

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of September 27, 2006

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, September 27, 2006, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following **agenda**:

1. Approval of the Minutes of September 6 and September 13, 2006
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President
4. Discussion on Textbook Pricing
 - Michael Ryan, Dean of Undergraduate Studies & Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education
 - Viqar Hussein, President of the Undergraduate Student Association
5. Report of the SUNY Senate Planning Committee
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of September 6 and September 13, 2006

The Minutes of September 6 and September 13, 2006, were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

Professor Nickerson reported that the Graduate School Executive Committee had met last week. The GSEC set the minimum grade point average for acceptance into graduate programs at 3.0; appeals must justify acceptances with lower averages. In addition, students must submit GRE scores or those of other standardized tests, and deans must specify, in cooperation with Chairs and Directors of Graduate Studies, a minimum QPA for students in Master's degree programs. The GSEC also reported that a new Office for Post-Doctoral Affairs and Comprehensive Program Reviews has been established, and will be directed by Associate

Dean Marilyn Morris. The fee for application to graduate programs will increase to \$35, and discussions continue about whether those accepted to graduate programs should pay a deposit on tuition.

The UB Council met on Monday, September 25, at which James Willis, Executive Vice-President for Finance and Operations, presented an overview of UB's Comprehensive Master Plan for developing, rationalizing, and best utilizing the University's physical facilities. UB has already issued requests for qualifications (RFQ) to various architectural, engineering, and planning firms; ten multidisciplinary consulting teams submitted responses to the RFQ, of which four were selected as finalists. Requests for more detail were to be issued this same week, with interviews to begin in early November. Provost Tripathi delivered an update on the deans' searches, SAT scores, and enrollment figures. President Simpson introduced Kathryn Costello as the new Vice-President for Development at UB, and gave an update on UB 2020; he emphasized that recruitment and hirings in the ten strategic strengths would center on people who are more collaborative and less restricted by traditional disciplines. Chancellor Ryan reported that SUNY enjoyed the best budget in 20 years, but cautioned that we still need to focus on basic financial issues, such as applying for more grants, developing a rational tuition policy, finding ways to form partnerships and maximizing our resources. He believes our strength lies in strategic differentiation among the several campuses. Both gubernatorial candidates, he added, were particularly interested in how UB can have more impact on the State's economy; moreover, both looked favorably on the Empire Innovation Program and the High Needs Program, for which more money can be expected, provided the University makes a compelling case. The last item on the agenda was a presentation by Vice-President David Dunn on the continuing development of the UB Academic Health Center. He reviewed the health care capacity and resources of Western New York, and outlined in particular the problems in urban acute care (aging infrastructure, high levels of facility debt, excess hospital bed capacity, duplication of services), then summarized the AHC's strategic goals. As a final point, he noted that about 80% of the 1,169 AHC graduates (2006) remain in the Buffalo / WNY community, thus providing a huge economic

engine which we must keep running.

Next Tuesday, President Simpson will address the annual Meeting of the Voting Faculty at the Center for Tomorrow.

The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) discussed how it will approach the report from the Distance Education Committee (discussed at the September 13 meeting of the FSEC), as well as the Center for Teaching and Learning. The TLC will develop a charge on how to give input on the reorganization of these activities at UB.

The Budget Priorities Committee heard from the Provost about the procedures for resource allocation to the decanal and other units of the University. After considering the best practices for the reports from the deans and how the faculty is involved, the Committee will report to the FSEC and the Faculty Senate on the budgeting process.

