

## FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of November 29, 2006

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, November 29, 2006, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following agenda:

1. Introduction of and Discussion with Dr. Michael Cain,  
Dean of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
2. Report from the Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee  
SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Dianne Christian, Chair
3. Approval of the Minutes of November 1, 2006
4. Report of the Chair
5. Discussion and Update on the Honors Program  
Dr. Kip Herreid, Academic Director  
Dr. Josie Capuana, Administrative Director
6. Adjournment

### **Item 1: Introduction of and Discussion with Dr. Michael Cain**

Dr. Cain, the new Dean of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, spent about thirty-one years at Washington University (WU) in St. Louis. Initially trained in internal medicine, he decided to specialize in cardiology, and later started the modern-day arrhythmia service at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. In 1993, he was asked to serve as Director of the cardio-vascular section of the Department of Medicine at WU, a post he held for the past thirteen years.

Professor Danford asked his opinion about the lack of a teaching hospital in our biomedical complex. Dr. Cain replied that although Washington University does not own Barnes-Jewish Hospital, the two are closely affiliated and are situated on the same geographic campus; however, one disadvantage is that this is the only place to which to send their interns, residents, and medical students. In Buffalo, there are several different hospitals to choose from, at least at the moment; these provide a desirable

diversity, but the lack of ownership of any one in turn prevents UB from concentrating its "brand", since this must also be spread out over the several institutions.

Professor Brazeau asked about his experience in working with other health-related schools in professional training and education. Dr. Cain replied that WU, in contrast to UB, does not have a Dental School, nor a School of Pharmacy, nor a School of Public Health; his own experience has been primarily in developing research enterprises and grants that involve individuals from these various professional schools. He has not yet had much experience with utilizing the various resources for fundamental undergraduate or pre-clinical education. He expounded the view that, although a School of Medicine needs to excel in the traditional three areas of education, clinical care, and research, it is unrealistic to expect any individual to excel in all three of those areas; this, he argued, is in fact a sign of progress, since each has evolved significantly over the last 25-30 years and essentially forced increased expertise in one area and collaboration among the three. What's missing at most medical schools (including UB), and what could make them "magic", is a middle group of individuals who have some clinical presence, but are truly trained to be translational and clinical investigators, who bring the clinicians and the basic scientists together.

## **Item 2: Report from the Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee**

SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Diane Christian, Chair of the Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee (APC), presented the APC's report on, as well as its support of, the dissolution of the School of Informatics, as well as the relocation of the Department of Communications to the College of Arts & Sciences. The APC also supports an appropriate relocation of the Department of Library and Information Studies (LIS), possibly to the Graduate School of Education.

The idea of the School of Informatics was originally envisioned in 2001 by former Provost Capaldi as merging four entities --- Communication, Library and Information Studies, Computer Science and Engineering, and Media Study. The latter two declined the merger, and the hoped-for mutual synergy of the other two failed to develop; they have divergent senses of their mission and work, and expressed general satisfaction to separate. Despite this, both registered concern over the perceived

abruptness of the Provost's decision this past June to dissolve Informatics. This led to the Provost's delay, to further extensive discussion, and to the Committee's formal consideration.

LIS faculty have requested the formation of a Faculty Task Force to study their situation and recommended deferring a decision on dissolution and placement. The APC considers continuing study possibly beneficial, but deferral detrimental. One primary reason: The American Library Association has set a deadline of December 1, 2006 for a plan to clear their conditional accreditation finding of this past Spring. Recruitment to the LIS program thus cannot proceed effectively without resolution of the issue. The Graduate School of Education (proposed first as a home for LIS) and the College of Arts & Sciences (preferred by some others) represent two different housings. LIS in itself is too small to be an independent school, and will have to forge a relation respecting its identity and certifying its function, as well as plan for its future.

Professor Rittner inquired into the actual process the APC undertook in ascertaining the views of the faculty involved. Professor Christian replied that faculty were invited to submit written statements and/or to meet with the Committee; Professor Nickerson noted that the staff in the two disciplines were asked as well. Professor Rittner commented that she did not sense any universal support for the dissolution; Professor Christian agreed, but pointed out that there was often a divergence between what people said publicly and privately. She added that overall academic implications "put the discourse at a slightly different level."

The context of what actually transpired, Professor Rittner continued, was made difficult to understand by the absence of several details, such as the number of students in one program versus the other, the student-to-faculty ratios in the two programs, and possible resource issues --- all of which may have contributed to tensions between the programs. Professor Finley, Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs, pointed out some of the differences between LIS and Communication; for example, the LIS program has no undergraduate or doctoral/research component, and offers a professional Master's degree only; in contrast, Communications has one of the University's largest undergraduate bodies and strong research-oriented M.A. and Ph.D. programs. These very different natures alone helped hinder any expected synergy. The Informatics Master's degree was created shortly after the merger, partly in an attempt to give an identity to the new program. The program had low admission standards, almost

exclusively adjunct faculty, an insufficient number of full-time faculty to supervise capstone projects; the program also lacked a coherent core curriculum. LIS faculty were often called upon to teach Informatics courses, and LIS felt in this respect that resources were being stolen from its program. Communications was not happy, either, since they found the quality of the students lacking.

Professor Adams-Volpe expressed concern that the report seemed to indicate that the Graduate School of Education would be the new home for LIS, even though LIS faculty seem to prefer the College of Arts & Sciences; Vice-Provost Finley said that the issue has not yet been decided. Professor Woelfel wished to make clear that relations among the faculty of the two disciplines have always been cordial, and never constituted an issue in the dissolution. Instead, the driving factor was the diversion of resources from a program striving to become world-class (Communications) to one that was marginally adequate (Informatics).

