

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of March 26, 1997 (approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM in Room 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. [Report of the Chair](#)
2. [Approval of the Minutes of February 5, 1997](#)
3. [Approval of the Faculty Senate Agenda](#)
4. [Report on Campus Crime Statistics](#)
5. [University Logo](#)
6. [Report of the Graduate School Executive Committee](#)
7. [Report of the Faculty Senate Grading Committee on Administrative Resignations](#)
8. [Stresses on Academic Research](#)

Item 1: Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that he had sent notes to both President Greiner and Senior Vice-President Wagner regarding specific steps to be taken on following up the report of the Women's Task Force and on implementing decentralized Affirmative Action; responses are expected either in the late Spring or early Fall 1997 semesters. The Chair had also urged President Greiner to establish a task force on racial minorities.

Professor Welch reminded all standing committee chairs to submit any proposed resolutions to the FSEC by no later than April 20, 1997, for consideration at the final two Faculty Senate meetings of this academic year.

The Faculty Council of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences had adopted a resolution from an ad hoc committee on the proposed merger of Statistics with Social and Preventive Medicine. Professor Nickerson reported that the committee, which had found the planning for the merger to be far advanced, stressed the need for an appropriate process in which the rationale of the merger and its impact on the concerned units are thoroughly examined.

The Provost's Office is sending copies of written responses to the planning document to *The Reporter* and to the Faculty Senate office.

The Chair solicited nominations for the President's Panel for the Review of Search Procedures and for the University Faculty Senate's newly established Public Information Committee. He then circulated materials on freshman and transfer orientation, contracting out, a conference on diversity, the annual "Take our daughters to work", and responses from Senior Vice President Wagner on privatization (to be discussed at the FSEC meeting of April 23).

Professor Welch had met with Senior Associate Vice-President Innus regarding faculty input to the Information Technology Steering and Coordination Committees, since both groups are heavily represented by deans or their representatives.

In memory of Emeritus Professor Harriet Montague, the FSEC observed a moment of silence.

Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of February 5, 1997

The Minutes of the FSEC meeting of February 5, 1997, were approved as submitted.

Item 3: Approval of the Faculty Senate Agenda

The agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of April 8, 1997, was approved.

Item 4: Report on Campus Crime Statistics

Senior Vice-President Wagner explained that the recent negative article in *The Buffalo News* on crime at UB resulted from two things: first, how crime is reported at UB, and secondly, the fact that the newspaper elected to single out one crime, burglary. He noted that, in reality, UB is far below the national norm in campus crime; had *The Buffalo News* considered all ten categories, UB would have fared much better in the article.

Mr. Grela circulated statistics on campus crime and noted that the UB Public Safety department is particularly aggressive toward crime. Because it follows a strict interpretation of statutes and definitions of crimes, it reports even minor thefts (of compact discs, for example) as burglaries; consequently, the numbers in this category are relatively high compared to those of institutions which follow less stringent crime-reporting policies. In all other categories, UB proves itself a very safe campus. Thus *The Buffalo News* reported the mere numbers of only one category, and omitted all relevant context.

Professor Hoeing asked if UB had already responded to the article; Vice-President Palmer replied that it had indeed. Professor Hoot wondered whether there were any standard definitions for each category of crime. Vice-President Palmer responded that the existing definitions were general; what is reported depends on the degree of strictness of interpretation.

Professor Wetherhold inquired about what measures Public Safety had taken which were responsible for the drop in crime at UB. Associate Vice-President Wilson cited locking the dorms, erecting firmer walls, increased vigilance, and student group accountability for damage.

Professor Bruckenstein asked about the definitions of various crime categories, such as felonies and misdemeanors. Mr. Grela cited a few examples, adding that some vary from state to state. Crime statistics also depend on who reports them: Private institutions, for

example, report to the local police, who often do not keep separate statistics as they should; nor are the local police required to report under the Campus Security Act.

