

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Minutes of December 8, 1999 - (approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on December 8, 1999 in Capen 567 to consider the following agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of November 17, 1999
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President/Provost
4. Princeton Review
5. Old/New Business

Item 1: Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that:

1. the Academic Planning Committee meets on December 14 for additional discussion of the merger of the Department of Biochemical Pharmacology and the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology; if the APC is ready to report there will be a brief public session at the beginning of the Provost's meeting with the FSEC on December 15
2. he seeks the FSEC's permission to refer Dean Grant's proposal to formally establish the Department of Women's Studies to the Academic Planning Committee (there was consensus to do so)
3. he attended the December 2 meeting of the Professional Staff Senate; the PSS is sponsoring a wellness fair on February 11; faculty are encouraged to attend
4. the agenda for the January 25 Faculty Senate meeting will include the Provost's postponed Academic State of the University address and a second reading of the resolution from the Teaching and Learning Committee if its Chair, Professor Gentile, is ready; the FSEC will discuss the Grading Committee's resolution on academic good standing and reasonable progress toward the degree at its January 19 meeting to determine whether it is ready to present to the Faculty Senate

5. there is holiday cheer available to celebrate the last meeting of the FSEC for the year 1999
6. Vice Provost Sullivan will be meeting with us today to continue the discussion of classrooms
7. three Faculty Senate Committees are active: the Academic Planning Committee will meet on December 14; the Budget Priorities Committee will meet on December 13 with Dean Grant to explore budgetary issues in the College of Arts & Sciences; the Computer Services Committee met with Chief Information Officer Innus this morning; he agreed to the Committee's request that three faculty members serve on the IT Steering Committee; the Committee will submit names for FSEC discussion

Item 2: Report of the President/Provost

Provost Triggles announced several retirements and a reporting change that will have the effect of flattening out the IT organization. Professor Tufariello, Senior Vice Provost for Educational Technology, will be resigning from that position to teach in the Department of Chemistry for a final year before retiring. Dr. Hinrich Martens, Associate Vice President for Computing and Information Technology, will also be retiring. Continuing the trend toward flattening reporting structures to save resources and to facilitate communication, Mr. Voldemar Innus will assume the title of Chief Information Officer for UB, reporting jointly to both the Provost and the Senior Vice President with regard to the University Libraries and the full range of IT activities. This is an important change for the Provost, who has informally had communication with the Libraries as Provost and as Dean of the Graduate School, but now will have a formal relationship with the Libraries and IT. Finally there will be an internal search to fill the position of Vice Provost for Educational Technology at a part time level; the position will report to the Chief Information Officer.

Senior Vice President Wagner added that with Dr. Martens' retirement the Directors of CIT will report directly to the Chief Information Officer; Nancy Kielar and Sue Ferry will assume additional responsibilities in CIT administration and Martha Barton will play a greater role in IT budgeting and planning. Given the Provost's interests, it is important to have the Chief Information Officer reporting jointly to the Senior Vice President and the Provost.

- will the Chief Information Officer be a member of the Budget Committee? (Professor Schack)

- no, but he will attend the Monday morning meeting of all the Vice Presidents and some Vice Provosts (Senior Vice President Wagner)
- what responsibilities will the Vice Provost for Educational Technology have? will there be an internal posting or just an appointment? (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- the Chief Information Officer will draft the responsibilities of the Vice Provost for Educational Technology; we will specify requirements for the position and then post it generally with a target fill date of summer 2000 (Senior Vice President Wagner)
- Professor Tufariello will be still be available, and we will rely on him for advice and support (Provost Triggle)
- had heard that Martha Barton would be assigned to Dean Grant's office (Professor Meacham)
- she will make a temporary detour to Dean Grant's office (Senior Vice President Wagner)

The President spoke of his frustration at the difficulty of explaining UB's budget process clearly so a reasonable faculty or staff member could understand it.

- the explanation printed in the Reporter was very clear; the noise in the system is from earlier, less clear attempts (Professor Schack)
- agree with the President that the process is not understood by faculty (Professor Swartz)
- (directed to the President) your remarks at yesterday's Faculty Senate meeting pointing to good possibilities in the coming academic year were very helpful; time to put this Fall's budget difficulties behind us and begin to focus on next academic year; consider sharing these possibilities more widely (Professor Meacham)
- by the beginning of the next semester, the Governor's budget should be available, and we will have a better sense of our prospects (President Greiner)

The President described a recent article that looked at the prospects over the next decade of the financing of public higher education. The article concluded that states rely too much on taxes that don't keep pace with growth and income and have commitments like health care and prisons whose costs will rise more rapidly than their tax collections. While New York is in a better financial position than many states because it relies heavily on income tax, it has tied itself by formula to supporting expensive

priorities like K-12 education. In this context it is important for UB to have its own finances under control.

