

**Senate Year End Report
2014-2015
Rodger L. Jackson, President (2013-2015)**

This is the end-of

committee. Moreover, this year, the Senate charged various standing committees with specialized tasks, somewhat akin to what it does with a task force. Hence, it is conceptually useful to differentiate Senate activities on policies and procedures, regardless of whether a proposal for consideration came through a standing committee or from the work done by said committees on projects charged to them by the Senate at large.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SENATE ACTIVITIES 2014-2015

1. The Senate created a Task Force on Dual Credit.
2. The Senate determined that the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance shall henceforth interpret its standing charge to include the regular consideration of issues regarding campus accessibility.
3. The Senate commended the administration for its actions in implementing several specific recommendations of the Task Force on Accessibility regarding the priority access gaps and encouraged it to continue addressing these issues with all due speed.
4. The Senate passed a resolution calling for full and substantive participation with the administration in developing an Atlantic City Campus, were such a purchase to take place.
5. The Senate passed a resolution calling for a Task Force composed of faculty and administration to advise the Office of the President in the implementation of any Atlantic City campus.
6. The Senate approved a new process for selecting student speakers at commencement exercises.
7. The Senate approved changes to the Academic Life Cycle Program procedures.
8. The Senate approved the creation of an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership.
9. The Faculty Assembly, led by the Senate, and the Stockton Federation of Teachers met in two extraordinary sessions to discuss a number of issues stemming from the problems that arose with regard to the Showboat Casino purchase
10. The Senate and the Stockton Federation of Teachers conducted an online referendum to vote on faculty participation on the Board of Trustees as well as to assess the President's conduct.
11. The Senate approved attendance policy revisions and consolidations proposed by the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee.
12. The Senate approved of changes to the manner in which faculty were elected to the Academic Honesty Board.
13. The Senate moved to have the Task Force on Dual Credit continue its work into the next year.
14. The Senate approved pilot testing a permission slip for field trips.
15. The Senate recommended that the university adopt a policy of graduate tuition waivers for spouses, partners, and dependent children.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Life Cycle of Academic Programs: This policy is an updating and clarification of the university's procedures for obtaining approval of new academic programs (or programs promoted by level from concentration-minor-certificate-major- baccalaureate-masters-doctoral), as well as for managing programs during their life cycle, and for program closure.

Policy For Selecting Student Speakers For Commencement Exercises: This was the approval of a pilot process for selecting student commencement speakers starting spring 2015 and possibly for all future ceremonies. The intention is to develop a process with clearly defined selection criteria whereby eligible students can apply to represent their class during commencement ceremonies. Past experience indicates that, when asked, some eligible speaker candidates have declined the request to address their class; therefore, a speaker application process would both confirm a student's initiative and willingness to make such an address as well as provide an equitable process for selecting speakers from among qualified applicants. The two students awarded the honor to present a "Student Address" would be represented in the ceremony program book with a brief biography highlighting their accomplishments.

Creation of a Permission Slip For Field Trips: The form that was designed by the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee with Senate input contains the name of the student, the sending faculty member, and the date and time of the field trip, filled in by the sending faculty member to avoid inappropriate usage. Students are to sign their own names and present them to the affected faculty members. The pilot permission slip also specifically indicates the faculty member whose class is being missed has the prerogative not to excuse the absence. The Senate approved a year trial period in which professors would not be required to use it but could as a courtesy to their colleagues.

Alteration and Consolidation of the University Attendance/Graduation Policy: There was only one piece of new information in Policy II-17. The Senate approved the removal of time limits for undergraduate degrees. Such limits had been in the previous policy but had never been put into practice.

Alteration to the Policy Concerning Membership on Academic Honesty Board: There had been concern regarding the manner in which faculty were selected for the Academic Honesty Board. The Academic Honesty Board is not a standing committee of the Senate, and therefore had not historically used the same election cycle or process. There had been no standard means of appointing members to this committee from each school, and no defined term of service. The Senate recommended an alteration to the existing procedures so that the election cycle, election process, and length of service would be the same as those of senate committees.

STANDING COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES

Addition to the Charge of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance:

One of the recommendations of the 2013-2014 Task Force on Accessibility was to construct a means for an ongoing consideration of these issues. Moreover, they concluded that it was important that there be a clearly identified entity to which faculty, students, staff and administrators could turn if they had questions or problems which needed investigation or remediation. The Senate voted to extend the charge of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance to include the regular, ongoing consideration of issues regarding accessibility at Stockton University.

Task Force on Dual Credit: This task force is conducting a detailed investigation into the current status of Stockton University offerings in collaboration with local high schools, whether taught here or at the high schools. Their charge was highly detailed and quite extensive and only a preliminary report could be completed by the May retreat. Given the importance of this matter, the Senate voted to continue the work of the task force into the next year with a requirement to issue a report in December 2015.

Task Force On Atlantic City Campus: As a follow up to a resolution passed earlier in the year (see below), the Senate voted to create a joint Senate/administration Task Force to advise and make recommendations to the Office of the President on issues regarding the establishment of a campus in the former Showboat Casino. The Task Force was co-chaired by the Senate President and the Provost.

Creation of an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership: The Standing Committee on Academic Programs and Planning voted 13 to 1 (abstention) to recommend the creation of a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership at the University. This new program can draw on an already strong cohort of faculty from across different schools, and meets an identified need for professional development identified through market surveys. Although drawn from professional leadership standards, the program will not culminate in a professional certification. Nor will additional accreditation be sought beyond the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools as the regional accreditation body. It was moved and seconded to use a ballot vote for consideration of the matter. The vote was 20 in favor, 11 against, no abstentions.

OTHER ACTIVITIES BY THE SENATE

Normally, this section of the report details those Senate activities that do not fall neatly into the standard categories outlined above. These have included resolutions praising members of the Stockton community, declarations about political events, and recommendations for the administration to take particular actions on some university matters. Although important, such activities typically do not take up much of the Senate's business.

This past year, however, was unique in

President also reiterated that he was unable to provide more details as all parties were bound by a confidentiality agreement.

In response to this news, the Senate Executive Committee decided to raise this issue with the Senate. It crafted a resolution, brought before the Senate on November 18, 2015, which demanded the opportunity for substantive faculty input on the process of implementing this project were it to proceed, as well as on any other future such projects. The Senate deliberated upon the proposed resolution, made some minor modifications, and passed it unanimously. The resulting document was sent to the Offices of the President and the Provost.

In between the November and December Senate meetings, senators worked in small groups, and engaged in a series of email discussions to determine what would be the most effective method of ensuring the full and active faculty participation called for in the November resolution. The consensus was that a task force should be created which would be composed of an equal number of faculty and administrators. This task force would advise and make recommendations to the Office of the President regarding implementation of an Atlantic City campus, if indeed the University went ahead with the purchase of the Showboat property. The details of the Senate's recommendation as well as its rationale for this particular model were carefully laid out in the document "Motion from Stockton Senate Executive Committee Regarding a Joint Task Force on a Potential Atlantic City Campus Dec 9th, 2014," which can be found on the Senate website. The charge for such a task force was amended to include language that explicitly stated that the creation of such a body did not constitute approval of the project.

The Senate Executive Committee further asked the Senate for permission to recruit volunteers for task force membership, if needed. Ordinarily, composing a task force is an activity which would have engaged the full Senate but this would have proved difficult given the likelihood that the task force might have to be mobilized over the winter break. The Senate unanimously approved both the proposed motion and the request to empower the Executive Committee to recruit task force volunteers.

On December 12, 2014, the President announced the purchase of the Showboat casino building. In the

The faculty had made numerous requests to the Senate to find out the status of the Island Campus. While some faculty expressed interest and even excitement at the prospect of creating an Island Campus, there was also a great deal of uncertainty, insecurity and apprehension. A number of faculty and staff complained that they did not know whether they would be forced to teach at the Showboat against their wishes, whether their entire program would be simply moved out there, whether it would be a branch or a satellite campus, what the timetable would be, what the security arrangements would be, and so on. This uncertainty was exacerbated by the news that the corporation that sold Stockton the building, Caesar's Casino Entertainment, declared bankruptcy in January.

Some of these issues clearly fell within the purview of the University's Stockton Federation of Teachers, and, as such, the Union leadership had been actively seeking answers at every opportunity. Their efforts were stymied by the fact that they too were only minimally consulted as the process moved forward. While the Senate made sure to include an SFT representative on the Academic Affairs Task Force, there were no SFT representatives on the other task forces.

Given the extraordinary circumstances and the paucity of detailed information available to the Stockton community, the Senate Executive Committee asked the President to give his State of the University address earlier in the term than he had done in recent years. The Senate Constitution requires that the President (or the President's representative) speak to the Faculty Assembly at least once a year and provide his or her take on the health and future of the institution. Typically, this occurs midway through the spring semester, but the Senate Executive Committee proposed that President Saatkamp address the Assembly as soon as possible upon the resumption of classes. With this in mind, the Senate, in consultation with the Union, scheduled a presentation by President Saatkamp on the last Tuesday of January, a date normally set aside for Union business. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather the school was closed that day, and his talk was rescheduled to February 17, 2015.

In the interim, people from all areas of the university, including the Academic Affairs Task Force, began work

identified and highlighted recurring themes in identified opportunities and potential problems, and followed up with a series of online surveys intended to reach those people who had been unable to attend the school meetings or allow those who had commented earlier to register their views

alternatives, specifications about the design of rooms for particular programs were often dismissed or met with the charge that people were dragging their feet. This resulted in a top-down decision system which limited autonomy and flexibility on the part of the many different working groups.⁵ Moreover, it further exacerbated the concerns on the part of many faculty that the administration had already made most of the major decisions and the attempts by the Academic Affairs Task Force to solicit their input was a smoke screen.

