

## FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 31, 2007

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, January 24, 2007, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following agenda:

1. Report of the Chair
2. Report of the President
3. Interaction with Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources
4. Report on the Center for Teaching and Learning  
James Jensen, Chair
5. Report on the SUNY Senate Meeting in Stony Brook (delivered by Dr. Henry Durand)
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

### **Item 1: Report of the Chair**

The UB council met earlier this morning:

- Student representative Jenna Christophonte raised a number of questions, among them: How can students be involved in UB 2020? How can students best become involved in University service? How can students in Medicine and the allied Health professions on the South Campus buy into owning the South Campus? She expressed concerns about "equal access / equal housing", particularly in regard to graduate students with children who cannot live in apartments. She also mentioned that a number of underrepresented students, especially those in our STEP program, will give presentations in all fifteen public schools in Buffalo.
- President Simpson introduced Deans Stenger, Brown, and Cain to the Council. The he announced that he will be giving a talk to the Buffalo Rotary Club in another gesture of reaching out to the Western New York community, and that the physical

Master Plan for the three campuses is progressing well. He also announced a major partnership between UB and the Buffalo public schools.

- The Provost talked about affordability in education at UB compared to other institutions, and about graduation rates and how we might improve them.
- Vice-President of Health Services Dunn gave a detailed description of the Berger Commission and how it affects Western New York and UB education in the Health Sciences.
- Vice-President Henderson talked about her area of external affairs, in particular, integrated advocacy for UB.

SUNY Senate President Carl Wiezalis will meet this coming Tuesday, February 6, with the UB Faculty Senate.

The Chair needed to solicit in executive session nominations for people to serve on decanal review committee for the Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. He circulated a sign-up sheet for faculty participation in "Hoops for Heart", a student-faculty basketball tournament.

## **Item 2: Report of the President**

President Simpson reported on the Governor's budget, describing it as "nothing positive, nothing negative". It preserves basic operating costs of the University, funds negotiated salary increases for faculty and staff, as well as providing for anticipated increased energy costs and deferred maintenance capital issues. It does not fund enrollment increases, nor change tuition policy in any way, but does provide some \$5-6 million in system-wide funding for hiring faculty of research distinction. He expressed some disappointment that there was no funding that allowed for growth and expansion. However, he supports a proposal by the Governor of establishing a higher education initiative focusing on issues such as tuition and enrollment growth; this may in fact be a means of getting some action from the government on our intended expansion. Professor Fiden asked if any funds were being targeted for improvement of the physical appearance of the North Campus; the President replied that this would be part of the Master Plan currently in design.

### **Item 3: Interaction with Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources**

Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources, reported that his office is responding to the question most frequently asked by faculty and staff, namely, 'How do I fit in to UB 2020?' Given that UB 2020 is a simple set of core principles designed to make UB one of the great public research institutions in the country, Mr. Nostaja stated that this essentially boils down to two major strategies: becoming bigger, and better.

Addressing the first ("bigger"), he pointed out that, in its goals to increase its growth by 10,000 students plus corresponding faculty and staff, and in light of the fact that the average retirement age is now at 60 years and 2 months, UB will need to replace about 600 faculty and 900 staff in addition to its planned new hirings. This presents an opportunity for them to stay where they are needed and grow along with the institution. UB will need to find ways of keeping them an average of 6 years beyond the current retirement age, and thus will need to be more flexible in allowing them to contribute in the manner they wish.

He then argued that the "better" dimension of growth --- i.e., through growth in quality instruction, research, grants, etc. --- would be best expressed if the employees of UB were to regard the University as one of the best places at which to work. He and his office were inspired on this point by a local business, Wegman's, which consistently ranks at or near the top of the list of Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For. His goal is to make UB the first university to be included in this list as one of the best employers in this country. This includes two major strategies: First, providing the right programs and facilities, such as a well-run training and development organization, day-care center, wellness program, and others which we must determine. Secondly, the establishment and maintenance of the right cultural environment, focusing on how to best treat the employees of UB.

Professor Batalama asked if this was an achievable or even feasible goal. Vice-President Nostaja responded in the affirmative, pointing out that other universities, such as Harvard, have the same goal. In answer to Dr. Durand's question, Mr. Nostaja described the process of being considered for the list; the first step consisted in answering a questionnaire, which

is followed by a survey of the work force on a broad range of questions. Professor Brazeau pointed out that this should definitely include improvement of the quality of student life on campus, which would improve in turn our ability to attract graduates to the University. Professor Springate asked if any employee survey were currently available; Mr. Nostaja replied that there is not, and therefore it is all the more necessary to set specific benchmarks as reference points. Professor Danford observed that all the topics discussed to this point interconnect and influence each other, for example, the improvement and expansion of facilities leads to a more aesthetic as well as more sociably pleasant place to work, which in turn leads to increased creativity and various activities. Vice-President Nostaja added that, through informal discussions, the most common suggestions for improvement of University culture were (in order): better parking, staff access to faculty, facilities, free food, and expansion of day-care.

