

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 21, 2001 - (approved)
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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on March 21, 2001 in Capen 567 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the minutes of February 21 and February 28, 2001](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the President/Provost](#)
4. [Focus on the Office of Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School - Dr. Kerry Grant](#)
5. [Faculty Senate Committee on Grading - Class Absence Policy - Professor Baumer, Chair](#)
6. Old/new business

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of February 21 and February 28, 2001

The minutes of February 21 and February 28, 2001, were approved. **Item 2: Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that:

1. for the second time this academic year, he was invited to attend the meeting of the Provost with the Deans
 - the Associate Vice President for University Libraries discussed recent developments and directions for the Libraries in a presentation very similar to her presentation to the Faculty Senate Committee on Information and Library Resources; plan to schedule the Committee for an Executive Committee meeting in the near future
 - the Deans approved the name change for the School of Informatics
 - the Deans discussed the University Calendar and revisions to it proposed by Professor Baumer; President Greiner has decided against making any changes to the Calendar for Fall 2001
 - the policy for approved places to deposit money for university activities was reviewed

2. Professor Nyberg, Chair of the President's Review Board, and Senior Vice Provost Levy will discuss the promotion process and answer questions on April 23, 2001 at 3:00 PM, in Room 330 of the Student Union
3. the Provost and the Vice President for Research have developed a new policy on the distribution of royalties (other than book royalties); the Committee on Research and Creative Activity, to which the policy has been referred, will report on the policy to the FSEC on April 18, 2001
4. the Professional Staff Senate met; he invited Dr. Coles to report on the meeting
 - Dean Wright made a wonderful presentation on the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (Dr. Coles)
5. Professor Peterson, Chair of the Faculty Senate Computer Services Committee, has proposed members for the Administrative Services Advisory Board; he circulated the proposed names for the FSEC to review
6. he followed up on Professor Swartz's request for clarification on whether someone without UB identification could access BISON and learned that temporary id will be issued
 - Professor Swartz was concerned about the loss of privacy in searching BISON because of the requirement that BISON users identify themselves for authentication purposes (Professor Adams-Volpe)
 - necessary to identify oneself as a security precaution (Professor Nickerson)
7. the following Senate committees have been active: the Faculty Promotions and Tenure Committee met and will report next week on the Faculty Workload Policy; the Research and Creative Activities Committee is analyzing its survey, heard about technology transfer and provisional patents and has begun discussion of the new policy on royalty distribution; the Budget Priorities Committee and the Computer Services Committee will meet on Monday
 - old royalty policy is available on the web for comparison to the new policy (Provost Capaldi)

There were questions for the Chair:

- is the Bylaws Committee looking into how the 25% cap on the number of Senate seats any school may have will affect the College of Arts & Sciences? (Professor Baumer)
- the Bylaws Committee discussed the matter and will meet again after the Elections Committee has done preliminary work on the actual count of Voting Faculty (Professor Kramer)
- the Bylaws Committee will ask Professor Baumer to speak at its next meeting (Professor Malone)

Item 3: Report of the Provost

The Provost is spending much of her time answering questions from the New York Legislature on the Center for Excellence in Bioinformatics. In the process she is getting an intensive introduction to New York politics.

In order to avoid further across the board budget cuts for administrative services, a group is analyzing how to make administration more effective. The objective is to do transactions on line and only once. IT has been focused on teaching applications; some attention must now be given to administrative functions. Student services will also benefit from IT applications. Changes will take about five years to come together, but in the end UB will transact business more quickly and accurately.

There were questions for the Provost:

- who is on the analysis group? (Dr. Coles)
- Senior Vice President Wagner, Chief Information Officer Innus, Vice Provost Sullivan, Vice President Black, Associate Vice President Seitz and myself (Provost Capaldi)
- are you looking at storing records electronically? (Professor Booth)
- yes; information is currently very difficult to get; need a system that will accurately reflect what is going on (Provost Capaldi)
- is the stock market slide expected to affect the SUNY budget? (Professor Malone)
- state projections are that state revenue won't be too badly affected (Provost Capaldi)
- the market slide will probably deter some faculty retirements; any chance that food services in Harriman Hall could remain open for the summer and coordinate breaks with the South Campus schedule? (Professor Easley)
- the Faculty/Student Association expects a certain volume of business and negotiates opening and closing dates based on past history (Professor Nickerson)

Item 4: Focus on the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School

Vice Provost Grant described the newly created Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs/Dean of the Graduate School as combining the roles of the former Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education/Dean of the Graduate School and also being responsible for brush fire suppression. The increasing linkage of undergraduate and graduate affairs through the medium of joint baccalaureate and master's degrees and the development of strategies to capitalize on having a unique combination of the largest College of Arts and Sciences and the most comprehensive collection of professional schools in SUNY make the merger timely.

