

## FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of September 6, 2006

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, September 6, 2006, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following **agenda**:

1. Introduction of Dr. Harvey Stenger, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
2. Approval of the Minutes of April 19 and April 26, 2006
3. Report of the Chair
4. Report of the Provost
5. Update on Strengthened Campus-Based General Education Assessment Plan Review
  - Michael Ryan, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
  - Carol Tutzauer, Assistant Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

### **Item 1: Introduction of Dr. Harvey Stenger, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences**

DDr. Harvey Stenger introduced himself as having had a traditional ground as a professor of chemical engineering at Lehigh University for the past 22 years, where he also served as Chair and, for six years as dean. A native of upstate New York, he welcomed the Provost's invitation to serve as Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

After spending some time learning more about the University, Dr. Stenger plans to set an agenda for the School, first by posing questions such as:

- Does EAS have, within UB's aggressive growth plan, also a plan to increase enrollment?
- Are the students in EAS of the appropriate academic quality?

- Are we taking advantage of federal funding opportunities in Medicine, Health, and Materials (Engineering)?
- Do we deliver a high-quality graduate and undergraduate core curriculum?
- Do we take full potential of our actual and potential corporate partners?
- Do we maximize the utilization of our space?
- Are we taking full advantage of the Strategic Initiatives programs and UB 2020?
- Do we market ourselves effectively?
- Do we know what areas of research the School's next 30 faculty hires will cover?
- Do department chairs and Center directors have the financial resources necessary to execute their jobs?
- Does each entity have a set of goals and metrics in place for the next 1-5 years?
- Are our resource allocation procedures appropriate?

In answering these questions through informed conversations, Dr. Stenger will arrive at a list of priorities as well as a list of new questions which will inevitably arise in the process of establishing these priorities. All of this is a necessary first step, given the size and complexity of the School. So far, everyone involved seems pleased with this process.

Professor Nickerson wondered whether we can address the State's (and nation's) shortage of engineers. Dr. Stenger replied that one of the problems is that many students graduate without a goal or a license to practice engineering; and before we can answer the question of whether we have enough engineers, we must first determine what is an engineer. He is less worried about the pipeline, since this usually solved itself through market forces and in market cycles. He added that although a bachelor's degree is generally sufficient these days, engineering is a relatively young field and an advanced degree, as well as license, may be required in the not-too-distant future. In answer to another question, Dr. Stenger expressed optimism toward developments in high school engineering programs and toward the positive effects various outreach programs across the nation have had on the high school curriculum. These should help the School's enrollments. However, he is bothered by the decline in the numbers of female students in

engineering, from 21% to 15% over the last five years --- for which there is as yet no explanation. A similar decline among minorities is equally disturbing. The School certainly needs to address these cases of underrepresentation. Professor Bradford asked if he were planning any outreach to area high schools, since domestic students also seem to constitute an underrepresented group. Dr. Stenger replied that, indeed, more than 50% of graduate engineering degrees are now awarded to international students, although the percentage is much lower among undergraduate students. He sees a great local potential to tap into among domestic students, but will focus mainly on top quality, including searching outside New York State; this would entail bringing in scholarship money to attract the best students. What counts is the student's academic quality; nationality is irrelevant, since most foreign students end up staying in the country and contribute significantly to our economy. Dr. Stenger pointed out that we must also change the (wrong) perception that engineering is not as exciting as other fields. To Professor Faran's question how our faculty feel about supporting the concept of licensing, Dr. Stenger assumed they would; the exam is not only inexpensive but greatly advantageous to a career.

### **Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of April 19 and April 26, 2006**

The Minutes of April 19 and April 26, 2006 were approved as distributed.

### **Item 3: Report of the Chair**

After the Committee observed a moment of silence to honor the memory of Professor Dennis Malone, the Chair announced some new members of the University community: Dr. Risa Palm - SUNY Provost and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Mr. Gerald Schoenle - Chief of Police at the University of Buffalo; and Ms. Kathryn Costello - Vice-President for Development.

During the summer, Chancellor John Ryan stated there should be no smoking in the University Residence halls in the entire system; Joe

Krakowiak assured Professor Nickerson that smoking is not permitted in UB residence halls.

The UB council met at the end of June 2006. A number of guests waited for the executive session to end, and waited, and waited, and in the end never did attend the meeting that was held at the Center for Bioinformatics. The Chair reported these items from the Minutes that were circulated:

- There was a report on the opening of the Center for Bioinformatics;
- Vice-President Henderson reported that the new philanthropic commitments for 2005-2006 were running well above the commitment figures for the fiscal year;
- There will be a new scholarship gala on November 4 this year hosted by the UB Foundation;
- Research expenditures for the current fiscal year will lie in the range of \$130-140 million;
- Undergraduate applications are up 6% this year at UB, graduate applications up 20-25%;
- There was a resolution in support of UB 2020. After two years of planning, the University is moving into the implementation phase of several elements of the plan;
- The UB Council named a new sports performance facility after UB alumni Robert and Carol Morris.

The University Club will begin its weekly meetings (4:00 - 6:00 PM) today in the Tiffin Room; under consideration are how to better advertise these meetings and whether discussion of specific topics should complement the social functions of these meetings.

Mr. Viqar Hussein announced that a SUNY Student Service Regional Conference will be held at the Marriott this Saturday. Addressed will be student concerns at Buffalo-area and Western New York schools, among them a campus-wide smoking ban and the cost of textbooks. All are welcome to attend.

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

Provost Tripathi delivered an update on enrollment and hiring figures for the new academic year. At

the time of the meeting, enrollment at UB reached 27,753, about 100 more than expected; about 9,229 are graduate/professional school students, the remaining 18,524 are undergraduates.

Increasing graduate enrollment was a major goal which the University met. He reported that the average SAT scores have dipped nationwide, and that Dean Michael Ryan and his office have been working with others across the nation to determine what is causing this problem. However, the ratio of G1 to G2 students at UB is still the same --- as desired --- but our average SAT is down 6-7 points, somewhat lower than the average score at comparable institutions across the nation.

There are about 80 new tenured or tenure-track faculty on campus, 34 of whom are female, and about 103 new full-time faculty overall. About 30 of the new faculty are additions, not replacements. Three chairs have been hired from outside UB in English, Urban Planning, and Health Behavior. The Faculty in Leadership program continues: Andreas Daum (History) will work with Dean Ryan in Undergraduate Education, Alexander Cartwright (Electrical Engineering) with the Provost on Strategic Strengths, Thomas Russo (Medicine) in Faculty Affairs, and Wesley Hicks with Bruce Holm and Robert Genco on Technology Transfer.

In addition to Dr. Stenger [see item 1], UB hired a new dean for the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Michael Cain from Washington University. Interviews for a new Dean of Arts & Sciences should be completed by the end of the Fall semester, so that the new dean can begin office by July 1, 2007. The Interim deans are Bruce McCombe (Arts & Sciences), Lucinda Finley (Informatics), and John Ho (Acting Vice-Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School).

UB has received some new faculty lines through the Chancellor's Empire Innovation Program, the goal of which is to increase research funding in the SUNY system. Of the Program's \$6 million available this year, UB received about \$1.4 million and expects to hire eight to fourteen faculty based on that funding.

Through the SUNY High Needs program, Nursing and Engineering each were able to hire three new faculty, with the goal of increasing the number of students in each program. In addition, [an institute]

in the Center for Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences (CoEB) is receiving money for about ten new faculty.

### **Item 5: Update on Strengthened Campus-Based General Education Assessment Plan Review**

Carol Tutzauer, Assistant Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education and Director of Assessment, distributed a sheet summarizing the ground, main documents, and key components of UB's modified Strengthened Campus Based Assessment (SCBA) initiative, available at

<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAsummary.pdf>

and <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAsummary.html>

The key documents include the SUNY Board of Trustees Resolution on SCBA, the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) guidelines for evaluation of campus plans, UB's plan, a memorandum on funding, and a GEAR/SUNY response to UB's plan. The SUNY campuses faced a choice from among three options for assessing learning outcomes in the general education areas of Writing, Mathematics, and Critical Thinking:

Option 1: Adopt SUNY-wide scoring rubrics;

Option 2: Adopt ACT-modified CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency) modules approved by SUNY for use system-wide;

