

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of April 2, 1998 (approved)**

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on April 1, 1998, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. [Report of the Chair](#)
2. [Discussion on Ad Hoc Committee for Distance Learning](#)
3. [Review of Changes to the Resolution on Student Access to Computing](#)
4. [Review and Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of April 8, 1998](#)
5. [Discussion between FSEC and Student Association Officers](#)

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

The Chair attended the installation of the Student Association officers last Friday; new SA president Nanette Coleman talked about enhancing communication between the SA and the students and other campus organizations, including the Faculty Senate. Professor Nickerson also participated in a forum, arranged by SA representative Yotan Hod, on University governance. He also agreed to participate (as a recipient) in a pie-throwing contest outside the Student Union; proceeds benefit charity and the ATO fraternity.

Professor Kramer agreed to succeed Professor Hoeing as Secretary of the Faculty Senate for the 1998-2000 term; the Chair requested the current Secretary to cast one ballot to elect her to this office.

At the request of the Faculty Senate Committee on Affirmative Action, the Chair inquired as to when a University Task Force would be appointed, and reported that it is in the process of being assembled.

## **Item 2: Discussion on Ad Hoc Committee for Distance Learning**

In arguing for the formation of an ad hoc distance learning committee, Professor Chen attributed his interest in distance learning --- particularly for his department (Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering) --- to two main reasons: First, his department is the only such one in the entire SUNY system and can effectively broadcast its product to a wider market; secondly, there is a current national trend "to tie continuing professional registration of PEs (Professional Engineers) to mandatory continuing education", which he believes connects well with distance learning. He himself has already taught distance-learning courses and has coaxed several colleagues to do the same. Although his efforts have met with some success, progress is impeded by some degree of faculty reluctance, as well as by concerns about quality of instruction and about intellectual property protection. Although he did not pretend to have answers, he presented a "Distance Learning Policy Draft" from SUNY - Oneonta as a possible starting point in dealing with these issues.

These issues, Professor Malone reported, are precisely what is currently being discussed by the existing Distance Learning Committee. Although he had nothing against the formation of another ad hoc committee, he did view it as "somewhat duplicative"; an alternative would be simply to increase faculty representation on the existing committee.

Professor Welch suggested the FSEC ask Dean Lopos to expand the faculty representation on the existing committee, first in order to share more with the faculty the complex issues involved, and secondly, because the EPPC is still being reconstituted and is not yet ready to deal with the matter. The FSEC accepted the recommendation.

Professor Baier wondered what impediments, if any, stand in the way of allowing students to earn a Master's degree through distance learning and thus hinder our competitiveness with institutions which currently offer this. Professor Chen replied that, in his opinion, UB can do this; the infrastructure is in place. The only impediment he sees is the "piece-meal" manner in which courses are offered through distance learning, stemming from a lack of "collective commitment of a department-wide faculty".

One additional problem, Professor Wooldridge pointed out, is that we have as yet no reliable system for measuring the success of this type of instruction; he recommended that the faculty, instead of simply touting the benefits, make a systematic effort to determine the value of distance learning and its outcomes.

### **Item 3: Review of Changes to the Resolution on Student Access to Computing**

In response to a concern about the potential costs of implementing a policy on student access to computing, the Provost indicated to the Chair that he had as yet no answer, but would look into this question this summer. The other major concern, expressed by the Provost himself, is whether the faculty would "buy into" this resolution.

Professor Straubinger presented the revised version of the draft resolution, which he said "expresses pretty accurately the enthusiasm" expressed at both the FSEC and Faculty Senate meetings. One immediate issue the Computing Services Committee must consider is the *model* of the program to be used. Another subtler issue is the effect of differential tuition in some units --- as well as changes in the University budgeting system --- on the 'total student [financial] burden'.

Addressing concerns of the resolutions budgetary implications, Professor Meacham pointed out that the resolution merely endorses a policy of increasing student access to computers, and does not --- at least for the moment --- require all financial details to be worked out in advance. Professor Welch agreed, noting that a companion resolution dealing with the costs

of implementation could be developed in good time over the course of the policy's enactment.

