

## **FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting of August 28, 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 Minutes of March 27, May 8, and July 10, 1996](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Faculty Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning](#)
4. [Other Business for Public Session](#)
5. Committee Memberships (executive session)

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### ITEM 1: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the FSEC meetings of March 27 and May 8, 1996, were approved.

Professor Jameson questioned the accuracy and lack of detail in one section of the Minutes of the July 10, 1996 meeting; she did not recall Senior Vice-President Wagner affirming that the budget cuts would be parcelled out across the board. Professor Welch responded that Wagner had stated that cuts would be taken at all parts of the University, and that in areas reporting to the Provost, these cuts have ranged roughly between 5 1/2 and 7 3/4 percent. Professor Jameson remembered that Wagner had said that computing would not be cut at all, and Professor Welch affirmed this. Professor Jameson mentioned that there were several other specifics left out of the minutes. [The Secretary explained to her afterwards that the batteries in the tape recorder had failed, and that he did not write down the specifics on

paper.] The minutes, with any additions that may be made, were then accepted and approved.

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

The Chair reported that the Deans' Council had met and discussed two issues of particular importance to the FSEC: (1) the planning process for the University, and (2) the evaluation of Deans.

Speaking of the planning process, the Chair noted that one area being discussed deals with the 1997/98 budget; it is not clear, he said, what SUNY Central intends to do in terms of establishing a process by which campuses submit requests. Consideration is therefore being given to having UB submit a budget request for 1997/98, even though System Administration (SUNY Central) may not be requesting such submissions. The Chair added that it was an important part of the planning process for UB to indicate its particular goals to be achieved; furthermore, it is the hope of many at UB 1) that our campus be recognized as the flagship institution of SUNY, and 2) that the Trustees would make an effort to have campus missions more clearly articulated and discussed. This could mean that the mission statements would be individually tailored to each type of campus, similar to the system in California, in which the University (e.g., Berkeley, UCLA), Colleges (e.g., Downingves Hills, Long Beach), and the community colleges are distinct systems.

Professor Welch also noted that the Provost's office expects to have, by the end of September, a reasonable projection of the needs and attainable budgets for academic units on campus over the next few years. Also as part of this planning comes the hope that UB would raise revenues in a variety of areas. The Provost has received a series of "Vision Statements" from the various deans, with the help of which he will develop a tentative plan for resource allocation during the coming months. Although these plans are to be discussed initially with the deans, there will be an effort to involve both the faculty and the student body into the discussion. The Chair added that in this 5-to-7-year plan, which is based on an assumption of some growth in the overall University budget, the Provost's office is

concerned not so much with cuts as with the expansion of the resources available to the University. On the second topic, Professor Welch noted that a few years , then Acting Provost Ken Levy had attempted to carry out an evaluation of six Deans, who found the process not well-suited to several Schools. Levy had found "tremendous resistance" to the implementation of the evaluation, as well as little interest in several of the Schools. The Chair said that Provost Headrick pointed out that the evaluations of some Deans with several years of service might be moot in the short term because of impending retirements, but felt nevertheless that evaluations of Deans is important. Of paramount importance for the FSEC, the Chair noted, is the need to discuss the weaknesses of previous evaluation procedures; the Committee should discuss this with the governance units of the various Faculties and Schools.

The Chair invited Senior Vice-Provost Levy to comment on the matter. Senior Vice- Provost Levy noted that the evolution of the process lasted nearly two years; in its first form, it was not acceptable to former President Steve Sample and needed to be "fine-tuned" through joint faculty-administration cooperation. Senior Vice-Provost Levy mentioned that any single set of procedures, when applied to the different disciplines and cultures on campus, will run into problems. He advised the FSEC to consult with the faculty governance bodies and to build some "latitude" into the evaluation process. Professor Welch stressed that decanal evaluation should be formative, i.e. should provide useful insight as to how to improve; concurrent with these evaluations, he added, should be an effort to build a sense of trust, implying a certain degree of confidentiality in the evaluations. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Professor Nickerson made clear that the committees responsible for the previous evaluation were indeed able to carry it out, despite problems of identifying people agreeable to both the faculty governance structures and the Deans. Senior Vice-Provost Levy agreed, but said the majority of the schools either had problems with the evaluation or did not wish to participate. Professor Nickerson stressed that this is a constructive process, and that everything, not just the Deans, is being evaluated. Professor asked whether this process also includes the evaluation of chairs. Professor Nickerson replied that that is a separate

matter. Professor Miller affirmed that this matter had gone through a series of Senate proposals, and the problem has been going on for at least the last ten years. Professor Welch noted that the Provost was favorably inclined toward carrying out evaluation, that anyone holding such an office should welcome such an opportunity for evaluation.

