

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Minutes of November 3 1999 - (approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on November 3, 1999 in Capen 567 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the minutes of October 20, 1999](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the President/Provost](#)
4. [Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee update](#)
5. [Discussion of the University Calendar](#)
6. [Brief updates by the Computer Services Committee and the Grading Committee](#)

Item 1: Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that:

- the Provost provided him with an update on the ongoing discussions of the merger of the Department of Chemistry (College of Arts & Sciences) and the Department of Medicinal Chemistry (School of Pharmacy). The proposal is not yet final but provides a common ground for discussion; with consent of the FSEC will send the proposal to the Academic Planning Committee (there was informal consensus to do so)
 - will members of the Departments participate in the APC discussion? (Professor Schack)
 - the Chairs of the Departments have been invited to the APC meeting (Professor Welch)
 - recommend that faculty members from each department participate (Professor Schack)
 - APC's practice is to include the department Chairs and any relevant factions (Professor Welch)
- the Provost met in executive session with the Deans on the evening of October 27 to review the budgetary shortfall; the Budget Priorities Committee has not yet been brought into the loop; he is pursuing this because it is an opportune time for the Budget Priorities Committee to become involved in the process

- on November 10 in the Provost's absence, the FSEC will participate in a video conference entitled "Accountability in Higher Education" to be held in 120 Clemens Hall; this is an issue on which the Provost has previously given us articles; the issue will be a challenge in the near future
- the Faculty Tenure and Privileges Committee has revised its resolution on promotions and appointments in Centers and Institutes; the FSEC will see the revised resolution before its second reading at the December 7 meeting of the Faculty Senate; the Committee has also asked for the FSEC's permission to examine how the processes for appointments and promotions are adjusted to changes in University priorities; not clear what exactly is meant by the sentence
 - would be very unfair if promotion standards changed on short order; faculty should be able to rely on the stability of standards while they are working toward promotion (Professor Boot)
 - is it the processes or the criteria which change? (Professor Malone)
 - the issue is criteria; the Committee is concerned about a case in which a candidate for promotion was possibly held to a different standard at the time of promotion than had prevailed through most of his time at UB; several questions are raised by the case: first, how does one know there has been a change in standards; second, should standards change relevant to individuals, and third, if not, how would standards be kept the same for individual faculty? (Professor Schack)
 - added the word "processes" to make the Committee's question clearer; the question originally read "how do appointments and promotions adjust?" (Professor Nickerson)
 - the Faculty Senate is responsible for discussing such issues; standards don't adjust, they are adjusted after study (Professor Welch)
 - will tell the Committee that the FSEC gives its approval to study the issues involved (Professor Nickerson)

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of October 20, 1999.

The minutes of October 20, 1999 were approved.

Item 3: Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee update

At the September 15, 1999 meeting of the FSEC Professor Gentile, Chair of the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, presented a report on student evaluation of

instruction. The FSEC was supportive of the report, but asked the Committee to revise its recommendations into a resolution which is now ready for FSEC review . The FSEC also asked the Committee to consider other approaches to course evaluation other than student evaluations; the Committee is just beginning that work.

The Chair asked for comments on the Resolution which was distributed with the agenda:

- are students permitted to have access to the evaluations, and if so to which parts? (Mr. Pallickal)
- each decanal unit would set its own policy on student access; the Committee did not feel it would be possible to have a standard policy across the University (Professor Gentile)
- in 1991/1992 there was a course evaluation project which promised student access to evaluations, but student access has never been implemented (Mr. Pallickal)
- SUNY Counsel has advised me that statistical data are available to anyone through the Freedom of Information Act; individual student comments would not, however, be available (Senior Vice Provost Levy)
- make mandatory the provision that each decanal unit designate someone to be responsible for ensuring that evaluation instruments within disciplines are standardized, establishing, updating and collecting normative data, and making available course ratings (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- a 1987 Faculty Senate resolution, approved by the President, requires evaluation in every unit; this resolution would weaken that earlier requirement; incorporate by reference the 1987 resolution and require evaluations (Professor Meacham)
- is evaluation now being done by all units? (Professor Malone)
- tenure and promotion dossiers routinely contain information about course evaluations (Senior Vice Provost Levy)
- language that makes Deans responsible for carrying out the duties outlined by the resolution would be acceptable to the Committee (Professor Gentile)
- use wording that makes each Dean responsible for administering student evaluations (Professor Welch)
- point 2 of the resolution suggests that administration of student evaluations could be done at the departmental level; in large schools that would be confusing, so better to place responsibility at the decanal level (Professor Meacham)
- urge that the Committee look at the non-availability of the evaluations to students (Professor Baumer)

There was a motion (seconded) to schedule the resolution's first Faculty Senate reading on December 7. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4: Report of the Provost

The Provost updated the FSEC on the budget picture. SUNY sustained a \$20 M reduction in its 1999/2000 budget.. Additionally SUNY is facing about \$32 M in unfunded salary increases from last year, and the recently approved UUP contract raises salaries even more. Also the three SUNY hospitals are obligated to pay SUNY about \$116 M annually; they underpaid by \$77 M last year, and it is doubtful that they will be able to pay any of the obligation this year, leaving SUNY with a deficit of about \$200 M. The hospital issue is a political one, which the state will have to settle. Altogether SUNY has a deficit of about \$250 M.

