

# **FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of February 18, 2004**

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18, 2004 , in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following **agenda** :

1. Report of the Chair
2. Report of the President/Provost
3. Academic issues that the FS would like to be considered – Academic Affairs
4. Update on UB alumni issues – R. Davies
  
5. Old/New business
  
6. Executive session (if needed)
  
7. Adjournment

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

Chair Peter Nickerson reported:

- No one from SUNY counsel is able to attend the March 2 nd Faculty Senate (FS) meeting, so we're left without an agenda item. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the meeting be cancelled.
- The Teaching & Learning Committee presented a successful program, "Student Perspectives on Teaching and Learning," on February 13 th .

- The Computer Services Committee met and discussed numerous issues including downloading of copyrighted music and video files. It is also reviewing a policy draft regarding printing at public computer sites. An academic freedom issue was raised, but we need to find a chairperson to reactivate the FS Academic Freedom & Responsibility Committee.
- The Student Life Committee met with Vice President Dennis Black and Dean of Students Barbara Ricotta about the activities of the division. A SUNY conference on dealing with disruptive students will be held in Syracuse . One of the issues involves what students with laptop computers in wireless classrooms are viewing.

## **Item 2: Report of the President/Provost**

Dr. John Simpson reported that the provost search is going very well. Several good candidates have already been identified and will be invited for preliminary interviews soon.

During a recent visit to Albany , Dr. Simpson met with SUNY Chancellor Robert King and the Board of Trustees. He stressed the importance of our operating and capital budgets, and made a case for enhancing the role of the UB Council so it can function more like a local board of trustees.

UB is getting sold short because its ranking in *U. S. News & World Report* is lower than it should be. All rankings are flawed systems, but people pay attention to them, so we need to deal with that reality. We'll be focusing on improving areas of the university that will make a difference in how we get ranked.

#### Questions & comments:

- UB doesn't control what data is provided for rankings. The data are submitted directly from SUNY Central. (Adams-Volpe)
- UB gets sold short in rankings, but we often sell ourselves short, too. The UB Alumni Association hasn't been very aggressive in the past. That has improved, but we all should do more to promote UB and make students and alumni feel more involved with the university. (Brazeau)
- Increasing the UB Council's involvement in academic decision-making might be a good thing, but it's important to remember that Council members, like the SUNY Board of Trustees, are political appointments made by the governor. (Baumer)

#### **Item 3: Academic issues that the Faculty Senate would like to be considered – K. Grant, M. Thompson, N. Kaars, B. Del Genio**

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA) Kerry Grant described the responsibilities and authority of his office, which is an amalgamation of two former offices of vice provosts for undergraduate and graduate education. The provost is the chief academic officer at UB, and the Office of the VPAA acts as the surrogate for dealing with all academic affairs matters. The delegation of authority is absolute, and all appeals of VPAA decisions would have to go through either a committee or legal process.

Undergraduate affairs are managed in the Office of the VPAA, and graduate affairs are dealt with in the Graduate School . The Office of the VPAA is currently working with the FS Grading Committee to make undergraduate and graduate grievance policies more alike.

Academic Affairs has a high regard for accountability. Public institutions such as UB are subject to the constraints of the U. S. Constitution. Private institutions, however, are not accountable to the same standards. Tenure, after it is earned at a public institution, for example, is regarded as faculty member's property right, but at private institutions it is a legal contractual agreement.

UB's accountability covers equal protection and opportunity, due process, educational quality, and academic services. Every student must be treated equally in the conduct of all academic affairs. What is available to one student must be available to all, and what is demanded of one student must be demanded of all. If a faculty member offers a student an opportunity to change a grade by doing extra work, that same opportunity must be available to everyone in the class. If that's going to be the case, it's a good idea to say so in the class syllabus.

Due process is a clearly defined set of rules governing issues such as academic integrity charges by a faculty member against a student or a grievance against a faculty member by a student. UB is legally liable for any violation of due process.

Academic Affairs ensures educational quality by overseeing the development of new courses or changes to existing ones. There are undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees that review course proposals for consistent quality.

UB has a legal obligation to inform students when they are not making satisfactory program toward a degree or not meeting graduation requirements. Academic Affairs works closely with FS and the Office of Enrollment & Planning to establish and implement policies, guidelines, and deadlines. During the past year, they've dealt with academic standards for probation/dismissal, and deadlines for incomplete grades and resignations from courses.

