

Minutes
Faculty Senate
March 22, 2006

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

The senators introduced themselves.

Julia Marvin gave the opening prayer.

- 2) The minutes from the March 7th, 2006 meeting were approved without amendments.

- 3) Chair's report:

The chair announced that the evening's meeting was the last for the sitting senate, thanked those senators whose terms expired, and mentioned that new officers would be elected at the May 9th, 2006 Faculty Senate. The floor was given to Salma Saddawi, who announced openings for treasurer, secretary (two co-secretaries), chair, and vice-chair. The chair then introduced the proposed Faculty Senate statement of principles of academic freedom and summarized salient aspects of the document, viz.; while reasonable limits must accompany the exercise of academic freedom, these must stop short of silencing responsible discourse and expression—this view is essential to sustaining the University's mission, as enunciated in the university's mission statement. The chair then opened the floor for debate on the proposed document.

- 4) Debate on statement of principles of academic freedom:

Numerous friendly amendments to the document were proposed and accepted, including one tendered by Julia Marvin that clarified statements (third paragraph) concerning tolerance in the context of artistic expression. Others suggested a tempering of the language to project a less dramatic tone, e.g., the "chilling effect" of suppression (third paragraph). After some discussion, it was agreed that the original phrases would remain in the proposal. Barry Keating indicated that the original language of the document would seem to give the President no good reason to disallow any event or activity. A substantive amendment was forwarded by John Robinson in an attempt to address this concern. He suggested the inclusion of the following sentences at the end of the seventh paragraph: "This is not to say that extreme scenarios cannot be imagined that might appear to call for stronger presidential action than that sketched here. Our point is that such stronger action would, in every case, put at risk the academic freedom upon which the University insists in its mission statement." This substantive amendment was approved by the senate, with Gail Bederman in opposition. Following general agreement on the language and content of the revised document, the chair called to question acceptance of the document. Acceptance was affirmed, with one dissenting vote.

- 5) Given the late hour, the chair elected to defer the remaining items on the agenda (break to committees, committee reports, and old and new business).

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Prorok