The Board of Trustees will vote on SUNY's budget at its November 16 meeting, so these numbers are unofficial. It seems prudent, however, to begin planning, expecting that the official numbers will be very close to these. Revision of the budget seems unlikely since the new budget cycle will begin after the holidays.

As a consequence of these problems, UB's budget will be reduced by \$5 M. \$3.1 M is our share of SUNY's budget reduction. We lost bridge funding. We are paying \$500 K for not meeting our enrollment targets in past years. Law School and School of Pharmacy tuition was raised, and UB expected to keep the increase. However, the Department of the Budget rolled the increase into UB's base which then didn't go up, so we have lost that money. Fortunately there are some additions to our budget. Because our enrollment is up, we realized marginal tuition revenue. We had an increase in research funding and therefore also realized marginal income recovery.

UB began the 1999/2000 budget year with an \$8.9 M budget imbalance, but normal float will take care of that. There are, however, a number of obligations to be met; for example, rolling out merit scholarships and faculty set ups. On the plus side we have \$5 M in marginal tuition revenue, though our state tax support will not reflect this year's increased enrollment

until next budget year. Between our obligations and our \$5 M budget reduction, we will have to manage about \$9 M. The Provost and the Deans have begun talking about how to handle this deficit, which will be allocated to the Schools and the College of Arts & Sciences. The impact of the cuts will be doubled since we are half way through the budget year. Aggressive use of endowment income can help manage the budget cuts, but ultimately the cuts will have to be paid for in state dollars.

There were questions for the Provost:

- must the entire \$9 M be made up in state dollars? (Professor Adams-Volpe)
- only the \$5 M in budget reduction must be made up in state dollars; we could add some of the deficit to the budget imbalance, but am reluctant to do so since the next two years look even harder (Provost Triggie)

The Provost reported that he and Professor Meacham are members of a committee looking at assessment of general education programs; the committee met in Syracuse last week. Professor Meacham noted that the committee's discussion was positive, expansive and open minded.

Item 5: Discussion of the University Calendar

The Chair reminded the FSEC that in the past the Faculty Senate had a Calendar Committee which was responsible for establishing the University Calendar. The task was too difficult for the Faculty Senate Committee, so an administrative Committee replaced it. The Chair then introduced Vice President Gresham and Associate Vice President Rice.

Vice President Gresham explained that responsibility for the calendar rotates among administrative units. Her Office is taking over for the 2001/2004 calendar. In developing the next calendar, the Committee will be using a set of principles established when the 1998/2000 calendar was being developed by the Office of Student Affairs. The two required principles come from state education law. The eleven internal principles are self-imposed and represent a distillation of the calendar issues which successive calendar committees

have faced. The purpose of today's discussion is to identify any problems that have arisen from the eleven internal principles.

There were comments from the floor:

- typically classes are canceled for holidays only until 6 PM. and classes after 6 PM are held; if we then follow the Monday = Tuesday scenario, classes after 6 PM get taught twice; suggest canceling classes for the entire day (Professor Sridhar)
- canceling class from sundown to sundown is necessary to conform to the way Jewish holidays are calculated; the Monday = Tuesday scenario should apply only to classes held before 6 PM; after 6 PM Tuesday's classes should be held (Professor Baumer)
- it would be confusing to have classes before 6 PM from one day and classes after 6 PM from another day (Professor Sridhar)
- if classes are canceled for the full day, Millard Fillmore College will have trouble offering the required number of hours (Associate Vice President Rice)
- in the Graduate School of Education about 60% of classes are held in the 4:10 - 6:50 PM slot; if cancel class at 6 PM we lose a week of instruction since students who are working full time will not come to campus for a 50 minute class (Professor Schroeder)
- any switch in schedule is confusing; just remind students when the next class is (Professor Schack)
- because there are 9 class periods from 9 AM to 5 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and only 6 slots on Tuesdays and Thursdays; use a 3 to 2 ratio instead of an equal number of classes (Professor Welch)
- principle should not be to have "an equal number of M,W,F and T,Thu classes" but rather to have an equal number of M,W,F and T,Thu days; it won't be possible to satisfy all the vagaries of the various holidays without the day substitution scenario, but if we use a Monday = Wednesday or Tuesday = Thursday we will minimize problems (Professor Boot)
- Fall semester has built in problem because of Labor Day Monday and Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday; those holidays force the Monday = Tuesday scenario for Fall semester (Professor Baumer)
- start at a Tuesday, Friday and end on a Monday to solve the Fall semester problem (Professor Boot)
- seems clear that it is impossible to uphold all the internal principles at the same time; own pet peeve is that Spring Break doesn't coincide with local school districts' spring break (Professor Meacham)

