

MINUTES

Boulder Faculty Assembly

February 2, 2006

Attending:

Jerry Hauser, Chair

R L Widmann, Vice Chair

David Kassoy, Secretary

Deward Walker, At-Large Board Member

Barbara Bintliff, Former BFA Chair

Wayne Angevine

Deane Bowers

Greg Carey

Frances Charteris

Cathy Comstock

Don Eron

Hardy Fredricksmeier

Lori Hunter

Eric Juenke

Samuel Junod

Paul Levitt

Daniel Kim

E. Christian Kopff

Uriel Nauenberg

Rolf Norgaard

Kathryn Pieplow

Andrew Pleszkun

Joe Rosse

Jon Rush

Petger Schaberg

Alexey Wolfson

John Cooper, Retired Faculty

David Hill, Retired Faculty

Barbara Battenfield, ASC Chair

Jeremy Jimenez, UCSU Tri-Executive

Mario Flores, UCSU Education Liaison

Amy Ha

William Kaempfer, Vice Provost & Associate Vice Chancellor for

Academic Affairs

Media:

Jeff Dodge, Silver & Gold Record

Not attending:

Marty Bickman

Sedat Biringen

Martin Boileau

Pamela Diggle

Ruben Donato

David Fagerstrom

Robert Ferry

Roger King

Robert Kuchta

Richard Laver

Bill McGinley

Tad Pfeffer

Bob Regoli

Terry Sawchuk

Ravinder Singh

Eric Small

Ted Snow

Simon Sparks

A regular meeting of the Boulder Faculty Assembly was held on February 2, 2006 in the Fleming Law Building, Room 103. Chair Jerry Hauser presided. The meeting convened at 4:00p.m. and adjourned at 5:30p.m.

A. Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes from December 1, 2005. There being no further comments, corrections or changes to the minutes, the motion to approve the minutes carried.

B. Chair's Announcements

Chair Hauser made the following announcements:

- A search firm has been retained in the chancellor's search;
- The chancellor wishes to commence the search for provost; members of the Executive Committee expressed concern about conducting this search before the chancellor has been selected;
- CU 101 is to be piloted in Baker, Farrand and Sewall; if it is to become a course there will be a credit issue which must go before the Academic Affairs Committee;
- The BFA has not come forward with a resolution in response to the recent racial incidents on campus but Student Affairs and the Diversity Committee are in the process of drafting a resolution;
- The faculty have been invited to a CU women's basketball game Feb. 26; please reserve tickets by calling administrator Shernick;
- PRP in the past was vetted by the BFA; Hauser has indicated the BFA will resume that preference in the future;
- Dean Williams of the Library has proposed a new seating arrangement at graduation;
- Awards nominations must be completed and submitted by February 8;
- On February 14 faculty can meet with new Head Football Coach Dan Hawkins in UMC 245;
- BFA election nominations are due no later than March 3;
- BFA representative Rosse was voted as Sture's replacement as At-Large member on the Executive Committee.

C. Committee Reports

BFA Electoral Structure

Hauser reported on behalf of the Executive Committee on his motion amending the BFA's standing rules. Census figures and population documentation was passed out regarding the current BFA electoral structure. Hauser believes each department should have a representative and has asked the Bylaws Committee to review this question and recommend changes to election procedures and representation guidelines. The proposed amendment has to do with the mode of election and consists of deleting the word "mail" from the current Bylaws:

Moved: That the term 'mail' be deleted from Boulder Faculty Assembly Standing Rules, Article II, Section 7.

The current wording is "The election shall be conducted by secret mail ballot."

The revised wording would be "The elections shall be conducted by secret ballot."

This motion will come for vote at the March 2. Widmann said the Bylaws committee was charged to review Bylaws and to make adjustments look at issues of substance; she

will ask BFA to review the amended Bylaws for proposed changes before the committee meets.

The BFA Bylaws, Article II, Section 4 reads: “No more than two members of any department or division may serve at any one time on the Assembly.” The current make-up of the BFA violates this rule in the case of three departments or divisions.

Academic Affairs Motion to adopt course repetition. Widmann read the motion aloud and spoke in support of the resolution, which was formally introduced December 1, 2005.

Kassoy asked whether graduate students would complete or repeat their courses. Widmann could not answer the question specifically. She yielded the floor and Hauser asked whether the deliberation could continue with specific issue resolution reserved for future consideration. The floor was then opened for debate.

Buttenfield reported on the discussion at the last ASC meeting that took place while emphasizing that her goal was to ensure faculty make an informed vote. She made the following points:

- 1) The BFA voted last year to terminate Course Repetition. Recent data suggests the logic of that vote was sound. Course repetition is intended to improve the student's academic record. However, the Kaempfer report acknowledges that even when a grade improves by two full letter grades, the overall GPA changes by less than one-tenth of a grade point unit. One definition of inflation is “an increase in value without commensurate increase in worth”. Also, students can repeat a course already, under current university policy. In fact, the Kaempfer report admits that 99% of students who are eligible to invoke Course Repetition do not do so.
- 2) The highest number of requests for Course Repetition are filed in Arts & Sciences, for introductory courses in Economics, Math and Applied Math. Other departments in the College offer courses that are capped by the number of available seats. Foreign language, fieldwork courses and courses using computer labs are prime examples. Course repetition puts extra strain on these courses -- one student can take a seat twice without penalty, precluding enrollment by another student who needs the class, especially when required to complete a major.
- 3) Those in favor of course repetition argue that it permits students to master difficult material. The reality is that most large enrollment introductory courses use roughly the same assignments, quiz and test questions from one semester to the next. Students who re-take a course know the problem sets and the answers in advance because their work has already been graded once. Thus without insisting on 100% redesign every single semester, it's not possible to establish whether students repeating a course are mastering the material or simply mastering the test.