### **Item 3: Approval of the Minutes of November 1, 2006**

The Minutes of November 1, 2006 were approved.

### **Item 4: Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that the UB Libraries Annex and storage facility is now open. Professor Adams-Volpe said that 10,000 books and several boxes of archival records have already been moved there; in about two years, the Annex will house approximately 1.5 million books, and may possibly serve also as a regional depository for other SUNY institutions.

The Budget Priorities Committee is reviewing and discussing the development of an academic budget model for UB; the University administration, working with the deans, is continuing to develop a three-year framework for each of the decanal units that is transparent and predictable with regard to existing resources.

The Affirmative Action Committee is continuing to work on a handbook for chairs; Professor Nickerson pointed out that this is the appropriate time for this project, in view of the imminent hirings over the next few years.

### **Item 5: Discussion and Update on the Honors Program**

The UB Honors program, now in its 25th year, was started by President Ketter to attract outstanding students to the University. The program proved successful and enjoyed the support of every president since, and has grown from 20 students in 1981 to approximately 1000 today. Professor Herreid noted that the students, who represent nearly all disciplines, choose UB for its relatively low tuition and for the generous support the Honors program provides. They fall into three categories of financial assistance: the Distinguished Honors Scholars, the top tier, receive "essentially a free ride" for their time at UB; the second category students receive \$4,500 per year for four years, and the third category --- the bulk of the Honors students --- receive \$3,000 per year.

Other benefits for Honors students include priority registration, preferred on-campus housing, evenings with faculty, social events, and special transcript notation.

Dr. Capuana reviewed the requirements for admission to the program: an unweighted high school average of 93, and a combined SAT critical reading and math score of 1300 (or ACT score of 29). The numbers for the Fall 2006 class are impressive:

- 250 freshmen were expected, but 300 decided to accept;
- 
- the Honors program was hoping to enroll 10 Distinguished Honors Scholars, and ended up with 18 instead;
- the mean average among the Distinguished Scholars was 98, and the SAT scores ranged from 1470 to 1590;
- 
- the \$4,500 group had a mean average of 97.9, and SAT scores from 1450 to 1580;
- among the third tier, the mean average was 96, with SATs ranging from 1300 to 1480.

Another scholarship program exists for Performing and Creative Arts honor students, who receive awards of \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year for four years. These students need an unweighted high school average of 90 and a combined SAT score of 1230; other criteria for acceptance include outstanding artistic merit, an audition and/or portfolio review, and a personal interview.

The Advanced Honors program does not provide any scholarship money, but offers students who have completed 60 credit hours and maintain a 3.5 GPA an individually tailored academic experience; these students must complete three Honors courses, a senior thesis under the direction of two faculty advisors, and a breadth requirement (such as a second major or minor, overseas study, internship, or community service).

The requirements for Honors students have recently been changed. Previously, they were required to maintain a certain GPA and successfully complete 4 Honors seminars. Students must now:

- successfully complete the Honors colloquium (a 2-credit course emphasizing teamwork and community service) in the Fall semester of the freshman year;
- complete two Honors seminars, one each semester of the freshman year;
- select and complete, over the following three years, six Honors experiences --- for example, undergraduate research or creative activity, independent study, study abroad, graduate coursework, contract honors coursework, departmental Honors coursework/thesis/project;
- satisfy all Gen Ed and major requirements;
- undergo mandatory advisement sessions to show their academic progress;
- file, during advisement sessions, an Honors Program Academic Progress Plan, to be reviewed by the staff in the Honors program.

Dr. Capuana pointed out that personalized advisement is especially critical for these students; many sport a wide range of interests --- "they're able to do a lit of things, and do them well" --- and thus one of their toughest challenges is deciding on a career direction. Professor Herreid added that three-fourths of the students continue on to graduate or professional schools.

Through the Honor Program's Research and Creative Activities Fund, students may receive between \$1,500 and \$5,000 to conduct an independent research project. Students must submit a detailed grant proposal, similar to that required for an NSF grant, to the Honors Council for review. Upon completion of the project, the awardee must present the research findings in an appropriate forum, as well as deliver a final report to the Program.

Asked about the Program's retention rates, Dr. Herreid replied that the Program loses about 10% from both the freshman and sophomore classes --- but most of these students remain at UB. The overall yield, in terms of acceptances to offers, is about 25%, and for Distinguished Honors, about 56%. Dr. Capuana pointed out that the many Honors students who go on to study at prestigious graduate schools excel there as well, and attributed this to the top-quality instruction and preparation they receive at UB. Dr. Coles asked how successful the Program has been in attracting/enrolling students from under-represented minorities; Professor Herreid replied that it has not been very successful at all, in large part because the overall pool is so small --- roughly 1500 across the nation. Another reason, Dr. Capuana noted, is that the University does not have at its disposal a lot of need-based financial aid which several private schools have and are able to offer.

## **Item 6: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 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. Faran (P), K. Tekeuchi (E), D. Street (A)

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

**Education:** J. Lee (A)

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** S. Batalma (P), R. Wetherhold (A)

**Public Health & Health Professions:** G. Farkas (P)

**Informatics:** J. Woelfel (P)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Guests:** L. Labinski (Prof. Staff Senate), B. Burke (EDAAA), S. Nolan-Weiss (EDAAA), M. Cochrane (*The Reporter*), M. Cain (Medicine / Biomedical Sciences), L. Finley (Faculty Affairs), D. Christian (Academic Planning Committee), K. Herreid (Univeristy Honors Program), J. Capuana (Univeristy Honors Program)