The Chair reported that the Vice-Provost for Graduate Education, Professor Triggler, is chairing a Task Force on Quality, and then listed the members on this Task Force. Professor Jameson asked whether Professor Triggler appointed the committee, or whether he is chairing the committee which somebody else appointed. Professor Welch was not sure. Professor Jameson then asked if we knew the charge of the committee. Professor Welch was not sure, but said he would find out by the time the matter came up again for discussion.

Professor Welch announced that the newly reconstituted Teaching and Learning Committee would attend the present meeting, and reported that most of those appointed have accepted.

The Chair then opened discussion on a memorandum circulated at the meeting concerning the Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate. In the Standing Orders, the Public Service Committee and the Affirmative Action Committee lack written descriptions of their charges. He asked the Chair of the Public Service Committee, Professor Frisch, to comment on the draft. Professor Frisch replied that the draft seemed adequate and broad enough in describing the things the committee hoped to accomplish. Professor Jameson expressed concern over the word "audience" in the phrase "for the direct benefit of external audiences"; she believed this word suggested a "PR spin" and suggested instead the word "constituencies". The Chair replied that the text came from a resolution that was voted on by the Senate, and for that reason the quotation was deliberate. Professor expressed doubt that we could change something approved by another body. Professor Welch stated that another possibility would be to drop the quotation altogether and merely refer instead to the appropriate Senate resolution. Professor Frisch argued that it was worthwhile preserving the operative language of the resolution; he assured Professor Jameson that the committee would re-examine the wording of the charge and the issues involved, and that he

considered the Senate resolution as "launching platform" for the committee, rather than a confining charge. Professor Meacham agreed that "audiences" was not the proper word, but also disliked "constituencies", and suggested substituting "others" for the words "external audiences". Professor Faran asked whether the committee had first been formed without a charge. The Chair replied that the committee had been given a charge by the FSEC, but that this charge had not been transmitted to the Bylaws Committee for inclusion in the Standing Orders. Professor Faran then asked whether the FSEC would be voting on some later version. Professor Welch answered that, if the FSEC were willing, it could be voted on now, and added that charges for standing committees should be phrased in general language; more specific goals could be determined and assigned each year.

Professor Miller remarked that this charge will eventually appear in a published document, and therefore should be carefully worded in order to send the right message. He proposed changing the phrase to read "for the direct benefit of those outside the University". Professor Meacham then suggested "for the direct benefit of the Western New York community". Professor Frisch acknowledged the validity of these suggestions, but considered it better, at least for the moment, to keep the original wording, since it was the result of a deliberative process. Mr. Quodomine proposed the word "community", since public service efforts would benefit everyone, and not just those inside or outside the university.

Professor Welch then invited any formal motions to amend the wording of the draft. Professors Albin moved that the draft charge as proposed be accepted, Professor Meidinger seconded. Professor Jameson moved to strike the quotation marks and substitute the word "audiences" with "beneficiaries". Professor Faran seconded the motion. Professor Danford (and others) noticed that the text would then read "for the benefit of beneficiaries", upon which the proposal was withdrawn. Professor Meacham moved to drop the quotation marks and suggest the change "for the direct benefit of other communities", which was seconded by Professor Miller. Professor Frisch argued against changing the wording, claiming that the matter would better be taken up by the Public Service Committee. Professor Jameson explained that she did not doubt that the Committee would deal with the charge in an

appropriate manner, but rather was worried about the phrasing of a charge whose text will be available to the entire public. Professor Miller agreed. The FSEC voted on the amendment to substitute the words "other communities" for "external audiences". Three members opposed; all others approved. Returning to the main motion, the FSEC voted unanimously in favor of the revised charge to the Public Service Committee.