After adjusting the wording and adding a paragraph requiring "the Faculty Senate to continue to work with the UB administration in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the policy", the FSEC agreed to forward the resolution to the Faculty Senate for a second reading.

#### **Item 4: Review and Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of April 8, 1998**

The agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of April 8, 1998 was approved. The Chair intended to schedule the report of the Faculty Senate Committee on Athletics and Recreation for a later meeting of the Faculty Senate.

#### **Item 5: Discussion between FSEC and Student Association Officers**

Ms. Nanette Coleman, newly-elected president of the Student Association, set as a top priority increased communication between students and the faculty and administration, in order to further avoid "walking forward on hearsay or opinion" instead of true information. Along these lines of improved communication, the SA plans to establish permanent e-mail accounts for student government leaders to facilitate student input, and to begin conversations toward setting up an "hour of interaction" every week, open to both students and faculty.

Mr. Kubiak echoed these sentiments, adding that one additional goal is to create a sense of continuity from one group of student leaders to the next, by clearly defining the roles of the SA leaders and establishing precedents for SA goals and agenda.

Professor Nickerson stressed the importance of student representation and participation at FSEC meetings, especially since so many of the topics for discussion affect students directly.

Dr. Smith asked if the undergraduate SA maintained any connection with the Graduate Student Association. Ms. Coleman replied that there are in fact seven student associations, as well as a Council of Student Governments, which she said has not been as active as it should be these past few years --- in large part due to the differing schedules of the students represented. She added that SA meetings will henceforth be open to faculty attendance.

Professor Welch also encouraged student participation in FSEC and Faculty Senate discussions, and asked for a briefing of the various student bodies --- including the SA, the UAB, the Student Assembly, the Student Senate, and others --- the responsibilities of which are "opaque" to most faculty. Professor Schuel suggested the new student leaders should try to register new voters among the student population; Ms. Coleman stated that this was already in the plans for Orientation this August. She added that the SA would like to coordinate more with the faculty in lobbying efforts. President Greiner vowed support in voter registration efforts, and recommended that if the students intend to visit area legislators, they should "visit them in their offices *here*", since it is both easier and more effective. Professor Baier asked what might be done to increase SA presence on the South Campus. Ms. Coleman hoped to establish an SA satellite office on the South Campus, and to schedule more events there, such as a picnic or a homecoming. She admitted that, in general, she did not know what to do to improve the situation, and welcomed any advice the faculty could give.

Professor Ludwig, Chair of the Student Life Committee, relayed one student's astute observation that faculty, more than perhaps anyone else, see students most on a day-to-day basis; this must serve as a starting point for getting faculty more involved with the students. Another area with which Student Life is concerned is Orientation, in particular, finding the truly excellent students and faculty who would convey the positive message of this University.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**Present**

**Chair:** Peter A. Nickerson

**Secretary:** Robert G. Hoeing

**Architecture & Planning:** Sherri Wallace

**Arts & Letters:** Martha Hyde

**Dental Medicine:** Robert Baier

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** Ramalingam Sridhar

**Health-Related Professions:** Judith Tamburlin

**Information & Library Studies:** George D'Elia

**Management:** Ramaswamy Ramesh

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Boris Albini, Herbert Schuel, Cedric Smith

**Natural Sciences & Mathematics:** Melvyn Churchill, James Faran

**Nursing:** Powhatan Wooldridge

**Social Sciences:** Jack Meacham, Simon Singer

**SUNY Senators:** John Fisher, Maureen Jameson, Dennis Malone, Claude Welch

**University Libraries:** Marilyn Kramer

**University Officers:** William R. Greiner, Kenneth Levy

**Guests:**

Stuart Chen (*Civil, Structural, & Environmental Engineering*)

Robert Straubinger (*Chair, Computer Services Committee*)

Jeannette Ludwig (*Chair, Student Life Committee*)

Nanette Coleman (*President, Student Association*)

Rob Kubiak (*Vice-President, Student Association*)

Kevin McCue (*Graduate Student Association*)

Keith Herms (*Professional Staff Senate*)

Sue Wuetcher (*The Reporter*)

**Absent:**

**Graduate School of Education:** Thomas Schroeder

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Ronald Batt

**Pharmacy:** Nathan