

## Faculty Senate Executive Committee

### Minutes of April 28, 1999 - (Approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on April 28, 1999 in Capen 567 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of April 7 and April 14, 1999](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the President/Provost](#)
4. [Issues related to student retention](#)
5. [Flyers on campus](#)
6. Report of the SUNY Senate Meeting
7. Old/New Business

#### **Item 1: Report of the Chair**

The Chair reported that:

1. in his absence, Professor Kramer attended the meeting of the Deans with the Provost; excerpts from her report follow:

- this year's Preview Day set an attendance record (1,227 students)
- as of April 14 freshmen applications were 5.7% ahead of last year
- we are aggressively using scholarships as a recruitment tool; offers have been made to 1,531 freshmen applicants with a current yield of 13% and to 283 transfer students with a current yield of 38%
- Ontario's bulge of students may offer UB a recruitment opportunity

- UB's News Services will disseminate press releases about science articles and research only after consultation with the lead author's Chair
- the Deans agreed to Vice Provost Fischer's plan for implementing the Junior Faculty Mentoring Initiative
- the Provost clarified his letter to the Deans on retirement incentives; individually negotiated retirement incentives, per se, are inappropriate; a semester leave to finish up projects may, however, be appropriate
- speaking only to the science Deans, the Provost began a continuing discussion of organized research, focusing on research priorities, research development funding, research infrastructure, interdisciplinary research, measuring research performance and research leadership/administration coordination; the Provost intends to take a more active role in decision making regarding research

2. an issue relating to the way UB calculates Latin honors has been brought to his attention; with FSEC approval he will refer the matter to the Grading Committee

3. the Chair invited Professor Welch to report on the Academic Planning Committee's meeting with Vice President Bernardino; Professor Welch said that Vice President Bernardino had been remarkably candid about the financial issues facing SUNY Health Sciences Schools due to reductions in reimbursement for hospital services and high expectations of income; this is not just a SUNY problem as other major medical schools across the country are suffering losses of up to \$1 M per week; UB's various practice plans have not been successful in providing a reasonable stream of income to the University or protecting the needs and concerns of the faculty; the Medical School is looking for creative ways to resolve these problems; Albany seems ready to be helpful; the Vice President spoke of the importance of "location strategic planning"; the Committee will meet with the Deans of Health Related Professions and Nursing in May for discussion of planning and the implementation of proposals from the Provost's Mission Review document

4. the Faculty Tenure and Privileges Committee has worked on several issues including the Hay report on Centers and Institutes and on the Nyberg document on evaluating scholarship and will report at next week's FSEC meeting

5. the Teaching and Learning Committee has met several times and will report in August on student access to teaching evaluations; it has also discussed Dean Grant's memo on eligibility of junior faculty for the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, a proposed policy which reportedly the Committee does not support

6. the Budget Priorities Committee has been working on the issue of student fees and has made suggestions to Vice President Black on how to present a report on the use of student fees to the University community; next week FSEC will be hearing from several graduate students about the impact of student fees

7. the Governance Committee discussed the reporting relationship for Millard Fillmore College

8. the Educational Programs and Policy Committee is dealing with program assessment and a policy under which students who are officially excused for University sponsored activities will be able to make up academic work; the Committee will report in August

- what committee is working on a sexual harassment policy and could we hear a report from the committee before the May 11 Faculty Senate meeting? (Professor Swartz)
- it is an administrative, not a Faculty Senate, committee; will ask Loyce Stewart to report on the committee's work at the May meeting (Professor Nickerson)
- what is the status of the proposal to substitute UB awards for the Chancellor's Awards? (Professor Malone)
- there is still discussion of the proposal but no decision to implement it (Professor Nickerson)
- the Faculty Senate Office has copies of two reports on student fees within SUNY that were distributed at the April 22-24 University Faculty Senate; in particular students might be interested in seeing them (Professor Malone)

