

Faculty Senate
April 16, 2007 4 p.m.
Birkeland Lounge

The motion brought by the Academic Advisement Committee to create an integrated four-year advising plan at Concordia College was amended three times and tabled for further discussion at Senate's April 23 meeting, the last of the semester.

As amended, the motion now reads:

“Motion: The Faculty Senate approves the creation of a four-year plan for advising at Concordia College as a framework to describe the shared roles and responsibilities for students in consultation with academic advisors, other faculty, and a wide range of other support professionals from across campus. It is recognized that an integrated approach to advising is an institution-wide effort rather than the sole responsibility of a single advisor. Identified learning outcomes in a four-year plan will be assessed through broad institutional measures such as National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).”

.....
 The meeting began with approval of the minutes of the April 2 Senate meeting.

Dean Mark Krejci then noted a typographical error in a motion on the consent agenda, that concerning a change in requirements for the Russian Studies Major with Teaching License, grades K-12. The requirement for REL 327 as described in the chart of current and proposed requirements should read: “Eastern Orthodoxy,” with the original phrase “Its Origins and Russian Expressions” deleted.

Heidi Manning (physics) moved to add a seventh agenda item, a statement from Krejci concerning the discontinuation of the Child and Family Science and Apparel and Design programs. Her motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

Senate then approved, by unanimous voice vote, the agenda, hence approving consent agenda items changing the requirements in the above-noted major, as well as those in General Science Licensure, Grades 5-8, and Scandinavian Studies with Teaching Licensure in Norwegian, grades K-12.

Discussion then turned to the advising motion. Joan Kopperud (English), chair of the Academic Advising Committee, thanked faculty for feedback provided at the April 2 Senate meeting and subsequently. She said the committee is pleased that advising continues to be important to faculty members, and that the committee does not see advising at Concordia as broken and in need of fixing. Rather, she said, the plan gives the campus an operating definition of advising, a foundation on which faculty advisors can build their own best practices.

The plan is “not an attempt to micro-manage advising,” she said. Faculty advisors will not be individually evaluated on the outcomes in the plan; instead, she said, the plan is a “guideline for good discussions.” Though most faculty are excellent advisors, she said, it is also true that “not every student is having a ‘best practices’ advising experience at Concordia.”

In response to a question from Roy Hammerling (religion), Krejci clarified that Senate is not voting to adopt the specific outcomes as articulated in the bulleted items in the motion's rationale, but on the motion itself.

Polly Fassinger (sociology) asked what would be next step should Senate vote to approve the motion. Specifically, she wondered if the Academic Advising Committee would bring back to Senate a more specific plan for implementation.

Krejci said that if the committee devised specifics that had to do with policies that fall under the jurisdiction of Senate, then Senate would vote on such specifics. But because the plan

outlines integrated advisement, he said, not all recommendations would fall under the purview of Senate, such as those that would specify tasks of the Student Affairs staff. Basically, Krejci said, what Senate is voting on today is the idea that advising is more than academic advising and that we recognize the need for an integrated plan for advising.

Susan Larson (psychology) offered an amendment to change the motion's second sentence from "This document recognizes that an integrated approach to advising is an institution-wide effort rather than the sole responsibility of a single advisor" to "It is recognized that an integrated approach to advising..." She said the amendment intends to clarify that the specifics as offered in the model four-year plan, outlined in the motion's rationale, would not be binding.

The amendment was seconded. In discussing the amendment, Hammerling noted that the motion includes the phrase "the following rationale will serve as a model." He said that phrase negates the intention of Larson's amendment.

Hank Tkachuk (CSTA) said he thought he understood that the motion's rationale was part of the motion. Kopperud replied that the entire document is part of the rationale, which is part of the motion.

Krejci reiterated that the committee has yet to determine the plan's implementation; if such recommendations impact how faculty advise, then the plan would need to return to Senate for approval.

Larson's amendment passed on voice vote.

