

## **FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of September 18, 1996 (approved)**

**revised 10/3/95)**

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The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM in Room 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of April 17, 1996](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the Task Force on Quality](#)
4. [Report of the Graduate School Executive Committee](#)
5. [Report of the Affirmative Action Committee](#)

### **Item 1: Approval of Minutes**

The Chair asked for any changes to the Minutes of April 17, 1996. Professor Jameson disputed a sentence which stated that President Greiner "replied that he had written to the student leadership". President Greiner published a position statement in the Reporter; Professor Jameson argued that this does not count as communicating with the students, since most students claim not to read the Reporter. Pending alternate wording to this sentence, the minutes were approved.

### **Item 2: Report of the Chair**

Professor Welch received a call last week from the Chair of Statistics, who, being deeply concerned about the proposed merger of his department into the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, asked about the role of faculty governance. Professor Welch replied that changes in departmental structure occur periodically at the University, but normally through a process of consultation in accord with the bylaws of a particular unit. Professor Welch brought to his attention the governance procedures of the

School of Medicine, whose bylaws stipulate the faculty's participation in considering proposed changes, including the organizational structure of the School. The matter is now presumably under consideration by members of the Faculty Council of the Graduate School.

Professor Meacham suggested that the Senate take some public action to re-affirm its responsibility in this area; he was concerned about setting a precedent if the Senate were not to react, even if it did consider the merger perfectly reasonable. The Chair reminded him of two mergers, one within the Dental School, which were accomplished the previous year without the Senate's involvement, in large part because the consultation procedures were acceptable to all concerned. Professor Miller remarked that it was a pity that the matter did not come before the Senate, since the merger in the Dental School was not totally one-sided or harmonious. Professor Nickerson thought the FSEC should tell the administration that such recommendations should first come before the FSEC before any final decisions are made; the Chair replied that we should raise this issue with the Provost during next week's executive session.

Professor Danford raised the possibility that the absence of complaint in such mergers may be attributable not to a lack of objection, but rather to intimidation by the administration. Ms. Lee complained that, in her efforts to establish an Ethnic Studies program, she was "catching flak" from Dean Grant, and wondered what role the Senate could play in this matter. The Chair replied that new programs are usually set up within the individual units, and that this was more an issue for Arts & Letters than for the Senate.

Professor Schuel wondered whether it would be appropriate for Professor Welch to write a letter to the Chair of the Faculty Council, asking him to notify the FSEC of any further developments of mergers. The Chair thought it better to await a response, and assured him that the Council had been notified of our concern. Professor Schuel noted that this matter was important not only for the Medical School, but for all parts of the institution. Professor Bruckenstein raised the issue of mergers involving separate faculty units; the Chair replied that that is clearly a Senate concern.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the Voting Faculty meeting (which he encouraged the faculty to attend) on September 24, the executive session with the Provost on September 25, and the absence of an FSEC meeting on October 2 due to the University Convocation.

A student had asked Professor Welch about the possibility of having student representation on the Individual Admissions Committee (IAC). The Chair replied that students normally do not sit in on meetings where decisions regarding applications are made, but wondered afterwards whether this had been an appropriate response. Professor Miller asked whether any other departments had student representation on similar committees; it was verified for the Medical School, Political Science, and English. Professor Bruckenstein wondered how many applications were processed on the average, and how the decisions to admit were reached. Professor Malone, as a former member of the IAC, explained briefly the various rationales for specialized admissions, adding that, perhaps because of the nature of specific personal evaluations, students were not represented.

Although he in general would allow student participation on various committees, Professor Meacham thought it would be inappropriate for the IAC: First, faculty members do not allow it among themselves in cases of promotion and tenure; secondly, the confidentiality of students would be at risk. Professor Welch agreed, citing family problems (which can be cited as argument for admission for a student not meeting all the "regular criteria") as a specific example. Professor Nickerson thought that graduate students could serve and, judging from his own experience, tend to do a good job. Professor Frisch pointed out that "reading between the lines" in specialized applications might be difficult for faculty who have been away from high school for so long, and that perhaps undergraduates could offer crucial insights. Professor Miller thought that perhaps graduate students could be allowed, but agreed with Professor Meacham that undergraduates should not be. Regarding the privacy issue, Professor Wetherhold argued that applications are assumed to be confidential, and that the university is ultimately responsible should that confidentiality be breached. Professor Meacham drew an analogy to school prayer; student input could always be sought, but not mandated.

