

Minutes
Faculty Senate
February 1, 2006

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm; Seth Brown chaired.

The senators introduced themselves.

Mary Prorok gave the opening prayer.

- 2) The minutes from the December 6th, 2005 meeting were approved without amendments.

- 3) Chair's Report:

The chair acknowledged Fr. Jenkins recent address to the faculty regarding academic freedom and applauded Fr. Jenkins for raising the issue and allowing for open discussion of the matter. The chair indicated he had met with Fr. Jenkins and that Fr. Jenkins assured him of his receptiveness to respectful discourse on the subject. The chair reminded the senate of the March 7th, 2006 Faculty Senate meeting with Fr. Jenkins and that it represented a rare opportunity for actual dialogue with Fr. Jenkins. The chair stressed that the importance of the issue of academic freedom requires a response by the Faculty Senate. The chair also noted that, as per the Academic Articles, the Faculty Senate is empowered to convene forums and charged the Student Affairs and Administrative Affairs committees with organizing such a forum regarding academic freedom. The chair emphasized that a response to Fr. Jenkins must be finalized by the April '06 Faculty Senate meeting and suggested that a draft of such a response be ready available at the March 7th meeting to allow adequate time to reflect on the content and solicit comments. He proposed that the Student Affairs and Administrative Affairs committees be charged with drafting the document. The chair reminded the senators of upcoming Faculty Senate elections and encouraged members to run for office.

- 4) Philippe Collon introduced Rhea Boyd, the Student Senate Affairs Chair, who asked the Faculty Senate to consider two Student Senate Resolutions on cultural competency: 1) that the Faculty Senate endorse the Student Senate resolution that an ad-hoc committee be created by the Provost to investigate how best to incorporate cultural competencies within the undergraduate curricula and, 2) that the Faculty Senate endorse, in principle, the Student Senate resolution that Notre Dame students be exposed to activities that enhance their cultural competency. She noted that the initiative to investigate integration of cultural competency into the curriculum can be linked to Fr. Jenkins' desire to improve campus diversity [as stated in his inaugural address], insofar as both can enhance the academic culture. She introduced Mark Gunty, of the Office of Institutional Research, who discussed information extracted from exit surveys of graduating seniors pertaining to their interaction with those of different cultures or ethnicities. Overall, graduating Notre Dame seniors are much less satisfied with the diversity of their college experience than are seniors from peer institutions. Additionally, those Notre Dame seniors who have pursued an expansion of their cultural diversity report being dissatisfied with cultural diversity as it exists on campus—more so than students who have not participated in such efforts. These, and other data from the survey, reinforce the notion that Notre Dame students have less exposure to other races/cultures than students at peer institutions. A discussion ensued

concerning the presented resolutions. A senator raised the possibility that perhaps the university is actually doing a commendable job in improving racial/cultural awareness given the homogeneous student population. Other concerns voiced by senators included: the perception that the current initiative represents the imposition of an agenda by one set of students upon another; the possible alteration of general education requirements; and the fact that existing courses might adequately fulfill the cultural competency initiative. It was suggested by several senators that cultural competency need not be addressed through the core curriculum but could also involve increased study abroad, admitting more foreign students and/or incorporating a foreign language requirement. Both resolutions were passed after rewording.

5) In lieu of breaking to individual committees, the chair directed the remainder of the meeting towards the issue of academic freedom. The chair emphasized two goals to be accomplished in a timely manner: convening a forum to discuss the matter with other faculty and composing a draft document that would summarize the Faculty Senate's position on the issue. The chair suggested that perhaps the draft document not stem from the Student Affairs and Administrative Affairs committee, but from a smaller ad hoc committee in order to hasten the process (with the intent of having a document that could be examined at the March senate meeting). While one senator questioned the need to formulate a representative versus individual response, the suggestion was forwarded that the Faculty Senate could issue a majority and minority report, or that Fr. Jenkins could be asked to defer his decision on the matter. An ad hoc committee was assembled to call a forum.

6) Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.