At the meeting of the Computer Services Committee, Sandy Peters from the IT Policy office announced that October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month; the Committee will work with Peters in drafting a statement, to be sent to the faculty, on how to protect material. FaceBook and MySpace were also discussed; students need to be aware of the implications for privacy and safety and about their on-line persona related to hiring. Also discussed were:

- *Iprint*: System stability issues arose, causing down-time for 10-12 days. The latest revision is now being tested. There has been a 30% drop in the volume of printing from a high of 54 million pages in 2003-2004.
- *TurnItIn* is now available to faculty. A license has been purchased for UB for this anti-plagiarism software. A faculty member will need an account, and eventual integration with *UB Learns* is being planned. Issues such as privacy and intellectual property rights are beyond the scope of the Committee's charge, but will be brought to the attention of the FSEC.
- *UB Learns* has been upgraded to a new version, and contains multilingual interface capabilities.

Item 3: Report of the President

President Simpson reported that he and the Provost will be hosting a reception for all the new faculty. He also noted that the Dalai Lama's visit, in addition to being an astounding success and enhancing the reputation of the University, generated greater interaction between UB and the Western New York Community.

The SUNY Board of Trustees introduced Dr. Risa Palm as the new Provost; she had most recently been Provost at Louisiana State University, and before that, the Dean of Arts & Sciences at UNC - Chapel Hill and at the University of Oregon. President Simpson said he "could not be more pleased" about the hiring of this national figure in higher education leadership.

He announced he would give an address to people in leadership positions in various Buffalo communities on "Strengthening a Vital Partnership", with the goals of (1) emphasizing that UB is not removed from, but rather an integral part of, the Buffalo community --- that as UB prospers, so does the community, and (2) to engage them and interact more with them in determining the community's future.

Item 4: Discussion on Textbook Pricing

Viqar Hussain, President of the Undergraduate Student Association, introduced data on the problem of textbook costs in college. He and a group of students compared prices of new and used required textbooks in the University Bookstore and discovered an overall average difference of approximately \$105 per student per semester; figuring in the undergraduate population, Mr. Hussein noted this totaled about \$4 million savings per year if students were to switch from new to used books. Furthermore, if students know in advance which textbooks they will need, they are likely to buy from E-Bay, another on-line source, or from fellow students. Currently, the average cost for textbooks per student per semester lies between

\$600 - \$700.

Professor Nickerson added that a related issue is whether faculty members were aware of what students were being charged for the books ordered for a course, since the books themselves are often "bundled" with other materials, such as workbooks, CDs, etc. Professor Churchill commented that, compounding the problem --- at least for Chemistry --- is that publishers typically release a new edition every two or three years. Vice-Provost Ryan mentioned that his Office requested faculty to put course syllabi (listing required texts) online, so that students may compare prices in advance and purchase accordingly. Professor Rittner pointed out that one common on-line vehicle, *UB Learns*, is not accessible to students until the night before the course starts. Professor Coles added that textbooks specially tailored for UB courses limit students' purchasing options. Professor Durand mentioned the option employed by the School of Dental Medicine of renting out DVDs containing several textbooks; although still expensive, they still are cheaper than outright purchase of the books. One disadvantage, however, is that students wanting hard copies of the materials will create a heavy printing load. Professor Faran observed that faculty, at least those teaching larger courses, can negotiate with the publisher for price breaks. Professor Baumer advised that faculty can create listserves to notify all students in a course about relevant textbook information.

Professor Nickerson noted that there is a "tremendous interest" among State legislators in taking action on this problem; the Textbook Pricing and Access Act is currently under revision, and the textbook publishers are aware of this Senate Bill (No. 6804). Professor Baumer added that most of the burden of the execution of the new bill rests on the faculty.

Vice-Provost Ryan acknowledged that while most faculty were already sensitive and responsive to the problem, increased communication to students could only help. Professor Nickerson contemplated re-constituting the University Bookstore Committee, or finding some other way to be more pro-active in resolving the problem. Professor Brazeau mentioned another problem is that the

bookstore does not work with the rest of the University; for example, during one major sporting event, it was closed for inventory. Nor was there much merchandise sporting the new UB logo. In addition, the prices --- and not only those for textbooks --- are quite steep.

