

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Minutes of November 12th, 2008

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, November 12th, 2008, in the Jeannette Martin Room of Capen Hall (567) to discuss the following:

1. **Report of the Chair**
2. **Report of the President/Provost**
3. **Interaction with Interim Dean of the Graduate School John Ho and Executive Director Mick Thompson**
4. **Proposal for the Creation of a Writing Center (attached) Arabella Lyon, Associate Professor of English and President of the SUNY Council on Writing**
5. **Old/New business**
6. **Executive Session (if needed)**
7. **Adjournment**

Item 1: Report of the Chair

Reminder: Wednesday, November 19, 105 Harriman Hall, South Campus—Phase III of the Physical Master Plan will be presented. Still time to register online.

Parking: VPSA Dennis Black made several suggestions as to where to park; another option is to push the meeting time to 3pm at which point the paid lot is free.

There may be a new charge each for our Academic Planning and Grading Committees.

Associate Dean Jeri Jaeger asked about the procedure for transforming the Asian Studies Program into a department. Also, an idea is being floated around which would require students who wish to re-take a course for a better grade to do it during the summer sessions. Advantages: Increases summer enrollment and University income, eases the strain on severely impacted courses, and might discourage exploitation of the re-take

policy. Baumer reminded senators that until the Grading Committee changed the policy, students could re-take courses indefinitely.

Some faculty have expressed concern over the Financial Aid gives, and wondered whether the FS should take a position on this issue. VPUE Michael Ryan has agreed to talk to FSEC next week about this problem.

Item 2: Report of the President/Provost

The Provost discussed the press release from governor Paterson's office regarding the governor's latest proposal, which still has to be acted upon by the legislators. Under the governor's proposal, Provost Tripathi said, additional cuts incurred in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 would be paid for by a \$300 tuition increase in the coming spring semester, 90 percent of which would remain with the state and only 10% will go to the campuses. Next year, the state will retain 80 percent of the combined \$600 to cover the cuts in the 2009/2010 budget. The Provost reminded the senators that the last tuition increase was 2003/04. President Simpson interjected that in his view, "this is really nothing more than a tax on the students, for which they will receive nothing more and pay a substantially increased amount." He said that he wished there could be a conversation about implementing a structure and predictability, a "rationality" to tuition increases instead of this erratic taxing of students when there is a budget crunch.

In response to a question, Tripathi clarified that if the governor's proposal is approved, this will potentially be revenue neutral. Professor Burkart asked whether this would cover the 4% salary increase. The Provost answered that the governor has proposed that the increase not be implemented and be postponed. In addition,

Paterson's proposal could restore several million dollars to UB, including about \$1.6 million in one-time relief for UB's academic units, the Provost explained. This cash will be kept in UB's central budget to invest in projects that will generate extra revenue for the campus and to use as buffer against future crises. President Simpson emphasized the need for the state to be more "proactive or forward-looking" when it comes to dealing with the impact of the budget crisis on UB. Chair Hoeing asked Simpson whether he thought that the tuition

increase will have an effect on enrollment? No, said Simpson, "there is a major shift from private to public and this will mask any deleterious effect the tuition increase may have."

Item 3: Interaction with Interim Dean of the Graduate School John Ho and Executive Director Mick Thompson

John Ho gave an update on the Graduate School and its doings and briefly outlined how the budget cuts affected its services. He emphasized that the Graduate School was trying to maintain full service despite the cuts. He then listed the major areas of service provided by the Graduate School, including student recruitment and enrollment management, student financial support, student academic services, academic program facilitation and coordination, comprehensive program reviews, postdoctoral affairs. He also discussed the recent and new initiatives undertaken by the Graduate School to

manage enrollment (such as new re-admission policies, periodic quality assessment of applicants and enrollees, annual survey of admitted students, etc),

enhance student services (such as an exit opinion survey of new PhD graduates, the timely submission of final undergraduate transcripts, the improvement of the application to candidacy process, dissertation embargo policy, etc). A lively discussion followed concerning embargoes. The chair suggested bringing in a lawyer to discuss the issue further.

enhance student diversity (with enhanced stipends for Schomburg Fellowships which are now open to anyone from a disadvantaged ground, an earlier identification of underrepresented applicants, and a very successful diversity visit day). Senator Durant commented on the fact that the Schomburgs do not include health insurance and that the cost of health insurance is sometimes too heavy a burden for departments to carry. Janiece Kiedrowski asked whether the website showcased UB's diversity through its images.

review programs (including an external review of graduate and undergraduate programs in 12 Academic Departments annually, the refinement of self-study guidelines, the analysis of the results of the National Research Council)

provide postdoctoral services (the formation of UB postdoctoral Association, access to professional development and social programs, responsible conduct of research training, the crafting of UB policies concerning postdoctoral scholars)

provide guidelines for student retention and degree completion (including an annual review of PhD student progress, RCR training for PhD students, a handbook for dissertation mentors, workshops on teaching, dissertation writing, career choices, grant writing, and job interviews)

other initiatives Dr Ho mentioned were the Professional Master's Programs, Joint/Dual Degree Programs with Partner Institutions, Expanded fellowships and services, Graduate student wellness programs, and Alumni tracking