The Chair presented a draft of the charge for the Affirmative Action Committee, but added that he did not find it suitable, as it did not directly address certain areas of immediate interest to the Faculty Senate, such as recruitment, appointment and retention of faculty. Discussion was postponed until a committee chair is appointed.

Professor Welch reported that a subcommittee of the Budget Priorities Committee is working on a potential new approach to the budget for UB. The concept, called Responsibility Center Budgeting, is potentially at the level of a department; each unit would have both revenues allocated to it (from areas such as tuition, fees, clinical practice plans, private gifts, etc.), as well as costs (salaries, costs for computers, library usage, space occupied, etc.). The Chair emphasized that this effort is at present a planning idea, and not a decision-making device; the Budget Priorities Committee has been asked to look at the proposed methodology, while the Provost is seeking broader advice to find out whether the idea is feasible and appropriate for this university. Professor Nickerson explained that the idea behind the program was to better account for the various revenues and expenses at the university.

The Chair then welcomed discussion on a memorandum by Professor Wetherhold concerning a discrepancy in the University calendar between total teaching time for MON- WED-FRI schedules and TUE-THU schedules; the memorandum also suggested revisions to the University calendar. Professor Jameson asked for reassurance that the calendar would not be changed for the present semester. Vice-Provost Goodman stated there was no way this could happen. Professor Wetherhold related that he had noticed the discrepancy last year, but could get no satisfactory explanation; thus the rationale for the memo is to formally seek and receive one. Professor Welch said he would inquire into the status of the University Calendar Commission, to see whether it is functioning, and to ask that Commission to look

into the matter. Vice-Provost Goodman informed the Chair that the Commission is functioning and is chaired by Vice-President Palmer. Professor Jameson asked whether there were people on the committee who understand the need to teach 42 one-hour classes. Vice-Provost Goodman responded assured her that there are, and furthermore that the Commission has already devoted some discussion to this issue for next year's calendar. He stated further that there is no consensus as to what the rules are, but as he interprets the rules, there should be 42 fifty-minute class sessions (or the equivalent) per semester. Professor Wetherhold wondered whether this is specified in the State Education Department rules. Professor Welch said he would report to the FSEC on this matter.

The Chair distributed two memos, one from Professor Faran, the other from Professor Hopkins (Chair of the Bylaws Committee), on the issue of breakdown of a unit's governance, for future discussion.

The Chair asked whether any members of the FSEC would be willing to work on a new edition of the Faculty/Staff Professional Handbook. Professor Welch volunteered himself, and Professor Albin also volunteered. He then announced that Vice-Provost Goodman has circulated a document for future discussion on "Outcomes Assessment"; Vice-Provost Goodman explained that the reason for circulating the document was to contribute to the imminent discussion on Teaching Quality.

### [ITEM 3: Faculty Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning](#)

The Chair was delighted to announce that all those who were asked to serve on the newly-reconstituted Committee on Teaching and Learning (formerly the Teaching Quality Committee) accepted the appointments. He then asked those committee members present to identify themselves: Distinguished Teaching Professor Ron Huefner, Chair (Management); Professor Christina Bloebaum (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering), winner of the 1996 Chancellor's Teaching Award; Professor Jonathan Reichert (Physics); Professor William Ruyechan (Microbiology); Professor Frank Scannapieco (Dental Medicine); Professor Phillips

Stevens (Anthropology), winner of the 1993 Chancellor's Teaching Award; and Professor Ken Takeuchi (Chemistry). Professor Welch then summed up specific charges he had suggested for the committee, consisting of the following five points:

1. to analyze and examine existing student evaluation questionnaires;
2. to analyze how these assessments are used formatively, i.e., to help improve instruction;
3. to analyze how they are used summatively, i.e., for promotion, merit increases and the like;
4. to consider alternative forms of evaluation;
5. to examine how student learning can best be ascertained and measured.

The Chair then asked Professor Huefner to comment on the charge and initiate the discussion.

