Academic Senate Policy Recommendation #S86-137

At its meeting of April 8, 1986, the Academic Senate approved the following policy regarding open meetings.

In the spirit of the best ideals of an academic community, it is a principle at San Francisco State University that meetings are open.

There are two purposes for “openness”

1) To allow opportunity for presentation of diverse opinions or to provide information from a wide variety of concerned persons.

2) To monitor committee activities, to observe rather than to participate, to gather rather than provide information.

The following suggestions are made to groups which conduct meetings:

1. An agenda or information about what issues are scheduled should be available to the campus community.

2. Committees should:

   A. Define what constitutes a personnel matter or matters involving individual student records which will be discussed in closed session
   
   B. Work out the form of participation of visitors in the meeting with the visitors based on the purpose of the observation or participation and in the spirit of completing the work of the body
   
   C. Find suitable larger rooms when there is indication that a large number of visitors creates the need. The number of visitors and observers must be limited by fire and safety regulations and the accomplishment of the assigned task. If larger facilities cannot be found consideration may be given to having delegations of visitors present in the meeting room.

3. Visitors or observers should:

   A. Try to notify the convener when they plan to attend a meeting. (This may aid in planning the agenda or finding adequate meeting space.)
   
   B. Identify themselves at the meeting which is helpful in knowing what interests and constituencies are present.
   
   C. Act within the principles of participation or conduct established by the body.

ACCEPTED AS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE BY PRESIDENT WOO, APRIL 23, 1986

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I. IMPLEMENTATION - The policy will be implemented by the following procedures: The following suggestions are made to groups which conduct meetings:

1. An agenda or information about what issues are scheduled should be available to the campus community.

2. Committees should attempt to:

   A. Define what constitutes a personnel matter or matters involving individual student records which will be discussed in
closed session

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II. APPEALS

In case of disagreement about the implementation of this policy on open meetings the Academic Freedom Committee shall serve as an appeal board. Procedures for appeals shall be developed by the Academic Freedom Committee and made available to all parties.

ACCEPTED AS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE BY PRESIDENT WOO, APRIL 23, 1986

[Presidential modifications shown in bold]

§ 11126. Permitted closed sessions

(a) Nothing contained in this article shall be constructed to prevent a state body from holding closed sessions during a regular or special meeting to consider the appointment, employment or dismissal of a public employee or to hear complaints or charges brought against such employee by another person or employee unless such employee requests a public hearing. As a condition to holding a closed session on the complaints or charges to consider disciplinary action or to consider dismissal such employee shall be given written notice of his or her right to have a public hearing rather than a closed sessions, which notice shall be delivered to the employee personally or by mail at least 24 hours before the time for holding a regular or special meeting. If notice is not given, any disciplinary or other action taken against any employee at such closed session shall be null and void. The state body also may exclude from any such public or closed session, during the examination of a witness, any or all other witnesses in the matter being investigated by the state body. April 23, 1986

To: Bernice Biggs

Chair, Academic Senate

From: Chai-Wei Woo

President

Subject: Recommended “Policy on Open Meetings”

As discussed during my last meeting with the Academic Senate Executive Committee, I find the one-page statement too sweeping and implementation too difficult to accept the statement as a university policy. I am not certain that the University should interfere with how every Senate committee, student organization, volunteer group, etc. conducts its meetings on and off campus.

I strongly support the sentiment behind the proposal and the underlying principle, and will be happy to accept the document as a statement of principle accompanied by concrete suggestions, though not a university policy. Thus the modifications as shown.

CWW/pk