

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 5, 1997 (approved)

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

1. [Report of the Chair](#)
2. [Steps in reviewing the Provost's Academic Plan](#)
3. [Report of the President's Task Force on Women](#)
4. [Approval of the Minutes of December 4, 1996](#)

Item 1: Report of the Chair

After adoption of the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting for February 18, 1997, the Chair presented to the FSEC a draft resolution for Philip Wels, recently retired Chair of the UB Council. Professor Noble pointed out that the resolution was not approved unanimously by the Faculty Senate, since no formal vote was taken, and suggested instead that the text should read "adopted by an overwhelming majority", or "passed by acclamation". The Chair announced that the Provost had established the "Center for Advanced Phototonic and Electronic Materials"; in addition, the Chair circulated information from the SUNY Institute on Professional Development in Technology.

Concern over absences of senators from the Faculty Senate meetings prompted the Chair to send letters to those faculty members who missed three of the four meetings so far this academic year; he asked the FSEC members, as liaisons, whether they would like to receive copies of these notifications. The members approved.

The Chair had circulated a questionnaire to the FSEC members dealing with the policy issues discussed during the Fall 1996 semester, and asked them to respond at their early convenience.

An electronic version of the *Faculty/Professional Staff Handbook* will be available this summer; the Chair noted that some major items will be added (such as the University's mission statement, links to all eight union contracts, and the revised *Bylaws of the Voting Faculty* and *Standing Orders of the Faculty Senate*). He added that not all faculty will be able to access this, since some of them lack the appropriate computer links. Professor Meacham pointed out that anyone with a UNIX account could access this document through a terminal in the libraries or in one of the public sites. Professor Welch said he would bring a copy of the Table of Contents for the Committee's consideration and possible suggestions.

Item 2: Steps in reviewing the Provost's Academic Plan

Attention turned to developing a procedure of review of the Provost's Academic Plan. The Chair reminded the FSEC that some Senators were adamant about including the entire Faculty Senate, perhaps even the entire Voting Faculty, in the discussion, and asked the FSEC how to respond.

Professor Nickerson felt we needed the guidance of the Senate committees, but cautioned that we have very little time to act. We should (1) determine which Senate meeting(s) are to be used for the discussion, and (2) give the appropriate committees a very short timeline to discuss, and advise on, individual items in the Plan. Professor Albin hoped for consultation with the Voting Faculty, and not be limited to the forum of the Faculty Senate. Professor Faran noted that it might be appropriate to discuss the Plan at more than just one Senate meeting; we must first specify what issues each committee should consider. The Senate as a whole, he suggested, could guide the work of the committees, although he was not sure of the exact procedure to be used.

An opposite procedure was proposed by Professor D'Elia. After publication of the Plan, the FSEC should charge the standing committees to examine the plan from their individual perspectives; the committees would then report to the FSEC, which in turn would present these findings to the Faculty Senate. A discussion proceeding from the bottom up, besides being potentially more time-consuming, could be chaotic as well.

Professor Meacham noted that the Provost's report is bound to contain a number of "lightning rod issues" affecting certain units directly; but for the sake of the University community, discussion should focus on the Plan's underlying assumptions and proposed directions for the future of UB.

Since history has shown that the faculty is typically very slow to react and deliberate on such issues, Professor Noble observed, it is good that we are forced to react in such a short time span. Professor Faran asked if the FSEC should decide which committees are to consider which portions of the report; Professor Welch replied that each committee should select and discuss those portion(s) it considers relevant to its charge.

Much of the initial impact of the Provost's Plan, noted Professor Malone, will be on the graduate programs; it is therefore critical for the Senate to determine to what extent it has standing with respect to these programs. Although the Faculty Senate is entitled by the *Bylaws* and *Charter* to "be interested" in these matters, the Senate's actual standing is much less clearly defined.

Professor Frisch believed one major issue would be to decide how the pieces of the Academic Plan fit together, and warned that a "parcelling out" procedure might not prove as beneficial as a more integrative exercise of determining how the proposed changes will interact and affect various units. He argued that the Provost wants feed on the big picture, which will require a broad Senate action.

Professor D'Elia seconded this idea, and suggested we clear the docket for the next Senate meeting, prior to which time the chairs of the appropriate standing committees should report to the FSEC to clarify the several ramifications of the Plan. It is important that they do so, he continued, since they and their committees are most qualified to identify potential problems.

Professor Faran expected conflicts among the different parts of the Plan and of the committees' reports; he suggested that the FSEC try to iron out these conflicts and focus on the Plan as a whole before delivering its report to the Faculty Senate.

Professor Albini stressed the importance of having some venue for faculty input, and proposed notifying the faculty to participate through their senators.

