

## **FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of January 28, 1998 (approved)**

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on January 14, 1998, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. Report of the Chair
2. Approval of the Minutes of April 2, April 16, November 19, December 3, 1997 and January 14, 1998
3. Resolutions on the Review of Proposals for the Future of the University and Reorganizaition of Academic Units
4. Resolution on the New Paltz Situation
5. Report of the Provost
6. Report of the President (Executive Session)
7. Aesthetic Appearance of the Campus
8. Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting on February 4, 1998
9. Approval of the 1998/99 Calendar of Faculty Senate Meetings

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

The Chair reported that he had attended a lunch for the Western New York National Conference of Christians and Jews, at which Professor Malave received an award for her work in the community and in bilingual education.

Professor Tedlock has agreed to chair the Educational Programs and Policies Committee; she will ease into the office during the course of the semester. Professor Nickerson plans to convene the Committtee to help organize and start work on the issues to be discussed.

He asked the FSEC to review the draft schedule for Faculty Senate and FSEC meetings for the 1998/99 academic year, and offer any suggestions. No meetings are scheduled on the South Campus, since few buildings there prove suitable.

The SUNY Senate meets next weekend at Stony Brook; Professor Fisher will deliver a written report on the proceedings.

Professor Gutman, Chair of the Department of Statistics, formally requested Professor Nickerson to look into the progress of resolving the issues facing that Department and program. The Dean of the Graduate School had sent a letter to the Department to suspend admission to the graduate and undergraduate majors program for a period of one year, in order to allow the University time to resolve the future of the Department. The Provost recognizes this as a University-wide issue, and Vice-Provost Levy will chair a working group to explore the potential establishment of an institute.

Professor Nickerson circulated a number of materials, among them a position announcement for Associate Vice-President of University Facilities, an Executive Budget for fiscal year 1998/99 from Vice-president Wagner, information on a conference on promotions and tenure, sponsored jointly by the School of Medicine and the UUP Health Sciences Chapter, as well as copies of materials on Diversity distributed by Dr. Rice at the previous meeting of the FSEC.

The Academic Planning Committee has been meeting regularly, Professor Baier reported that the APC had invited three deans from the professional schools to discuss the ways in which they are working with the Provost's Office, as well as with their own faculties, in the development, verification, and taxonomies of data; it also offered the deans an opportunity to reply directly to questions from the APC members. The Committee plans to meet next month with three the deans of Arts & Sciences.

The Budget Priorities Committee met on Monday; the principal subject of discussion was the proposed Resource Allocation Model (RAM) from SUNY Central. Also, Senior Vice-President

Wagner discussed the Governor's Budget, which "looks good" for UB (Provost Headrick: "It's OK...").

The Public Services Committee plans to meet on Friday and will be co-sponsoring (with the Vice-President of Public Service and Urban Affairs) a conference in the near future; Professor Nickerson will invite them to the FSEC at some point prior to that conference.

### **Item 2: Approval of the Minutes**

Pending a few corrections and clarifications, the Minutes of April 2, April 16, November 19, December 3, 1997 and January 14, 1998 were approved.

### **Item 3: Resolutions on the Review of Proposals for the Future of the University and Reorganization of Academic Units**

Professor Albini, chair of the Faculty Senate Governance Committee, presented a revised resolution on the Faculty Senate's obligation to review any proposals concerning the future reorganization of academic units in the University. The intent was to provide not only a structural process, but also some degree of flexibility in not requiring review of items which are "obviously acceptable and non-controversial".

Professor Faran commented that the resolution does not seem to reflect actual process at this University; rather than developing an academic plan in conjunction with faculty, it seems the Provost outlined the plan himself and presented it to the faculty for their reaction. Professor Albini replied that the resolution is meant to formally ensure that the full Faculty Senate be alerted to any proposed changes and thus be allowed to exercise its advisory role.

The FSEC voted in favor of transmitting the resolutions to the Faculty Senate for approval..

### **Item 4: Resolution on the New Paltz Situation**

The Provost distributed copies of the Chancellor's statement on New Paltz. In it, the Chancellor noted that all campus activities *"must meet standards of intellectual content, significance and relevance to the academic mission of the University"*; the New Paltz conference, he continued, *"included components that were needlessly offensive to many people"* and *"failed....to meet expectations....for intellectual substance and quality"*. Chancellor Ryan holds the President of New Paltz (as he does all campus presidents) responsible for upholding these standards. In his opinion, President Bowen *"made errors in judgment"* on the New Paltz conference, which *"promulgated a 'how to do it' manual on lesbianism and sadomasochism --- not at all appropriate for a university. The planners of the conference should have known better and planned better. President Bowen should have insisted on substance and rejected the simply prurient and sensational"*.