In a straw vote, the FSEC was strongly in favor of student participation in policy issues concerning admissions, but strongly opposed to student input into individual cases. Professor Frisch said we should seek a number of creative ways of including student input while protecting confidentiality. The

Chair intended to bring this issue to the attention of the IAC and await its response. Professor Hare added that, if there is a need for current information on life in the high schools, the IAC could surely have regular consultations with those schools or their advisors; Professor Malone did not recall any particular case in which the IAC resorted to this, but saw no reason why it could not.

Nominating ballots for the new chair of the Faculty Senate would be sent soon to the Voting Faculty, which this time includes all Geographic Full-Time members; the Elections Committee is currently working out the complications of determining the exact number of Voting Faculty members.

The Bookstore Task Force, chaired by Vice-President Palmer, had not met for the past two years; the Chair asked whether the Senate should urge the Task Force to be reconstituted. The FSEC responded affirmatively.

The Chair also asked for nominations of two faculty members to serve on the Calendar Commission. The Committee nominated Professor Wetherhold; Professor volunteered to serve also.

### **Item 3: Report of the Task Force on Quality**

Professor Malone reported that the Task Force, which consisted of three deans, three Distinguished Professors, three department chairs, two graduate students and a few members of the administration, had met last week. Questions were distributed to the individual members, asking them their opinions about what was being done right, what wrong at UB. Vice-Provost Triggles asked the members to submit specific responses by the end of September, which would then be shared with the Task Force. Professor Malone was not sure whether the report would be published, but noted that Vice-Provost Triggles's report on the future of the University would be less optimistic than a previous version.

### **Item 4: Report of the Graduate School Executive Committee (GSEC)**

Professor Nickerson reported that the GSEC had also met last week, and began with a "considerable discussion" of program reviews, which had been suspended for the last several years. The Committee discussed the purposes and goals of such reviews, as well as priorities as to when/how a program should be reviewed; these include a change or shift in the direction of a program and the departure of faculty. The GSEC is also planning to look into what happens to the reviews once they have been received and filed.

The Presidential and Woodburn Fellowships, he continued, were not working as desired. Not all the fellowship recipients are graduating, and the process takes too much time to do centrally, hence there is talk of decentralizing it. In addition, the resources are limited, and we must be sure to use them wisely.

Other items under discussion are (i) the criteria for the outside reader for a Ph.D. dissertation and (ii) the criteria for Graduate Faculty, for example, whether the members of the Graduate Faculty should be periodically evaluated.

Professor Frisch asked if one of the issues discussed included whether we need a Graduate Faculty at all; he and others found the institution somewhat archaic, given the number of procedures already in place at UB for assuring the quality of the faculty. Professor Nickerson replied that this was not "on the front burner", although it has come up for discussion.

Professor Jameson asked Professor Malone whether the Task Force on Quality has a specific charge. Professor Malone replied that there was no specific charge. Professor Ramesh asked whether the GSEC was considering any alternative configurations for managing the scholarships program; he also wanted to know the attrition rate of those supported on fellowships. Professor Nickerson said that the attrition rate is "considerable", and that many alternatives are being considered. Professor Schuel, referring to Vice-Provost's Triggles's statement that we have 12-18 months to make sweeping changes at this University, asked whether anyone at this campus had a clue as to what is to be done. Professor Welch suggested we raise this with the Provost at next week's executive session. Professor Wetherhold corrected Professor Schuel's reference, saying that Triggles had said we have 12-18 months *to make a plan for those changes*.

## **Item 5: Report of the Affirmative Action Committee**

As ground information for the report and ensuing discussion, Professor Welch cited some statistics:

- of the nearly 1850 faculty employed at UB, only 484 (26%) are women;
- at the Assistant Professor level, 100 are female, 145 are male, but at the level of Full Professor, 89.3% are male,
- of the entire faculty, 84.6% are White, only 3.3% are African- American, and about 9.4% are Asian.