The Chair asked Vice-Provost Fischer what process the Provost had in mind for collecting feed. Vice-Provost Fischer believed there would be a series of "intense visitations" with the faculties of various units and with the FSEC.

Professor Meacham believed we should encourage the faculty to address some of their concerns directly to the standing committees. Professor Malone found the idea "delightful", adding that no Senate committee holds closed meetings; indeed, he found it critical that younger and untenured faculty offer input to these committees. By no means should the discussion be restricted to the Faculty Senate.

Professor Noble emphasized the need to be "rapidly responsive", especially since the Senate schedule is very rigid and limited in its time for active exchange of ideas.

Professor Malone wondered when the Provost's ideas for change would be put into action. Vice-Provost Fischer replied that the intent of the Provost's Plan is to provide a context for open discussion and get feed, and not to lay out a series of decisions. Although there is a sense of urgency, the present semester is the time for dialogue.

The Chair, following up on the proposals, announced he would (1) invite the chairs of the standing committees to the FSEC meeting of February 19, (2) require at least preliminary reports from some committees by the next Senate meeting (March 11), and (3) ask the committees to further refine their reports after discussion in the Faculty Senate.

Item 3: Report of the President's Task Force on Women

Professor Noble, Chair of the President's Task Force on Women, presented a written executive summary of her report and offered a few introductory comments.

First, she emphasized that the document is concerned not only with the faculty, but with everyone, with all constituencies throughout the University, and that the Task Force

membership was accordingly very heterogeneous. Many of the tables in the report addressed exclusively faculty issues, but only because these data were more readily available. Second, the report represents a *consensus* document; the many members of the Committee worked hard to prepare a report with which they could all feel comfortable.

Third, she noted that the contents of the report were necessarily limited, and comprise those issues which the Task Force considered most immediately important.

Professor Noble admitted candidly that she had accepted the appointment as Chair because she had been very frustrated as a member of the Faculty Senate. A few years ago, she had tried to make known how the University appears to women, but her comments were "not received by particularly friendly ears"; she felt that conversation on this issue was limited due to a lack of data and to various sorts of misinformation. In addition, she considered the faculty to be out of touch with the changing roles of women in work places outside the University. Chairing the Task Force afforded her the opportunity to get the message out.

Among the negative findings in the report is that there is a "very thick glass ceiling" at UB; there are disproportionately few women at the top, disproportionately many at the bottom. In addition, several women at UB feel like second-class citizens and suffer from low morale.

The more positive findings include: first, the fact that many of the problems can be fixed without money; the Task Force made several suggestions for improving the climate for women at UB without large investments; secondly, that women, instead of being the problem, are actually a part of the solution in that, by improving women's conditions at UB, we could attract better students and faculty.

The Task Force itemized its recommendations in the report on each of the six charges assigned; repetition of some recommendations is due to the overlapping nature of the charges. Among these is the recommendation that there be an office for women, but that prior to the establishment of such an office, the mandate for the Task Force be extended in order to continue its proactive activities. The Task Force would facilitate as much open discussion as possible for feed.

A top priority is to increase the representation of women at higher levels of academic and managerial units across the University -- the Task Force believes that many of the other discrepancies will resolve themselves if there are women at the table when important items are discussed.

Matters on quality of life for women also need immediate attention. These include: first, the need for the University to develop procedures for dealing with sexual harassment; although we have a fine policy in place, we need a mechanism for reporting incidents and assuring a good hearing; secondly, there is an overwhelming demand for child-care facilities on the North Campus, a market-place issue which affects everybody, even men; third, the Task Force urged the promotion of scholarship around gender and women's issues, as at other institutions.

Professor Jameson, noting the disparity between salaries of male and female Full Professors [Table Q3], observed that if one factored in the ratio of the total number of incumbents, the ratio of total salary money would come closer to 11:1; she asked if the full report (to be released in the *Reporter* the next day) reflected improvements in this matter in one decanal unit over another.

Professor Noble replied that no serious salary problems existed at the Assistant and Associate levels, but only at the Full Professor level. She added that this seems to reflect the hiring practices of twenty years ago, when women were hired at disparate salaries. Present hiring behavior appears to be acceptable, and has been so for a while if one takes into account the Associate-level salaries. Consequently, the older group of women faculty has suffered most; the Task Force suggested that UB consider how to compensate for this quickly, within their employment lifetimes. Although the Committee devoted a great deal of time to salary issues, Professor Noble did not consider this the most interesting nor most important item in the report.