On the other hand the SUNY Chancellor designate made clear to the search committee that he would like to see two principles underlying SUNY budget development: first that the Governor would find funding for contracts he negotiates, and second that tuition should not be used to offset reductions in tax support. The Chancellor designate also understands the need for year to year financial stability to permit effective planning. Tuition increases would be used for program enrichment. In that environment UB could do well if we focus on increased enrollments and sponsored research. Central to that strategy is an increased emphasis on masters programs.

- (directed to the President) you have offered a sophisticated budget analysis to the FSEC; at a less sophisticated level you need to move the University community away from the budget to thinking optimistically about the coming year (Professor Meacham)
- we need to talk about the complex economy of the University, which is much more than the state budget, and how much of that economy is driven by the intellectual life of the faculty; UB has weathered many financial crises because of the talent and hard work of its faculty and staff; will speak more about that (President Greiner)
- would you like to comment on the basketball situation? (Professor Baumer)
- for thirty minutes yesterday UB was the basketball equal of the University of North Carolina (which statement was followed by spirited applause); our old basketball coach concluded that the situations between himself and his players and with the NCAA were not going to work out, so he did the right thing and resigned; it appears that there were violations of NCAA regulations over a five year period; we brought these violations to the attention of the NCAA and will be appearing before its Infractions Committee in January; penalties will undoubtedly be imposed, but our self-reporting and our cooperation with the NCAA should mitigate them; sports in general are in good health on campus, e.g., the women's basketball team is doing very well as are intramural activities; we intend to run an ethical sports program which is supportive of our student athletes; my thanks to Vice President Black who worked extensively with the athletes, allowing Bob Arkeilpane to act as a neutral in sorting out the situation (President Greiner)

Item 3: Approval of the minutes of November 17, 1999

The minutes of November 17, 1999 were approved.

Item 4: Princeton Review

The Chair opened the discussion of the Princeton Review rankings of UB by pointing out that it is an honor to just be included in their book, its title being *The Best 331 Colleges*. To get a sense of the reliability of the Princeton Review's methodology, the Chair phoned the Princeton Review and asked how they had conducted the UB survey. They said on several occasions they had sent representatives who randomly surveyed students on campus asking 74 questions. However, the Student Union, which seems the most likely place to do the survey, has no record of the Princeton Review using its facilities.

- the book's introduction says that a college "must allow anonymous student surveys to be completed on campus" and that the Princeton Review "send administrators at each school a copy of the entry ...with ample opportunity to respond"; someone knew about and agreed to the survey and saw the completed UB entry (Professor Schack)
- a section of UB's entry appears to have come from the Office of Admissions; as a policy any outside request to do a survey on campus is funneled to the Assistant Provost for Institutional Analysis, Jeff Dutton; the Princeton Review might have used a student club as its agent (Vice President Black)
- consider withdrawing UB's permission to allow surveys to be completed on campus if we feel the methodology is unacceptable (Professor Schack)
- there is inconsistency within their data; for example, UB appears in both the categories of "Class Discussions Encouraged" and "Class Discussion Rare"; UB actually seems to have done better in the book than our other SUNY colleagues; our overall profile is much better than one would think just focusing on a few categories (Professor Sridhar)
- take great personal exception to ranking first in the category "Professors Suck All Life From Materials" (Professor Nickerson)

