

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting of August 21, 1996 (approved)  
(revised 10/3/95)

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The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM to consider the following agenda:

1. [Report of the Chair](#)
2. [Current Areas of Concern](#)
3. [Discussion of the Budget](#)
4. [Draft Resolution of the Budget Priorities Committee](#)
5. Committee Nominations (Executive Session)

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## [Item 1: Report of the Chair](#)

Professor Welch began the meeting by asking for a moment of silence to remember colleagues who died during the summer: Milton Brown (Dental Medicine); Joseph Campo (Medicine), Louis Ciola (Medicine), Richard Dollinger (Electrical Engineering), Robert Ganyard (History), Livingston Gearhart (Music), Joseph Godfrey (Medicine), Eugene Gorzynski (Medicine), Agnes Lucas (Medicine), and Leslie Osborn (Medicine). He then asked both new and continuing members of the committee to introduce themselves.

Professor Welch then reported on his activities as Chair since the previous meeting. He participated in the Deans' meetings, at which the major issues discussed included a potential \$250 million capital campaign and distribution of Affirmative Action responsibilities. He reported that he had met with the Chairs of all UB Faculty Senate committees over the summer, as well as with most of the Deans, to discuss how the Senate could become more effective. He drafted a schedule of major issues to be discussed by the FSEC for this coming Fall semester (with the Spring schedule partially completed); the schedule allows each standing committee the opportunity to discuss their charges and

progress with the FSEC. He had sent out the revised compendium of Senate resolutions, now available on hard copy and electronically (on WINGS).

The Chair has scheduled monthly meetings with the President, Provost, and Senior Vice-President. He explained that the rationale for these meetings with the chief administrators arose from the nature of the Senate; although traditionally an advisory body, the Senate exercises major responsibilities in nearly all areas of academic life. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Senate needs to be alert to developments in considerations of budget planning, facilities, the quality of support services, and of student life, among others.

Professor Welch then reported on important developments since the mid-summer meeting:

1. In the office of the Vice-President, Mr. Voldemar Innus has taken on the combined responsibility of having both CIT and the Libraries report to him.
2. According to a summary report from the Office of Institutional Studies on final examinations, over 90% of the undergraduates at UB took at least one centrally-scheduled final examination in the Fall 1995 semester, and at least 40% of the undergraduate lecture courses scheduled final exams in regular university space. Professor Jameson asked whether the University had indeed scheduled 43 sessions (instead of the usual 42) for classes which meet three times a week. Professor Welch verified this, noting that prior to this change, those classes offered on Tuesday-Thursday schedules lasted about 100 minutes longer this fall semester. The Provost's alteration of the current Fall calendar follows a report and recommendations of a University-wide Calendar Commission last year.  
Professor Nickerson asked whether the report looked into potential conflicts in final examination schedules. Professor Welch replied that computerized scheduling does the best it can, but some conflicts would almost certainly arise.
3. Passage of the State Operating Budget [[Item 2, below](#)].
4. Professor Nickerson has agreed to serve as the one-year Interim Chair of the Budget Priorities Committee while Professor Gates is on sabbatical.

Professor Welch then supplemented the tentative agenda for the FSEC meetings for the coming academic year with additional matters for consideration, among them the Honors Program, distance learning, library digitalization and acquisition, the capital campaign, faculty productivity, as well as upcoming Senate resolutions. He strongly encouraged suggestions and comments on these issues.

### [Item 2: Areas of Concern](#)

Professor Welch first addressed the relatively low rankings of SUNY-Buffalo in the 1995 report of the National Research Council (NRC) on doctoral programs. Part of this decline, he said, is attributable to the numerous and extensive budget cuts over the last decade. By comparison, Emory University, which entered the American Association of Universities (AAU) at the same time as SUNY-Buffalo, has registered some of the most significant increases in its academic quality (according to an article in *Change* magazine), and holds the sixth-largest university endowment in the nation. Despite possible flaws in gathering and disseminating the data, the NRC report damages UB's image; the Chair expressed hope that the Senate would lead in finding ways to improve the academic quality at UB. He noted that several planning efforts are underway, but are by necessity long-term and hence will not have any immediate impact on the present state of affairs. UB has followed a policy of relatively evenly distributed cuts to the major academic units, and of relegating additional cuts to support rather than to academic areas; underlying this policy is the principle of avoiding retrenchment. General uncertainty about the direction of SUNY further aggravates this area of concern.