The staff of the former Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education/Dean of the Graduate School will be responsible for developing undergraduate and graduate academic policy, implementing graduate policy, working with various governance structures, and making sure that the academic aspects of student life work properly. The staff of the former Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs reports to Vice Provost Sullivan and will continue to be responsible for implementing undergraduate academic policy.

Vice Provost Grant intends to work closely with the Faculty Senate and its committees. He has already met with the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, Professor Gentile, to discuss the Office of Teaching Effectiveness.

The Vice Provost praised his staff as being extremely knowledgeable about and sensitive to the needs of the various graduate programs. For example, the rules on currency of courses that count towards advancement of candidacy, though somewhat narrow as written, are applied intelligently to fit differing circumstances. The Vice Provost hopes to be able to synchronize the written policies with the actual practice.

There will be no immediate changes in the Office's decision-making structures, policies or practices. There will, however, be a change in style of communication, moving away from a sense of "personal determination around issues", to a thorough explanation of relevant policies and what needs to be done to make a petition successful.

On the undergraduate side, his Office is looking at the tone and temper of letters sent to students regarding academic progress. He would like such communications to convey a sense of personal concern or congratulations and to be signed by academic officers rather than staff.

There were questions from the floor:

- given your responsibility for assessment, will you be documenting what UB has done, is doing and will do? (Professor Malone)
- the Faculty Senate and a Provostal committee have produced relevant documents; as mandated by the MOU we will undertake assessment in a meaningful but reasonable way; will also look at teaching effectiveness and teaching evaluations (Vice Provost Grant)
- for accreditation reports need assessment of both general education and majors (Professor Malone)
- would be helpful to also look at communications with newly recruited faculty to make them friendlier (Professor Easley)
- Senior Vice President Wagner is doing so; for example, will be establishing a UB e-mail account for newly recruited faculty and sending them a parking hang tag (Provost Capaldi)
- need University wide orientation for new faculty and staff (Dr. Coles)
- make suggestions to Senior Vice Provost Levy who is now responsible for new faculty orientation (Provost Capaldi)
- how will you ensure communication between the graduate and undergraduate side of the Office? (Professor Booth)
- will focus on information sharing rather than having a common social environment; will rely on Myron Thompson to serve as the bridge; much of the communication will flow from the graduate to the undergraduate side, e.g., changing undergraduate to graduate status for students in joint degree programs; a common concern on both the undergraduate and

graduate side is assisting faculty and graduate assistants to become more effective teachers; a related issue is the need to increase the level of faculty support and mentoring given to graduate students (Vice Provost Grant)

- what are your feelings on requiring faculty to be periodically re-appointed to the Graduate School? (Professor Malone)
- found strong support in the Graduate School Executive Committee for re-appointment requirements, especially from Roswell Park; the question is still open (Vice Provost Grant)
- will you be overseeing graduate recruitment and admissions? (Dr. Coles)
- they remain the purview of the Schools; there is, however, a serious need for better information systems to track number of students, etc. for administrative purposes (Vice Provost Grant)
- at least in the College of Arts & Sciences there is dissatisfaction among directors of graduate studies that faculty judgments about such things as progress towards a degree are frequently questioned (Professor Bono)
- agree that rules on progress toward a degree should be flexible, but faculty should be prepared to define a discipline specific pattern and then enforce it; as to the broader issue of second guessing faculty, there have been instances in which faculty judgments have been embarrassingly faulty and have lacked any credibility; have to push a sense of accountability to the faculty (Vice Provost Grant)
- issue a standing invitation to Vice Provost Grant to come to Senate meetings and help avoid situations in which the Graduate School has problems with resolutions of the Senate (Professor Nickerson)

Item 5: Faculty Senate Committee on Grading - Class Absence Policy

Professor Baumer, Chair of the Grading Committee, introduced the Committee's draft policy on class absence. The policy states that faculty should clearly explain what their policies on class absence are, and that faculty have an obligation to make reasonable accommodations for justified student absences.