- the Budget Priorities Committee was told that Vice President Black is drafting a report with comparative data on fees within SUNY for distribution to students; this report will be made annually (Professor Schack)
- informed Professor Hamlen, Chair of the Budget Priorities Committee, of the existence of the University Faculty Senate documents (Professor Nickerson)
- don't understand why Vice Provost Fischer would go to the Deans with a proposal that garnered only criticism when it was presented to FSEC; do the Deans believe we endorsed his proposal? (Professor Boot)
- Vice Provost Fischer told the Deans that there was criticism of the proposal, focusing around the role of the Chair in evaluating a junior faculty member (Professor Kramer)
- if the initiative is going to be implemented in a way we don't like, we should be concerned (Professor Schack)
- believe that Vice Provost Fischer agreed to work on the draft and come to us; will find out what's happening (Professor Nickerson)

9. an ad hoc committee of past chairs of the Faculty Senate currently serving on the FSEC was formed by the FSEC when two resolutions relating to the Statistics Department were returned to the FSEC by the Faculty Senate; the ad hoc committee drafted two statements for FSEC and Faculty Senate discussion and action; Professor Malone presented the two statements which follow:

**Statement 1:**

The Faculty recognize that Dr. Irwin Guttman is an excellent scholar, and wish to extend their appreciation of his stewardship of the Department of Statistics. We look forward to his continued contributions to the discipline and to the University and wish him all good success.

**Statement 2:**

Whenever initiation, termination, amalgamation, division or major reorganization of an academic unit is under consideration, that shall be reported promptly to the Chair of the Faculty Senate who shall report it to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall determine the actions to be taken by the Senate.

there were comments from the floor:

- how high does a discussion of such actions have to go before a report to the Chair of the Faculty Senate is appropriate? (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- don't think it is necessary to specify that; whoever is considering such action should report it to the Chair, and FSEC can then decide if the action being considered is too trivial for its discussion (Professor Malone)
- important to specify who is to do the reporting to ensure it gets done; send the draft to the ad hoc committee for the addition of provisions specifying responsibility; this draft evolved out of motions designed to censure the administration, but all this draft does is to repeat what is already stated in other procedures, that the administration is required to inform Faculty Senate of such actions (Professor Schack)
- can't compel behavior by a resolution; the President has acknowledged the failure to report and says it won't happen again; wait and see if it does happen again (Professor Malone)
- Statement 2 doesn't do anything; it just states what people already know they are supposed to do; don't see its point (Professor Schack)
- Statement 2 makes clear that the Chair should be informed by the appropriate person and that when the Chair is so informed, the Chair is to report to the FSEC (President Greiner)
- the word "censure" has disappeared from this discussion; so also has any mention of the failure of the administration to follow reporting provisions as to the Statistics Department (Professor Holstun)

- the word "censure" disappeared because the ad hoc committee felt that that action would be totally ineffective at this point and not likely to pass in the Faculty Senate (Professor Malone)
- that was the consensus of the ad hoc committee (Professor Nickerson)
- Professor Baumer has suggested adding the phrase "by the cognizant Dean or Vice President or the Provost" between "shall be reported promptly" and "to the Chair of the Faculty Senate"(Professor Malone)
- the phrase "under consideration" establishes much too low a threshold and sets the stage for a culture of complaint by a passive Faculty Senate; Provost Headrick and the President in earlier discussions seemed receptive to conferring with the Faculty Senate on an on going basis, but the Faculty Senate has not pursued this possibility (Professor Swartz)
- "under consideration" means looking at the pros and cons of taking an action; not too vague a phrase to be workable (Professor Baumer)
- last week Provost Triggles announced a merger or an amalgamation of Biochemical Pharmacology and the Pharmacology Department in the School of Medicine, perhaps as early as December; the faculty in Biochemical Pharmacology have not been involved in the planning process for this, although there seems to have been discussion of this merger for several year (Professor )
- there has been FSEC involvement in this matter; Provost Triggles in executive session agreed to establish a faculty based task force to do fact finding and ensure adequate communication with faculty (Professor Nickerson)
- Statement 2, if adopted, would make completely clear the need to report (Professor Malone)
- the Statement should say that consultation should happen before decisions are made; would also be nice to report changes in programs, like abolishing Ph.D. programs (Professor Albini)
- that statement is in the *Bylaws of the Voting Faculty* and in the *Charter of the Faculty Senate* which has been agreed to by the President (Professor Malone)

There was a motion (seconded) to transmit Statement 1 to the Faculty Senate. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion (seconded) to transmit Statement 2 as amended to the Faculty Senate. The motion carried.