Item 5: Report of the SUNY Senate Planning Committee

Professor Bradford reported on the SUNY Senate Planning Committee meeting in Albany on September 15-16. University Faculty Senate president Carl Wiezalis reviewed the accomplishments of the last Senate, including:

- the eventual signing into law, by the governor, the requirement that the head of the University Faculty Senate serve as a non-voting member of the SUNY Board of Trustees;
- discussion of how current policies on freedom and responsibility address such issues as the proposed Academic Bill of Freedom;
- defining the need for liaison between K-12 and college instructors to create a continuum of education;
- cultivating progress toward continued faculty development.

President Wiezalis also announced the approval by the Board of Trustees the appointment of Dr. Risa Palm as the new SUNY Provost and Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

Among the reports of the six standing committees, the Operations Committee identified five projects completed or to be completed shortly. A principal focus was a study of Associate faculty trends. The Committee issued a policy statement with recommendations concerning trends in Associate faculty hiring. This included data of faculty diversity, management confidential positions, and non-teaching professional levels. The Committee also issued a white paper on Strategic Energy Issues in SUNY encompassing campus fuel prices, green building construction priorities, and energy efficiency. In response, the Chancellor has established a Task Force

on Energy and Environment to further develop this issue.

The Student Life Committee worked with the SUNY Student Assembly on the Rock the Vote campaign to register 20,000 student voters and is equally ambitious for its Fall 2006 drive. Another principal ongoing activity is to promote easy cultural transitions for students, particularly for international students; the Committee has planned activities in the classrooms, residence halls, and across the campuses.

The Graduate Research Committee headed by Professor Nickerson of UB forwarded a resolution, which was passed by the Senate, to use the offices of the SUNY website to promote recruitment of graduate students. The Committee also evaluated the requirement that graduate students participate in supervised teaching.

SUNY Senator Labinski added that the Governance Committee will include in its agenda the issue of dealing with difficult campus presidents. This will entail further review and modifications of the SUNY Faculty Senate Handbook on Governance. The Committee will also consider the issue of school designations, such as Geneseo advertising itself as the "Honors College of SUNY".

Professor Brazeau asked whether the SUNY Senate is also discussing the disparities in promotions between men and women faculty in the system. Professor Bradford confirmed the discrepancy and that the Senate is indeed looking at the relevant data. Professor Durand added that, while it is easy to identify numbers in any given group at a particular point in time, it is at present very difficult, if not impossible, to find out how these numbers have changed due to attrition, turnover, and the like.

Item 6: Executive Session

Item 7: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hoeing, Secretary of the Faculty Senate

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

Chair: Peter Nickerson (P)

Secretary: Robert Hoeing (P)

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford (P)

Arts & Sciences: Melvyn Churchill (P), James Faran (P), Debra Street (E), Kenneth Takeuchi (P)

School of Informatics: Joseph Woelfel (E)

Dental Medicine: Richard Hall (A)

Graduate School of Education: Jaekyung Lee (P)

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Cemal Basaran (A), Paschalis Alexandridis (A)

Law: Teresa Miller (A)

Management: Winston Lin (P)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Daniel Amsterdam (P), Merrill Dayton (P), James Springate (P), James Hassett (P)

Nursing: Powhatan Wooldridge (A)

Pharmacy: Gayle Brazeau (P)

Social Work: Barbara Rittner (P)

SUNY Senators: William H. Baumer (P), Peter Bradford (P), H. William Coles III (P), Henry J. Durand (P)

University Libraries: Judy Adams-Volpe (P)

Guests: John B. Simpson (President), Satish Tripathi (Provost), Michael Ryan (Vice-Provost / Undergraduate Education), Larry

Labinski (Professional Staff Senate), Viqar Hussain (Undergraduate Student Association), Kathy Bissonnette (Student Affairs Director), Jayme Wortley (Student Association), Martin Bielicki (The *Spectrum*), Kelly Warth (The *Spectrum*)