There were questions for Professor Baumer:

- how would you answer a faculty member who says the requirement that exams be offered only during regular class times forces him to also schedule a make-up exam during regular class time, thus causing the student to miss a lecture to take the make-up? (Professor Fournier)
- believe that requirement applies only to class exams, not to make-up exams; would personally tell him to use some common sense (Professor Baumer)
- technology may help with scheduling make-ups; have had success using UB Learns to give a make-up exam on line (Dr. Durand)
- policy specifies using the student grievance procedure to resolve problems, but there may be cases that require a resolution before the absence so that the student isn't subjected to stress; suggest adding the option of immediate recourse to the Office of Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- adverse decision can be always be appealed after the absence, so don't agree that there is any need for 24 hour resolution; if there were such need, doubt that any procedure could always provide it; a better approach would be to require faculty to accommodate certain types of absences (Professor Baumer)
- suggest striking provision 2 which permits a faculty member to specify in the class syllabus an activity for which there is no feasible alternative or make-up (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- there are activities for which there legitimately are no alternatives; sufficient to give students notice of that at the beginning of the class (Professor Malone)
- don't need to state that an instructor's actions may be appealed; that is a general and well known policy (Professor Fournier)
- consider adding a statement that there will be no academic penalty for participating in a University sponsored activity (Professor Malone)
- the Committee's policy stipulates that faculty be given a week's notice of an absence which should make it easier to arrange an accommodation (Dr. Coles)
- students should resolve conflicts at the very beginning of a course (Professor Fournier)
- absences caused by unforeseen circumstances should also routinely be accommodated (Professor Baumer)

- critical that the instructor spell out his absence policy in the class syllabus (Professor Malone)
- believe the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs would be able to respond to problem situations within a 24 hour period (Vice Provost Grant)
- policy should not include the “no feasible alternate” provision; some alternative is always possible, even if only discounting the activity when giving the course grade (Professor Sridhar)
- if the “no feasible alternative” provision and the “absent such notice, no penalty” provisions are removed, effectively, a faculty member can be told what grade to give a student; better approach is to require the faculty member to make accommodation for a justified absence (Professor Baumer)
- believe the Faculty Senate policy on absences adopted about 10 years ago already states that a student can not be academically penalized for an absence due to a University sponsored activity; afraid this draft weakens that policy (Professor Fournier)
- believe there is consensus to rephrase provision 2 to say that if there is an activity for which there is no feasible alternative which a student misses because of University business or an emergency, the student will not be academically penalized; also believe there is consensus for removing the reference to the student grievance procedures (Professor Baumer)
- can’t legislate against mean faculty, but this recommendation gives students some protection (Professor Noble)

There was a motion (seconded) to include the Committee’s recommendation on the agenda for the April 10 meeting of the Faculty Senate. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Provost Grant raised a related issue. In order for a grade to be legally changed administratively, the institution must have a process in place that establishes how and under what circumstances a grade may be changed in the absence of or against the wishes of the instructor. UB lacks such a process and on rare occasions a grade has been changed surreptitiously to avoid serious harm to a student. He suggested that the Grading Committee draft an official process with which faculty could be comfortable.

There was a motion (seconded) to forward Vice Provost Grant’s suggestion to the Grading Committee.

- the Grading Committee should consider making departments responsible for changing grades rather than placing the responsibility in administrative hands (Professor Fournier)

The motion passed unanimously.

There being no old/new business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn McMann Kramer

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Present:

Chair: P. Nickerson

Secretary: M. Kramer

Parliamentarian: D. Malone

Arts & Sciences: W. Baumer, J. Bono, C. Fournier

Dental Medicine: M. Easley

Engineering & Applied Sciences: R. Sridhar

Health Related Professions: G. Farkas

School of Informatics: J. Ellison

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: B. Noble, C. Pruet

SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe, H. Durand, P. Nickerson

University Libraries: A. Booth

University Officers: E. Capaldi, Provost **Guests:** K. Grant, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs/Dean of the Graduate School

W. Coles, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

J. Lewandowski, *Reporter*

K. Purdy, *The Spectrum*

K. Levy, Senior Vice Provost

Excused: Management: J. Boot

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: S. Spurgeon

SUNY Senator: J. Boot **Excused: Graduate School of Education:**

L. Malave **Absent: Architecture:** R. Shibley

Arts & Sciences: M. Jardine

Law: L. Swartz

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: A. El Sohl

Nursing: E. Perese

Pharmacy: R. Madejski