The BSUFA Senate continued its March meeting on 7 April 2003, coming to order at 4:05 p.m. at in HS 107.

Present were Pres. Brown, Vice Pres. Forsyth, and Senators Bennett, Bland, Bodien, Boudry, Donovan (recording), Frauenholtz, Gendreau, Hauser, Henry, Hoffmann, Kippenham, McManus, Nelson, Oldham, Peterson, Rave, Robinson, Rosenbrock, Struve, Traxler, Welle, Westhoff, and Wolf. Guests included University President Jon Quistgaard, Vice President for Administrative Affairs Gerald Amble, Prof. Dunn (chair, ad hoc committee on FYE), and Prof. Fulton (chair, Curriculum Committee).

President Quistgaard addressed us on budgetary matters, with some assistance from Vice President Amble. The presentation was largely though not exclusively a walk-through of the document titled “President’s 2004 Budget Balancing Proposal” (e-mailed to Senators 4/3/2003). President Quistgaard characterized the budget-balancing process as more open in this instance than formerly. The gap to be closed appeared to be $4.7 million for FY 2004. As an index of the magnitude of this gap, if it were to be closed solely through personnel reductions, the layoffs would amount to 80 or 16%; while if it were to be closed solely through increasing tuition, the necessary hike would be 29%. At present a 15% tuition increase is contemplated, bringing the student contribution to the cost of education up to about 50%; operating expenses are to be cut some $2.27 million, with no layoffs of tenured or probationary faculty. This still leaves a gap of some $140,000.

Other points made by President Quistgaard:

- There is talk of shifting the cost of health insurance premium increases to employees.
- The Board of Trustees may not act on tuition recommendations till July—lately this date seems to be moved up to June, but there is reason for them to wait till after allocation is actually made.
- BSU’s 9% enrollment increase is a remarkable performance especially against the background of demographic changes in the region—but the overall MnSCU average increase is 25%, and 17% for the state universities as a group.
- He anticipates that by end of decade, or sooner, 12–15% of operating costs will have to come from private sources.
- Student Senate is in on this discussion, and is not favoring any cuts in programs or services, but they have not really acknowledged the alternative—tuition hikes. The 15% tuition hike here contemplated has yet to be broached to students officially.
- Comments and suggestions to BRAC are still sought.
- State work-study and child-care monies are being restored. State grant monies will if necessary be shifted from these monies, though. The Minnesota grant program siphons a lot of money from public to private institutions, which he noted as an example of the trend to slant the playing field ever more steeply in terms of class. (Private institutions may look good enough on paper in terms of racial balance, he said, but not in terms of economic class.)
- Our chief competitors for students are the University of Minnesota at Duluth, Saint Cloud State University, and the University of North Dakota. Our competitive assets include the feasibility of timely completion of degrees, and small class sizes.
After the departure of our guests from the Administration, Pres. Brown confirmed that the process was refreshingly open in comparison with past budgetary crises.

Prof. Dunn reported for the ad hoc committee on the Freshman Year Experience course that it had wound up its business and passed out of existence, having identified nine issues requiring scrutiny (here quoted from the committee’s written report as provided by Prof. Dunn):

1. Should this course be required? If so, of whom? Can we keep someone from graduating who has fulfilled all other requirements for a degree? What kinds of instructions should be given to the registrar regarding this requirement? We also had a healthy debate about nontraditional students.
2. Who is going to deliver this course? Should we be starting a program that will always be staffed as faculty overload? Won’t this distract from many Integrated Studies programs which also depend on the enthusiasm of the faculty to teach overload?
3. Can we ask our students to shoulder yet another financial burden with a new course fee?
4. Curriculum generated by the administration is troubling enough. Should not an academic officer, in this case the Academic Vice President, at least sign the proposal before it goes to the Curriculum Committee?
5. The 128 credit limit on any given degree remains a concern.
6. Should this course be primarily academic or student services oriented?
7. Should this course be 1/2 or a full semester?
8. Should there be a common, required reading?
9. Should there be regular, institutionalized faculty oversight of any FYE program?

Prof. Fulton noted that the Curriculum Committee had a revised course proposal in hand, which had not yet been reviewed by should be later that week, and which supposedly addressed these concerns. Sen. Gendreau added that the new proposal came from a committee with faculty representatives and did answer these questions and objections. Sen. McManus, seconded by Sen. Bodien, moved that the matter be tabled till the Curriculum Committee should report on it. This motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m., to be continued 14 April.