For these reasons, and after 3 months' discussion, ASC voted in Oct 2005 to discontinue Course Repetition after Spring 2006. At the same time, we voted to extend the course drop date from week 6 to week 10, thus giving students an additional 25% of the

semester to drop a course without penalty, and without petitioning for approval. The new drop policy goes into effect in the coming Fall semester. Students campaigning in favor of Course Repetition are unaware of the policy change as it has not yet appeared in published registration materials.

In summary, Course Repetition is documented to inflate grades without improving a GPA. It replicates an existing policy that students do not often invoke, and it targets a specialized subset of classes in a single College that has voted to terminate the policy in coming years. Last, it is difficult to document that the policy meets its stated intention. Based on ASC discussion and vote, Battenfield urged faculty to vote NO on the motion before the BFA.

Bintliff expressed concern that the issue was before the assembly once again and said it showed a lack of understanding of shared governance and that after years of discussion only this year did faculty receive hard data about this issue. She concluded that she understood the importance of giving students a second chance but does not feel it is a reflection of academic rigor and stated that she supported the motion.

Levitt spoke against the motion. Carey spoke against the motion on behalf of many colleagues in Psychology who spoke out against the policy. Nauenberg spoke for Physics and Peterson and said a straw poll was taken in Physics and the result was against the resolution. He said it is the responsibility of the faculty to train the students to become responsible and to take a course and learn the material, and that there are many ways in which a student may withdraw due to unforeseen circumstances and he believes the faculty should have a say. Comstock spoke in support of the resolution and talked about the difficulties with grades some first year students face.

Hauser gave the floor to Kaempfer who pointed out that his assignment from the chancellor was to collect evidence on the issue of course forgiveness. The faculty he worked with on the committee were unbiased and impressed with the evidence collected and the resulting report really accomplishes one thing and one thing only which is how cumulative grade points are calculated. The proposal only changes the calculation of the GPA as the first grade received remains on the transcript. The student is able to come off suspension or other academic restriction presuming the newer grade shows improvement. The policy allows students to recover for a low grade but it does not affect the student's ability to retake a course. This is simply a way of calculating the grade point average and the feeling of the committee was that this involved a small number of students who were helped immeasurably and the committee concluded that passage of the policy was the best choice.

Norgaard reported on the results of a straw poll taken in PWR: 21 in favor, 2 against the measure, and he supported a uniform policy for the entire campus. Hunter reported a straw poll conducted in Sociology revealed concerns about the other students prevented from taking courses by those retaking so the vote was against the adoption. Hauser asked Tri-Executive Jimenez for a statement, who said the students worked hard on the

issue and said these same students worked to increase faculty salaries. He addressed academic rigor and said other AAUW institutions have adopted this policy and that employers will recalculate the candidate's GPA. He summed up by saying UCSU as the voice of the students asks that the faculty support the resolution.

Kim reported on a straw poll taken among English Department faculty with a vote of 33 to 1 in favor of course repetition. He added that the Kaempfer report was compelling as it pointed out the mechanics of how the policy works and it made sense to him. Kopff said one of the problems is the reputation of CU is that of a party school and asked that the Kaempfer report be reviewed. Levitt offered that the probation policy could be changed if that is the principle that needs to be corrected. Kaempfer responded to the point made by Carey and Hunter and clarified that this is a policy about calculating GPA rather than evaluating whether students attend classes or not.

Hauser asked for new arguments and then called for the question. A vote was taken and 12 faculty voted in favor of the motion and 12 against with 1 abstention. Hauser exercised his prerogative as chair to break the tie in favor of adopting the motion. Course repetition was approved by a vote of 13:12.

Levitt asked for clarification on the chair's vote. Hauser explained that Kaempfer's argument on GPA was persuasive. Parliamentarian Bintliff pointed out the request for the chair to explain his vote was out of order.

The meeting adjourned as there was no further business.

**Boulder Faculty Assembly
Executive Committee
Motion to Adopt Course Repetition
BFA-X-M-112805**

The BFA Academic Affairs Committee presents the following motion for adoption by the Boulder Faculty Assembly:

Moved, that the Boulder Faculty Assembly accept a permanent policy on Course Repetition for the University of Colorado Boulder campus. The policy is stated below.

1. Eligibility and number of credit hours:

Students at the University of Colorado at Boulder campus may retake courses under this Course Repetition policy.

Undergraduate students who receive a grade of D+ or lower may repeat up to through 10 hours of course credit taken on the Boulder campus or through Boulder Continuing Education any time before graduation.

Graduate students who receive a grade of C+ or lower may repeat one single course (whether undergraduate or graduate level) taken on the Boulder campus or through Boulder Continuing Education. Graduate students must repeat the course within a year and a half (i.e., three consecutive fall/spring semesters) or before graduation, whichever is first.

2. Grade point average calculation for University of Colorado at Boulder:

The original earned grade remains permanently on the UCB transcript. The original grade earned, upon completion of the course again for a letter grade in the A-F scale or as P/F, will be removed from calculating the grade point average only for the UCB campus.

The repeated grade under this Course Repetition policy will be the grade used for calculation by UCB in credit hours and grade point average even if the repeated grade is lower than the original grade.

3. Restrictions on Course Repetition:

Undergraduate students who have earned D+ or lower and graduate students who have earned C+ or lower in the original course through academic dishonesty may not use this Course Repetition policy to recalculate the UCB grade point average.

This policy should be reviewed in three years.

From Faculty Affairs Committee: November 28, 2005
Approved by the BFA Executive Committee: November 28, 2005
Recommendation presented to the BFA: December 1, 2005
Approved by the BFA: February 2, 2006