### **Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of April 7 and April 14, 1999**

Professor Churchill pointed out that on page 8 of the Minutes of April 14, Professor Malave was incorrectly placed in the Graduate School of Engineering rather than Education. Subject to that correction, the Minutes of April 7 and April 14, 1999 were approved.

### **Item 3: Report of the President/Provost**

The President gently chided the Faculty Senate for not having consulted with him before voting on the George amendment to the *Charter of the Faculty Senate*. He has no particular difficulty with the content of the amendment, but the process of adopting the amendment was not collegial. The President values his position as the Chair of the Voting Faculty and his membership in the Faculty Senate; he is often in attendance and should have been drawn into the conversation. It was not sufficient to have discussed the matter solely with the Provost.

While we have done a good job of establishing UB's graphic image, our SUNY identity has not been prominent enough in letterhead, etc. We don't want to distance ourselves from SUNY; within New York we need to be seen as having a statewide franchise, not as a regional institution, and nationally and internationally the SUNY identification is also very important. The President is considering a redesign of our letterhead. One change might be to add the article "The" to State University of New York. The samples illustrate different placement of the elements "UB," "University at Buffalo" and "The State University of New

York." The President passed around two versions of a redesigned UB letterhead, and asked for comments.

- placing "The State University of New York" as the last element is consistent with the practice of going from the most specific to the more general in addresses (Professor Schack)
- why did we give up on the seal? (Professor Baumer)
- nobody knows what it is unless it's huge; we use it on all official documents and as a water mark on stationery (President Greiner)
- "The State University of New York" used with "University at Buffalo" could suggest that we're the only university in SUNY (Professor Thompson)
- when you photocopy current letter head the light gray letters become invisible (Professor Ram)
- also doesn't fax well (President Greiner)
- placing "The State University of New York" as the top element is truer to the structure of SUNY (Professor Swartz)
- will check the design with Albany; do people like the addition of the article? (President Greiner)
- better to place "University at Buffalo" as the first element since it gives us more name recognition (Professor Malave)
- as an alumna of The Ohio State University, am always puzzled whether to include the "The" which seems a bit pretentious (Professor Kramer)

The President is concerned about the way graduation rates are computed, viz., a cohort of students is tracked over a six year period. The President believes this provides data on student persistence and is a surrogate for retention rates but is not accurate as to graduation rates. When parents ask about graduation rate, their question is really, if a student remains at UB and is reasonably diligent, what are the chances she will graduate in 4 years? Tracking the cohort means that students who leave UB are kept in the denominator and skew the graduation rate.

Data on the graduation rates of students in different deciles of the Class of 1986 is very interesting. 30 % of the bottom decile graduated; 42 % of the next decile graduated; the third decile jumps into the 50's and continues to rise through the deciles into the 60's; the top decile graduated at a rate of 69 %. If UB had not admitted those students in the bottom deciles, the graduation rate would have been only marginally affected. The President believes that our graduation rate is strongly affected by our retention rate.

- we need to add more sections of required courses to enable students to graduate on time; reference sources use two criteria to compare colleges: the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of students who graduate in four years (Professor Woodson)
- for graduation rate what you really want to know is out of a graduating class what percentage graduated in 4 years, rather than tracking a cohort (President Greiner)
- what Professor Woodson says is not true; the federal government requires us to report 6 year graduation rates, not 4 year rates; neither do we have a problem with freshmen not being able to get required courses; students take longer than 4 years to graduate because they change majors and work (Vice Provost Goodman)

#### **Item 4: Issues Related to Student Retention**

The Chair introduced Professor Fournier, Chair of the Committee on Admissions and Retention, and Vice Provost Goodman to talk about retention issues. Professor Fournier described activities aimed at increasing retention. Incoming students were counseled more extensively than in other years. Block scheduling was available for the first time this Fall, and student evaluations of block scheduling were very good. There were 75 sessions of UB 101 tied to block scheduling; students formed groups and worked through problems together. Mid semester evaluation for freshmen was also helpful. The University has done a lot, and though we may not have done everything we could with the numbers generated, for a first time experience, it was reasonable.

Professor Fournier asked to go off the record. The request being refused because the meeting was a public meeting, Professor Fournier declined to report the numbers relating to the success of these activities. The Chair invited questions for Professor Fournier:

- why should the numbers be off the record? they are public information (Dr. Coles)
- not yet public information (Professor Fournier)
- can Vice President Goodman provide data? (Professor Nickerson)
- could have, if had come prepared to do so (Vice Provost Goodman)
- if success is measured in the percentage of those freshmen who return as sophomores, the figure won't be available until the Fall semester; bring the figures to FSEC in the Fall (Professor Schack)
- retention involves the efforts of everyone; have been concerned about a disconnect between the Office of Student Affairs and the academic side (Professor Nickerson)
- have reporting responsibility for the Academic Advisement Center, the University Learning Center, Financial Aid, Student Accounts and Records and Registration and have tried to integrate those activities so students don't get the "Buffalo bounce," being sent from one office to another with no one taking responsibility for solving problems; have tried to improve these offices' relations with the academic side, working especially with the College of Arts and Sciences, and also with the Office of Student Affairs, over issues like coordinating the organization of orientation (Vice Provost Goodman)
- what is the most important problem facing the Office of Undergraduate Education in dealing with students (Professor Malone)
- the most important problem the University faces with respect to undergraduate retention is the lack of faculty commitment to spending time with students; many faculty feel they have discharged their duty to undergraduates by teaching their undergraduate classes well, but in successful undergraduate programs, faculty have to do more than that; students come here, not for the quality of interactions with staff, but because they want to relate to faculty; for traditional undergraduate students faculty need to play a parental role (Vice Provost Goodman)

- spending time with students takes time away from the activities for which the University rewards us; University should also reward time spent with students (Professor Malave)
- paycheck is reward (Vice Provost Goodman)
- will get a paycheck whatever I do, but some activity gets additional rewards from the University (Professor Malave)
- we reward what we value; somehow must change our culture, so units value spending time with undergraduates; new budget model will reward units for retaining students; most of us became academics because we value the intellectual life and are attracted to a discipline we want to convey to a new generation; our intellectual life would be happier if it were more cross generational; students leave because they aren't socially integrated into the University (Vice Provost Goodman)
- teach a class of 100; work hard at being accessible to students but during generous daily office hours typically only get two students a day; students are uncomfortable interacting with faculty because student culture says that asking questions in class and talking to the professor outside of class is brown nosing (Professor Fournier)
- remember a UB administrator saying that a faculty member's value is his market value; market value is driven by research, not teaching (Professor Malone)
- UB's mission statement is very research oriented; Provost Triggles described to FSEC a successful recruitment effort in which the candidate was offered a very high salary, two assistants and no teaching load, not teaching being seen as an incentive (Professor Boot)
- develop a guide to best practices for student retention; give work assignments that make students come for help (Professor Sridhar)
- disagree with comments about student culture; a class size of 100 puts a real barrier between faculty and students and dehumanizes the experience; with a class of 20, you would still get two students a day, but that would be 10 % of the class; incentives at UB encourage teaching large classes which in turn produces student alienation (Professor Schack)

