

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of December 10, 2003
(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 10, 2003, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of November 12 & 19, 2003
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President/Provost
4. Report of the Grading Committee: update on grievance procedures - W. Baumer
5. Report of the Academic Planning Committee: discussion of MOUs - D. Christian
6. Old/New business
7. Executive session (if needed)
8. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of November 12 & 19, 2003

Both sets of minutes were approved as distributed.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

Chair Nickerson reported that he had met with President Designate Simpson and invited him to our first FSEC meeting in January and also to the first meeting of the Faculty Senate (FS) in February. Dr. Simpson indicated that he expects to attend our meetings regularly. He would also like to meet with some of the FS committees. Over the next year, he will be meeting with governance bodies throughout the University.

In today's e-mail is an announcement from Dr. Simpson that a national search will be conducted for a new provost. Meanwhile, Vice Provost Robert Genco will serve as Interim Provost after Provost Capaldi leaves for her SUNY post in Albany at the end of January.

The Professional Staff Senate and the Faculty Senate are planning to co-host a reception to welcome President Simpson. Time and location will be announced when details are finalized.

FS committee activity included:

- The Teaching & Learning Committee discussed inviting an outstanding speaker to begin the speaker series (on September 10th) that has been endowed by Professor Ron Gentile. The Committee also is planning, in collaboration with the Center for Teaching & Learning Resources, a January 23rd program, "Student Perspectives on Teaching & Learning."
- The Grading Committee has been working on policies about academic integrity and grievance procedures for undergraduate and graduate students.
- The Information & Library Resources Committee met and heard updates from Associate Vice President Barbara von Wahlde. Professor Helju Bennett, Committee chair, will be going on leave next semester, so we'll need to designate a new chair.
- The Governance Committee would like to have a few more members. Please suggest names for the openings. Current members include professors M. Kramer (Libraries - chair), R. Bryant (Architecture & Planning), V. Doyno (English), and M. Farrell (Sociology).

Item 3: Report of the President/Provost

None.

Item 4: Report of the Grading Committee: update on grievance procedures - Professor William H. Baumer

Professor Baumer, chair of the Grading Committee, reported that the group had met and discussed grievance procedures pertinent to undergraduate and graduate students. Both sets of procedures have much in common, and a forthcoming resolution may suggest that they should be the same, except

that one is dealt with by the Graduate School Dean and the other by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

There are more differences in academic integrity procedures for undergraduate and graduate students. The Committee will try to reduce or eliminate those differences, many of which involve the appeal process when a student disputes an instructor's penalty.

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Grant said that the review of procedures is part of a broader effort to return responsibility for academic decision-making to departments and decanal units. Departmental committees will be charged to review and make decisions about students' complaints. The Academic Affairs office will do a final review to ensure that due process has been maintained.

Professor Baumer said that there are also complaints of harassment filed by faculty members against disruptive students. These matters need to be dealt with more promptly than current procedures allow. Violent incidents are on the rise nationally, and the Grading Committee is trying to draft policies that are proactive, instead of being reactive.

Vice Provost Grant agreed that threats against faculty members should be dealt with promptly. He said that any faculty members who are concerned about their personal safety should contact Public Safety. They can issue a citation, rather than arrest a student, which refers the matter to Student Affairs for action. Public Safety can also provide a plainclothes officer to be nearby for protection if a situation warrants that.

The Grading Committee will continue to discuss these issues and might have recommendations to present sometime next semester.

Item 5: Report of the Academic Planning Committee: discussion of MOUs - Professor Diane Christian

Professor Christian said that the faculty role in the current MOU was mostly reactive. She would like to see faculty be more proactive in formulating MOU2. Communication can help to accomplish this; we need to move beyond departmental discussions to broader forums for brainstorming ideas. Technology might be able to help in attracting more input.

Professor Brazeau said that we need a better way to evaluate faculty service. Faculty members will be more inclined to contribute if their service is recognized. Many faculty are not inclined to invest time in group discussions that won't help them advance.

Professor Adams-Volpe said that perhaps there could be an interactive Web page devoted to soliciting comments about MOU2. If it were divided into sections, it could facilitate faculty responding to topics of particular interest to them.

