

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting of March 27, 1996 (approved)

revised 10/3/95)

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The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Jeannette Martin Room to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of February 14, 1996](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the President/Provost](#)
4. [Grading Report Update](#)
5. [Classroom Quality](#)
6. [Low Enrollment Classes](#)
7. [Sesquicentennial Update](#)
8. [Old Business](#)
9. [New Business](#)

ITEM 1: Approval of the Minutes of February 14, 1996

Professor Welch asked for corrections or additions to the minutes of February 14, 1996. Professor Jameson requested deletion of paragraph 1 on page 7. Professor Sellers conveyed a request by Professor Hopkins to change government to governor on page 5, paragraph 3. The minutes as amended were approved.

Professor Welch noted that the approved minutes were in the process of being posted on Wings. He noted that there would be wide access and that openness of communication would be emphasized.

ITEM 2: Report of the Chair

Professor Welch reported that:

- Copies of his letter to President Greiner regarding the revised Bylaws were available. He noted that President Greiner must approve sections dealing specifically with faculty consultation.
- Vice Provost Fischer had developed a statement on the advancement of teaching through working with the joint committee of faculty and administration. Professor Welch commented that nominations for a reconstituted Committee on Teaching and Learning would be sought during executive session.
- The University Governance report had been developed into resolutions for action at the next Faculty Senate meeting.
- A final report from the Faculty Senate Athletics and Recreation Committee was being pursued by Professor Welch.
- Issues related to Academic Freedom and Responsibilities would be discussed in executive session.
- The report on the Sesquicentennial had been postponed until 4/3/96. Additional agenda items for the next FSEC meeting on 4/3/96 included a report by Professor Nickerson on the Graduate School and a report by Professor Acara on the Promotions and Tenure Committee. Professor Welch noted that an open meeting for faculty with the Chair of the President's Review Board (PRB) would be held on 4/16/96 as a result of a Faculty Senate resolution.
- The Budget Priorities Committee (BPC) meeting on 3/25/96 had examined enrollment targets and all funds accounting. He noted that it was likely that the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) would remain within SUNY rather than be transferred to the Labor Department and that there would be significant restoration of TAP. Professor Welch commented that full restoration of the capital budget was possible and he noted the equipment initiative and its importance to graduate research. He stated that there had been little move towards possible acceptance of differential tuition. It was noted that 1996 was an election year and that state support would probably be forthcoming until after the election when a mid-year budget cut was anticipated. Professor Welch quoted from an article in the New York Times which

discussed "fiscal exigency" within CUNY, synonymous with retrenchment. A figure of 10 to 20% of the full-time faculty and staff were reported to be involved in the action.

ITEM 3: Report of the President/Provost

There was no report from the President or the Provost.

ITEM 4: Report of the Grading Committee

Professor Schroeder stated that consensus revisions in the Academic Good Standing policy had been drafted by the Grading Committee with the underlying rationale that the FSEC and committee meetings had expressed strong opinions that the criteria were too strict and had resulted in negative consequences for good overall students with one bad semester. He referred the FSEC to the detailed proposal which included warnings for not having a GPA of 2.0 for the most recent semester or completion of 75% of credit hours in the most recent semester. He noted that a student could not avoid probation for subsequent semesters for the conditions which had resulted in a warning.

Professor Meidinger stated that section F, dealing with a student who has been on probation in any previous semester at UB not being allowed to use the warning clauses, was unnecessarily punitive. He reported that Law School applications required students to explain reasons for being on academic probation. He stated that the implied sanctions had not been addressed by the revised policy. He counseled care in dealing with probation through consideration of wider ramifications for students in the future.

Professor Schroeder agreed that the problem was in the implementation of the policy. Professor Welch noted the absence of a statement regarding personal counseling in section D following receipt of a letter of warning from the office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Professor Schroeder noted that the Undergraduate Catalogue included a more elaborate statement that the Vice Provost's office would contact individuals on probation. Professor Welch noted that the letter of warning included a suggestion to contact the office of the Vice Provost.

Professor Wetherhold asked if the revised policy would avoid probation for the proportion of students included in the current net. Professor Schroeder replied that the majority of students would escape being placed on probation; the figure would have been approximately 1300 rather than 4000 undergraduates who had been placed on probation spring 1996 due to implementation of the current policy.

Professor Wetherhold suggested substituting "was not placed" for "escaped" in the proposal. Professor Wooldridge agreed that "escaped" had a negative connotation.

Professor Jameson inquired into the criteria for TAP which allows only one time probation. She voiced concern with the language of the revised policy including the numbering and lettering which appeared unclear. She suggested that the TAP criteria were worded more succinctly.

Professor Schroeder clarified that for first semester freshmen, the overall GPA would equal the semester GPA and would result in probation if less than a 2.0.

Professor Wooldridge stated that the rules were not sufficiently precise and cited an example in which two students with 13 and 12 hours initially could hypothetically end a semester with 9 hours and GPAs of 4.0 and 2.0. He noted that the student with the 4.0, completing 9 hours, would be on probation for completing less than 75% of credit hours while the student with a 2.0 completing 9 of 12 hours would not be on probation. He questioned how these examples could result from a "sensible" policy.

Professor Nickerson stated that the policy was attempting to address the "R" problem. Vice Provost Goodman stated that the "R" policy was used to avoid poor letter grades. He stated that it was necessary to account for student resignations in the policy.

Professor Welch suggested that the Grading Committee could check into appropriate procedures and changes in language of the revised policy. He noted that there was no ready answer for Professor Wooldridge's question. He stated that it was important to present the revised policy to the Faculty Senate at the meeting on 4/9/96. He questioned if the FSEC should provide explicit instructions or send the revised policy directly to the Senate.

Professor Meidinger suggested that formulation of options would lead to more intelligent Faculty Senate debate.

Professor Schroeder clarified that sections D,E and F were additions to the current policy.

Professor Jameson suggested that the committee consider changing the measure of completion from 75% of all credit hours to 75% completion of all courses.

Professor Ramesh, supporting the "human element", suggested allowing appeals against warnings or notification of probation. Professor Schroeder stated that an appeal was "always possible". Professor Welch questioned the availability of an appeal under all conditions.

Professor Schuel stated that the problem was with the implementation of the criteria. He stated that particular areas were not within the control of students, such as attempting to apply for a major or being unable to secure an appointment with an academic advisor in a timely manner. He suggested a two letter sequence. The first letter could state that the student was likely to be placed on probation for the following reasons and a particular time period could be offered in which to appeal. Vice Provost Goodman replied that the workload from an approximate 5000 letters of appeal would be unmanageable. He stated that it was necessary for the Academic Good Standing Policy to be objective due to pressure on standards for athletics. He remarked that he was uncomfortable with an ill defined policy. He noted that there were clear criteria for exceptions and stated that administrative resignations were available for medical problems and deaths in families. He stated that he was concerned regarding public debate about the problems with the current policy.

Professor Malone suggested a clause for provisional acceptance into majors. Vice Provost Goodman replied that an entire semester was available for application to majors. He suggested speaking with the Dean if faculty were too busy for an entire semester to schedule a student appointment. Professor Wooldridge agreed with Vice Provost Goodman that an arbitrary decision-making policy would not be acceptable. He stated that it was "unconscionable" to place a student on probation for no valid reason. Vice Provost Goodman stated that the prior system was more unconscionable.

Professor Welch stated that procedural suggestions had been offered and that the committee had met a significant part of the concerns with the current policy. Professor Schroeder stated that his committee would attempt to modify the revised policy. Professor Meidinger stated that he was not prepared to support a policy that was not objective or rational.

Professor Eberlein suggested use of a warning rather than probation for a first offense. She stated that the second time a student did not fulfill the rules, probation should be automatic. Professor Schroeder replied that a two stage process was a possibility.