Professor Welch identified as a "bright spot" the appointment of the highly-regarded John Ryan as Interim Chancellor, and expressed hope that the search for a new chancellor would find someone of Dr. Ryan's caliber. He suggested that the uncertainty with respect to the Chancellor is enhanced by the changing role and composition of the Board of Trustees. Over half of the current Board members were appointed by Governor Pataki, and most of them earned their degrees at private rather than at public institutions of higher education. The

newer, "more activist" members have assumed a greater degree of trustee leadership rather than delegation of responsibilities system administration and to the various campuses. The Chair then welcomed questions and discussion.

Professor Ludwig wondered to what extent the NRC rankings reflected an actual decline in quality (which she has not noticed), or whether they were a function of the reporting mechanism, of our failure to communicate who we are and what we do. Professor Meacham suggested a different interpretation of the data: they indicate not that our quality has declined, but that our rate of improvement has not kept pace with other major universities. Professor Welch mentioned that another important factor was the correlation between the perceived quality of an academic program and its size; in this respect, attrition and hiring freezes could have blanching our image. In addition, certain programs were not included in the survey.

### [Item 3: Discussion of the Budget](#)

Vice-President Wagner distributed a summary of the 1996/97 State Operating Budget and quickly discussed the major points. Tuition and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) remain unchanged, and no differential tuition would be introduced for Fall 1996; the only additional expense for UB students is a technology fee increase of \$65 (from \$60 to \$125). Professor Ludwig asked what was meant by this "fee", i.e., what the students receive in return for paying this money. Vice-President Wagner replied that the fee was strictly for covering costs in technology --- hardware, software, access to databases. improvements in touch-tone registration, and the like. He added that the money from this fee would not be used to offset any budget reduction.

Vice-President Wagner reported a total funding reduction for UB of \$2.3 million, in large part due to a restoration by the State legislature which totalled \$51 million more than what the governor recommended. Other changes to the Operating Budget included:

- keeping the Educational Opportunity Center at UB;
- the creation of a stabilization account which will allow a two-year carry-over of fund balances;
- appropriation for a 1996/97 State University Tuition Reimbursable Account (SUTRA) which will allow campuses to keep revenues available beyond the established target based on exceeding enrollment targets (Provost Headrick pointed out that there is a cap on this, amounting to about \$1.7 million);
- the possibility of a mid-year budget reduction;
- the defeat of a proposed change in the fiscal year.

Capital equipment funding suffered a major loss of over \$3 million; efforts are underway to provide capital equipment funding via the State University Construction Fund. In the area of Management Effectiveness and Flexibility, the only change from 1995/96 is the creation of the stabilization account. Vice-President Wagner then fielded questions from the committee.

Professor Welch asked what implications the budget would have for UB. Vice- President Wagner replied that the Vice-Presidents were examining the potential implications of a 5% to a 3% reduction in State support. He said we would start the fiscal year assuming a 3% reduction, and would re-assess it (probably in December) when they consider three items: (i) whether there has been any reduction, and in what amount; (ii) whether there has been any capital equipment restoration; and (iii) a sense of the 1997/98 budget. Provost Headrick commented that the administration has been working on these expectations since the Spring; consequently, there were essentially no changes in their planning. Professor Welch added that the senior administration had made extremely accurate estimations.

Professor Meidinger wondered about the "political dimensions", i.e., how unstable the restorations were, and the effects of the upcoming elections. Provost Headrick answered that State support over the past decade has been on a straight-slope decline, and that election results would in all likelihood not change anything. What we can hope for is stabilization rather than increase, in addition to being given the flexibility to raise our own

revenues. Vice-President Wagner emphasized that the major challenge would be to stabilize funding over the next fiscal year. Graduate Student Association representative Mr. Toscana-Cantaffa asked whether the cap reduction was responsible for the technology fee increase. Vice-President Wagner explained that it was not. Mr. Toscana-Cantaffa then asked whether the University will use student fees as a way to generate revenue. Vice-President Wagner replied that as resources go down, the administration will use what tools are available to offset reductions; if present trends continue, students will indeed be asked to help offset the losses. Provost Headrick pointed out that the fee increases were not so much related to the State Operating Budget as they were to the increased demand for certain facilities to meet student needs, which can no longer be met by the budget alone. Mr. Toscana-Cantaffa asked whether there would have been fee increases had the tuition been increased. Wagner answered that that depends on whether the tuition increase would have channeled net revenues to the university.