Professor Cohen said MOU2 should be a document expressing faculty and administrative expectations. It should clearly state how faculty in various decanal units will be evaluated.

Professor Baumer said that MOU2 will state what type of university we're going to be, and what steps we'll take to get there. If we don't write it, it will be written for us. It's unavoidably a political document that will be used by SUNY and the State legislature for making decisions about our future.

Professor Wooldridge said that the MOU shouldn't be confused with previous attempts to draft an institutional mission statement. MOU2 will have a real impact on how faculty teach and do research.

President Greiner said that the Middle States accreditation report should be helpful in promoting discussion about issues relevant to MOU2. Although it hasn't been made public yet, it can be shared with FSEC and the Academic Planning Committee to assist their deliberations.

Professor Jensen suggested that we provide concrete examples of how the first MOU had a direct effect on faculty teaching and research. Unless we can describe a real-life impact, many faculty probably will still not regard it seriously.

Item 6: Old/New business

Chair Nickerson solicited topics for discussion when FSEC meetings resume in January. Communication issues will one of the first agenda items, but other suggestions are welcome.

Professor Kramer said that she's a member of the Public Safety Committee, which has been concerned about recent changes to the NYS Fire Code. Fines can now be levied by the state agency for non-

compliance, and UB could be affected by false alarms. The new law requires that an alarm go directly to the nearest firehouse without local intervention.

Professor Jensen said he's heard a rumor that China has blocked student access to several U. S. university Web sites, including UB's. It's unclear why, but, if true, it would have a big effect on enrollment in departments such as Engineering.

Professor Jensen also said that previous attempts to implement online teaching assessment were blocked at the provostial level. With a search for a new provost underway, perhaps the topic should be revisited.

Chair Nickerson said that some instructors have expressed an interest in having access to pictures of the students enrolled in their classes. Current policy seems to disallow that without a student's permission. Some departments have been successful in getting all freshmen to allow it, but most units don't ask. The policy seems to be contradictory to other policies that provide instructors with students' phone numbers, addresses, and access to their DARS reports, etc.

The Alumni Association is interested in offering graduates a lifetime UB e-mail address. Some other universities are doing it, and UB might do it too, if technical issues can be worked out.

Professor Danford asked whether UB's Division 1-A athletic future might be in jeopardy because of low attendance at football games. Professor Adams-Volpe said that the Intercollegiate Athletic Council has been discussing attendance requirements, but UB's past football season won't be penalized because the new rules don't go into effect until 2004.

Professor Jensen asked if FSEC will have a role in the search for a new provost. Chair Nickerson said he expects we'll get to interview finalists after the search committee has screened the pool of candidates.

Professor Cohen suggested that we invite Senior Vice Provost Bruce Holm to give an update on bioinformatics developments at UB.

Professor Wooldridge said that one way to avoid hasty administrative decision-making "because there wasn't time for faculty consultation" would be for administrators to declare that decisions are "provisional" until they've been reviewed by the FSEC.

Item 7: Executive session (if needed)

FSEC met in executive session. A grievance was considered and resolved to the satisfaction of all involved.

Item 8: Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Will Hepfer

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

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

Chair: P. Nickerson (P)

Secretary: W. Hepfer (P)

Architecture & Planning: S. Danford (P)

Arts & Sciences: S. Bruckenstein (A), M. Churchill (A), R. Hoeing (P), S. Schack (A), K. Takeuchi (A)

Dental Medicine: M. Donley (P)

Education: L. Malave (P)

Engineering & Applied Sciences: J. Jensen (P), R. Mayne (P)

Informatics: F. Tutzauer (P)

Institutional/General: O. Mixon (A)

Law: L. Swartz (P)

Management: C. Pegels (A)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: J. Hassett (P), G. Logue (A), B. Murray (E), J. Sellick (P)

Nursing: P. Wooldridge (P)

Pharmacy: G. Brazeau (P)

Public Health & Health Professions: C. Crespo (P)

Social Work: B. Rittner (P)

SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe (P), W. Baumer (P), M. Kramer (A), P. Nickerson (P)

University Libraries: CA Fabian (P)

University officers: President Greiner (P)

Guests: D. Budniewski (Reporter), D. Christian (Academic Planning Cmte.) L. Labinski (Prof. Staff Sen.),