

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 20, 2004

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, 2004, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. Report of the Chair
2. Report of the President/Provost
3. Report of the Teaching & Learning Committee – P. McCartney, P. Stevens, D. Penniman
4. Report of the Search Committee for the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs – N. Olsen
5. Charging the Governance Committee – M. Kramer
6. Old/New business
7. Executive session (if needed)
8. Adjournment

Item 1: Report of the Chair

Chair Nickerson reported:

- The November 2nd Faculty Senate (FS) meeting will be about the current status of UB's academic planning. Provost Tripathi and Chief of Staff Willis have been invited.
- The Graduate School Executive Committee (GSEC) met last week. They're in the final stages of changing the appointment of new tenure-track assistant professors to the graduate faculty. It will henceforth be automatic. The current procedure will still be in effect for clinical, research, and other adjunct faculty.
- The GSEC is still discussing the outside reader policy. They were informed about FSEC's discussion, and it now seems likely that the reader can be from within the university, but from outside the department/program serving as the representative of the graduate dean on the committee.

- The workshops & interviews team of the Academic Support Services Committee would like to hear FSEC's views on how UB might become more efficient and effective. We'll try to schedule them a few weeks from now.

Item 2: Report of the President/Provost

None

Item 3: Report of the FS Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) – Patricia McCartney, Phillip Stevens, David Penniman

Professor McCartney, chair of the TLC, said that the group was concerned about the quality and consistency of distance education (DE) courses at UB, so a subcommittee headed by Professor Stevens was formed to collect information on how DE is handled here.

Professor Stevens reported that the subcommittee talked to numerous people during summer 2004 and found that many shared their concerns. There's no clear definition of what DE is, because "online" offerings range from having portions of a syllabus accessible via the Web, to fully interactive video, and myriad variations in between. Moreover, there doesn't seem to be much attention paid to it, since only one page of UB's Self-Study Report for the Middle States Accreditation Review even mentioned DE.

Dean Penniman agreed that the state of DE at UB is worrisome. He said the people involved in DE aren't talking about the same thing, they aren't talking to each other, and there's no institutional policy or strategy. UB needs to develop policies, therefore, so we can move forward and compare favorably with DE courses available elsewhere. DE is a growing field, and we could get left behind if we don't establish some policy guidelines and monitor the quality of what's being marketed.

Questions & comments:

- We need to make sure that DE courses provide the same or similar type of learning that traditional classroom courses do. (Schack)
- DE is usually much more expensive to offer than most administrators realize. (Brazeau)
- The committee that's being recommended should include continuing education staff from various units. Much expertise is already available at UB. (Donley)

There was a minor revision to the TLC's recommendations before the FSEC voted unanimously in favor of the following resolution:

1. establish a centralized process to assess and monitor all DE at UB that is associated with credit-bearing courses and credit-granting programs. Such monitoring should:
 - A. recognize two components: technology and conduct. DE technology at UB seems state-of-the-art, and the committee makes no specific recommendations in this area. It is the second component, conduct – and content – that concerns us.
 - B. include reports from the various units on their own DE activities, and certification that policy guidelines have been met;
2. authorize a committee to devise a uniform set of policy guidelines for the assessment and monitoring process. Such policy should state clearly that the content and execution of DE courses must satisfy the same expectations as traditional classroom courses, but will have to accommodate also issues of rights to and ownership of intellectual property. Presumably the finalized policy statements would go to the Faculty Senate for their approval and dissemination to the academic community.

Item 4: Report of the Search Committee for Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs – Nils Olsen

Professor Olsen, chair of the Search Committee, said that a position description was e-mailed to the UB faculty Listserv outlining the range of responsibilities and required qualifications for candidates for Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (VP-FA). The announcement solicited nominations and/or applications, and a few of the nominees agreed to apply for the position.

The VP-FA will be responsible for coordinating the faculty promotion/tenure process and creating and delivering services that assist in faculty retention and faculty development, special faculty hiring initiatives (such as spousal accommodations), and faculty recognition programs. The VP-FA will work closely with the President's Review Board (PRB) and the Center for Teaching & Learning Resources (CTLR).

Questions & comments:

- How much oversight will this position have over the PRB? (Kramer)
- The job will involve coordinating PRB activities rather than overseeing their deliberations. PRB will continue to function as an independent body. (Olsen)
- The position description is rather vague about duties, so there's a risk that applicants will have different expectations about what the job is. (Faran)
- The duties are non-specific because aspects of the job are negotiable, e.g., full-time or part-time, office location, etc.

Item 5: Charging the FS Governance Committee – Marilyn Kramer

Professor Kramer, chair of the Governance Committee, said that the group has spent the last few years trying to determine the extent to which an old FS resolution calling for the evaluation of deans was ever implemented. It's been difficult to get specific information, but, as far as she can ascertain, only a few deans ever went through the process, which now seems to have fallen into disuse.

The Committee needs new members and welcomes suggestions about how to proceed.

Questions & comments:

- There's a new administration now, so the committee should get more members and make new recommendations rather than spend more time trying to resurrect the old resolution. (Schack)

- Other SUNY campuses have dealt with similar situations, so perhaps the committee can benefit from their experiences. (Nickerson)
- The SUNY Senate Governance Committee is discussing a relevant case now, so something might come of that. (Kramer)
- Developing new recommendations seems like a big enough task for the committee to work on, so we won't expand the charge. FSEC will appoint additional members to the Governance Committee.

Item 6: Old/New business

Professor Baumer said that Interim Vice Provost for Research Genco had sent out an e-mail earlier today indicating that he was setting up two committees regarding centers and institutes. These committees are intended to address matters that could have been dealt with by FS committees. We should clarify who's responsible for what, because there appears to be some confusion.

Chair Nickerson said he'll invite Dr. Genco to attend an upcoming meeting so we can resolve any misunderstandings.

Item 7: Executive session (if needed)

There was an executive session

Item 8: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 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: GS. Danford (P)
Arts & Sciences: S. Bruckenstein (A), M. Churchill (P), J. Faran (P),
S. Schack (P), K. Takeuchi (E)
Dental Medicine: M. Donley (P)
Education: X. Liu (P)
Engineering & Applied Sciences: J. Jensen (P), R. Mayne (A)
Informatics: J. Ellison (A)
Institutional/General: O. Mixon (A)
Law: vacant
Management: C. Pegels (P)
Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: J. Evans (A), L. Harris (A), J.
Hassett (A), J. Sellick (P)
Nursing: P. Wooldridge (P)
Pharmacy: G. Brazeau (P)
Public Health & Health Professions: C. Crespo (E)
Social Work: Barbara Rittner (A)
SUNY Senators: W. Baumer (P), W. Coles (P), M. Kramer (P), P.
Nickerson (P)
University Libraries: C. Tysick (A)

Guests: P. Balzano (SA), A. Burgio (SA), M. Cochrane (Reporter), L.
Labinski (Prof. Staff Senate), P. McCartney (Teaching & Learning
Cmte.), L. Muster (SA), N. Olsen (Search Cmte.), D. Penniman
(Informatics), P. Stevens (Teaching & Learning Cmte.)