The Chair asked what the FSEC representatives should convey to their constituents; Mr. Grela replied that, contrary to the report in *The Buffalo News*, a full understanding of all the statistics is most important in realizing that UB is a safe campus. Associate Vice-President Wilson concluded that UB has an outstanding Public Safety department which gets to the bottom of many crimes. Not only does this lead to a reduction in crime, but it also increases people's confidence in the department --- people are much more likely to report a crime because they feel something will be done about it.

Item 5: University Logo

Dr. Carole Smith-Petro announced that UB had embarked, one year ago, on the revision of its visual identity guidelines. Included was the President's desire for a new signature logo to replace the present emblem. Designers had submitted over 100 sketches; the number had been reduced first to twelve, and then to five. She invited the FSEC members to examine these and express their dislikes and preferences. They objected to three of the designs: One logo resembled interconnected paper-clips; the "three-dimensional" sketch, although distinctive, was not immediately recognizable, especially from a distance; another suggested the abbreviation "BU" instead of "UB".

Item 6: Report of the Graduate School Executive Committee

Professor Nickerson reported that the GSEC had discussed teaching excellence, for which twelve awards would be given this year.

A subcommittee proposed that different Faculties and Schools would appoint and evaluate the members of the Graduate Faculty, which entailed that lifetime appointments were no longer guaranteed. The proposal was not well received.

Controversy arose over the fate of the Graduate Groups program; Dean Triggles has removed the fellowships in order to use these funds for graduate student recruitment, and discussion focussed on whether the Groups are entitled to the appropriation they received in the past.

The GSEC had also met with the Provost to discuss the size of graduate programs, Responsibility-Centered Management, and the issue of space available for increased interdisciplinary work.

Professor Faran asked if there had been any discussion of review of the Graduate Groups; Professor Nickerson replied affirmatively, adding that those Groups which were doing quite well would continue, and that there would be a regular review process.

On the question of funding for the Groups, Professor Noble considered it "disturbing" that, while there is a deadline for applications, there are no guidelines as to what could be requested. Professor Frisch noted that the guidelines explicitly stated that there would be no support for GAs. The Chair suggested raising the issue with Dean Triggles later in the meeting.

Item 7: Report of the Faculty Senate Grading Committee on Administrative Resignations

After introducing the members of the Committee, Professor Schroeder presented a draft resolution to restrict awarding the R grade to only those cases in which a student makes a timely election to resign from one or more courses. After the deadline for the R grade, administrative resignations should be considered on a complete-semester, all-or-nothing basis, and should be indicated on transcripts by a W.

Professor Schroeder explained that the resolution aims to "tighten up" existing policy and to prevent further excessive abuse of the R grade by students who use it to clean up their transcripts of grades resulting from inferior classwork.

Professor Malone supported the idea, and asked whether Advising pays attention to the instructor's comments on the petition for withdrawal. Vice-Provost Goodman replied that Advising does indeed consider the comments, and would not award an R grade unless the faculty member agreed. He would, however, advocate dropping the present process and implementing clear rules instead.

Professor Frisch asked for further clarification of the reasoning behind the "all-or-nothing" clause. Professor Schroeder replied that, if a student has legitimate reasons for completing some but not all courses in a semester, that student should apply for an Incomplete (I) for any course(s) he/she is unable to finish. Professor Frisch responded that there are several courses for which the assignment of Incompletes would be unfeasible.

Professor Bruckenstein addressed the issue of the "friendly physician" who writes a letter of excuse on behalf of the student, and argued that clause 2(c) of the resolution did not really solve the problem.

Professors Jameson and Hoeing agreed that the "all-or-nothing" clause may be too draconian; many students do have legitimate reasons for requesting an administrative resignation, and determining the legitimacy of the request should be the instructor's prerogative. Professor Baumer argued that, if a student is physically or mentally unable to complete a course, why should he/she be able to finish other courses? He thus found the clause entirely appropriate.

Professor Schuel regarded the petition deadline (no later than the midpoint of the subsequent academic semester) as rather late, to which Professor Schroeder responded that others on the Committee thought it should be extended. Professor Schuel countered that having such a late deadline would not solve the problem.