- look at the other institutions in that category, University of Michigan, UCLA, University of Toronto (Professor Sridhar)
- it is essential that we appear in the book since it is popular with students; try to cooperate with Princeton Review to ensure the survey is really random; need a good tag line to counter the sucks all life from materials label and turn it to our advantage (Professor Meacham)
- the real challenge is combating the student apathy that is wide-spread on campus (Mr. Pallickal)
- worrisome that we're mentioned in the category "Professors Make Themselves Scarce"; that is not my experience (Professor Nickerson)
- one response is to ignore the rankings since our SUNY colleagues and other prestigious schools also had rocks thrown at them; demographics are on our side for recruitment as the cohort of college age students in New York increases; danger is that the wrong people could get hold of these negative rankings and publicize them to discredit SUNY; if we want to say the study is flawed we need to do detailed and intensive work to explain how it is flawed, and that will be no trivial task; an alternative approach is to accept the rankings and try to deal positively with them (Professor Benenson)
- the written evaluation of UB is reasonably positive and we should not focus exclusively on the negative rankings; all surveys like this are invalid because of the voluntary response bias, i.e. people who respond have a strong opinion, either negative or positive, to express, whereas people with middle of the road opinions tend to be underrepresented (Professor Schroeder)
- should focus on getting out our story on the negative rankings; for example, could point out that large schools will lose to small schools on the criterion of faculty contact; however we will turn applicants off if we offer a formal critique of the book's methodology (Professor Baumer)
- any attempt to respond to the rankings would appear defensive and be futile; have no interest in carrying this discussion forward (Vice Provost Fischer)
- agree with the Vice Provost; any attempt to respond to negative ratings would appear self-serving (Professor Meacham)
- focus on what we want to be known for and get on with it without worrying about this survey (Professor Shibley)

- it would be helpful for the reader if the survey separated rankings of public and private institutions and of colleges and universities (Professor Sridhar)
- Princeton Review is primarily concerned with selling a product; we should be prepared to respond to the hits and wave the flag where we do well (Professor Baumer)
- no one was anxious to check the methodology when Yahoo named UB as one of the most wired universities; we are concerned about making UB better for the students and should continue those efforts; the issue is whether we believe the survey is doing UB more harm than good (in which case we should not participate), or if it is doing more good than harm (in which case we should participate), but we will not be able to change the product (Professor Schack)
- refuse to participate in the *US News and World Report's* ranking of AAU institutions; since I can't change its methodology, I just ignore it; looked at the Princeton Review ranking and decided it wasn't worth worrying about; UB came out well in the summary description which is what parents are likely to read; we got hit on the quality of food on campus, and we've hired a new food service; there were complaints about long lines, but we've gone to on-line registration and there just aren't lines anymore; we are building a new student services building to make it easier for students to transact business; we should put our energy into making UB a better place for students; the Chancellor designate says that he wants SUNY to be the preferred choice of New York students for higher education; that would be a significant attitude shift, since even today in New York public education is seen as a second choice and private education the preferred choice (President Greiner)

The Chair characterized the sense of the discussion as being that the Senate should take no action on the Princeton Review ranking. Since the Senate referred the matter to the FSEC, he will report to the Senate that the FSEC had an extended discussion of the matter but will take no action.

- UB's athletics program gets us publicity in the sports news that we never used to get (Professor Baumer)
- CNN's shot of the day, being repeated all day, is Lewis making a 23 foot jump shot at the UB/UNC game (President Greiner)

- haven't been a supporter of athletics, but agree that the spirit generated by athletics is positive; include the report to the Faculty Senate on the Princeton Review in your Chair's report and keep it very short to avoid wasting more time on the issue (Professor Schack)

Item 5: Old/New Business

In a follow up to prior discussions of classroom utilization and quality, Vice Provost Sullivan described efforts to keep classrooms in good condition and fully utilized. About three years ago the Vice Provost established a coordinated structure to handle classroom issues. The Committee on Classroom Quality and Attribute, chaired by Professor Gold, and the Committee on Classroom Capacity and Utilization, chaired by Professor Foster, meet during the Fall semester to develop proposals for additional classrooms and for improvements to existing classrooms. The Classroom Steering Committee reviews their proposals and in turn sends its recommendations forward to the Provost who makes final decisions about which projects to fund. There is about \$350 K in funding available annually for these projects; decisions are finalized by December to allow adequate lead in time to complete projects during the Summer.

The Vice Provost listed some of the projects that have been done over the last three years. Every year tablet armchairs, desks and lecterns have been replaced; on a two year cycle faculty are surveyed about classroom needs; in 1997 \$1 M was spent on technology upgrades for 26 classrooms. For Summer 2000 the Steering Committee would like to spend \$270 K on replacing technology in the 47 classrooms that are wired. Each year we spend money on fixtures, carpet and painting, last year some \$100 K on these items, but this year considerably less. Vice Provost Sullivan asked whether the proposal for 2000 seemed reasonable.