- a mid-semester Spring Break is better for our students' morale than waiting as late as April for a break; also avoids choosing between Christian and Jewish holidays in scheduling the break (Associate Vice President Rice)
- the rest of humanity doesn't get holidays to coincide with school breaks, and faculty already have more scheduling flexibility than almost any other group; Spring classes with a mid-semester break are more coherent than Fall classes with a break nearly at the end of the semester (Professor Schack)
- students would benefit from a mid-semester break in the Fall; not all departments comply with the Monday = Tuesday scenario, thus setting up conflicts when two classes try to occupy the same classroom (Professor Tamburlin)
- unaware that the policy was not always followed (Associate Vice President Rice)
- annoying that SUNY institutions don't have common break schedules; how was the decision to cancel classes only on the first day Jewish holidays decided upon? (Professor Charles Smith)
- it was a compromise to avoid divisiveness arrived at after negotiations with a group of Jewish faculty; the Provost intended the compromise to close debate on the issue (Associate Vice Provost Rice)
- its inclusion under the section of Required Principles make it seem like a matter of state law rather than a local decision; seems as though the Calendar Committee aspires to a religion neutral calendar, but that is not possible given our commitment to cancel classes for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Professor Charles Smith)
- have examined the possibility of a religion neutral calendar and believe it is not feasible to implement such a calendar (Associate Vice President Rice)
- is there any possibility of getting Good Friday off? (Mr. Celock)
- students are not obligated to attend class on Good Friday; UB is so diverse that we would not have classes if we canceled for religious holidays (Associate Vice President Rice)
- that is disingenuous; UB has the largest Roman Catholic student population of any school in New York (Professor Charles Smith)
- agree that the Thanksgiving break is disruptive of classes and exams; would like Good Friday off, but understand the difference in that Jewish holidays ban working (Mr. Pallickal)
- if we accommodate the Jewish religion must accommodate other religions and that is not possible (Mr. Lerman)

- would be preferable for the Principles to say that UB does not schedule classes on certain days rather than saying we cancel classes; the requirement for a minimum of 15 weeks of classes is a requirement for an undergraduate and graduate calendar only (Professor Welch)
- to be more accurate state law requires a certain number of contact minutes; UB made scheduling decisions which give us a 15 week semester, but Binghamton, for example, has only 13 weeks (Professor Boot)
- Provost Salins issued a memo saying that an institution that schedules less than 15 weeks of classes is not in compliance with state regulations governing student financial aid (Associate Vice President Rice)
- Binghamton has a trimester program which exempts them from the 15 week requirement (Professor Baumer)
- do the professional schools have their own calendars? (Professor Tamburlin)
- yes (Associate Vice President Rice)
- the Planning Principles document should make clear that the principles govern only the undergraduate and graduate calendar (Professor Welch)
- if professional schools have different calendars, that may explain the conflict over classrooms during the Monday = Tuesday scenario (Professor Tamburlin)
- the Law School is not subject to the Department of Education but to the Department of Law and the American Bar Association (Professor Baumer)
- with respect to religious holidays, the law says we may not penalize any student who for religious reasons misses a class; that is the most important point in this discussion; am considering forming a core Calendar Committee, which would include the Chairs of the Faculty Senate and the Professional Staff Senate, the student representative to the UB Council, Associate Vice President Rice and myself; the core committee would then consult with a larger group comprised of a representative from the Campus Ministries, International Education, each professional school, University Services, Arts & Sciences, the Libraries and Millard Fillmore College; small core committee might be able to work more quickly than a larger group and could meet the Spring deadline for a new calendar (Vice President Gresham)
- members of the Calendar Committee should have longevity to avoid re-inventing the wheel; better to have a representative from Faculty Senate and the Professional Staff Senate rather than the Chairs who change frequently (Professor Boot)

Item 6: Invitation

Mr. Celock offered tickets to the November 6 football game against Hofstra to faculty who would be interested in joining a group of students from Special Interest Housing. The Chair guaranteed that faculty would enjoy talking with the students.

