

## FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 25, 2006

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 25, 2006, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following **agenda**:

1. Approval of the minutes of November 30th and December 14th, 2005
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President/Provost
4. Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment - M. Ryan, C. Tutzauer, P. Gold
5. Quorums for Senate meetings - an issue for the Bylaws Committee?
6. Old/New business
7. Adjournment

### **Item 1: Approval of the minutes of November 30th and December 14th, 2005**

The minutes were approved as distributed.

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

Chair Nickerson reported:

- The Chancellor's visit went well. We had an hour with him. He also saw our earthquake research facilities and had lunch with students. He said he would like to come in the spring and spend more time interacting with the Faculty Senate (FS). Professor Carl Wiezalis, the new chair of the SUNY Faculty Senate, also visited and spoke at our meeting.
- SUNY senators and governance leaders will be meeting in Farmingdale this weekend. One of the topics will be whether campus Senate meetings will be prohibited from going into executive sessions.

- Class photo lists are being made available to the faculty member of record for all graduate and undergraduate courses beginning this semester. The idea for this came from the FS Committee on Teaching & Learning.

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

None

### **Item 4: Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment - Michael Ryan, Carol Tutzauer, Peter Gold**

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Ryan said that it's important that we respond properly to SUNY's mandate for an assessment plan because we have a responsibility to our students to provide a quality education. The process will ensure that we have a plan for continuous improvement, particularly in the general education area.

Carol Tutzauer, Director of Assessment, thanked the FSEC for their previous input regarding the assessment of general education (GenEd) courses. It helped in drafting the current proposal, which addresses the three major aspects of GenEd courses - mathematics, written communication, and critical thinking.

UB has looked for models that would be good for students and good for us. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) seems to suit our purposes, and UB is inclined to make it available free of charge to a 20% sample of first-year students who persist to junior year. It should be a good incentive to students to do their best, because a large number of our juniors go on to graduate school. Their scores will also provide us with useful assessment data. Rather than assessing 20% every three years, however, UB will stretch the 20% over three years so there's data on each year. This will enable us to see what's working or problematic with the approach we're taking sooner.

Additional changes will be made by Friday, and the revised Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment document will be distributed electronically to FSEC then. We'll continue today's discussion at next week's FSEC meeting.

Questions & comments:

- Why do we need campus-based assessment? Aren't grades good enough? (Nickerson)
- Grades are based on more than learning, e.g. attendance and participation can affect grades. It's important to have a separate assessment of learning to help us identify strengths and weaknesses in our programs. (Tutzauer)
- All campuses are being required by SUNY to have a plan. (Gold)
- Has anyone at UB seen other schools' proposals? If so, how do we differ? (Welch)
- We haven't seen other proposals. Based on conversations with individuals, however, it appears that UB is the only school proposing to use the GRE. (Tutzauer)
- Has anyone considered giving the GRE twice - once to freshmen and then again when they are juniors - to assess learning improvement? (Wooldridge)
- It's risky for students to take the GRE twice, because both sets of scores get reported. Many students won't take that risk. (Schack)
- SAT scores can also be used for comparisons, and useful information can probably be "teased out" of that data. (Tutzauer)
- Many students prefer to wait till their senior year to take the GRE so they'll presumably know more and do better. (Tripathi)
- Students would have the option of taking the GRE in their junior or senior year, but they would be informed about it when they are juniors. (Tutzauer)
- Could we use a composite of GRE sample questions to test freshmen and then use the actual GRE when they're juniors? (Donley)
- Perhaps we could devise a test from GRE study guides so students could get an idea of how well they're likely to do before they take the actual test. This might be good practice for the real thing. (Wooldridge)
- Tests that count are always taken more seriously, so we should stick to the proposed GRE plan. The GRE is more likely to be accepted by SUNY than a test that we've devised ourselves.

The GRE-approach would also be cheaper, because we won't be getting involved in creating or grading a local version. (Schack)

- Stick with the GRE. Keep it simple, keep it straightforward, and stick to what we have to do, because anything more than that will involve expense. (Baumer)
- There's a lot of information about assessment on the SUNY General Education Assessment Review (G.E.A.R.) Group's Web page at <http://www.cortland.edu/gear/>.

## **Item 5: Quorum for Senate Meetings - an issue for the Bylaws Committee?**

Chair Nickerson asked whether the FS Bylaws should be changed to redefine a quorum. We're currently going by one more than half of the total membership, but that can be changed, howbeit with great difficulty.