There were comments and questions from the floor:

- what is the situation on the South Campus? (Professor Nickerson)
- the SUNY Construction Fund has decentralized the management of capital budgets, so we have \$105 M to spend over the next five years, 40% on new buildings and program rehabs and 60% on infrastructure renewal; with his share the Vice President for Health Affairs has chosen to rehab bench science space for researchers and to spend \$1.3 M on South Campus

classrooms; Farber G26 and the Butler Auditorium have already been significantly upgraded and Farber 144 will be this summer; these spaces are in the Medical School, and not much money is left for the remainder of the South Campus; have asked the four Health Science Deans, representatives from the School of Architecture, the Office of University Preparatory Programs and Millard Fillmore College to meet with me to talk about this issue; the Committee on Classroom Quality and Attributes has tended to focus on the North Campus since we thought the South Campus would be taken care of by capital money in the Health Affairs plan (Vice Provost Sullivan)

- emphasis is mostly on equipment; need to think about painting, etc. (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- called service number several months ago to have lights replaced in Knox 109, and nothing has happened yet; may be a staffing problem or difficulty in getting into the room; consider using flat plugs for projectors and uniformly installing chair rails to protect classroom walls (Professor Baumer)
- happy that visualizers are being added to classrooms; have difficulties in getting scheduled in technology classrooms, so maybe we need more of them; in some classes chairs and tables are more effective than the tablet armchairs, but getting them is difficult because of the problem of theft (Professor Schroeder)
- as an architect I worry that we are close to a critical level of deferred maintenance; may need to give priority to working down the maintenance log (Professor Shibley)
- have been told that if equipment isn't built into the classroom, can't get a temporary set up, for example, an opaque projector (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- decided when the first technology classrooms were installed that we could not support both fixed equipment and portable equipment (Vice Provost Sullivan)
- portable equipment might be best provided by departments with faculty doing their own set ups (Professors Schroeder and Baumer)
- agree with earlier statement that the hot line for requesting maintenance doesn't work; survey department chairs and their administrative assistants about classroom needs rather than getting surveys from the small number of faculty who bother to read and fill out the form; consider developing a procedure for swapping high/low technology classrooms for faculty who need equipment infrequently (Professor Schack)

- that technique could work well within a department (Vice Provost Sullivan)
- understand that you have "classroom patrols" to check whether classes are meeting in their assigned space; need to make departments aware that they don't automatically control space in their building (Professor Malone)
- adopt a Responsibility Centered Management approach to classrooms; units would be responsible for the upkeep of classrooms but could rent them out (Professor Schack)
- assure us that the space freed up by the Student Services Building will go to classroom use and not be converted to other offices (Professor Malone)
- the Classroom Steering Committee has drafted tentative plans for reclaiming classroom space; all the space in Norton, Talbert and Capen that becomes available when the Student Services Building comes on line should be turned into classroom space (Vice Provost Sullivan)
- Music Department has been untouched by the technology upgrades and has had to buy equipment with our own OTPS money; we are very jealous of keeping control of our space (Professor Charles Smith)
- technology upgrades went only to classrooms that were centrally scheduled; made an offer to units that if they turned over classrooms to central control, the classrooms would be upgraded (Vice Provost Sullivan)
- Music Department space is much more like specialized lab space than classroom space; the Music Department should be provided with extra OTPS money for the upkeep of those rooms and be allowed to keep them under departmental control (Professor Baumer)
- would like several members of the FSEC to join the Classroom Steering Committee; will talk to Louis Schmitt about the hot line problem (Vice Provost Sullivan)

There being no other business, the Chair offered his wishes for happy holidays. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn McMann Kramer
Secretary of Faculty Senate

Present:

Chair: P. Nickerson

Secretary: M. Kramer

Parliamentarian: D. Malone

Architecture: R. Shibley

Arts & Sciences: W. Baumer, C. Fournier, J. Meacham, S. Schack, Charles Smith

Engineering & Applied Sciences: R. Sridhar

Graduate School of Education: T. Schroeder

Law: L. Swartz

Pharmacy: N.

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

University Officers: W. Greiner, President

D. Triggle, Provost

Guests:

D. Benenson

S. Sullivan, Vice Provost

K. Levy, Senior Vice Provost

N. Goodman, Vice Provost

M. McGinnis, *Reporter*

L. Pallickal, Student Association

J. Celock, Red Jacket Hall Council

W. Fischer, Vice Provost

D. Black, Vice President

Excused:

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Cedric Smith

SUNY Senators: J. Fisher

Absent:

Health Related Professions: J. Tamburlin

School of Information Studies: C. Jorgensen

Management: J. Boot

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: B. Albini

Nursing: J. Thompson

SUNY Senators: J. Boot

University Libraries: D. Woodson