Professor Wooldridge agreed with the proposed distinction between the R and W grades, but found parts of the resolution too rigid and insensitive to any special circumstances. He further commented that we would need to consider the consequences of R versus W grades in cases of academic probation.

Professor Meidinger urged the Committee to develop two or three different formulations of the resolution in order to focus the debate in the Faculty Senate.

Professor Malone also wondered how the W would be interpreted in calculating the student's overall grade average, and how it would affect the student's application for financial aid. Professor Schroeder said he would look into those matters.

Professor Meacham suggested replacing the word "principles" with "guidelines", in order to give the faculty members sufficient flexibility; he then proposed that the FSEC forward the resolution to the full Senate. The FSEC agreed.

Item 8: Stresses on Academic Research

Vice-Provost Triggie reported that he and Dr. Holm attended the second convocation on this topic organized by the National Science Board Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable; a report from the first meeting, held a few years ago, is available for those interested. Representatives from roughly 24 research institutions attended the second convocation. The meeting consisted of a variety of formats, including a number of "breakout groups" which analyzed one or more of the components of the "Stresses" document --- governance, research and education, community stakeholder relationships, and patents and institutional support. Vice-Provost Triggie said he was impressed by the relative homogeneity of responses from the wide variety of institutions, particularly their concerns about institutional infrastructure, the uncertainty of the federal budget, the federal

government's attitude toward the contributions of research and science to the nation's economy, and the concerns of young faculty about the impact on their careers.

Dr. Holm reiterated that the groups expressed several common concerns, among them (1) what the university puts forward into the community, "the technology transfer, if you will"; (2) the need for recognizing that graduate education and research go hand in hand; (3) that interdisciplinary practices across departments and broader training of students were key elements in graduate education.

Although leaders from several national funding organizations provided some optimism, things were not so rosy in the political sphere. Several politicians, Dr. Holm reported, felt that our universities were exporting a great deal of our knowledge overseas --- particularly in the sciences --- and not doing enough to educate domestic students.

Industry leaders as well lamented that we train students to work at universities, rather than in businesses, making it necessary for industry to re-train them after they have earned their degrees. Thus a broader education is mandatory.

Although most felt that higher education in the United States is generally unparalleled, they believed our primary and secondary education --- once again, particularly in the sciences --- is getting "weaker by the minute". They were clearly serious, Dr. Holm continued, about wanting more than mere lip service, and conveyed the message that we must help relieve societal stresses before we can ask them to help us.

Vice-Provost Trigg added that the recurrent theme at the meeting was that of faculty accountability and responsibility, one to which we must pay increasingly more attention.

Professor Bruckenstein commented that there is no way to prevent knowledge from going abroad, nor would we want to stop admitting foreign students into our programs. Dr. Holm agreed, but pointed out that the problem was how influential politicians perceive this, especially since they are not hearing enough counter-argumentation.

Professor Bruckenstein added that our students are not spending enough time in the primary and secondary schools to receive an adequate education at these levels. Vice-Provost Triggles concurred, saying the issue is not one of xenophobia, but rather inadequate training of the American work force and the increasing stratification of our social structure. Professor Meidinger asked Vice-Provost Triggles to comment on the implications for graduate education at UB. The Vice-Provost replied the graduate enterprise is under a variety of stresses. We have built it at random over the years, and when we have cut, we have cut across the board --- "probably the two worst contributions you can make to establishing a stable structure". Secondly, he felt the report pointed to our need to focus more attention on generating graduate programs in which we have constellations of appropriate size, numbers, and mentoring activities, rather than very large numbers of small programs. We must look at our graduate programs much more critically than we have in the past, and must rapidly move toward institutional self-assessment by defining our own indices of quality.

On the matter of properly training our students to work in industry, Professor Meidinger wondered what would be involved. He also asked how we could better connect

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graduate education to the high schools. Vice-Provost Triggles replied that we must increase the students' breadth of education "in terms of ability to expose students to the two things

graduate students are always asked to do when they get a job" --

- *communicate* and *manage*. We could also investigate working toward cooperative ventures between the university and industry and toward teamwork among our students rather than isolated research.

On the problem of secondary education, Vice-Provost Triggles said we should find ways of conveying not only new knowledge, but new ways of looking at knowledge. There are several ways of accomplishing this. One specific example he suggested would be to invite high-school science teachers to our laboratories and to expose them to the latest developments in research, so that they can carry this experience to the classroom. Maintaining a constant interface would benefit our educational system in both directions. Addressing other matters, Professor Meacham asked about the alleged loss of support for the Graduate Groups, who, he argued, play a central role in interdisciplinary activities at the University. Vice-Provost Triggles replied that the Graduate Groups have not been disbanded; rather, the Graduate School is faced with problems of enrollment and quality, and that it must either make the program better or shut it down. In addition, the Woodburn Fellowship "has not been thriving in recent years", for various reasons; if we are to use the program to recruit high-quality graduate students, we had to revamp it in a significant way. To this end, the money from the Woodburn/Presidential Fellowship was put in the form of an RFP; the Graduate School then invited Faculties and Schools to respond how they would recruit graduate students and what assurances they would give as to their quality. About two-thirds of the money still remains in the interdisciplinary Graduate Groups program, available not necessarily for individual graduate student lines, but for people to use "in any way they choose fit".

Professor Frisch commented that, in our present circumstance of difficult budgets and low morale, the confusion over the Graduate Groups was just one example of the complicated mixed signals between administration and faculty.

Professor Wooldridge noted that, whenever we try to move in a particular direction, we inevitably encounter unanticipated problems; given our limited resources, our first priority is to keep in place what is working well, and if possible try to improve it, rather than to look for unproven alternatives.

Professor Meidinger noted that while many of Vice-Provost Triggles's arguments have pushed in the direction of strengthening traditional departments, the Provost's planning document

suggests the opposite, i.e., a re-thinking and reorganization directed away from traditional structures. He asked whether most of the Fellowships went to traditional departments. Vice-Provost Triggles said that some of what the Graduate School is trying to do is just the opposite --- for example, to unify the organization of biological studies.

Professor Noble observed that much of the tension among the faculty arises from a lack of communication at the University. She then asked directly what happened to the Fellowship money. Vice-Provost Triggles said a notice had been sent to all the deans about the RFP, adding that he too was upset that "nothing ever reaches anyone".

GSA representative Hopson asked if increasing the breadth of graduate programs would entail an increase in the time needed to finish. Vice-Provost Triggles responded that that was indeed an interesting irony --- the COSEAPP (Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy) report recommended increasing breadth but not time toward the graduate degree. We must closely examine our graduate programs and decide on their goals and time needed to accomplish these.

This lengthy session was adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

THOSE PRESENT:

Chair: Claude Welch

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch

Dental Medicine: Robert Baier

Graduate School of Education: James Hoot

Health-Related Professions: Atif Awad

Information & Library Studies: George D'Elia

Law: Errol Meidinger

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Boris Albin, Bernice Noble, Herbert Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein, James Faran

Nursing: Powhatan Wooldridge

Social Sciences: Michael Farrell, Jack Meacham

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

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Guests:

REPORTER: Sue Wuetcher

Graduate Student Association: Justin Hopson

Campus Crime Statistics:

Robert Palmer, Vice-President of Student Affairs

John Grela, Director of Public Safety

Clifford Wilson, Associate Vice-President

University Logo:

Dr. Carole Smith Petro, Alan Kegler

Faculty Senate Grading Committee:

Thomas Schroeder, Chair, William Baumer, Charles Fournier, Mel Churchill

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Nick Goodman, Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, Peter Gold

Stuart Goldberg, Student Representative

Research and Academic Quality:

Vice-Provost David Triggles, Dr. Bruce Holm

Absent:

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: James Pappas