

**UNIVERSITY OF DENVER**  
**Faculty Senate**  
**20 Jan 2006**  
**Mary Reed Building, Renaissance Room South**  
**Minutes**

**Senators present (or represented by Proxy):** William Anderson, Elizabeth Anderson, Alvaro Arias, Davor Balzar, Dennis Barrett, Marian Bussey, David Christophel, Richard Clemmer for Bonnie Clark, Joel Cohen, proxy for Jenny Cornish, Davy Davis, Andy Divine, Sandy Dixon, Jack Donnelly, , Ronald Fariña, James Gilroy, Deb Grealy, Shannen Hill, Mike Keables, Seth Masket, Don McCubbrey, Ved Nanda, Catherine Reed, Dean Saitta, Roger Salters, Nancy Sampson, Martha Santos, Jack Sheinbaum, Joe Szyliowicz, Javier Torres, Gordon Von Stroh, Christof Demont-Heinrich for Diane Waldman, Timothy Weaver, Todd Wells, Margaret Whitt, and Yavuz Yasar  
**Guest:** Christine Coughlan , Teaching Task Force

**Call to order**

Dean Saitta, President-elect, called the meeting to order at noon. Minutes of 18 Nov 2005 were approved as written.

**Provost Search: Dean Saitta**

The Committee is winnowing 120 applications in three stages: currently, preliminary phone interviews; then, airport interviews; finally, on-campus interviews. Sen. Saitta credits the job ad with the high quality of candidates. The criteria enunciated by the Committee include: academic record, previous experience and breadth thereof, vision, financial acumen, record in administration, skill in winning outside funding, and ability in building academic quality. Because there are many provost jobs open, the Committee “moves with dispatch.”

**Academic Planning Committee: David Christophel**

Academic Planning’s subcommittee advisory to Admissions has been meeting with Vice-Chancellor Willoughby and is pleased with the evolution occurring in the Admissions Office. He cited as one instance the new rating scale to determine whether an applicant is admitted, which uses the Hyde interview result as only one of several criteria, where previously it sufficed to bar a candidate. The vice-chancellor now weights the Hyde interviews as a recruiting tool more than an assessment tool. Senators were encouraged to bring recommendations to the subcommittee members, Sens. Javier, Sheinbaum and Christophel, and indeed to Vice-Chancellor Willoughby.

**Personnel Committee: Todd Wells**

Sen. Wells reported with consternation that this year the provost continued to transmit sabbatical applications to the Senate three weeks after the stated deadline; he hoped that administrators would enforce deadlines in future.

Personnel Committee is working to change the process of choosing recipients of the annual faculty awards, attempting to make applications shorter and more consistent. He elicited ideas for the Committee on how to handle nominations that originate with

students and lack documentation, and agreed that the Awards Subcommittee might be charged with assembling a comparable dossier to accompany a student-led nomination.

**Academic Affairs Committee of AUSA Senate: Aaron Schwarzberg**

Mr. Schwarzberg reported as chair of the Academic Affairs committee, which was constituted last year by the AUSA Senate to increase that Senate's attention to all things academic. He mentioned among their accomplishments: starting a Cram Night during finals week, with 1300 students in attendance; a dinner for dean's list and Hornbeck scholars; a website with a faculty member of the month, as well as complaints about faculty members; and hanging banners in Driscoll Center. He asked for suggestions on how the committee might be more useful.

**Diversity Issues on Campus: Margaret Whitt**

Sen. Whitt reported on two "fishbowl" events intended to address issues of racial diversity. The first considered whether the Princeton Review's ranking of DU as the worst in the nation in student-perceived interrelations between black and white, rich and poor, was justified. The second dealt with racial inequities as revealed by Hurricane Katrina. Sen. Saltus' question whether we were judged against comparable institutions brought the answer that the Princeton Review piece rested on voluntary student participation, not a random sample, and thus had "no statistical validity, but much impact." Sen. Santos pointed out the difference between the real diversity of our student population and the perception that groups don't interact. Sen. Saitta commented that finding a provost with skills in this area is a goal of the search committee.

**Teaching Task Force Report: Sen. Saitta**

Sen. Saitta introduced Prof. Christina Coughlan and Sen. Cathy Reed as members, with him, of the Task Force, and encouraged their corrections and additions to his report. He set the goal of the discussion as seeking the sense of the Senate on which parts of the long, multi-authored, Task Force report the Senate may wish to support and help the administration to implement. The Academic Planning committee will take these ideas and draft specific motions for the next meeting.

The report sought to respond to:

1. the desire by the chancellor, provost and deans to affirm the importance of teaching and to encourage teaching excellence
2. the view of many faculty members that teaching has no importance in merit and promotion considerations, or that when it does, student evaluations drive the reward process, so that good but unpopular teaching, and especially teaching outside the classroom, go unrewarded
3. the thrust of reorienting the university to serve the public good, and to teach beyond the registered students

The report asks for two lines of evaluation: 1) the standard evaluation forms filled in by students, with renewed attention to tweaking some questions to serve specialized needs of individual units, and 2) enhanced review methods at special times.

Among actions we might recommend to the administration, he mentioned redesign of classrooms to stimulate teaching experimentation. Regarding awards, the major proposal of the report is to abandon the current annual distinguished teacher award, given since 1940, and replace it with three-year Teaching Professorships given to four faculty members per year, carrying a stipend of \$5K and requiring some teaching component.

### **Teaching Task Force Report: Q & A**

Sen. Barrett asked what purpose was served by replacing the Distinguished Teaching Award instead of adding the Teaching Professorships to it. Sen. Saitta replied that the object was to spread recognition and development opportunities much more widely, so that in time, many more faculty will have been rewarded, and the culture of teaching improved commensurately.

Sen. Reichardt commented that in the Law School at the time of review for tenure, colleagues attend the candidate's classes. Sen. Nanda clarified that a committee of mentors will attend a Law professor's classes; every two years for a mini-evaluation, three peers will attend classes; and a development committee will provide remedial teaching help if asked. This line led to a cluster of suggestions: that professors in the School of Education share their disciplinary expertise; that professors selected as distinguished teachers be employed (by giving their departments release funds) to teach us how to teach; that distinguished professors be videotaped in the act of teaching and the tapes be available for our learning.

In a discussion of the orientation program that Center for Teaching and Learning provides for incoming faculty members, it was suggested that mandatory training sessions were not justified, and that the value of what CTL gives has never been assessed and should be. Sen. Saitta replied that the Task Force agreed that some CTL programs are in need of assessment.

Sens. Whitt and Dixon both emphasized the basic importance of departments' meeting yearly to discuss and compare their teaching efforts in some depth, perhaps carrying these efforts further to interdepartmental discussions -- but such formats are neglected in the Task Force report.

The point was made that good teaching should be cooperative rather than competitive, although the current merit pay increases are zero-sum, encouraging competitiveness.

Sen. Fariña suggested that a good use of resources would be to fund sampling students 3-5 years after their graduation, to add a concrete dimension to student assessment.

Sen. Christophel, as chair of Academic Planning Committee, deemed that the extensive discussion had yielded adequate guidance to the committee in drafting measures for the Senate.

### **New Business**

The point that we are tired of seeing Marc Holtzmann's affiliation as Past President of the University of Denver, without clarification of his minor role, seemed to meet general agreement. Among considerations of how his role here should be clarified, a letter to the

editor of the two Denver daily newspapers was mentioned as a minimum. The task was referred to the president and the president-elect.

**Adjournment**

Sen. Saitta adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Barrett  
Secretary pro tem