Professor Malone found it odd that the Chancellor claimed earlier in the statement that there was no attack on free speech, and then "proceeds to show that there is". The FSEC considered the statement disappointing, especially after the report of the special investigating committee, which was much more positive and supportive of academic freedom.

President Greiner added that if the statement is intended to set standards for campus presidents, it is asking the impossible, especially on large campuses such as UB. Even if everything in the statement were true --- and undoubtedly many people were indeed offended --- it is still not desirable, nor possible, to prevent controversial issues from being aired on a university campus.

Professor Welch feared certain "chilling effects" as consequences of the statement, particularly on open discussion, but also in terms of constraints on campus presidents. President Greiner added that we cannot allow ourselves to regard the events "out of the factual context in which they occurred", part of which was the incapacity of a president "to find a way to gracefully move this thing along" without insulting the Chancellor and the Trustees. It would have been better to say far less in the media.

The worst part of the statement, Professor Malone continued, was the Chancellor's idea that *"it is the ultimate responsibility of the president to insure that programs and conferences meet the University's and community's standards of quality, relevance and civility"*; he did not see how a campus president could decide what takes place.

Professor Meacham commented that the controversy is now widely publicized --- in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, on the Internet, and elsewhere --- and could prove detrimental to attracting faculty, since they might consider their academic freedom, as well as their constitutional freedom of speech, curtailed at SUNY. It is all the more important now that we issue a resolution which makes clear UB's position. The Provost asked if we could appeal to the AAUP to differentiate among the different SUNY campuses, in order not to be "tarred by the behavior of other similar institutions"; Professor Malone responded that the University Faculty Senate has done that, with only limited success.

Professor Boot, who was scheduled to present the second reading of a resolution on the New Paltz situation, noted that during its revision he was unaware of the most recent developments. At that time, it seemed "not altogether unreasonable to let it be"; however, in light of the Chancellor's statement, he considered a response useful and necessary. In lieu of the original resolution, he read and distributed a new resolution commending the investigating committee on its report on the New Paltz issue, *"culminating in recommendations the [UB] Faculty is pleased to endorse.*

*More specifically, the Faculty wants to underscore recommendation F, stating that when controversies arise about SUNY-campus events, it is essential to learn as much as possible about the facts before drawing conclusions, and to reflect how public statements, made without the benefit of careful factual scrutiny, have the potential to harm the institution."*

The resolution added further that the UB Faculty would have preferred that recommendation G had concluded with a sentence affirmatively stating that Professor Bowen had, in the matter at hand, acted in the best traditions of academic freedom and its responsible exercise.

Professor Albini supported passing the new resolution, in order to counteract a series of incremental steps toward throttling the freedom of speech. President Greiner strongly supported the new resolution; it is subtle and reinforces the investigating committee's report --- a report which successfully laid out "the framework within which these matters ought to be resolved". Endorsing the report endorses everything in it, and quietly informs the Chancellor and Trustees of our opinion.

The resolution, with a change in wording to reflect the support of the Faculty Senate, was adopted by total substitution of the original. and endorsed for presentation to the Senate.

#### **Item 5: Report of the Provost**

Provost Headrick distributed copies of the SUNY Provost's draft of the Mission Review process for each campus, which had been disseminated for comments before becoming official policy. The document outlined the general principles of the review, along with appendices describing institutional categories, Mission Review process and guidance, and Undergraduate Admissions Selectivity. Since no Executive Session of the FSEC could be arranged prior to the deadline for a response, the Provost invited, at Professor Welch's suggestion, comments from the FSEC via electronic correspondence.

#### **Item 6: Report of the President (Executive Session)**

#### **Item 7: Aesthetic Appearance of the Campus**

At the request of Vice-President Wagner, Michael Dupre, Interim Assistant Vice-President for University Facilities, presented a project to upgrade the aesthetics of the grounds floors of Capen, Norton, and Talbert halls.