Nick Ellig (sociology) said he favors an integrated approach to advising, but fears this motion amounts to "a blank check." It contains strongly worded outcomes, he said, but does not delineate a process for developing them, and he said he is "uncomfortable with the open-endedness of this motion."

Krejci said the motion does not articulate how such outcomes would be realized, nor who is responsible for them, but emphasizes what students would attempt to achieve in their four years at Concordia.

Kopperud said the bulleted points are "suggested learning objectives" that students will strive to achieve, "though not all in one way in lock step." The committee did not want to prescribe precisely how students would go about accomplishing these objectives, she said, for fear of micro-managing how faculty and staff advise.

Lisa Sethre-Hofstad (psychology) said the language in the motion's bulleted items, such as "students will develop," is the language used in articulating outcomes, not objectives.

In response to a question from Larry Papenfuss (athletic director), Kopperud affirmed that these suggested learning objectives would be measured using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Hammerling then offered an amendment, seconded, to edit the motion's last sentence to read: "The following rationale will describe suggested learning outcomes and a starting point for advisement at Concordia College."

Jonathan Clark (German) said Senate was being asked to vote on an actual plan, not a rationale.

Krejci said Senate was voting on the need for a four-year advising plan that calls for support from across the campus. The point is that the advising committee thinks Concordia needs an integrated, cross-campus advising plan, but that it has not yet decided how to implement it.

Clark said he supports the motion, but thought the rationale is not an explication of the motion; rather, he said, it is the advising plan.

Greg Muilenburg (philosophy) said Senate was being asked to approve the creation of a four-year advising plan that may or may not look like the model offered in the rationale.

Tkachuk said he would support the amendment if we could sever the explication following the rationale statement.

The amendment carried on voice vote.

Fassinger offered an amendment to change the motion's penultimate sentence to read: "Identified learning outcomes in a four-year plan...", substituting "a" for "the."

The amendment carried on voice vote.

Bill Tomhave (mathematics and computer science) said he was confused about exactly what Senate would be approving by voting for the motion. He said he is unclear on who is responsible for what and the implementation process. "We should just pass the first sentence and be done," he said.

Tkachuk said the motion reinforces the sentiment of the faculty that we need a four-year advising plan; passage of the motion would mean we agree in principle, he said.

Maddy Burchill (German) said the motion's first sentence, which emphasizes the shared roles and responsibilities of advising, seems in contradiction to the first sentence in the rationale: "Advising at Concordia College is a teaching and learning relationship between advisor and advisee." The rationale's sentence seems to imply that one person is responsible for advising, she said.

Kopperud said "advisor" was used in its broadest sense, and that students would not be confused; they would not see the rationale as offered in the motion.

Manning offered an amendment to "remove the carte blanche feeling of the motion." The amendment would add "any four-year plan will be brought to Faculty Senate for approval."

The amendment died for lack of a second. Krejci said the problem with the amendment was that faculty does not control every part of the advising plan, so it is not appropriate to bring the whole plan back to Senate for approval.

Clark then moved to refer the motion back to committee "so we have something coherent and tangible to vote on." The amendment was seconded by Gay Rawson (French).

Ellen Aho (biology) spoke against the motion to refer, saying she trusted the committee to come back with an appropriate plan.

Clark said he was confused about what Senate was being asked to vote on, and that he was troubled by the relationship between the motion and its rationale.

Rawson said she agreed we need an integrated advisement plan, but that she did not understand exactly what the motion says.

Krejci said he understood that Senate was being asked to vote on the motion, not the accompanying rationale.

In that case, Luther said, we need to delete the motion's sentence that refers to the rationale. "Just strike the final line in the motion, and then the rationale would be descriptive and there would be no confusion," he said.

The motion to refer the motion back to committee failed on voice vote.

Luther offered an amendment to strike the last sentence of the motion, seconded by Muilenburg.

Fassinger spoke against the amendment, saying removing the sentence "devalues using this document as a starting point." She said she trusts the committee to devise a workable plan.