Professor Wooldridge stated that there should be a differentiation between probation due to unsatisfactory grades and probation due to other reasons. He stated that if the fault was with the University due to bureaucratic difficulties, the student should not be punished. He stated that it was unconscionable to place even one student on probation due to University responsibility.

Concluding on a positive note, Professor Goodman stated that the criteria for Dean's List was a 3.6 or greater average for 15 or more credit hours. He reported that 1,186 undergraduates had earned the distinction.

ITEM 5: Classroom Quality

Professor Welch noted that Professor Danford was the Chair of the Facilities Planning Committee. Referring the FSEC to the handout, he mentioned five topics for discussions: the survey by Dr. Gold, accessibility and instructional space inventories, rehabilitation and new construction, quality standards related to the space inventory, and criteria for seating classes scheduled centrally.

Mr. Noll, Manager of Planning, stated that Diefendorf 148 was being changed into an "e-tech" classroom based on needs established through faculty consultation. Professor Danford asked Mr. Noll to explain "e-tech". Mr. Noll stated that "e-tech" classrooms required approximately \$100,000 to equip with overheads, 35 mm slide projectors, VCRs, PCs, lasers and Wolf visualizers. He noted that upkeep had an impact on CIT related to various parameters including training.

Dr. Gold stated that the primary issue was to establish a policy regarding funding of large "e-tech" classrooms or smaller classrooms. He stated that the survey had addressed demand issues. He reported that the primary findings were 1) that technology was used across disciplines and 2) that the interest was strong in both small and large classrooms. Dr. Gold stated that technology serves to allow presentation of material in large classrooms that might not be available in another format such as use of the Internet. He noted that the transition to a technology approach was complicated and expensive and that faculty frustration had been expressed regarding the absence of a guarantee to access to the technology equipped classrooms for a second semester. He stated that faculty wanted to utilize the technology but were less willing to make elaborate arrangements for its use. He stated that the technology classrooms needed to be easily available with appropriate training.

Professor Churchill referred to specific technology problems. Mr. Noll replied that problems were being addressed by CIT. He mentioned prioritizing needs and funding concerns.

Professor Wetherhold mentioned the importance of distance learning and use of the Internet and CD Rom in the classroom. Mr. Noll responded that it was important for CIT to be familiar with actual equipment uses. Professor Farrell stated that the visualizer was most useful in his opinion. Mr. Noll stated that scheduling had been accomplished through programming for the first time during the last year. He noted that there were an adequate number of classrooms but that the rooms were not utilized completely. He mentioned supply and demand and that classrooms accessible to the spine were most desirable. He stated that it was necessary to look at a better distribution of classrooms per departments. He commented that the next step in scheduling was to deal with specific requests beyond the need for technology.

Professor Welch mentioned priorities for handicapped accessibility and to teaching assignments. Mr. Noll replied that there was no carryover of space of assignments from semester to semester and that there was a "new run" each semester.

Professor Jameson stated that use of equipment such as videos was difficult in Clemens since CIT does not service the building. She suggested equipping Clemens with cabinets for equipment storage. Mr. Noll replied that security was crucial and that overhead projectors were available in all rooms. He

stated that the next step was to move to a higher level of standard equipment. Professor Jameson suggested that a CIT student might be paid to move equipment in Clemens.

Professor Nickerson mentioned the availability of rooms in the evenings for scheduled speakers for SA clubs.

Professor Malone commented on the potential for abuse involved in distance learning. Mr. Noll replied that instruction could be programmed to interface with students. Ms Cornwall stated that valuable classroom time could be wasted during equipment malfunctions. Mr. Noll replied that training was available in use of technology.