Item 7: Brief updates by the Computer Services Committee and the Grading Committee

The Chair introduced Professor Peterson, Chair of the Computer Services Committee. She reported that before its October meeting, the Computer Services Committee had not met since December 1998. The first meeting drew 15 members with only 4 members absent, suggesting strong interest.

The Committee is thinking about several issues. First, the Committee would like to increase faculty influence and power on IT planning. Faculty are nominally represented on the IT Steering Committee by the Deans, but that is not particularly satisfactory. Senior Associate Vice President Innus has suggested a series of brown bag lunches to be held in various places for faculty to discuss issues of IT planning with him. The Committee would be interested in any other ideas from the Faculty Senate. The second issue is the of the nodes; none of the Committee members are satisfied with the nodes serving their units; the Committee is discussing a survey of faculty to evaluate the nodes, perhaps done by outside consultants. The Gartner Group has been suggested as a possibility. Third, the Committee has learned that Senior Vice Provost Tufariello is stepping down as Senior Vice Provost. The Committee is concerned about the future of the position. Finally the Committee is concerned that there does not appear to be a recognized mechanism for prioritizing IT projects, although Senior Associate Vice President Innus would probably not agree.

There were questions and comments:

- the Professional Staff Senate has a representative on the IT Steering Committee; shouldn't the Faculty Senate also have a representative? (Professor Adams-Volpe)

- as Chair, I should attend the meetings of the IT Steering Committee but have a teaching conflict so Professor Straubinger is attending the meetings in my place; however, one faculty voice is not enough on that Committee; furthermore the Committee has no planning mechanism, instead Senior Associate Vice President Innus talks and everyone else listens (Professor Peterson)
- the Senior Associate Vice President is not the most consultative person on campus, but nonetheless, the IT Steering Committee should be interactive (Professor Malone)
- the brown bag lunches would give an informal forum for faculty discussion with the Senior Associate Vice President; would prefer a more formal mechanism to ensure that faculty input influences policy making (Professor Peterson)
- the Faculty Senate website could devote a page to IT issues, and notes from the brown bag lunches and from the meetings of the IT Steering Committee could be posted there (Professor Shack)
- might it be possible to use graduate students to do the survey? (Professor Meacham)
- survey will be very touchy; in terms of confidentiality and protection on both sides an in-house survey would not be desirable (Professor Peterson)
- Gartner Group has a close association with major IT players on campus, so they probably aren't a good choice to do the survey (Professor Adams-Volpe)

The Chair then asked the Chair of the Grading Committee, Professor Baumer, to report on the activities of the Committee. The Committee is looking at issues related to satisfactory progress toward the degree. The *Undergraduate Catalog* describes UB's procedure, but it appears that there are exceptions to the procedure which make it unclear that UB is in compliance with external agencies' policies. However, in 50% of the cases in which exceptions to the policy have been made the student granted the exception has consequently achieved satisfactory progress status without special consideration. The Committee is examining whether we can accommodate within the external regulations at least some of what is accomplished by these exceptions. The Committee will meet again in a week to try to draft some recommendations.

There were questions:

- is the grade replacement policy applicable to graduate courses? (Professor Sridhar)

- the Graduate School Executive Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School have not accepted the policy (Professor Nickerson)

There being no old/new business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Marilyn McMann Kramer

Secretary of Faculty Senate

Present:

Chair: P. Nickerson

Secretary: M. Kramer

Parliamentarian: D. Malone

Arts & Sciences: W. Baumer, C. Fourtner, J. Meacham, S. Schack, Charles Smith

Engineering & Applied Sciences: R. Sridhar

Graduate School of Education: T. Schroeder

Health Related Professions: J. Tamburlin

Management: J. Boot

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Cedric Smith

Pharmacy: N.

SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe, J. Boot, H. Durand, J. Fisher

University Officers: D. Triggles, Provost

Guests:

R. Hoeing, Grading Committee

J. Celock, Red Jacket Hall Council

G. Pape, Student-wide Judiciary

A. Lerman, *The Spectrum*

C. Welch, Academic Planning Committee

L. Pallickal, Undergraduate Student Association

W. Coles, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

M. McGinnis, *Reporter*

L. Peterson, Chair, Computer Services Committee

R. Gentile, Chair, Teaching and Learning Committee

M. Gresham, Vice President

D. Rice, Senior Associate Vice President

Excused:

School of Information Studies: C. Jorgensen

Absent:

Architecture: R. Shibley

Law: L. Swartz

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: B. Albini

Nursing: J. Thompson

University Libraries: D. Woodson