He began with a brief ground history of the project's naissance. Early in this decade, the Facilities staff realized they would be operating with budget reductions, and thus decided to -fill only critical positions, in an attempt to build savings as much as possible. About five years ago, Facilities began investing some of the savings in a capital renewal program, mostly in physical facilities one normally is not aware of, such heating, ventiating and

cooling equipment. With increased financial flexibility, Facilities began to focus on campus aesthetics, primarily to assist recruitment and retention. Approximately \$ 247,000 has been set aside for campus beautification in this year's budget. The Capen/Norton/Talbert project is the first major one this year, estimateed at \$ 85,000, and including the following changes:

- re-painting the orange ceilings;
- re-carpeting and re-furnishing these high-profile areas of campus in order to make them less "institutional";
- elevating and re-planting three trampled-down plots on the North side of Capen;
- carpet replacement in centrally-scheduled classrooms, for which \$ 100,000 has been set aside.

Vice-President Dupre circulated sketches of the proposed changes to the campus area outside these halls, and invited comments and discussion. Professor Welch commended the general principles behind the project, but pointed out that tastes change over time and from one generation to the next. In addition, aesthetics for our facilities also involves day-to-day maintenance, such as the prompt removal of graffiti or the repair of broken furniture in public areas. He encouraged Facilities to maintain communication with the Faculty Senate Facility Planning Committee.

Professor Meacham commented that flowers and shrubs at an appropriate height attract the eyes down from tall, ugly buildings to a "more human scale"; adding more of these would help beautify the main walkway on campus. In addition, departments and students might be willing to take responsibility for maintaining individual plots.

Professor Welch remarked that UB has had a problem keeping trees alive on campus; Vice-President Dupre replied that this is due first and foremost to the nature of the topsoil on the North Campus. He added that, after the (more urgent) signage needs have been addressed, Facilities would need to develop a landscape plan for the entire campus.

Professor Sridhar stressed that improvements would need to be done on a continual basis, instead of just once for the next ten or twenty years. Professor Wooldridge hoped that the plans included improvements of the South Campus as well, which has "deteriorated markedly over the years". Vice-President Dupre replied that quite a bit of work would be done this summer, including sidewalk and signage improvements, plans to demolish the Parker annex and the Mathematics Library if the books can be relocated in time. Professor Smith urged Facilities to start quickly with the signage and access projects, since it is almost impossible to find one's way around on the South Campus; not only is this inconvenient, it makes a horrible impression on visitors.

Professor Schroeder welcomed any improvements to the North Campus, such as the tubs of geraniums planted last summer. He pointed out that, whereas plans include beautification of the north side of Capen Hall, he was not sure whether this was the side that needed improvements; far better would be a beautification on the Flint Loop side, since this is the most visible and used access to the building.

Professor Tamburlin commented that several years ago, a group of students wanted to plant a tree in memory of a professor, but ended up scrapping the idea because there were too many barriers; she wondered if this problem has since been addressed. Vice-President Dupre said it had; in fact, some memorial trees had indeed been planted in the last few years. [He later requested that the **WINGS** website address be included in these Minutes for reference and further information on memorial markers: <http://www.buffalo.edu/services/fac/> -RGH]

Chris Connelly remarked that, although it is fine to concentrate on a single area for beautification, what is more important are the "little things --- a flower here, a flower there" --- which seem to make the most difference. Vice-President Dupre mentioned that one mistake Facilities had made was to try to maximize savings rather than focussing on the level of service. Another problem it must wrestle with is exactly how to beautify the campus; some places, such as Northwestern, fertilize rather heavily, which UB will not do for environmental reasons. One effective remedy is simply to plant low-maintenance shrubs

around building which, although simple, are easily well-kept and help greatly to improve the appearance of the campus.

**Item 8: Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting on February 4, 1998**

The agenda for the next Faculty Senate meeting was approved.

**Item 9: Approval of the 1998/99 Calendar of Faculty Senate Meetings**

The calendar for Faculty Senate meetings for the next academic year was accepted.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing,

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**Present: Chair:** Peter A. Nickerson

**Secretary:** Robert G. Hoeing

**Architecture & Planning:** Sherri Wallace

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** Ramalingam Sridhar

**Graduate School of Education:** Thomas Schroeder

**Health-Related Professions:** Judith Tamburlin

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

**Management:** Ramaswamy Ramesh

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

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

**Nursing:** Powhattan Wooldridge

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

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

**University Libraries:** Marilyn Kramer

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

**Guests:** Michael Dupre, *Interim Assistant Vice-President for University Facilities*

Sue Wuetscher (*The Reporter*)

Chris Connelly (*Pre-Professional, SIH*)

M. P. Weaver (*Pre-Professional, SIH*)

**Excused: SUNY Senators:** John Fisher

**Absent: Arts & Letters:** Martha Hyde

**Dental Medicine:** Robert Baier

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Ronald Batt, Herbert Schuel

**Pharmacy:** Nathan