Professor Huefner mentioned first that the issue of evaluation has been "studied to death", and that there was no doubt an extensive literature to draw on. An inventory of evaluations used on campus could well prove useful; to this point, none exists. Other forms of evaluation, he noted, have received little attention. He stated that, since he was beginning from "point zero" on this committee and this issue, he welcomes input and suggestions, as well as guidance, from the FSEC. Professor Meacham thought that the charge as formulated concentrated too much on evaluation, too much on the "output side"; he suggested we look more at the "input side" and consider first, what we are doing to orient new freshmen and transfer students to the learning opportunities at UB, and secondly, what resources we provide to assist faculty in their research. He cited as an example the Office of Teaching Effectiveness at UC-Davis with 11 full-time staff members to assist faculty.

Professor Bill Fischer, Vice-Provost for Faculty Development, mentioned a proposal from an ad hoc committee last February which contained recommendations for restructuring teaching and learning. The proposal suggested that each decanal unit establish a Teaching and Learning Committee, and that there would be a similar body in each department which

would keep in touch with this committee. Furthermore, a University-wide committee on the provostal level would oversee broad issues. The overall intent was to place the responsibilities of teaching and learning with the faculty, rather than with the Office of Teaching Effectiveness which, although it did very positive work, was unable to engage the faculty across the disciplines. Due to several factors, including a self-study by the Deans, the issue has received relatively little attention, and is ready for reconsideration. Professor Meacham agreed with Vice-Provost Fischer, and considered the direction mentioned by Fischer to be more important than the first two items specified in the charge. Vice-Provost Fischer added that information technology will have an enormous effect on the way we teach in the future; it will put teaching more in the public domain, and thus be more accessible not only to students but also our peers. This would influence the way we view the assessment process. Vice-Provost Fischer said he would encourage a peer-review process which would re-evaluate the data from evaluations.

Professor Nickerson warned against entirely omitting the evaluation process mentioned at the beginning of the charge, since such evaluations are part of the university policy. Professor Huefner agreed with Fisher on the importance of technology and peer evaluations, and considered them positive opportunities. Professor Jameson also urged that the first item in the charge not be dismissed; while some forms used at this university may be useful, she found the ones used in her unit to be neither adequate for student input nor adaptable, and the results of these evaluations were unintelligible. Professor Miller said he was puzzled at the way things are organized at UB; rather than having a central group, matters such as teaching evaluation are decentralized, doled out to the different units. He believed that certain things would be better done by a group of people working physically together. He thought it a pity that the Office of Teaching Effectiveness was not supported enough to function to its capacity. He urged the formation of a central body to deal with this issue.

Professor Welch asked the other members to express their thoughts on the goals and issues for the committee. Professor Scannapieco pointed out that many students who come to UB have never done evaluations before, and so are puzzled when asked to do so; it would therefore be a good idea to explore how the university could create an appropriate

environment for the evaluative process. Professor Bloebaum stressed that if evaluations are used, they better be significant. She added that "teaching" and "learning" mean different things to different people, and it is necessary to define these before deciding how best to assess them.

Professor Ruyechan agreed that it is crucial as a first step to come to some understanding of what constitutes effective teaching. Professor Stevens thought all items in the charge important, but wished to add one more: learning. He believed there were much more basic elements in the learning process which need to be emphasized, such as attendance, doing the assignments regularly, thinking about and discussing the material, asking for help, and such fundamentals. Professor Takeuchi considered student evaluation critical in determining the structure and direction of the course; student input and increased faculty-student dialogue were most important in improving both teaching and learning.

Professor Reichert made it clear that he was a "quasi-member" of the committee, saying he would serve only if the administration were truly ready to make a commitment to improving teaching; he expressed doubt, claiming that research and grants are what run the university. He was disturbed by the fate of the Undergraduate College, which he called "the greatest effort we ever made towards teaching at this university...an enormous effort, made by a lot of great teachers...and we got our legs sawed right out from underneath us."

Professor Bloebaum asked for a point of clarification; she said it was not clear to her that money played any role in the discussion. Professor Reichert replied that he does not see the administration putting out any funds to support the development of teaching and new courses.

