Dear AP Council,

The Senate met last Wed., Mar. 3rd. Oddly enough, this was the first meeting this semester in which anything of substance came up. The last meeting was cancelled, a first in the three years I have been doing this, and the first meeting in January lasted thirty minutes, as there were no administrators present.

Before I begin my report, I would first like to thank the AP Council for The Esprit de Corps award. It was as great an honor as it has been a pleasure to serve as the AP Council’s representative to the Senate for the last three years. Second, I would like to make a note concerning the absence of written Senate Reports from the fall semester. While I continued to make verbal reports in council meetings, I refrained from writing up lengthier comments for a number of reasons. In part, it had something to do with my course load this fall and that I was delivering two new courses that consumed much of my time. In addition, there was a relative dearth of information to pass along and most of that bad news. I can honestly admit that I did not relish the repetition, week after week, of H1N1 reports or the latest financial calamity in front of us and presumed that you would not either. I hope that my comments in-Council were sufficient; however, I offer my apologies to anyone who looked for lengthier comments. If it is any consolation, I would be happy to pass along the fall minutes to anyone interested. Last, and unfortunately for me, this will be my last semester on the Academic Senate. I will accede to the Council’s wishes but I am willing to serve the remainder of the year if that is acceptable. With that, I will gladly offer my summary of the Mar. 3rd meeting.

There were two action items and all the administrators were present. We began the meeting with a discussion of alcohol consumption at I.S.U. According to Kerri Calvert, Health Promotions Coordinator and Chair of the Alcohol Task Force, the abuse of alcohol—our students’ “drug of choice”—is significantly worse at ISU than nationally (though it is bad anywhere you look.) The percentage of students at ISU who had a hangover, do something they regret while drunk, forget where they were or what they did while drunk, missed a class because they were drunk, performed poorly, got injured or got into a fight because they were drunk outpaced the country in each category. I would encourage every one of you to seek out Nikki Brauer for information from the Task Force, their strategic plan, their accomplishments (which are numerous), and how each of us can model and normalize a culture of moderation.

Dan Holland, the Chairperson, followed and noted that he was going to “take to his soap box” and encourage all of us to contact our representatives in Springfield and Washington to reiterate the importance of education, particularly higher education, to the public good. Due to the recession, the state seems more than ready to dismiss anything that does not lead directly to job training and ignores the impact that neglect will have on the quality of citizens we produce.

Dr. Bowman mentioned that he was meeting with the governor and expected to hear that we would receive our full appropriation this year. To date we have received 33% of the amount promised. We may have to borrow money in the summer to keep the doors open. While the
negatives mount, Dr. Bowman also tried to point out some positives, including that private giving is up as are the number of applicants who have put down money to hold their places. He offered two other comments of interest. In response to allegations from the Humane Society that ISU is abusing animals, the President flatly denied them. He also offered an apology for the 5am warning call that went out in error.

Dr. Everts noted that we had a “first-class class” for fall with an average ACT of 24.6, including a greater number of underrepresented students. Senator Kalter asked Dr. Everts if there was a way HR could notify the campus that an Associate Provost position had been advertised.

Vice President Adams explained what happened with the emergency call and noted that it was human error. He recognized the remarkable job Admission is doing attracting students to ISU. He also mentioned that the architects for the Bone Center have created a plan that will make the building unrecognizable and also noted that Einstein Bagels has had a stellar beginning, particularly as they don’t yet have a fully functional store.

Dr. Layzell commented on the following: they had finished the interviews for the HR finalists; Fiscal ’11 budgeting has begun; Stevenson Hall bathrooms on the 3rd and 4th floors are almost done; the K&R building is on schedule; and that the Hovey column is being repaired this week.

The first Action Item involved the discontinuance of the Constitution Exam requirement for graduation. As we require students to take a civics requirement in General Education, the Constitution Exam has only affected about 10% of our students and all of them transfer students. The presented a letter from Political Science requesting its termination in 1999 and noted that we were about the only institution of higher learning that held onto the exam even after they found the state law only applied to K-12 institutions graduating students. For the most part, this was an administrative decision. Some students and faculty objected, but mostly to note that the Senate was not attempting to diminish civic education while recognizing that this requirement had become problematic in its implementation.

The second action item concerned the creation of a Policy Policy. One senator voted against on the principle that he would always vote against a policy policy. With that we adjourned at 9:30.

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to send me an email.

Cheers,

Ron Gifford