The data clearly show a huge disparity in the percentages of female faculty in the different ranks; they also show a faculty that is non-representative of the population of New York State and the United States in general. The Chair noted that these and other data, as well as a new policy on the decentralization of affirmative action, are among the many items which the Affirmative Action Committee will need to consider.

Senior Vice-President Wagner reported that one of the tasks of the Committee was to review the OFCCP (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs) guidelines, a set of institutional requirements which must be met and maintained; a second task, as part of a charge from President Greiner, is to recommend campus policy that will advance the Affirmative Action goals of this campus. President Greiner had challenged the Committee a year ago to take a hard look at existing policies and procedures, and to consider what in them needs to be changed in order to get results. Senior Vice-President Wagner circulated among the FSEC copies of a report on the "Distribution of Affirmative Action Responsibilities" and welcomed discussion.

Professor Welch noted that these are issues in which the Senate would take a keen interest, and reminded the FSEC of its duty to discuss any matter related to Affirmative Action. He said we should also be concerned about the various unit plans, to insure that the faculty are partners working to

develop plans for recruitment and retention of faculty and professional staff that would not only meet our formal legal obligations but also reflect our society as a whole.

Professor Eberlein, past chair of the Affirmative Action Committee, summarized two points for the Senate to consider: first, the issue of sports for women and the Title IX clause, and secondly, equal salaries for minorities and women in the various schools and departments. Professor Acara asked if that were the charge for the Committee; Professor Welch said that the FSEC would draft its charge.

Professor Schuel asked whether our sister institutions were doing any better in terms of the decentralization procedures. Ms. Denton replied that there no evaluations of how good the programs were, because they were so new, but that redistribution was the key to all the programs concerned. Mr. Toscana-Cantaffa asked to what extent affirmative action extended to the employment of Teaching and Graduate Assistants. Senior Vice-President Wagner replied that it applied to all. Professor Frisch wondered what the expected impact of the responsibility distribution would be on this campus, i.e., which problems would be fixed, what outcomes would be encouraged? Senior Vice-President Wagner replied that previously, there had been no clear understanding of where the responsibilities lay; it was generally understood that "somebody" was doing it. Yet until we identify where the individual responsibilities lie, it is very hard to hold anyone accountable. The goal, then, was to provide some clarity in the organization. Professor Frisch then asked if it would be fair to say that the report was really about the distribution of accountability rather than responsibility. Senior Vice-President Wagner affirmed this.

Professor Jameson, following up on Professor Frisch's comment, thought we should articulate a plan on the distribution of goals for Affirmative Action. She also referred to a document prepared by former Provost Bloch on the "decay rate" of junior faculty, and questioned whether it was not one of the conclusions of that study that women and minority suffer a greater turnover rate than white male faculty. Vice-Provost Fischer confirmed that. As he understood it, Professor Bruckenstein said there were two groups involved here: one that monitors and reports, and another which implements the policy. He insisted that if we do in fact implement the policy stated in Senior Vice-President Wagner's report, then those conducting a search for a faculty member and those voting on tenure must see the document and be made aware of its implications.

Professor Kramer had reservations about the phraseology of the document, most of it being almost "boilerplate", and was unsure of what certain phrases really meant. Professor Meacham, although he appreciated the report and the efforts of the Committee, claimed there were too few "action" statements in the report; with its present wording, one could frame it as an official policy -- successfully -- without really doing anything to change the situation. His second objection was that the report reads like one used "to minimally cover ourselves on Affirmative Action", rather than one which states our desire to strive for excellence in this matter. He reminded the Committee that, 4 or 5 years from now, we must be able to look and determine what we did wrong or right in our efforts to advance affirmative action. Senior Vice- President Wagner replied that he will supply some action statements which people can translate into what they should be doing. Addressing Professor Meacham's second comment, Senior Vice- President Wagner mentioned that there are a number of pilot groups working on developing more specific goals to be achieved.