Professor Frisch asked whether the Task Force had studied the award of merit money, which seems to have caused much of the salary disparity. Professor Noble replied it had not; despite the wealth of anecdotal experience, she doubted whether anything could be gained

from documenting that history. Rather, it is more important that in the future, each unit chair be more sensitive to gender-based equity in the distribution of that money. Professor Meacham supported the idea of extending the mandate, and noted that it would be far too difficult for the Task Force alone to move forward on all its recommendations; he wondered how best to transfer the responsibilities to the administration for executing those recommendations. Professor Noble replied that any subsequent actions depend on what is done with the report; it is now our responsibility to decide what is most important, and to take the initiative for action. The Task Force supplied the information and the impetus; the action must come from each individual in the community.

Professor Wooldridge thought that, even at the level of Full Professor, it was the length of time in the position, rather than gender, which was most responsible for the salary discrepancy; he suggested the report should address this issue accordingly.

Senior Vice-Provost Levy suspected that the glass ceiling was lower in the past, and that a large part of this was due to the fact that a higher percentage of Full Professor males had been department chairs, at which point they negotiated salary increases; hence the salaries which accompanied administrative responsibilities account more for the disparity than merit increases.

Professor Welch asked whether the consistent low representation of female students was a result of the mix of academic programs at UB. Professor Noble, speaking for the Task Force, doubted that: first, several schools from which data were collected show similar mixes; secondly and more importantly, enrollment in Engineering dropped precipitously without any change in the proportion of women students. She felt that this represented a great market-place opportunity, and that somehow, UB was not recruiting the women it should and must increase its efforts.

Professor Jameson asked if the Task Force had examined the male/female ratios among honors students. Professor Noble replied it had not, but pointed out that there were very few undergraduate courses which would promote scientific career choices for entering students.

Professor Malone, noting that the data in the report indicated maxima and minima in salaries, suggested that the standard deviation might be the better indicator. He also observed that the glass ceiling is even lower in the "hard technical industries", and that, because women were aware of this, they tended not to major in Engineering. Data also indicate that women tend not to major in the physical sciences as much as they do in medicine and the biological sciences; he felt this to be one strong reason why there are fewer women faculty.

Professor Moore stated that she and other members of the Affirmative Action Committee found the results in the report substantiated what they had already suspected -- namely, that women are generally less valued than men by the University community. She considered the report valuable not only for its statistical evidence, but also for its comparative analyses with other universities. She and the Committee agreed with the recommendations, particularly with those calling for the creation of two standing committees, one to monitor progress on improving the environment for women, the other to deal with racial issues.

Professor Banks noted that there has never been a Senate committee on minorities. The Affirmative Action Committee seems to have been developed in line with external requirements on the University; yet he felt that the faculty has a responsibility to deal with minority issues within their own ranks. He thus supported the creation of such a committee, but moreover looked forward to the day when such a committee would no longer be necessary.

Professor Kennedy mentioned that the Affirmative Action Committee had been devoting a great deal of energy to finding ways to correct salary inequities; the Committee feels that the University needs some policy to enact at *all* levels, and welcomed suggestions from the FSEC on this matter.

Professor Frisch thought the most important point of the report is the way in which women's issues are interrelated with all the other issues discussed by the FSEC during the previous semester. An especially damaging limitation for this University is that the administration has

been "as unrepresentative as it needs to be" when compared with several other institutions. This affects our profile as an educational institution, and must be changed. Professor Noble agreed, noting that although the academic community is changing, UB is slow to respond to those changes; and the less responsive we are, the more it will hurt us.

Referring to Table F, Professor Welch noted that UB lagged behind in percentages of women faculty/students compared with the national availability pool, and asked whether this suggested a strategy for targeting certain areas for improvement. Professor Noble stressed that the entire story is not in the numbers; several factors contribute to the discrepancies in various fields. She was, however, particularly concerned about the Natural Sciences, in which women have been prominent for many years -- except at UB.

Professor Meacham added that Psychology lost several good women faculty in recent years, and that it has become very difficult to hire additional women faculty because women know of the problems women have at UB. Professor Noble noted that the University of Michigan, in order to become a leader among women-friendly universities, had to enrich their programs with various women's and gender studies.

Item 4: Approval of the Minutes of December 4, 1996

The Minutes of December 4, 1996 were approved as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

THOSE PRESENT:

University Officers: R. Wagner, K. Levy, W. Fischer

Chair: Claude Welch

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch

Dental Medicine: Robert Baier

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold

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

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran

Nursing: Powhatan Wooldridge

Social Sciences: Jack Meacham

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

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Guests:

REPORTER: Sue Wuetcher

GENERATION: Faisal Shah

Other Guests:

Bernice Noble, Chair, President's Task Force on Women

Affirmative Action Committee: Brenda Moore, Chair

Margaret Acara, David Banks, Michael Frisch, Elizabeth Kennedy, Mattie Rhodes

Absent:

Arts & Letters: James Pappas

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Herbert Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein