

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of November 5, 1997 (approved)

E-MAIL: ZBFACSEN@ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met in 567 Capen Hall at 2:00 PM on November 5, 1997 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of September 17 and October 1, 1997](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the Provost](#)
4. [Report of the President](#)
5. [Report of the Committee on Affirmative Action](#)
6. [Report of the Academic Planning Committee](#)
7. [Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of November 12, 1997](#)
8. [Old Business](#)
9. [Committee Appointments \(Executive Session\)](#)

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes

Pending a few suggested corrections discussed prior to the meeting, the Minutes of September 17 and October 1, 1997 were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

Professor Nickerson had distributed a fax from Vincent Aceto, President of the University Faculty Senate, seeking endorsement of resolutions on faculty consultation.

The Chair then asked whether the FSEC should respond to the article that had appeared in The Buffalo News, the tone of which he considered "anti-UB". Professor Malone thought we should take the opportunity to respond; although it was depressing and deprecated the University somewhat, it did contain many true statements, in particular the one which held that the Centers were more vulnerable than other units. Professor Meacham argued that publishing a response would simply remind people of

the negative article; instead, the proper response would be for the University to develop something positive and try to have a story on that published.

The UB Council had met yesterday. Professor Nickerson reported that President Greiner intends to appoint a Secretary for the University, who in turn would have a secretary, for the purpose of adding an additional member to the UB Council and thus allowing it to function as a local Board of Trustees with more involvement in UB affairs. At the meeting, Interim Vice-President for Student Housing Dennis Black gave a presentation on expanding the opportunities for student housing; of related and particular concern here is the adequacy of child-care facilities on both campuses.

Discussion on the Faculty Senate e-mail list indicated a strong bias for returning to Tuesday afternoons for Senate meetings next year, at a site which offers adequate parking.

Item 3: Report of the Provost

Provost Headrick agreed with Professor Meacham's comment, but noted that it is very difficult to get a story published on the front page of The Buffalo News, unless one is an ex-Chancellor.

He mentioned that UB is now building townhouse-style apartments on UB Foundation land at the I-990 entrance. As a self-financing operation, it is designed to be fully competitive with the present market. No State money was necessary, which meant that UB had more latitude on rules and regulations in the construction and was able to get better financing. Although situated off-campus, UB expects to have direct bus service to the units. UB now also has authority from the State legislature to build housing on two additional sites, one between the bookstore and the Ellicott Complex, the other complementary to the Governor's housing site. The provisions under the statutes are somewhat constricting in terms of location and number of units, among other things; the Provost added that it was difficult pushing the bill through the State legislature. Through careful screening of the statutes, he and others discovered that the alumni association of a campus can lease land from the State through the Trustees, without requiring legislative approval, for the purpose of building student housing. They identified several other sites on both campuses where they intend to make use of this authority. The current plans, at any rate, would add between 3000 - 4000 units, which, although it will not change UB into a predominantly residential campus, will substantially change the present ratio of on-m to off-campus housing.

Professor Acara asked whether the plans included a day-care center on the North Campus and the Provost averred that this is indeed in the plans.

Professor Faran asked whether the revised planning document would be ready soon; Provost Headrick replied that it is now in the hands of the secretaries, and should appear in print within a week. He noted there would be no substantial changes; rather, it clarified some unintended ambiguities in the first version.

Item 4: Report of the President

President Greiner considered it unfortunate that the Buffalo News article appeared on the front page, which is usually "reserved for a crisis or some major event"; it received such prominence in part because of the remarks of an ex-Chancellor. Nevertheless, he hoped the faculty and staff would stay focussed on the future of UB, which he believed for a variety of reasons would be "very bright". What happens in Albany gets a lot of press coverage, some deservedly so. What many do not realize is that there are many new people, including some of the Trustees, who are still trying to find out what their roles are; although they are not fully adroit, their motivation and efforts to come up with something new is, in effect, good --- "It's better that they are working to change the way the central offices work than staying with it". In the end, "the future of this place depends on what we do", and what we are doing is good; we have reason to be optimistic.

The Chair wondered whether the negative press would hurt our recruitment efforts; President Greiner remarked that The Buffalo News gives UB so much positive press that an occasional negative article is to be expected and should not have any dire consequences. Professor Meacham added that one study indicated that what matters is not whether the press is negative or positive, but that the name alone gets mentioned; thus the mere fact that UB made the front page could prove to be positive.

Professor Faran asked whether capital funds have already been approved; the President replied that they have not been approved yet, due to "an elaborate and mysterious process". The Governor and the leaders of the two legislative houses each have a sum of money to dispose of, but how the SUNY projects fit in is not yet clear.

Professor Albin remarked that UB has had a lot of negative press over the past few years, and that many of the faculty are genuinely concerned about the future of the institution; he felt that Administration should address this concern before things get much worse. President Greiner responded that if we cannot face and openly discuss the problems and challenges facing us, we will not be able to make many of the needed changes.

Item 5: Report of the Committee on Affirmative Action

Professor Banks, Chair of the Affirmative Action Committee (AAC), pursuant to the Faculty Senate's discussion of the first reading of the Committee's report on May 13, 1997, presented a list of changes to the report prior to its second reading. The main theme running through all proposals, he noted, was the need to address the isolation of minorities on campus. Bottom-up efforts to resolve this problem have not worked, especially not in incorporating minorities into the mainstream of activities and decision-making. Thus the present proposals urge a more top-down strategy, i.e., that the Administration to take a more active role in helping to resolve this problem.

One obvious desired result would be a more multi-cultural, more multi-ethnic university, one attractive to a variety of cultures. One major difficulty, he pointed out, is that no one really knows what works yet; thus most of the proposals are, in his opinion, rather modest, but ones which would at least "start the ball rolling".

When asked about the proposed creation of a Task Force, he replied that it would determine the present state of the University with respect to racial isolation and would identify areas of progress as well. The idea is not to develop issues as "partisan planks or interest group politics", but rather to develop a local concern of the need to end this isolation.

Professor Welch reminded him of discussion in the previous year about the impending decentralization of Affirmative Action responsibilities, and the need to develop greater expertise in taking the necessary steps listed in the report; he considered it important that this be incorporated into the report. Professor Banks replied that the proposed Task Force would be best able to address this. Professor Welch noted that the report does not specify any duties for the proposed Task Force, and suggested that some of the issues in Item 3 of the report be included as part of the charge to the Task

Force, in order to make the idea more appealing to the Senate. Professor Banks replied that the new version of the report took this into account, but welcomed any improvements.

Referring to the Minutes of the FSEC meeting of September 18, 1996, Professor Meacham noted that Senior Vice-President Wagner said that he would shortly provide some action statements which people can translate into what they should be doing, as well as that there would be a number of pilot groups which would be working to develop more specific goals to be achieved. After one year with no feed, he supported the idea of creating a Task Force to address these issues once again. He then asked what the "protected categories" in the report are. Professor Banks answered that the policies recommended in the report should benefit everybody; Professor Acara added that the protected categories are those listed by Affirmative Action. Professor Meacham then suggested that the Committee eliminate the word shall from the proposal, since the Faculty Senate cannot direct the Administration to do anything, but rather advise and request. A motion to reword the proposal was approved.

Professor Smith noted that a definition of "protected" is essential, and that it should be included in the report, perhaps as a footnote.

Item 6: Report of Academic Planning Committee

In keeping with the charge by the FSEC to consider the issue of phasing out the Music Education program, Professor Welch, Chair of the Academic Planning Committee (APC), distributed a statement to be presented at the next Faculty Senate meeting and welcomed comments and questions on its substance.

Professor Hyde asked for clarification of the phrase "that substantive, discipline-based issues need to be decided by the affected faculty". Professor Welch explained that the APC held as a general principle that the faculty in any given discipline are the ones who need to make decisions about their program. Thus, the "affected faculty" refers broadly to the entire faculty of a department or unit, not narrowly to those affected by a proposed change.

Professor Faran noted that if the "the faculty" (fifth line from the bottom) referred to the Faculty of Music, it should be so specified. Professor Welch agreed that any such reference should specify to which faculty is being referred. Professor Faran then wondered whether such decisions should always be exclusively matters for a unit's faculty to decide, since in extreme cases groups within a faculty

may abuse this principle and reach decisions which would hurt the department; should the Administration be able to intervene, and if so, at what point? To this Professor Welch responded that first, the APC crafted its statement after considerations based on concepts of Music as a discipline; and although it recognized that there would most probably be an impact on the community, the APC felt it lacked the appropriate expertise to include this aspect into its deliberations. Rather its concern was to consider whether, and to what extent, the faculty in Music Education had been involved in serious discussion of the issue. To the second issue, namely, the danger that some departments might become too narrowly focussed, he replied that there are various mechanisms (departmental evaluations, for example) in place to check this development.

The FSEC approved the motion to receive the report for transmission to the Faculty Senate for informational purposes.

Provost Headrick underscored the University policy to continue a program until all students making regular progress toward a degree within that program have had a chance to achieve their degree.

Professor Welch summarized the two main items on which the APC would be focussing this year: The steps proposed for the reorganization in large programmatic areas, primarily in the College of Arts & Sciences, secondarily in the chemical and biological disciplines.

Academic Information. Specifically, given the new responsibilities for Vice-Provost Sullivan, the APC hopes to better understand the methodology used, as well as data verification, in order to insure that we have the highest quality and manageable quantity of information that would help in making good decisions.

The Provost commented that meetings and discussions on the future of the Biological Sciences were already under way, and expressed optimism of making real progress in this area this year.

Professor Tamburlin asked whether the Provost had any thoughts on restructuring the way special majors are handled --- for example, what departments would be credited, or even whether a department or faculty member would be credited for the effort contributed. Provost Headrick replied that some of that would be dealt with in the new version of the planning document. He hoped that what would come out of the planning process would be not only better and more reliable information,

but also a understanding of what counts, and how it counts, toward the development of special majors.

Item 7: Approval of the Agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of November 12, 1997

Professor Malone delivered a brief summary of his report on the SUNY Senate meeting, which he would present to the Faculty Senate next week.

The agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Faculty Senate was approved.

Item 8: Old Business

On the issue of faculty advisement of students, Professor Welch noted several problems with the much-touted DARS system, which he suspected was not being properly maintained, perhaps due to reduced staffing. He cited, for example, reports which were as much as one year out of date, which led him to believe that data were not being entered in time for faculty to adequately advise students. He asked that the responsible members of the Administration be invited to the FSEC to address this issue.

Item 9: Committee Appointments (Executive Session)

There being no further business, old or new, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing,

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Present: Chair: Peter A. Nickerson

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: Sherri Wallace

Arts & Letters: Martha Hyde

Health-Related Professions: Judith Tamburlin

Information & Library Studies: George D'Elia

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Boris Albin, Herbert Schuel, Cedric Smith

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran

Nursing: Powhatan Wooldridge

Pharmacy: Nathan

Social Sciences: Jack Meacham

SUNY Senators: John Fisher, Maureen Jameson, Dennis Malone, Claude Welch

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Guests: President William Greiner

Provost Thomas Headrick

Senior Vice-Provost Kenneth Levy

David Banks (Chair, Affirmative Action Committee)

Margaret Acara (Affirmative Action Committee)

Christopher S. Connelly (Special Interest Housing, Pre-Professional)

Kevin McCue (Graduate Student Association)

Sue Wuetcher (The Reporter)

Excused: Dental Medicine: Robert Baier

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Ramalingam Sridhar

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Melvyn Churchill

Absent: Graduate School of Education: Thomas Schroeder

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Ronald Batt