The Office of Human Resources (HR) is targeting three main improvements: the addition of more strategic services, a better system of delivering services to the campus, and increased automation of their functions, such as on-line application and recruitment practices. Vice-Presidents for Human Resources Susan Steck and Jerry Linder then gave a demonstration of the new software installed on the UBJOBS website for job search and application. Cover letters and personal statements could be added as attached documents. The software is said to be compatible with any browser. For people without computers, HR is setting up kiosks at various points on the three campuses. Professor Horvath strongly recommended enabling the system to allow letters of recommendation to be submitted electronically, as is currently the case with programs used by other universities.

#### **Item 4: Report on the Center for Teaching and Learning**

Professor James Jensen, Chair of the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, reviewed the history of the Center for Teaching and Learning. In the early 1990s there was a centralized teaching and learning center, the Office for Teaching Effectiveness, which was closed in 1995 due to budgetary concerns. Vice-Provost Fisher ran instead a number of teaching and training programs for a while, after which faculty development was turned over to the individual academic units. The lack of centralization changed through the

establishment of the Educational Technology Center (ETC) in 1999 as well as through the increased activity of the Teaching and Learning Committee under then-Chair Ron Gentile, who was keenly interested in creating a Teaching and Learning Center on campus. This came to pass in March 2001, when Provost Capaldi announced there would be such a Center, preferably in conjunction with the resources available through the ETC. Shortly thereafter, Jeannette Molina was hired as Associate Director. The faculty committee proposed an organizational structure that had a faculty Director, a faculty Associate Director in charge of programming, and an Advisory Board consisting essentially of the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee. The Center opened in the Fall of 2001, but the first faculty Director (Jensen) was not appointed until one and a half years later in January 2003. There was in effect no budget for the Center; the Provost's office would pay the invoices submitted by the Center. After one year, Professor Jensen and Vice-Provost Grant re-examined the organizational structure; given that the Center functioned almost two years without a faculty director, they concluded the best utilization of resources would be to do without such, as long as there would be faculty input, the responsibility of which was redesignated to the Teaching and Learning Committee. In the Fall of 2005, a budget was strictly enforced for the Center for the first time, space was re-assigned, and some staff members were re-assigned and the director of ETC left in the Summer of 2006. In August 2006, Lucinda Finley, Vice-Provost of Faculty Affairs, announced that Associate Director Molina's contract would not be renewed after one final year.

This attrition led to Jensen's inquiries into the future direction of, and support for, the Center. At present, January 31 being Molina's final day of employment, UB has no set-up for Teaching and Learning Resources, no staff in the Center, no director for the ETC, but we do have a statement from the Vice-Provost of Faculty Affairs that the University has a commitment to teaching and learning. A group of representatives from various offices is now seeking input from the faculty about how to proceed. Three tasks are currently planned:

- To execute an inventory of internal T&L resources and to examine the models of other T&L centers around the country;

- To draft a job description for a director for a Center combined of Teaching and Learning Resources and the ETC and to identify the resources needed;
- To conduct a national search for a new director, probably with a research ground in teaching, to be hired by Summer 2007.

Professor Jensen did not know where the Center would fit administratively, but suspected it might be within the office of the Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Professor Brazeau found it inconceivable that a University, that wants to be excellent in everything, can and has let the Center dwindle to its present state. Teaching and learning are our primary responsibility, and faculty need to have access to the resources and services the Center should have available. The faculty, who have sat quietly by and watched this attrition, should now draft a resolution and declare publicly that this Center must be made an essential part of this institution. Failure to do so would be a gross disservice to our students and faculty. Professor Jensen agreed, adding that we should support the three tasks listed above, because they are steps in the right direction, and represent "an opportunity to demonstrate where the commitment is". Dr. Coles observed that this does not seem to be one of the administration's top priorities, thus it is all the more essential for the Faculty Senate to continue to advocate the Center's role in UB's image and plans for growth. Professor Nickerson added that the Faculty needs to have more information about all ongoing processes, hirings, and plans regarding the Center.