Professor Faran asked whether some of the money provided for library acquisitions was being used to cover the costs of digitalization of the libraries. Vice-President Wagner responded that some portion of the money was being used for purposes other than journal price increases, after consultation with the Library and the Faculty Senate Library Committee. Provost Headrick clarified that this was not a matter of money being diverted from one use to another, but rather a matter of priorities. He explained that SUNY, using inflation as a tool, found a way to increase the budget "before we took our whack". The money that then comes to the UB campus should be allocated according to campus priorities, and that is precisely what happened in this case.

#### [Item 4: Draft Resolution of the Budget Priorities Committee](#)

Professor Nickerson delivered a brief summary of the latest activities and issues of the Budget Priorities Committee before presenting a draft resolution on the "Budgetary Implications of Resolutions from the Faculty Senate". Professor Welch reminded the FSEC of the process by which resolutions are processed, adding that the Budget Priorities Committee

is to be commended for drafting a resolution which would enjoin on the Senate a "higher degree of awareness and responsibility for what we urge to be done". He then opened the floor for discussion.

Professor Albini wondered what amount of detail (of budgetary implications) would be necessary in Senate resolutions, and how capable the Senate is of assessing the required implications. Professor Nickerson said he was not sure, that this would be a case-by-case basis; what is more at issue here is an increased level of communication, since various committees may be asked to help assess the impact of different resolutions on the budget. Professor Meacham suspected that the proposed resolution would give privilege to financial and budgetary considerations over all others, such as the impact of a given resolution on educational programs, on our mission statement, or on the research and scholarship of the UB faculty. Consequently, he wondered why we needed such a particular resolution focussed on budgetary considerations. Nickerson replied that the items mentioned were already implicit in Senate resolutions, but that budgetary matters are often ignored; also, the resolution under discussion is not meant to be exclusive of other considerations. Professor Faran suggested that the Senate specify what it/the University is willing to sacrifice for the implementation of its resolutions. Professor Welch said that the resolution in effect also asks each Senate committee to determine priorities. Professor Jameson, addressing point A of the resolution, wondered whether the "financial implications" comprised only those resulting from the adoption of the resolution, or whether these should include as well those resulting from the failure to adopt the resolution. Professor Acara asked whether the Budget Priorities Committee had a list of priorities, and if so, what were they? Professor Nickerson replied that this issue was not resolved. Professor Welch noted that there were also priorities which were not strictly financial, such as avoiding retrenchment. Professor Acara replied that one priority which should be considered would be classroom availability and feasibility. Professor Malone lauded the resolution and its intent, but wondered whether it should be included in the Standing Orders. The Chair proposed that it would be more convenient for the Senate to consider it first as a separate resolution before being included in the Standing Orders. Professor Meidinger, addressing a concern

expressed earlier, considered the resolution good in that it is inexact in its wording and does not require specific amounts to be stated on Senate resolutions.

The Committee voted on the resolution, which passed by a large majority: none opposed, Professors Meacham and Grant abstained, the others approved.

The Committee then moved into executive session to discuss Faculty Senate committee nominations.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**THOSE PRESENT:**

University Officers: T. Headrick, R. Wagner

Chair: Claude Welch

Secretary: Robert Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: Nathan Grant, Jeannette Ludwig

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold

Health-Related Professions: Atif Awad

Law: Errol Meidinger

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Margaret Acara, Boris Albini, Herbert Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran

Social Sciences: Michael Farrell, Jack Meacham

SUNY Senators: Maureen Jameson, Dennis Malone, Peter Nickerson, Claude Welch

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Ex officio: Carol Ann Sellers

**Guests:**

Graduate Student Association: David Toscana-Cantaffa

Professional Staff Senate: Michael Stokes

REPORTER: Chris Vidal

SPECTRUM: Steve Watson

**OTHER GUEST(S): N. Grant**

**EXCUSED:**

Nursing: Mattie Rhodes

**ABSENT:**

Dental Medicine: George Ferry

Graduate School of Education: James Hoot

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein

Pharmacy: Nathan