Vice-Provost Fischer, addressing Professor Meacham's sentiment that there ought to be some action, suggested that the FSEC "is a good place for this to happen", that it could provide the impetus to get all involved in distributing the responsibilities. He also preferred to view this as a professional responsibility, not just a political or moral one.

Professor Miller emphasized that we need to know the reasons for the attrition at the associate professor level; some of the better ones, for example, get enticed elsewhere. In addition, he wanted to know the exact figures on attrition. He also stressed, echoing Vice-President Fischer, that this is a faculty responsibility, not one reserved for a particular group of individuals such as deans or chairs. Professor Acara admitted that there is a whole list of specifics which needs to be developed. One item which the Committee had discussed concerned the annual reports from the individual units, which were to specify what their Affirmative Action plans were, how they were developed, and how successful they were -- these she considered this crucial in determining whether and what actions were being undertaken.

Professor Malone wondered if Vice-Provost Fischer could assemble data on the promotion rates of minorities and women, broken down by decanal units. Vice-Provost Fischer replied that he would need to get the data. Professor Acara said that that data would be in the report from the Task Force on

Women, which states that it takes longer for women to be promoted, and that there are additional disparities in gender and salary.

Professor Bruckenstein argued that, in view of the limitations on the number of new hires in the university, there would be no significant influence on the distribution of ranks among the faculty. The Chair strongly disagreed, pointing out that one-sixth of the faculty were of age 60 or older, and that we can expect a turnover in the next ten years ranging from one quarter to one third of the present faculty. This, he claimed, offered an extraordinary opportunity to rebuild and to prepare the way for the best of the younger faculty to advance and make the best use of funds released by impending retirements. Professor Bruckenstein argued that, nevertheless, there are criteria for promotion from which we may not deviate; he wondered whether we plan on turning a blind eye toward using these criteria. Vice-Provost Fischer explained that these criteria were more often than not a matter of subtle interpretation; the professional work among the various departments could differ greatly in kind, but not necessarily in quality. He added that the point of diversification is to change the course or direction of a discipline to meet the realities and the variables of the changing social fabric "out there".

Professor Frisch suspected that we will be dealing less with conventional issues of discrimination and more with the changing culture of the University; echoing Vice-Provost Triggles report, he stressed the need to change for the next century and to welcome this opportunity to redefine and save ourselves and the university. Professor Acara observed that the greatest resistance to change in the university culture occurred at the point where tenure and promotion come under consideration, and noted she was not sure how to change this.

Professor Moore thanked the FSEC for the discussion, and looked forward to grappling with the issues and fulfilling the charge to the Committee. Senior Vice-President Wagner also expressed gratitude to the FSEC for the helpful comments.

The Chair summarized as an informal charge to the Affirmative Action Committee the plans for the decentralization of responsibilities as well as the recommendations from last year's Committee regarding women in sports and equal salary distribution. Professor Meacham suggested the Committee should also educate the university population about Affirmative Action, and dispel many of the myths

and misconceptions surrounding it. This could take the form of a brochure which straightforwardly states the law on the issue.

Professor Moore wished for an explicit statement of the charge, mentioning that she had heard in the discussion topics concerning athletics, salary, and promotion, and wondered which of these the Committee should concentrate on. Professor Welch suggested the Committee concentrate on the new distribution of responsibilities and the development of specific action plans.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**THOSE PRESENT:**

University Officers: William Fischer, Robert Wagner

Chair: Claude Welch

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch, Nathan Grant

Dental Medicine: William Miller

Educational Opportunity Center: Areta Buchner

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold

Graduate School of Education: James Hoot

Health-Related Professions: Atif Awad

Law: Errol Meidinger

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

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

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran, Stan Bruckenstein

Nursing: Mattie Rhodes

Pharmacy: Nathan

Social Sciences: Peter Hare, Jack Meacham

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

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

**Guests:**

Academic Affairs Director: Sunny Lee

Graduate Student Association: David Toscana-Cantaffa

REPORTER: Sue Wuetcher

**Other Guest(s):**

Affirmative Action Committee: Brenda Moore, Si Denson