Many policies are the result of FS recommendations. FS can also recommend that policies be changed. This could be done to more closely align policies that differ for undergraduate and graduate students unless there are good reasons why they should remain different.

Questions & comments:

- The university catalog is regarded as a contract, but perhaps a note should be added that the rules are subject to change. There may be long-time students still operating under old catalogs. When departments make changes regarding programs or credit hours, are currently enrolled students grandfathered to the prior guidelines? (Schack)
- The guiding principle for such decisions is whether a change will unreasonably affect a student's path toward graduation. If it does, the former guidelines are grandfathered. Academic Affairs always tries to consider whether changes might harm a student's progress, embarrass the university, or have any other unfair consequences. (Grant)
- Perhaps the catalog should include a date after which information is subject to change, so long-term students can't base their progress on the catalog they were admitted under indefinitely. (Schack)

- A statement has been added in the latest edition of the catalog that notifies students that the university reserves the right to make changes to courses and guidelines. The original catalog could still be applicable if a student has been continually enrolled for a long time, but a student who leaves and re-enrolls will be readmitted under the conditions of the new catalog. Likewise, students who change departments while they're at UB are subject to the departmental guidelines that were in effect when they switched. (Kaars)
- The university doesn't want to make changes that harm a student's progress toward graduation. There will never be new policies put into effect in the middle of a semester. (Del Genio)
- Faculty orientation didn't cover most of the useful information that we've heard about today. This would have been more beneficial than the information that was presented. (Brazeau)
- That's a good comment that will be shared with the orientation planners. (Grant)
- Some graduate students take a long time to complete their degrees. The Graduate School (GS) views credentialing differently for students who take longer than 10 years. Some disciplines change so much that courses taken a decade ago are outdated. Conferring a degree should indicate something about a student's knowledge at the time a degree is conferred. Students are required to petition the GS for special consideration if their time to degree is longer than 10 years. Justification is decided on a case-by-case basis. The nature of the discipline is a factor. (Thompson)

#### **Item 4: Update on UB alumni issues – R. Davies**

Associate Vice President Robert Davies discussed the role and activities of UB's Office of Alumni Relations, which is part of the Office of University Advancement. Their motto is: Communicate – Connect – Involve – Engage. Alumni Relations serves UB by reaching out to

alumni and involving them in university interests. It also works by promoting legislative action and mentorship opportunities on behalf of UB graduates.

There are over 176,650 living UB alumni 94,607 live in the state, and 56,682 of them live in western New York . UB graduates are in all 50 states and 122 countries. Only 14,000 or so are without contact information.

The Alumni Association is a volunteer-led organization with 20 active chapters in the U.S. and 11 in other countries. The newest chapter is here at UB for the 2,000 alumni who work at the university. The chapters organize reunions and other events that help to keep graduates connected to their alma mater. The Alumni Center Web site URL is <http://www.alumni.buffalo.edu>.

**Item 5: Old/New business**

None

**Item 6: Executive session (if needed)**

None

## **Item 7: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Hepfer

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

## **Attendance (P = present; E = excused; A = absent)**

Chair: P. Nickerson (P)

Secretary: W. Hepfer (P)

Architecture & Planning: S. Danford (A)

Arts & Sciences: S. Bruckenstein (P), M. Churchill (P), R. Hoeing (P), S. Schack (P), K. Takeuchi (P)

Dental Medicine: M. Donley (P)

Education: L. Malave (P)

Engineering & Applied Sciences: J. Jensen (P), R. Mayne (P)

Informatics: F. Tutzauer (E)

Institutional/General: O. Mixon (P)

Law: L. Swartz (A)

Management: J. Boot (P)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: J. Hassett (P), G. Logue (A), B. Murray (E), J. Sellick (A)

Nursing: P. Wooldridge (A)

Pharmacy: G. Brazeau (P)

Public Health & Health Professions: C. Crespo (A)

Social Work: Barbara Rittner (E)

SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe (P), W. Baumer (P), M. Kramer (P), P. Nickerson (P)

University Libraries: CA Fabian (P)

University officers: J. Simpson (P)

Guests: E. Benedict (Spectrum), D. Budniewski (Reporter), M. Cohen (FS past-chair), B. Del Genio (Academic Affairs), K. Grant (Academic Affairs), N. Kaars (Academic Affairs), L. Labinski (Prof. Staff Sen.), C. Ng (Student Assn.), M. Thompson (Graduate School)