Option 3: Develop a campus plan subject to criteria. [Note: Web sites for all relevant documentation included on URLs above] Since the CAAP modules did not seem to be of much value to either the students or to the institution, the Office of Undergraduate Education sought some other form of standardized test similar to the GRE; this would give the students a preview of what they might encounter in graduate school, and would allow the Office to use the GRE scores in conjunction with the corresponding SAT scores. As a result, UB will be spending the next three years piloting a unique assessment process based upon the GRE. Among the essential features:

- UB --- unlike other campuses --- will meet its 20% sampling target spread across all three years of the assessment cycle rather than only assessing once every three years. This will provide yearly data and allow a fine-tuned analysis of the impact of changes in our programs.
- There will be a stratified sampling of three key student groups --- traditional first-time, four-year freshmen, transfer students, and part-time students.
- Selected students will attend a workshop relating to post-graduate study, after which they will then take a "practice GRE" which will be the basis for assessing Writing, Mathematics, and Critical Thinking. Students would then receive feedback on their performance and be given an opportunity to register for a lottery to take the graduate examination test of their choice at SUNY/UB expense.
- After the assessment process, the workshop will be available to all students.
- Election of registration for a lottery protects students against forced participation in high-stakes testing, the results of which would become a semi-permanent part of their record.
- Discipline-Based Review Panels comprising UB faculty will map practice examination items to specific SUNY learning outcomes and set performance guidelines for classifying students into the SUNY learning categories of Exceed, Meet, Approach, and Does Not Meet.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which provides benchmark measures for five key student engagement factors, will be administered at least once every three years, but with the aim of being conducted annually.
- Value-added analysis will be accomplished by pairing students' incoming SAT scores with their practice-GRE scores to discern what UB has added beyond the abilities students possessed upon entering UB.
- Confidentiality standards will be followed strictly, as with all personal student information in UB databases.

Vice-Provost Tutzauer pointed out that UB is the only one of the SUNY campuses to develop its own plan. Professor Churchill asked if the practice of embedding questions on final exams would be discontinued, adding that, at least for Chemistry, the process did not work very smoothly. Vice-Provost Tutzauer replied that it is not being discontinued for evaluation of the other general education outcomes, e.g. for the Natural Sciences, Arts, and Social Sciences;

however, the process does need to be improved. Professor Brazeau questioned whether it was fair to use GRE scores for students who are only at sophomore standing. Vice-Provost Tutzauer answered that student who wish to take the real GRE usually do so in their junior year, thus the practice exam would probably be best taken toward the end of the sophomore year. To Professor Bradford's question about how "value-added" contributions are assessed, she replied that the SAT scores function as "proxy pre-test for the GRE", since students' performance on the SAT predicts about 85% of the variability of their performance on the GRE. Although this gives little indication of what an institution contributes, "it's what's left over that can be analyzed in conjunction with some other institutional data" which can better determine an institution's effect on the students' education. Asked about the "semi-permanent" part of a student's record, she explained that the GRE test scores stay recorded for a certain length of time (about 6 years); for this reason, the practice exams would be even more beneficial in helping the student determine if s/he is indeed ready for the real GRE. The practice GRE is compiled from items from older exams, and the scores would not be part of students' permanent records.

## **Item 6: Executive Session**

## **Item 7: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 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 (P), Kenneth Takeuchi (P)

**School of Informatics:** Joseph Woelfel (P)

**Dental Medicine:** Richard Hall (E)

**Graduate School of Education:** Lilian Malave (A)

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

**Law:** Teresa Miller (A)

**Management:** Winston Lin (P)

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Daniel Amsterdam (E), Merrill Dayton (A), Linda Harris (A), James Hassett (A)

**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)

**University Libraries:** Judy Adams-Volpe (P)

**Guests:** Barbara Burke (EDAAA), Viqar Hussein (Undergraduate Student Association), Kathleen Bissonnette (Student Affairs Director), Larry Labinski (Professional Staff Senate), Mary Cochrane (The Reporter), Brianna Sieber (The Spectrum), Lauren Skompinski (Student Association), Jayme Wortley (Student Association), Shannon Palermo (Student Association)