Fourth, the ongoing sense of uncertainty, insecurity, and bewilderment was frequently exacerbated by a lack of consistent, reliable information. Statements about the project made at Stockton differed from what appeared in the local newspapers and television reports. Such mixed messages are not unexpected in a project of this size and complexity, particularly as Stockton cannot control representations of the project in the media. Unfortunately, as the project was marked by extreme secrecy since the initial purchase, such differences contributed to a climate of mistrust.

Yet, despite these obstacles, progress was being made, a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Stockton community. The Academic Affairs Task Force surveyed students to learn their thoughts on the project. Academic programs met to determine the contributions they might be able to make, and whether they needed to revise their degree requirements to take advantage of the new location. A number of faculty volunteered to teach in Atlantic City either in Atlantic City or in Atlantic City.

purchase, it had been assured that this was only a formality that could be resolved by Caesar's Entertainment. Moreover, it had also been assured that it was indemnified from any financial losses that might result from the covenant. The President expressed his confidence that the University would prevail in any legal battle but admitted that if it could not be resolved quickly they would need to sell the property.

Over the next seven days, rumors abounded, but hard information about what would or should happen next was difficult to find. The task forces and working groups continued to meet although it was unclear what exactly they should be doing until the lawsuit was resolved. The overall sense of uncertainty and insecurity was intensified by the fact that the University's chief academic officer, Provost Kesselman, had accepted the position of President of the University of Southern Maine and was due to start on July 1. Many faculty were angry with what they perceived was the the administration's lack of due diligence, while others felt the blame rested primarily with Trump Entertainment and their insistence on preventing Stockton from moving forward.

On April 3, President Saatkamp announced that Stockton would enter into an agreement with KK Ventures, a subsidiary of Glenn Straub's Polo North, Inc. The arrangement was part of what Straub appeared to have named the "Phoenix Project." The \$500 million, 8-part project was to turn Revel Casino and large sections of Atlantic City into sports and non-gaming entertainment attractions, with investment from Straub. The Florida-based developer deposited \$26 million in escrow

arrangement, and that consequently, his personal views, however abhorrent they may be, were irrelevant.

On April 4, the day after the President's press release about the Phoenix Project, the Senate Executive committee called for the following:

- 1) An immediate and public denunciation of Straub's remarks by the university administration
- 2) A university-wide forum to allow the administration to clarify the exact relationship Stockton had contracted to be in with Mr. Straub, both legally and financially, as well as the role Stockton was to play in the development of this initiative, or whether Stockton should be involved in this partnership at all.

With this in mind, the Senate Executive Committee and the Union organized a joint meeting of the Union membership and Faculty Assembly.⁶ This may have been the first time in Stockton's history that a joint meeting of these two institutions had been called.⁷

A meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 9 for both Faculty A

President Saatkamp spoke and responded to questions. Many issues were raised, and while there were those who expressed support for the President's actions, the general atmosphere was one of anger, mistrust, and confusion about the immediate future and the decisions of Stockton's leadership. For example, while the President agreed that Straub's comments were unacceptable and that the university was not in a partnership with him, he was asked why the university website still featured a press release about Stockton's partnership in the Phoenix Project. At 5:00 pm, President Saatkamp departed, and the meeting moved into closed session.

Again, while there were dissenters, three themes emerged from the comments of the majority of those present in the ensuing discussion.

First, the administration was not, nor had it been for some time, engaging in a robust sense of shared governance. Furthermore, it was believed the administration had effectively isolated the faculty from the Board of Trustees.

Second, faculty and Union members expressed frustration and anger that the University had entered into a business arrangement with Glenn Straub. His offensive comments indicated, at the very least, a profound lack of understanding of Stockton's mission and history. This was compounded by the questionable history of his development projects in other cities, his public feud with the Atlantic City energy suppliers, and his vague and unclear remarks about the Phoenix project, and his inflammatory classist and racist remarks about his vision of education.

Third, assembly and union membership expressed a desire to vote on the president's leadership. Many stated that there should be a vote of no confidence, others felt that the president should be asked to resign, and still others felt that the president had made mistakes but not to the extent that he should be sanctioned by the faculty.

Given that it was rapidly approaching 6:00 pm, as well as the complexity of the issues that remained under discussion, the assembled parties voted to continue the meeting the following Tuesday. In the interim, the joint leadership of the Union and the Senate worked on an agenda specifically addressing concerns about shared governance, Stockton's partnership with Glenn Straub, and questions about a vote of no confidence.

On the following Tuesday, the meeting, having never formally been adjourned, continued in closed session. Assembled faculty and Union members voted to hold a referendum on President Saatkamp's leadership and to demand representation on the Board of Trustees. Because of the historic significance of these measures, the decision was made to make the vote as inclusive as possible by having an on-line referendum. While the 4:30-6:00 pm time slot is reserved for meetings, many Union and Faculty Assembly members were unable to be there in person. Moreover, an anonymous on-line referendum would provide a level of confidentiality for those who were concerned about the possible retaliation over the vote. Because there had been many suggestions about what exactly such a referendum should say and how it would be constructed, the exact structure and wording was left to a joint committee of the Senate and Union, which was comprised of the Executive

Committees of both bodies.

Over the next five days, the Union membership voted