### Questions & comments:

- Speaking as a senator and not as the parliamentarian, it would be wrong for the FS to lower the number required for a quorum. I will not support it. Rather, we should look at alternative voting methods such as an electronic or paper ballot that would be sent to the total membership. For a vote to pass by this method would require an absolute majority of the Senate, not of the votes cast. (Baumer)
- I don't like systems that invite voting by members who haven't participated in or at least listened to a discussion of the issues. I'm opposed to any form of electronic or mail balloting to decide Senate matters. (Schack)
- How far off are we from having a quorum at most meetings? (Hassett)
- We usually have a quorum near the start of a meeting, but some people have to leave for various reasons, so there aren't enough people present toward the end when important matters come up for a vote. (Baumer)
- We could help the situation by moving important issues to the top of the agenda. Reports and less urgent matters could come after the action items. (Schack)
- That's a good idea. I'll put the action items first for the February FS meeting. (Nickerson)

- We should also consider changing our meeting time. Tuesday afternoon is the heaviest teaching time, which narrows the pool of people who can participate. (Rittner)
- If we were to strictly enforce the Bylaws, people who don't attend FS meetings on a regular basis would be dropped from the membership, and that would lower the number required for a quorum. (Wooldridge)
- We've sent reminders to faculty members who don't attend most meetings. We've also encouraged everyone to designate alternates, but many of them still haven't done so. (Nickerson)
- Rather than asking the Bylaws Committee to consider a lower quorum, a better question might be what's the appropriate number of senators? Maybe we have too many. Maybe we only need 50 senators instead of 100. That would change representation, but it wouldn't affect governance. (Hassett)
- A lack of a quorum might be due to an erroneous membership list. Some faculty members on the list don't seem to be aware that they're senators. It might be useful to query everyone to find out if they know they're senators who are expected to attend meetings. (Rittner)
- The majority of UB classes are held M-W-F. Most FSEC meetings take up three teaching hours, so there should be more faculty available on T-Th than on M-W-F. For a faculty member to be able to attend FSEC and FS meetings precludes almost any afternoon teaching. If we were to hold the FS and FSEC meetings on the same day of the week, this problem would be cut in half. Although that leaves out the meeting with the provost, that meeting could be moved to a different day, e.g. if all Senate meetings were held on Wednesday afternoons, then Monday or Friday afternoons should be clear for a monthly meeting with the provost. (Schack)
- If we're going to do that, we should decide on it quickly, because it's time to settle on our fall teaching schedules. (Baumer)

## **Item 6: Old/New business**

Professor Baumer reported that President Simpson has promulgated the FS resolution on Academic Calendars through 2009/10.

The Academic Integrity Policies & Procedures and the Grievance Policies & Procedures passed by the FS in December have also been promulgated by the president. The School of Medicine won't have to change anything, because their current procedures are compatible with the adopted policies. Other departments will need to revise their procedures or create new ones before the summer semester.

### **Item 7: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Hepfer

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

ATTENDANCE (P = present; A = absent; E = excused)

**Chair:** Nickerson (P)

**Secretary:** W. Hepfer (P)

**Architecture & Planning:** GS Danford (P)

**Arts & Sciences:** J. Faran (P), R. Hoeing (E), SD Schack (P), D. Street (E), K. Takeuchi (P)

**Dental Medicine:** M. Donley (P)

**Education:** L. Malavé (P)

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** C. Basaran (P), R. Wetherhold (A)

**Informatics:** J. Ellison (P)

**Law:** T. Miller (A)

**Management:** W. Lin (P)

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** D. Amsterdam (P), M. Dayton (P), L. Harris (A), J. Hassett (P)

**Nursing:** P. Wooldridge (P)

**Pharmacy:** G. Brazeau (A)

**Public Health & Health Professions:** vacant

**Social Work:** Barbara Rittner (P)

**SUNY Senators:** W. Baumer (P), W. Coles (P), H. Durand (P), P. Nickerson (P)

**University Libraries:** HA Booth (E)

**University officers:** Provost Tripathi

**Guests:** K. Bissonette (Student Affairs), M. Cochrane (Reporter), H. Dumke (Spectrum), P. Gold (CAS), L. Labinski (Prof. Staff Senate), L. Meister (Undergrad. SA), M. Ryan (VPUE), C. Tutzauer (VPUE), C. Welch (World Civ. Cmte.) J. Xu (Grad. SA)