- students avoid contact with faculty because they are afraid of looking bad; two kinds of students come to office hours, students who think they are the best in the class and students who know they are going to fail; the popularity of a teacher is in inverse proportion to the rigor of the course; while teaching at the University of Illinois at Chicago saw very raw peer pressure on black students not to get above a C so as not to make other black students look bad (Professor Churchill)
- have too many students to give them individual attention, but am very successful at interacting with large numbers of students by incorporating students into research and field activities; small seminars are also very conducive to involvement with students (Professor Malave)
- faculty member can be the one to initiate contact with students; for example, if a student gets a bad grade, give him a call and set up an appointment for a meeting; many students work, cutting into the time they have available for interaction with faculty (Dr. Coles)
- we also need to work with older students to help them move past a purely vocational focus and to encourage the sense of learning and discovery (Professor Thompson)
- our problem is to find a way to work effectively both as a research and a teaching institution in a period of shrinking resources; may need to be more division of labor among faculty, with some doing more research and some doing more teaching; that's a bad thing, but don't see alternative; also don't have a model to show us how to run a large, publicly funded research and teaching institution (Vice Provost Goodman)
- most faculty don't work very hard at figuring out how to interact with students (Professor Fournier)

### **Item 5: Flyers on Campus**

The Chair introduced Christopher Rota and Kevin O'Sullivan, students at UB, who have approached the Faculty Senate with a concern. Commercial flyers are taking over bulletin boards in classrooms, detracting from the learning experience and leaving no space for

academic and student flyers. They displayed two full shopping bags of commercial materials removed from three small classrooms in Clemens. They propose that, if legally possible, the University ban the posting of non-academic commercial flyers in classrooms.

The Chair added that a contractor is hired by commercial concerns to plaster UB with their posters. The Student Union has banned the contractor from putting up posters there. A group of Good Samaritans clean the bulletin boards weekly, or the clutter would be worse than it is. The Chair thinks it would be appropriate to refer the matter to one of the Faculty Senate committees.

Christopher Rota said that he had researched to see what other universities are doing. UCLA, for example, has a ban on commercial flyers.

- many universities don't allow postings in classrooms and restrict certain bulletin boards for specific purposes but do allow commercial postings in other places (Professor Sridhar)
- need legal advice about banning postings; might be ways to regulate without banning (Professor Harwitz)
- we should be very supportive of limiting outside postings that exploit students; some students, for example, are solicited to apply for a credit card and then get deeply in debt, (Professor Thompson)
- that is part of our concern; students shouldn't be subjected to commercial pressures on campus (Mr. Rota)
- do a little citizen vigilantism and tear non-official postings down (Professor Baumer)
- committee should investigate what the University policies are on this matter (Professor Malave)

At this point the fire alarm began ringing. There was quick agreement to refer the matter to the Student Life Committee. The Chair referred the Executive Committee members to Professor Malone's written report on the Plenary Session of the University Faculty Senate on April 22-24, 1999.

The meeting adjourned in some confusion at 4:05 PM. with FSEC members gamely trying to figure out a safe evacuation route.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Kramer

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**Present:**

**Chair:** Peter Nickerson

**Secretary:** Marilyn Kramer

**Arts & Letters:** James Holstun

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** Ramalingam Sridhar

**Graduate School of Education:** Lilliam Malave

**Information and Library Studies:** George D'Elia

**Law:** Louis Swartz

**Management:** John Boot

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Boris Albini

**Natural Sciences & Mathematics:** Melvyn Churchill, Samuel Schack

**Nursing:** Jacqueline Thompson

**Pharmacy:** Nathan

**Social Sciences:** William Baumer, Mitchell Harwitz

**SUNY Senators:** Judith Adams-Volpe, Dennis Malone, Claude Welch

**University Libraries:** Dorothy Woodson

**University Officers:** William Greiner, President

**Guests:**

Nicolas Goodman, Vice Provost

Charles Fourtner, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Retention

Sue Wuechter, *Reporter*

John Celock, *The Spectrum*

Christopher Rota

Kevin O'Sullivan

William Coles, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

**Excused:**

**Dental Medicine:** Robert Baier

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** Cedric Smith

**SUNY Senators:** John Fisher

**Absent:**

**Architecture & Planning:** Shahin Vassigh

**Health Related Professions:** Luc Gosselin

**Ex-Officio:** Robert Hoeing