduate in four and a half years timeframe and have dropped education as their major and just majored in English. We had so many angry students and met with our Associate Dean about this; I don't know if anything's changed. It's a real problem in our program.

Senator: I wonder if we didn't process independent studies immediately and could almost waitlist these students. It's hard because of the 11th hour, but these are, in some sense, 11th hours students that we're talking about.

Senator: Some of them are like, off course, or this is my last semester, and if I don't take this, I'll have no other semester to take it. If we're able to find a mechanism where we're able to corral them

Chair: All these courses are at the 3000 level and above.

Stoudmire: We have about 70 regular independent studies that were not for substitution, and students are doing actual research. They do research projects. The enrollment is low, so they turn them into an i-section.

Chair: Well, then, it should be an independent study course. But what we are seeing is that for the regular course, the modality is different. *The course outlines were not approved for independent study.*

Stoudmire: These are regular sections that students registered into, and then the title of your course is whatever the project title is. You may have one or as many as five students working on the same project or the same research.

Stoudmire: That happened in the past couple of years when sufficient students were not enrolled, and the course was changed into an i-Section. We currently have 100 that are running independent study sections for the semester. Students are working on projects in the independent study courses that were created.

Senator: You have about 100. But you said previously 17 of them are research?

Stoudmire: I said those are the ones that had to be turned into i-Sections in math. But I currently have about 100 independent study sections for research,

Chair: But shouldn't they have an ID prefix, then, and not have the same prefix and number as regular courses?

Stoudmire: They have their prefix. They all say ID, whatever it is, and then the last number is changed depending on the number of credits. The ones that you see with the regular course number are the ones that did not have enough students to run the course; we changed them to i-Sections instead of canceling this course.

Chair: An example: a data mining course in my department is only offered as an i-section in the last four semesters. How can a student learn data mining as an independent study? *The issue remains why does our university have i-Sections?* James, do you have any thoughts on this?

James Castiglione: I make a couple of points. Number one, just so everyone is aware, the existing compensation was never negotiated. The i-Sections appeared out of the vacuum. And they began to be deployed. We did put it on local negotiations when we became aware of this. We have yet to make a lot of progress on that at this point. We do hope to resolve the issue, perhaps by the end of the semester, from the standpoint of terms and conditions of employment. As a faculty member, this body would have the authority to revise the i-Sections policy to comport with concerns about academic integrity. One aspect of being an R2 a research university is running classes even with low enrollment, especially with graduate programs. It's normal to expect to have some courses with small numbers.

Chair: Some courses have low course caps set at 6 to 10 students, so the class always runs. In other departments, a faculty teaches ten students as an i-section; these faculty do not receive full compensation and teaching credit. That is a fairness issue.

Senator: Coming back next year, one of the things I'm working on is a five-year schedule. Can scheduling out three to five years help solve this issue?

Sarnoski: We get many Environmental and Earth Science students moving from other departments. And there is no way we can fit that into our schedule. A student comes to our department in junior or senior year, oh, we don't offer a particular course for another two or three years. That means is the students end up with independent study.

Chair: If a student takes three or four of the five required courses as i-Sections, are

they really getting the education they're supposed to get? The I-sections issue is a multifaceted one that we should return to soon.

Sarnoski: I teach several i-sections; it's way more effort and attention I'm giving them. I'm meeting individually, I'm grading individually, and I'm giving attention individually.

Chair: Students in your program may be getting, but some students in other programs may have less than desirable learning experiences. It's also unfair to you to be teaching all these i-Sections and having to compensate for the additional time.

- E. **Chair:** Next item is the Senate Ad hoc Committee on Adjunct Faculty. The committee plans to send out the Qualtrics survey sent out this week. The committee will present its findings to the full Senate before April 30.
- F. **Chair:** The last item is the draft senate constitution. The draft constitution calls for faculty to vote for faculty in electing senators and professional staff to vote for professional staff. Administrators are not planned to be members of the constituency. No other university has administrators serving as senators. Most universities have a faculty senate though some have a separate staff senate. In 2010, the first paragraph in the senate constitution was changed to indicate administrators, professional staff, and faculty were constituents of the university senate. The rest of this constitution remained intact. As we move towards R2 status, it is essential to have a proper shared governance model reflected in an independent Senate. Our options are either a separate faculty senate and a separate staff council or maintaining three elected positions for professional staff members and the remaining for faculty. This needs further discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

IV. Next Meetings

- A. Executive Committee Meeting – March 21, 2023 – Zoom at 3:15 pm.
- B. Full Senate Meeting – March 14, 2023 – Zoom Webinar at 3:15 pm.