Professor Hubbard stressed the need to cultivate conversation among the faculty, in order to make it more a shared, rather than isolated and isolating, experience. More communication, more team teaching, more interdisciplinary work would most likely prove desirable alternatives. Professor Danford seconded many of the ideas which focussed on the transactions that occur between faculty and students; there is a responsibility on both sides, a culture of teaching and one of learning, and if the transaction becomes one-sided, neither

teaching nor learning takes place. Professor Wetherhold approved of Professor Reichert's idea of getting the administration to actively support the improvement of teaching and learning. Professor Meidinger supported the idea of expanding the conception of who ought to be involved in the evaluation process. He also raised the question of whether we want to get involved with external groups, such as the people who employ our students; what role should they have in the evaluation process? Addressing the issue of evaluation ranking --- i.e. knowing where one stands in relation to other colleagues in a given discipline --- Professor Meidinger warned that such rankings can become "perverse" and lead to a very constrained notion of what constitutes good teaching.

Graduate Student Association representative David Toscana-Cantaffa warned against over-emphasizing learning as a student responsibility --- it is a faculty responsibility as well. Undergraduate Student Association representative Fernando Maisonett pointed out that the evaluations used often lump all students into one big group; he felt there should be a part on the forms which allow students to say who they are. Professor Ramesh noted that we must also consider the relevance of the subjects that we teach; the relevance of certain areas has changed with the demands of the students and the demands of the marketplace. In the same vein, the evaluations should be viewed in conjunction with this relevance and designed accordingly.

Professor Grant remarked that the nature of the classroom itself is changing; consequently, distance learning must also enter into the discussion. Vice-Provost Fischer hoped that the new committee would not get bogged down on the issue of student evaluation. He believed that there were much larger issues to be addressed, that teaching evaluation goes far beyond student evaluations alone. He emphasized that it was as much the responsibility of the faculty as of the administration to change the culture to one in which the question of teaching will "carry a different kind of value". Vice-Provost Goodman seconded Vice-Provost Fisher's comments, stating that traditional evaluations, while good measures of student satisfaction, are not good indicators of teaching quality. He referred to recent movements toward evaluations based on outcome assessments, and urged the members to read the document he had distributed dealing with that issue. The basic idea, he argued, was to

articulate goals of the teaching before we can evaluate how successful we are/were in meeting those goals.

Professor Meacham thought that too much had been presented for one committee to consider effectively, and suggested that the new Teaching and Learning Committee sift through all the ideas presented, select one or two to work on this academic year, and decide which others to consider in following terms. Professor Stevens considered Professor Reichert's comments the most important, pointing out that there had been two or three previous attempts at establishing such a committee, with no tangible results. He also wondered how committed the administration would be, how much assurance we would have that we will be listened to, that our recommendations would be implemented.

Professor Huefner summarized the four areas presented ---

- a. [the teaching process](#)
- b. [the learning process](#)
- c. [the evaluation of teaching](#)
- d. [the assessment of learning](#)

--- and assured that they would try to determine what could be accomplished in the shorter term, and what constituted longer-term projects.

#### [ITEM 4: Other Matters](#)

Professor Jameson asked why newly-appointed faculty in some departments were still not "on the computer", which prohibits them from, among other things, using the library and getting an appropriate parking tag. Professor Welch said he would try to get some answers to this problem. Professors Faran and Miller asked about special parking tags for South Campus personnel attending North Campus meetings; the Chair said he would be happy to

sign special parking requests for South Campus personnel. Professor Frisch suggested that someone look into the bureaucracy involved in parking-tag matter, that it was in much need of improvement, particularly in issuing routine forms, instead of the copious paperwork involved every year. The Chair related that he had spoken last week with the Director of Parking and urged that the university-wide Parking Committee be reconvened to discuss this matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**THOSE PRESENT:**

University Officers: W. Fischer, N. Goodman, K. Levy

Chair: Claude Welch

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch, Nathan Grant

Dental Medicine: William Miller

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold

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

Nursing: Mattie Rhodes

Pharmacy: Nathan

Social Sciences: Jack Meacham, Carol Ann Sellers

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

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Ex officio: Carol Ann Sellers

**Guests:**

Undergraduate Student Association: Fernando Maisonett

Graduate Student Association: David Toscana-Cantaffa

Academic Affairs Director: Sunny Lee

REPORTER: Arthur Page

**Other Guest(s):**

University Council for Student Population: Richard Quodomine

Personnel Director of Student Association: Yu-Yu Ruan

**Absent:**

Educational Opportunity Center: Areta Buchner

Graduate School of Education: James Hoot

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein