

The University of Iowa
FACULTY SENATE
Special Senate Meeting
Tuesday, October 16, 2001
Old Capital Senate Chamber

Members Present: K. Abdel-Malek, J. Aikin, J. Berg, D. Bills, T. Boles, D. DeJong, J. Desmond, R. Hamot, L. Hunsinger, R. Hurtig, J. Jew, M. Klepser, S. Kurtz, S. Larsen, R. LeBlond, P. Lloyd, J. P. Long, C. Lynch, D. Manderscheid, T. Mangum, K. Marra, J. Menninger, S. Moorhead, P. Muhly, W. Nixon, T. O’Dorisio, G. Parkin, J. Polumbaum, A. Qualls, M. Raymond, C. Ringen, J. Ringen, T. Schmidt, H. Seaba, W. Stanford, S. Stromquist, K. Tachau, L. Troyer, E. Wasserman, R. Weir, P. Weller, J. Westefeld

Members Absent: J. Altman., S. Armstrong, Z. Ballas, N. Bauman, C. Berman, R. Bork, M. Browning, P. Chang, J. Cowdery, H. Cowen, K. Diffley, C. Dungy, , B. Fallon, L. Geist, V. Grassian, R. Hegeman, J. Jew, M. Klepser, P. Kutzko, R. LeBlond, P. Lloyd, J. P. Long, C. Lynch, A. McCarthy, R. Miller, J. Moyers, I. Nygaard, C. Porter, P. Rubenstein, L. Snetselaar, C. Sponsler, S. Vincent

Members Excused: P. Heidger, D. Brown, L. Dusdieker, B. Muller, , R. Slayton, R. Valentine

Faculty Senate Officers in Attendance: Amitava Bhattacharjee, President; Jeff Cox, Vice President; Erin Irish, Secretary; Carolyn Colvin, Past President

Guests: Charles Drum (University Relations), Panayot Butchvarov..(Philosophy), Lola Lopez (Office of the Provost), Susan Birrell (HLSS), Bonnie Slatton (HLSS), Sheila Benson (LLC), Dennis Roseman (Mathematics), Celeste Albonetti (Sociology), Maile Sagen (Ombudsperson), F. Charlton (Anthropology), Philip Lutgendorf (Asian Language and Literature), Jeffrey Schabilion (Biological Sciences), John Beldon Scott (Art History), Jackie Rand (History), Heather Woodward (*Press-Citizen*), Steve Collins (Electrical Engineering), Joe Bolkcom (State Senate), Bob Dvorsky (State Senate), Michel Gobat (History), Jon Whitmore (Provost), Vicki Hesli (Faculty Assembly), Kristin Clark (Office of Faculty Senate), Keith Stroyen (Mathematics), Lee Anna Clark (Office of the Provost), Mark Schantz (General Counsel), Tamara Meertz (*Des Moines Register*), Barbara Eckstein (English), Steve Hoch (Office of the Provost), Raul Curto (Liberal Arts and Sciences), Francisco Sanchez (Spanish and Portuguese), Tom Dean (Office of the President), Lisa Heineman (History), Derek Willard (Associate Vice President), Mary Mascher (State Representative), Stephen Vlastos (History), R Myers (State Representative), Laura Gotkowitz (History)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:38.

President Bhattacharjee began the meeting by thanking the Senators and guests for attending this special meeting of the Senate.

II. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Prof. Tachau moved and Prof. Hunsinger seconded the following:

MOTION: To approve the agenda. *The motion carried.*

III. New Business: Political responses to the budget crisis

President Bhattacharjee introduced the business of today's meeting by announcing that when he called the meeting, the budget cut was extremely substantial. It is now less, but combined with the cut earlier this year, it still amounts to a crisis for public higher education in this state. Referring to President Coleman's speech of September 25, he spoke of a widening gap between the resources from the state and elsewhere, repeating her caution that they are not interchangeable. Warning of fiscal privatization, he added that we are looking more and more like a private university. The issue is not what constitutes a fair cut. If the state is having a shortfall, we should share the cuts. Our meeting here today is an attempt to come to grips with the problem. While we are working with the administration to make cuts that would be the least painful to the university, we must also articulate to the wider public our views on state support of the university.

Prof. Hurtig began the discussion by stating that a fundamental problem we face here and nationwide is the attitude that if there is a national need, we "turn on the faucet." But our services are not like a faucet: the educational service universities provide are not instantaneous, taking, for instance, four years to train a physician, three years for a lawyer, four years for a undergraduate to be educated. Fearing that higher education is at risk in this country, he pointed out the difficulties in dealing with a budget that is determined on an annual basis, and suggested that our budgets be worked out in terms of 3-5 years, a time-frame similar to the educational programs we provide.

Prof. Cox read the resolution that he had prepared (below), and copies were distributed.

Whereas,

The establishment of publicly funded state universities that combine the highest quality teaching and research with accessibility to students regardless of financial means represents one of the highest achievements of American democracy;

Iowans have contributed to that achievement by building up over many decades a public system of higher education based on what President Mary Sue Coleman refers to as a contract between the people of Iowa and our state universities;

That contract, which depends in equal parts on (1) the provision of high quality teaching and research, (2) accessibility to students, and (3) adequate state funding, is being eroded in a process of "fiscal privatization".

We therefore as faculty members of the University of Iowa:

Support President Coleman's defense of the public character of Iowa's state universities, and her opposition to "fiscal privatization";

Call upon all Iowans, including community and political leaders throughout the state, to renew their commitment to high quality, democratically accountable public higher education;

Ask our state legislators from Johnson County to speak out publicly in defense of higher education;

Encourage faculty to speak out in defense of public higher education directly to our state legislators, the governor, and the people of Iowa through whatever means possible.

Prof. Cox moved and Prof. Colvin seconded the following:

MOTION: To accept the resolution.

Discussion continued with Prof. Hunsinger agreeing with the resolution and returning to President Coleman's speech, asking what caused the loss of support. President Bhattacharjee responded that much of it amounts to fiscal realities: tax cuts were passed, and there were unexpected revenue shortfalls. Prof. Tachau brought up the Taliban, which is often spoken of as imposing a "medieval" regime. She pointed out the only education they had available is religious, in contrast to our society in which we enjoy secular institutions of higher education. She suggested that we have gotten too comfortable, adding that we are willing to pay for security at home, but a broader security includes education for the people. Prof. Kurtz countered that political powers don't want to spend more money. He made the point that, in the past, the university received a lot of support from the state, but at that time they had no one else to support. Now the state also provides support to community colleges and private schools. There is also the problem that we are not visible in western Iowa. He admitted not having a solution, but could identify part of the problem as increased competition, both within the state and at a federal level.

Prof. Seaba, mentioning that she went to school on a national defense scholarship, went on to point out that an important part of national defense is an educated public.

Addressing visibility of the university within the state, she brought up our significant service mission, and suggested that “service” be added to “teaching and research” in Prof. Cox’s resolution as a friendly amendment (paragraphs 2 and 3), which was accepted.

Prof. Menninger addressed a more specific issue: why we were singled out by the governor and the legislature “for special treatment.” He fears that it is likely to happen again. He suggested that an appropriate response would be a political pothole, some obvious failure to provide an essential service that would make the voters take notice. Contrary to the principles drawn up last week for budget reduction, which included protecting financial aid and the four-year graduation plan, he argued that instead, we should protect those things that makes us special, such as research. Prof. Hurtig, who had proposed the pothole analogy earlier, addressed Prof. Kurtz’s point, asserting that our primary responsibility is what we do for people, producing educated citizens and professionals, while they are students here, a point that seems to have been lost here and elsewhere. Prof. Desmond concurred with the last three speakers and argued that we are only 19% a public university, suggesting that if the state truly wants us to be a public university, our support from the state should rise above 19%. Prof. Nixon asked that we consider what is appropriate for faculty to do, and suggested we do something akin to sitting at the gates of the castle. He suggested that we make the failure of the legislature apparent by embarrassing them.

President Bhattacharjee took this suggestion as an opportunity to distribute a list of state leaders and representatives, provided by Vice President Willard, to whom one could write in support of the university.

Prof. Cox stated his belief that there is no need to create academic potholes; they will become apparent on their own. He reiterated President Coleman’s statement that we are in no position to demand, and added that we really need the 19%. He urged us to talk directly to our legislators, especially those from Johnson County. He thought we should also get the regents to speak out for public universities. Prof. Colvin added that Jane Hoshi is actively trying to recruit faculty to speak in western Iowa. She went on to add her support to Prof. Cox’s resolution, and asked us to consider the changes that would occur if we became more privatized. Prof. Hunsinger called the question, with a second by Prof. Tachau.

MOTION (see above). *The amended motion passed.*

Prof. Hunsinger moved and Prof. Tachau seconded the following:

MOTION: To open the floor. *The motion carried.*

Prof. Charlton began the discussion by suggesting that we be certain of our facts, regarding the 19% state support of the university, or of the amount covered by tuition. Prof. Hunsinger returned to a few issues that had been raised earlier. He agreed that potholes would appear automatically. He asked whether it is worthwhile to maintain the university as a public university. As a member of the College of Medicine, he would be

less affected by such a change than most, yet he is vehemently opposed to becoming privatized. He went on to propose that we win the hearts of the people, not just those of the legislature. If we don't keep undergraduate education as our highest priority, we will lose the support of the people of Iowa. Prof. Kurtz disagreed, pointing out that how we view our mission could be quite different from the view of the citizens of Iowa.

State Representative Bolkcom joined the discussion, saying that he is critically concerned about the governor's proposal. He does not believe we should have to balance the budget of the university on the backs of students. He pointed out that the community colleges are having their worst year, ever. The governor believes that historically, the state has not done well by K-12 education, and his remedy is to recut the pie, taking from the Regents universities. Bolkcom continued that we have had an historical commitment to state support of quality higher education, and wondered where tuition hikes will take us with respect to ranking in the Big Ten. He mentioned that there are other constituencies making forceful claims for increased state support. He offered to let any of us shadow a legislator for a day, to see who is running the state, and what our representatives are doing for us. Prof. Tachau responded to Bolkcom's suggestion, saying that she had thought for years that faculty members should be shadowed, as most people don't have a good idea of that goes on in a typical day here. Prof. Hurtig addressed Bolkcom's point that many constituencies feel that their needs are not being met, with the thought that the size of the pie is fixed. He asserted that we, as voters, need to wake up and accept the reality that services cost money. Rep. Bolkcom agreed, saying that many politicians want to give money back, rather than taxing us appropriately, making the comparison to European countries where taxes are much higher than in this country. He read a list of tax cuts, making the point that it is a tough thing to counter.

Prof. Cox asked how much the annual tax cut is, to which Bolkcom responded, 2.9 billion dollars over 6 years. President Bhattacharjee asked how best to communicate to the leaders of the state the value of higher education, explaining that it is not just the voters that need to be educated, but the governor as well. Bolkcom suggested that visits every day they are in session from a carload of faculty could get their attention, plus provide an opportunity to engage the leaders. Prof. Nixon expressed concern about the partisan tone the discussion had taken, pointing out that the governor is a Democrat. Turning to the immediate problem, he asserted that it is devastating for any organization to be told midyear that their budget has been cut when there is no way to make up the lost money. Prof. Hanley added that she was shocked that the university had been singled out, and argued that we should consider becoming a real constituency, by organizing ourselves.

Representative Dick Myers was introduced by Rep. Mascher, who reported how tireless he has been in converting the 7%, targeted cut, to the 4.3%, across-the-board cut. Myers began by reminding us that the legislature is restricted by laws that dictate how the budget is set and how much can be spent. He asserted that the downturn in the state economy happened very quickly, adding that blame is irrelevant: the law says we must, as a result, cut spending. He said that it is a revenue problem but so far has been treated as a spending problem. As this is a political issue, and he has 44, not 51 votes, he fears going into special session. Whereas he doesn't believe there will be further "messaging

around” with the 4% cut, he is waiting for the budgetary repercussions of the September 11 attacks. Admitting that the revenue situation is dire, he thought that there were solutions other than spending cuts or raising taxes, such as delays in tax breaks. He also discussed the possibility of dipping into the emergency fund, which exists as state law allows only 99% of revenue to be spent. Unfortunately using this fund is complicated by earlier overspending. He concluded by predicting that the entire next legislative session will be spent on the budget. He warned that many legislators believe that students and their parents should be paying more for college.

Prof. Tachau, wondering if there was any way we could increase revenues, suggested that we reclassify our services as homeland defense, analogous to public health, an idea that Rep. Myers liked. Prof. Kurtz suggested that the law that bars us from changing tuition midyear be examined, as community colleges are not so restrained. Rep. Myers responded by voicing his preference for giving people the ability to plan ahead. Prof. Hunsinger then redirected the discussion by reinviting other guests to participate. Taking his cue, President Bhattacharjee thanked Rep. Myers and the other state representatives for attending the meeting and for their work to convert the 7% to a 4% cut.

Prof. Rand spoke to the issue of reaching “western Iowa”, warning not to speculate too much about how they view us and recounting her previous experience in establishing a Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Analogous to that effort, she felt that while it is important and useful to talk to distant Iowans, it was likely that the political processes would outpace any changes that would come about as a result of the dialogue.

Prof. Hurtig returned to the idea of building a constituency, pointing out that the UNI faculty is unionized, but that it does not help them fundamentally. What needs to happen is a public realization of the cost of the goods provided by our universities. He added that in many cases the bad guys had once been our own students. Prof. Nixon countered that whereas we have been calling on Iowans to be democratically accountable, perhaps the reverse should be true. People think we work 4.5 hours/week, teaching classes in which students need to be warned of content. Maybe we should be demonstrating the merit of supporting us. Prof. Tachau stated her belief, shared by all of us, in the importance of public education. She worried that a basis for our current budgetary crisis is that our vision of what a university should be does not mesh with most people’s vision, of Saturday afternoon football, Thursday night basketball, and a hospital. Prof. Hunsinger terminated the discussion by thanking President Bhattacharjee for calling the session and Prof. Cox for composing the resolution, then moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Prof. Nixon.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Irish

Secretary