Dean Ho concluded by sharing with the senators the procedures for evaluating and annually reviewing the status of PhD students. He emphasized that each graduate program is encouraged to develop its own process for student evaluation and advisement. Certain elements must be included, however, in doctoral students' annual evaluation. These include:

the review of the student's academic record (the overall GPA, a record of the number of incompletes and/or resigned courses; a monitoring of the overall progress towards completing the coursework phase of the program)

checking on student progress in completing or preparing for the qualifying exam
planning for a timely defense of the dissertation research proposal or prospectus
monitoring the adequate progress in research including the timeliness of degree completion

Dr Ho handed out sample forms to use for the annual review report for PhD students. He also distributed a draft of the document concerning the responsible conduct of research training requirement (RCR). He explained that all PhD students admitted for the Fall 2009 semester would be required to document their successful completion of "Responsible Conduct of Research" training when they submit their Application to Candidacy (ATC) for the PhD Degree. Most people can satisfy this, he said, by going through a collaborative

institutional training initiative online program (CITI) in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). This will only affect incoming students, Dr. Ho clarified.

Item 4: Proposal for the Creation of a Writing Center (attached) Arabella Lyon, Associate Professor of English and President of the SUNY Council on Writing

Professor Lyon discussed the need for a real robust Writing Center at UB, an “efficient way to get writing instruction to people who need it and want it.” She then offered a historical snapshot of the genesis of writing centers in the university setting. Writing, she said, has been an established part of higher education since the 1970s and came into being to respond to open enrollment. “Over time,” Lyon said, “writing centers moved from fixing commas to centers that reinforce the teaching of writing as a process and encourage planning, revision, and incorporation of research. Staffed with undergraduate and graduate peer tutors, they offer tutoring, workshops, dissertation completion groups, resource libraries of books and handouts, computer-assisted-instruction in writing, writing assessment, conversation groups for ESL students, tutor training, credited courses. They even offer workshops on writing instruction to faculty and TA’s, workshops on personal statements and CV’s or proposal writing for graduate students, and workshops on resumes and research papers for undergraduates. While some centers work only with writing, others help with reading, study, and oral communication.”

“While many universities have strengthened the basic requirement with writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) or writing-in-the-disciplines (WID),” Professor Lyon said, “UB’s writing instruction has depended on the freshman writing programs housed in either the English Languages Institute or English. As a result, the number of faculty expert in teaching writing is limited because it is not assigned in consistent ways,” she added. “And because there is little formal writing across the disciplines required, class sizes tend to be large for actively involved writing instruction.” Professor Lyon then highlighted a number of factors that have placed increased pressure on writing instruction at UB, and that led to a group of faculty and staff meeting over the winter break to outline their concerns.

She emphasized the importance of developing a Writing Center similar to those of other research universities such as OSU or Penn State University, centers that have been in place for decades. These centers, Lyon explained, are directed by faculty and offer graduate and undergraduate tutorials staffed by highly educated graduate and undergraduate assistants from a variety of disciplines. "A strong writing center with *bothwell*-prepared tutors and the ability to run workshops on writing could support more writing in all classrooms in all the disciplines." Professor Lyon concluded by stressing the need for

1. a *faculty-directed* writing center, offering graduate and undergraduate tutorials staffed by graduate and undergraduate assistants from a variety of disciplines, all educated in teaching writing. Undergraduates will take a *credit-bearing course* to prepare them to respond effectively to writing from a range of disciplines; graduate students will take a brief summer course. Given that our student body is currently 15% international students and destined to grow, Lyon added, we need to provide ESL support.
2. Expanded hours and *outreach*. A permanent writing center director could do outreach to numerous locations where writing is taught on this campus, not just programs like EOP and Composition, but classrooms and seminars in all the colleges. "If we are not at this time in a position to start writing across the curriculum," Lyon said, "many faculty would include more writing assignments if they had a way of responding to papers."

Senators were enthusiastic about Professor Lyon's proposal, even as they expressed skepticism at the feasibility of hiring a new senior faculty to direct the Writing Center.

Item 5: New/Old Business

Item 6: Executive Session (if necessary)

Item 7: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carine Mardrossian, Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Attendance

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

Chair:

Robert Hoeing (P)

Secretary:

Carine Mardorossian (P)

Arts & Sciences:

Robert Adelman (P)

Sampson Blair (A)

Stanley Bruckenstein (P)

Melvyn Churchill (E)

Stephen Dyson (P)

Dental Medicine:

Thomas Mang (A)

Educational Opportunity Center:

TBA

Engineering & Applied Sciences:

Paschalis Alexandridis (P)

Sargur Srihari (P)

Graduate School of Education:

Janina Brutt-Griffler (A)

Law:

Mark Bartholomew (P)

Management:

Hodan Isse (P)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:

Peter Nickerson (P)

Philip Glick (A)

James Hassett (A)

Charles Hershey (E)

Nursing:

Sherry Pomeroy (A)

Linda Steeg (A)

Pharmacy:

Gayle Brazeau (A)

School of Public Health and Health Professions:

Robert Burkard (P)

Social Work:

Robert Keefe (P)

SUNY Senators:

William H. Baumer (P)

Peter Bradford (P)

Henry Durand (P)

Marilyn McMann Kramer (P)

Parliamentarian:

William H. Baumer (P)

University Libraries:

Dorothy Tao (P)

Guests:

John Simpson (President)

Satish Tripathi (Provost)

Janiece Kiedrowski (Professional Staff Senate)

Kevin Fryling (The Reporter)

John Ho (Graduate School)

Mike Thompson (Graduate School)

Arabella Lyon (English Composition/ Writing Center)