Professor Welch inquired into plans for new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures. Mr. Noll replied that with the current state government, it appeared that "SUNY was all built out" and that there was no new construction planned. He mentioned that there was speculation about a Math building substituting for the previously planned second phase of NSM. Professor Welch asked for specific information about centrally scheduled classrooms. Mr. Noll replied that there were 160 rooms centrally scheduled and a large number that were exclusive departmental space. Questions were raised regarding the responsibility for upkeep of noncentral space with possible substandard conditions created by budget reductions. Mr. Noll stated that particular classlabs with technical equipment precluded multiple use such as labs in the Chemistry Department.

Professor Danford commented on departmental and University scheduled space and stated that only 20% of instructional spaces were controlled by the University. Professor Welch questioned whether the University would take responsibility for rehabilitation of departmental space and Professor Danford replied that a deciding factor would be whether there was a negative effect on the quality of instruction.

Professor Jameson stated that flexibility was greater with departmental ownership of space. Mr. Noll stated that the bottom line was funding and he remarked that a set amount of money for rehabilitation and upkeep would be preferable to yearly negotiations. Mr. Noll stated that he shared the concerns of the faculty and that the discussion had been beneficial. He commented that summer rehabilitation would include acoustic, seating and lighting upgrades.

ITEM 6: Low Enrollment Classes

It was noted that there was no official University policy regarding cancellation of low enrollment classes. Options for low enrollment classes included teaching the course as part of a regular teaching load, teaching the course as an overload or not teaching the course. Professor Welch suggested addressing the issue as part of a broader analysis of faculty productivity currently being completed by the Deans for the Provost.

Professor Goodman acknowledged the problem of low enrollment classes. He emphasized that students needed courses for timely completion of degree requirements. He stated that he would be happy to address the point and that it was important to insure that students receive proper credit. He did not recommend offering any course with low enrollment as an Independent Study. Professor Wooldridge stated that the problem centered on low enrollment classes being closed and faculty members offering the material through Independent Study (499). He emphasized that the faculty members were providing needed courses as Independent Studies.

Professor Welch questioned if a faculty member would be expected to teach another course in place of a closed course due to low enrollment. Professor Jameson stated that it was important to decide how to consider a low enrollment course counted as part of faculty workload. She stated that if the decision was unilateral, without faculty input, small courses could erroneously be considered a "frill". She stated that it was important to think through the academic implications. Professor Wooldridge recommended that the problem be "cleared up".

Professor Malone questioned the role of the registrar in the matter of low enrollment classes. He referred to the Undergraduate Catalog and hypothesized whether an Independent Study offered because a student needed the course to graduate would duplicate the regularly scheduled course. Professor Meidinger suggested that policies could lead to consequences.

Professor Welch proposed that the issue of low enrollment classes could be raised in the context of faculty workload and productivity at the meeting of April 10, 1996. He stated that Professor Johnstone's paper would be examined and that wide discussion would be encouraged.

ITEM 7: Sesquicentennial Update

The Sesquicentennial was not discussed due to time constraints.

ITEM 8: Old Business

There was no discussion of Old Business.

ITEM 9: New Business

There was no discussion of New Business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Ann Sellers

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Those present:

University Officers: N. Goodman

Senate Officers: C. Welch, C. Sellers

Architecture & Planning: G. Danford

Arts & Letters: J. Fradin

Dental Medicine: G. Ferry

Educational Opportunity Center: S. Bennett

Engineering & Applied Sciences: R. Wetherhold

Graduate School of Education: R. Stevenson

Law: E. Meidinger

Management: R. Ramesh

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: B. Albin, H. Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: M. Churchill, P. Eberlein

Nursing: P. Wooldridge

Social Sciences: M. Farrell, D. Henderson

SUNY Senators: M. Jameson, D. Malone, P. Nickerson

University Libraries: J. Adams

GUESTS:

Academic Affairs Director: L. Cornwall

Reporter: S. Cox

OTHER GUESTS: P. Gold, R. Noll, T. Schroeder

Those excused:

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: M. Acara

Pharmacy: N.

Those absent:

Arts & Letters: M. Hyde