The amendment to strike the final sentence in the motion carried on voice vote.

The motion, as amended, was tabled until the Senate meeting of April 23.

Krejci then read the following statement in an attempt to clarify the college's decision to discontinue two programs, Child and Family Studies and Apparel and Design:

“At our last Senate meeting, I was, in effect, asked why the decision was made to not accept new students into the Child and Family Studies program and the Apparel and Design program. I did not feel it was the time to list the rationale because we were talking about another proposal, the Neuroscience minor. It was not appropriate for me to take the attention off of a program that faculty colleagues had worked diligently to create by talking about another set of programs. As I said about the Neuroscience program at the time, this program fits the strategic vision for the college by strengthening programs in key areas – with science being one of those areas.

“During my three years in my position as Academic VP, many departments have come to me asking for increased FTE for their programs. The faculty also adopted a new core curriculum, which resulted in a need to increase FTE in the sciences and mathematics as well as in Communications. In order to increase FTE, we have three sources of revenue to pay for the salaries. One, we can receive enrichment funds but these are typically not adequate to address the needs. We can keep the amount of faculty salary increases lower and instead use money designated for salary increases to fund new positions but this does not help us restore faculty salary benchmarks. The final source is through re-allocation. Note that this does not imply a permanent cutting of positions but rather moving FTE from one program to another.

“I have worked with faculty and have carried out reallocation of resources in a number of areas. Positions were cut in Physical Education and Norwegian, the number of FTE's in English were decreased with the adoption of the new core curriculum, adjunct positions were cut in a number of departments. FTE's were increased in Communication studies, biology, and chemistry, along with adjunct increases in select areas. Further, some reallocation money was used to deal with decreases in faculty the salary pool because of a decrease in enrollment.

“At our last meeting it was suggested that I had consulted with most of Senate and I apologize if my letter to the community appeared to suggest this. I consulted with approximately 50 faculty in a variety of settings. I also looked at admissions information and registrar data. I understand that the announcement took people by surprise because it was not vetted in Senate or some other deliberative body. SCC agreed with me that this would not have to be done in Senate given that the faculty have an advisory role in making decisions about allocating resources for the academic program. SCC, in their role as the FEC, fulfilled this advisory role.

“The decision has appeared to raise some concerns and people have naturally begun to wonder about their own programs. The decision was, in part, based on the following factors:

1. The Apparel and Design Program and the Child and Family Studies program does not attract many students to Concordia. As of one month ago, we had 2 prospective students interested in AP&D and 3 students interested in CFS.

2. Nationwide, fewer than 1 percent of students are interested in these majors according to the organization that gives the SAT.

3. Faculty feedback identified these programs as low in strategic importance for the future of the college.

4. The program was in a state of transition because of retirements and resignations amongst the faculty. AND

5. Our one-person AP&D program was competing against a larger local program that offered a more comprehensive program and one that we could not compete with without an increase in FTE, an increase that was not warranted by the numbers.

“I want to conclude my comments by making two points: contrary to a rumor I am not out to get the professional programs and make us into a pure liberal arts college. This goes against the history of the college as well as the reality of our mission and location. I see great opportunity in a number of the professional programs and expect that growth can come in some of these areas.

“Second: I want to commend our colleagues in CFS who dealt with a very difficult situation with professionalism and grace. The decision was not a reflection on their careers or the students in the program.

“I have had to make decisions in my role that have impacted the careers of colleagues. Some decisions, such as giving people pay increases, are easy to make but others, such as not renewing a position or eliminating a program, are difficult but necessary. We live in an environment of limited resources that are largely provided by tuition dollars from students. I invite you to continue to share with me your views on how we can provide a Concordia experience at a new level of excellence while also keeping a Concordia education as affordable as we can.

“Thank you for listening to these comments and I will stay after for any who have questions they wish to ask.”

Senate adjourned at 5 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Catherine McMullen
Faculty Secretary