Senate Statutes and Bylaws Committee
MINUTES
September 26, 2002

Members present: Murray Brown, Tim Crimmins, Dan Franklin, Amy Lederberg, John Marshall, Ellen Podgor, Roger Presley, Marti Singer, Susan Talburt, Neven Valev.

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Murray Brown, at 10:32 a.m. The first item of business was the approval of the August minutes. The minutes were approved with no changes.

The next item of business was a subcommittee report by Tim Crimmins. Dr. Crimmins presented a proposal he had drafted for staff membership on the University Senate. The rationale he proposed is modeled after the manner in which the SGA is included in the Senate. The floor was opened for discussion. Discussion centered on elected versus selected Senators and how that would impact membership on Senate committees. There was also discussion about staff members who have expertise in certain areas and how these people would fit into the equation. There was also some discussion about how the SGA selects those students who serve on the Senate and on Senate committees. Dr. Crimmins will talk with Donna Ferguson, the SAC representative to this committee, to determine the best way to proceed with this proposal.

The next item of business was a discussion of the “25% rule” (Univ. Statutes Article VI. Section 4.) as approved by the Senate on April 12, 2001. Dr. Lederberg summarized the history of this proposal. This issue is being revisited because the interpretation of this “rule” for the last nominations cycle was different than this committee intended it to be. Because of this different interpretation, there were several unintended consequences: committees got much larger, small colleges/units had their Senators serving on three or more committees in order to cover all the allotted committee assignments, and the larger colleges were represented more dominantly. There was much discussion about these two interpretations: the one passed by Statutes and Bylaws and the one followed by the 2002-2003 Nominations Committee. It was noted that the 2002-2003 Nominations Committee did not confirm with either Murray Brown, Statutes and Bylaws chair, or John Marshall, university attorney, as to the correct interpretation of this amended section of the Statutes.

The committee agreed that the Statutes will not be changed but that a clear explanation of the text will be entered into the Senate record and will be distributed yearly to the Nominations Committee as it begins its work setting up Senate committees. There was discussion of the best way to inform the Senate-at-large of the correct interpretation of this text. Tim Crimmins proposed a motion to provide guidance to future Nominations Committee members by defining how committees are supposed to be organized according to the Statutes. This would also be reported on during the Senate committee reports so that the Senate-at-large is apprised of the situation. The motion was seconded. The question was called and the motion passed. Dr. Brown will prepare a summary of how this text should be interpreted and ask that it be entered into the Senate record. Dr. Lederberg proposed that the longer document presented at today’s meeting be included in the packets that Nominations Committee members get as they begin their work each year. The motion was seconded. The question was called and the motion passed. Dr. Brown will email Mary Nell the summarized version and the longer version so that both can be in file on the Senate Office.

Murray Brown introduced the next discussion item of online student evaluations. Discussion centered on the various drafts of the proposed changes to the process and how the decision was made to make these changes. There were several different interpretations of the policy that Provost Henry distributed to the faculty. The question was raised regarding the Senate’s role in the making of this decision. The changes to the student evaluation process are for the 02-03 academic year and are temporary. The final decision will be made once the Faculty Affairs Committee studies this issue and sends its recommendations forward.

Since there was no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Nell Stone,