

Chair's Report
Delivered by John Robinson to the Faculty Senate
October 5, 2010

My report tonight will be brief. I will begin with welcoming Krista Duttonhaver, who represents the Program of Liberal Studies, to our midst. I can report that Timothy Matovina, the acting chair of the Theology Department has told me that he has made finding a theologian who is willing to serve as the senator from that department a priority. And it grieves me to report that Steven Silliman, who had been representing the Department of Civil Engineering and Geological Sciences, has resigned from the Senate because of the weight of his other commitments.

On the issue that most concerned us at our last meeting—the administration's eleventh hour request for Senate advice on the Master of Science in Global Health Programs that was about to be debated and voted on in the Academic Council—the Executive Committee decided that the request had reached us so late in the game and that it gave us so little time for action that neither our Academic Affairs Committee nor the Senate as a body should take any public position on the proposal, but that Judy Fox, the chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, should articulate the concerns that her committee, in the short time that it had to consider the proposal, had developed. That she did at the Academic Council meeting, as did Seth Brown and I, among other members of the Council. Unsurprisingly, the proposal received an overwhelmingly affirmative vote in the Council after the rather spirited debate about it, with the Senate representatives providing most of the "abstain" votes that were cast. I personally am convinced that the proposal would have been much stronger if the Senate had been given the time that it needs to scrutinize a proposal of that sort carefully. I hope that the administration now realizes our need for lead time if we are going to add value to the assessment of any complex and innovative graduate degree program.

On an issue of perennial concern to those of us who either organize conferences or have constituents who organize conferences, I have been in regular conversation with Tricia Bellia, the chair of the faculty board on athletics. You may recall that it is the unpredictability of future football schedules that has made it so difficult for conference planners to plan Notre Dame based conferences. A few weeks ago, Tricia had hopes of being able to tell us at least some of the football team's away dates for the next few years. Once conference planners know that the team will be out of town on a particular fall Saturday in 2012 or 2013, those planners know that the biggest obstacle to their planning a major conference for that weekend has been cleared. Unfortunately, our football scheduling situation is too fluid right now for Tricia to be able to tell us just when even some of our

away dates in those years will be. Tricia remains hopeful, however, that she will have something to report to us after next week's faculty board meeting. As soon as I know of any fall weekends in future years when our football team will surely be away, I'll let you know of them.

On an issue of emergent importance, our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 2nd at 7:00 p.m. It may well be that several of us would prefer to be at home (or in some other place of refuge) to follow the election returns that night. When we return from our committee meetings, before we hear the reports of the committee chairs, I will ask you to vote, by a show of hands, on the following question:

Would you like to see the November meeting of the Senate moved from November 2nd to another night?

If a majority of those voting prefer to meet on the 2nd, that will, of course, be the end of the matter. If a majority would prefer to meet on another night, I will then ask the senators then present to vote on the following question:

Would you prefer to meet on Wednesday, November 3rd or on Tuesday, November 9th?

We will schedule our next meeting to conform to the preference of the majority in that vote.

As we are fortunate tonight to have both Denise Murphy from Human Resources and Greg Crawford, the Dean of the College of Science, here to discuss matters of significant importance with us, I will cut this report short and ask Denise to take the floor.