Professor Adams-Volpe drafted the following resolution for consideration by the FSEC:

WHEREAS

the Center for Teaching and Learning Resources was originally an initiative advocated by the Faculty Senate; and

WHEREA

the services and resources of such a Center are considered by the FSEC to be an essential component of University excellence;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

that the FSEC requests that the ongoing plans, including any merger plans with other entities

such as the ETC, Director job description, and

budgetary scenarios, be shared, at the point of

development/creation, with the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.

### **Item 5: Report on the SUNY Senate Meeting in Stony Brook (delivered by Dr. Henry Durand)**

SUNY Senate President Carl Wiezalis is assembling a committee to study the feasibility of a Service Corps of retired faculty who could engage in volunteer service to SUNY in areas of interest and need (research, energy, environment) and for helping to prepare students in the "STEM" --- science, technology, engineering, mathematics --- disciplines. He also talked about the following issues:

- the need for Centers for Teaching and Learning in SUNY institutions;
- the concern that proceedings from the SUNY Senate meetings were not being sufficiently disseminated, not reaching the "rank and file" faculty for better feed;
- an ongoing search for a Vice-Provost for Diversity and Academic Equity.

The Vice-Chancellor for Budget and Finance, Kim Klein, in answer to a question about the research funding formula, said her office was trying to encourage a different type of funding, a method of matching those national grants, dollar for dollar, that were not as competitive or more State-oriented. She then discussed the Empire Innovation Program; increasing the "Margin of Excellence" funding for graduate students; academic performance and innovation; the need for better advisement at the graduate level; the need for constructing a budget that would make SUNY a first-choice institution; and the need for collaboration among central administration, UUP, faculty, etc. in advocacy issues.

Senator LaValle, chair of the NYS Higher Education Committee, expressed a desire to continue to push for a more "ambitious" budget, and spoke at length on the importance of

community colleges as the gateway to higher education for many students in the State, as well as the need for more seamless articulation between these and four-year colleges. Another topic was the desire for campuses to become more environmentally friendly, "greener".

A presentation on Faculty Leadership Development followed. Then Provost Risa Palm addressed the Spellings Commission report, as well as the National Center for Academic Transformation Project concentrating on continuous student assessment and feed in efforts to improve retention and graduation. She quoted a statistic showing that there are 11 courses across SUNY which alone constitute 32% of undergraduate credit hours, AND have exceptionally high failure rates --- about 15% in the four-year colleges, about 50% in the community colleges.

The University colleges sector inquired into the Chancellor's satisfaction with the General Education requirements, and expressed concerns about part-time faculty remuneration and particularly about the loss of faculty development centers.

The Chancellor announced his plans to embark on a "listening tour" across the State over the coming month. He also talked about a graduate research initiative and the Empire Renovation Program, through which he last year asked for \$6 million to fund an increase in graduate stipends; this year, he is asking for another \$14 million. The Health Science centers expressed a major concern about the need for more trained nursing faculty, and for extra classroom space; the Chancellor reported that he is constantly in Albany seeking support in these matters, and is considering adding a senior administrator in his office in the area of Health Care services and other high-need programs.

Chancellor Ryan then addressed the demographics of New York State and the Northeast region in general, remarking that if nothing is done at levels of higher education, there would by 2015 be a smaller percentage of college graduates and a higher percentage of high school drop-outs.

The Chancellor further reported on the ongoing Mission Review, noting that 46 of the 60 units had completed their Memoranda of Understanding

## **Item 6: Executive Session**

## **Item 7: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hoeing,  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Attendance (P = present; E = excused; A = absent)

**Chair:** P. Nickerson (P)

**Secretary:** R. Hoeing (P)

**Architecture & Planning:** GS. Danford (P)

**Arts & Sciences:** M. Churchill (P), J. Woelfel (P), K. Tekeuchi (P),  
D. Street (P)

**Dental Medicine:** R. Hall (A)

**Education:** T. Schroeder (P)

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** S. Batalma (P), S. Dargush (P)

**Public Health & Health Professions:** P. Horvath (P)

**Law:** J. Milles (A)

**Management:** W. Lin (P)

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** William Fiden (P), James  
Springate (P), M. Dayton (A), J. Hasset (A)

**Nursing:** P. Wooldridge (A)

**Pharmacy:** G. Brazeau (P)

**Social Work:** B. Rittner (E)

**SUNY Senators:** W. Baumer (P), H. Durand (P), H. William Coles  
III (P), P. Bradford (E)

**University Libraries:** JA. Volpe (P)

**Guests:** J. Linder, Vice-President - Human Resources, S. Steck, Vice-President - Human Resources, S. Nolan-Weiss (EDAAA), D. Berg (EDAAA), L. Labinski (PSS), M. Cochrane (*The Reporter*), E. Pastore (*The Spectrum*)