

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 25, 2006

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, October 25, 2006, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of October 11, 2006
2. Report of the Chair
3. Discussion of the Undergraduate Catalog
 - Kara Saunders, Assistant Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education
4. Report of the Faculty Senate Admissions & Retention Committee
 - Professor Judith Adams-Volpe, Chair
5. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of October 11, 2006

Minutes of October 11, 2006, were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that the SUNY Senate would meet October 26-28 at Buffalo State College; Chancellor Ryan would visit the group on Thursday before leaving to receive an honor in New York City on Friday.

Interim Dean and Vice-Provost Ho announced at the Graduate School Executive Committee (GSEC) meeting that the NRC review is in progress; he will discuss the importance of this review at the meeting of the Faculty Senate on November 7. Among the items discussed at the GSEC meeting were:

- The application fee for graduate admission will rise from \$35 to \$50; a portion of the fee may be given to schools and departments, provided they have a plan to admit more competitive students in greater numbers.
- It was proposed that the Dean of the Graduate School send a welcome letter to students who are admitted to Master's programs; currently, this Dean officially admits all students to Ph.D. programs.
- The target for graduate admissions has not yet been established. Overall graduate student enrollment last year was 9,300. Professor Nickerson added that there has as yet been no penalty or reward for exceeding or not meeting targets.
- The GSEC also discussed possible "age limits" on the scores of GREs or substitute tests required for admissions; one suggestion was to draw the line at five years.
- As a follow-up on provision admissions, evidence of receipt of a Bachelor's degree is now absolutely essential before a graduate degree can be awarded.
- Admissions integrity policies are being developed. Full-time student forms need to be accurate in terms of a conferral date, since federal financial aid is related to accurate record-keeping.
- Although tenure-track faculty members are admitted automatically to the Graduate Faculty, a form must be filled out in compliance with the guidelines of the Graduate School.

The Academic Planning Committee met on October 20 to hear from faculty members of the Department of Library and Information Studies on the proposed re-organization, as well as from a representative of the University Libraries.

The Governance Committee is working on decanal review; Provost Tripathi met with the Committee last semester to discuss the procedure for reviews. The Committee will follow up to determine whether any changes to the procedure recommended by the Faculty Senate have been made.

The Budget Priorities Committee met on October 23 and heard from Vice-President Sullivan on the multi-year needs analysis; Chancellor Ryan would like to know our needs for the next five years. Also discussed were decanal management plans.

Item 3: Discussion of the Undergraduate Catalog

Assistant Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education Kara Saunders presented first the online version of the Undergraduate Catalog, available at

<http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/>

with its five sections: Home; UB Overview; Academic Policies & Procedures, containing the regulations governing student life and the code of conduct; Academic Programs, containing policy and degree requirements information; and a Course Description Search.

Prints catalogs are regularly distributed to academic departments, all academic advisors, and undergraduate admissions directors; approximately 8,000 copies are also sent to guidance counselors, prospective students and their parents, as well as about 5,000 to incoming students at Freshman Orientation. The print catalog contains almost all the information as the online version, with the exceptions of the faculty listing and course descriptions.

Other online sites with similar information, and organized in similar fashion, are *UB Programs At-A-Glance* (also formerly known as "The Rainbow Book", but no longer printed) --- containing other information about the various programs such as career possibilities, etc. --- and the *Academic Bridge* pages, which are directed to external audiences curious about the University and its programs.

Over the last few years, the Office of Undergraduate Education made a few significant changes to the online Catalog, among them:

- replacing the older Microsoft Word and HTML version with a database-driven site which greatly facilitates updating information;
- more refined Search options with improved results;
- information imported from the course schedules;
- a "syndication of data", the ability to enter items once into the database and to have it appear in numerous contexts;
- a feature which provides faculty with the option of using a course URL to enter a link to their course websites, syllabi, or related items --- primarily in response to student demands for course information about requirements, syllabi, textbooks, and the like.

Professor Brazeau suggested linking this information to *UB Learns*; Vice-Provost Saunders responded that this has come under consideration; however, the information on *UB Learns* is at present available only to those students already registered for the relevant courses. Professor Wooldridge advised that not all information be made completely available, since for example some intellectual property rights may be jeopardized.

Changes for 2007-2008 include: a proposed consolidation of the *Undergraduate Catalog* and *UB Programs At-A-Glance* sites; a reduction in the number of printed copies (which would now include course descriptions); and enhancing online print options. Professor Nickerson asked whether indeed one reason for students to have printed copies of the Catalog is that it contains the Policies and Procedures to which students are bound upon entering UB and/or its programs; Vice-Provost Saunders confirmed that the Catalog is, in effect, the students' contract with the University. Legal counsel further confirmed that posting a PDF version on the website would also serve as a binding legal document. Saunders added that a brochure (or similar format) would in the future be distributed to undergraduates to explain the importance of the catalog and its legal implications.

Professor Brazeau suggested adding a brief tutorial to the Catalog's website, and Professor Wooldridge mentioned that extending the availability of enrollment information to midnight instead of eleven PM might be appreciated. Professor Rittner added that including links to faculty/instructors and department websites would prove useful; Professor Wooldridge agreed, since this would be especially helpful to graduate students, for example, who need to find the appropriate members for their thesis committees.

Item 4: Report of the Faculty Senate Admissions & Retention Committee

The Faculty Senate Admissions & Retention Committee was charged, in Spring 2006, to review the situation regarding "impacted majors", i.e., those for which the University cannot meet the overwhelming demand. Specifically, the Committee was asked to do the following:

- determine which majors are declared to be impacted;

- determine the number of freshman applicants declaring initial intention for the impacted majors;
- document numbers of undergraduates who apply to be majors in the impacted areas and the acceptance rates in those majors;
- determine if deans/departments/programs have plans, or would like to, increase the size of these majors in terms of accepted undergraduate students.

The impacted majors at UB --- directly reflected in the Committee's ground research into the fastest-growing occupations nationwide and statewide --- include Bioinformatics, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Environmental Design, Exercise Science, Medical Technology, Nuclear Medical Technology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. To these can be added the officially declared impacted majors/programs in Architecture, Biochemistry, and Pharmacy.

Professor Adams-Volpe also provided data from the U.S. Department of Education which indicate that the number of high school graduates in the Northeast part of the country is expected to decrease from 528,490 to 501,800 between 2008 and 2012. This is an issue which UB will most likely need to address, since the University plans a growth rate of 40% by 2020.

She then presented a chart illustrating numerically the degree to which the programs are impacted, based on the number of applicants vs. the number admitted; the most extreme example was Pharmacy, admitting only 120 out of more than 1000 applicants in 2005.

Several of the impacted programs give official notice of approximately how many students are admitted each year. Three have drafted plans to deal with the impacted capacity. The School of Architecture, currently operating at maximum capacity, sees small growth in the program as desirable if resource issues (space, faculty, TAs, computing and other facilities) could be addressed. It also sees potential demand for a possible new degree program in Industrial and Graphic Design. The Computer Science department is interested in increasing capacity for undergraduate majors by 10-20%, with appropriate increases in faculty, teaching support, equipment and facilities. The School of Pharmacy would like to increase the number of accepted students from 120 to 140, but this would also depend on a commensurate increase in faculty and resources, as well as on the realization of a new major building facility.

The Committee was also asked to address certain issues about UB admissions procedures. Regarding Special Admissions, there are no recent changes in the review process; "talent" cases continue to be reviewed by the appropriate academic departments, while the Office of Admissions reviews all other cases, including athletes.

Regarding the use of the SAT ESSAY component, UB will be participating in a validity study, conducted by the College Board, in the summer of 2007. Following the study, Admissions will consult with the Faculty Senate on how to proceed. The earliest UB Admissions anticipates using the writing score, in any way, in the admissions process, would be for the class entering in the Fall 2009 semester. Professor Durand expressed hope that the ESSAY component would prove more helpful than the present practice of using SAT/ACT verbal scores in placing students in the appropriate courses.

Despite recent controversies (possible ethnic bias, erroneous scoring) surrounding the SAT, the Office of Admissions continues to use the SAT without change, and follows the selectivity matrix developed by the SUNY System Administration. This matrix includes high school average and the SAT or ACT score.

Regarding Early Admissions, SUNY allows campuses to be either "Early Decision" or "Early Action"; campuses cannot be both. UB has used the "Early Decision" process for years: Applicants must submit all admissions paperwork and related materials by November 1; accepted students are notified by December 15; then accepted students must respond to UB with their decision by a specific date. In addition, many UB programs (such as Pharm.D.) use "Early Assurance", which guarantees a space in upper-level courses if the student maintains a certain GPA in lower-level courses. Assistant Vice-Provost Saunders clarified that, if exceptionally bright students apply earlier, they are generally accepted earlier than December 15; thus, not all decisions must wait until that deadline. In answer to Professor Faran's question about whether the planned additional 720 admissions for next year would be targeted for specific programs or would apply more generally, Professor Adams-Volpe said the Provost was not yet sure, but seemed to be leaning toward the more general admissions increase. Other factors will determine whether the admissions increase will in fact be realized, such as maintenance of education standards and availability of space.

Item 5: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 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 (A)

Arts & Sciences: M. Churchill (E), J. Faran (P), K. Tekeuchi (P), D. Street (A)

Dental Medicine: R. Hall (A)

Education: X. Liu (A)

Engineering & Applied Sciences: P. Alexandridis (P), R. Wetherhold (A)

Informatics: J. Woelfel (P)

Law: T. Miller (A)

Management: W. Lin (P)

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

Nursing: P. Wooldridge (P)

Pharmacy: G. Brazeau (P)

Social Work: B. Rittner (P)

SUNY Senators: W. Baumer (P), H. Durand (P), 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), L. Skompinski (SA>, S. Duval (*The Spectrum*)