

# Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Minutes of September 10, 2008

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, September 10, 2008, in the Jeannette Martin Room of Capen Hall (567) to discuss the following:

1. **Moment of silence for recently departed colleagues**
2. **Welcome/Introduction of new and returning members**
3. **Report of the Chair**
4. **Report(s) of the President/Provost**
5. **Interaction with Dr. Jason Adsit, Director of the Teaching & Learning Center**
6. **Charging the Faculty Senate Teaching & Learning Committee**

**Professor James Jensen, Chair**

7. **Old/New Business**
8. **Executive Session (necessary)**
9. **Adjournment**

## **Item 1: Moment of silence**

The FSEC remembered recently departed colleagues by taking a moment of silence.

## **Item 2: Welcome/Introduction**

New and returning members of the FSEC took turns introducing themselves.

## **Item 3: Report of the Chair**

Senate chair Robert Hoeing told members of the FSEC that the main topic of discussion

during the upcoming year would be the budget. He further reported that

1. Associate VP for Communications Joe Brennan met with some members of the FSEC in early June [3] to pick brains for ideas on how to improve internal communications at UB. Since then, the ICC has met several times during the summer, brainstorming and enacting new ideas, such as the weekly update and the new-look Reporter. Joe Brennan will meet with FSEC again in October.

2. The Provost's Distinguished Awards Committee reviewed and voted on nominees for the position of Distinguished Rank on June 12; this pleasant task (and committee) serves as a reminder what truly world-class faculty there are at this University.

3. June 18 --- the FSILRC met with Bob Shibley & Co. for a HOTC update AND to voice strong concerns about the future of our libraries; Prof. Dyson and others made it abundantly clear how important it is to maintain a world-class collection that we can have constant, physical access to.

4. June 11 --- \$10 million gift from Jeremy Jacobs, Chair of the UB Council and most generous donor to UB and its mission.

5. Josie Capuana retired from serving as Administrative Director of the Honors College; interim Director is Don McGuire --- we will meet with him, Kip Herreid and Vice Provost Ryan next week to discuss the changes to, and the future of the Honors College.

6. Director of the Teaching & Learning Center has been hired --- Jason Adsit, present today. We were extremely lucky in being able to hire him before the budget disaster.

7. July 23 --- Physical Master Plan update II on the South Campus --- attended by about 30 people; good discussion and ideas. These are not intended as plans, but as forums for soliciting ongoing discussion.

The makeover of the Promenade / Founder's Plaza is nearing completion, and the Student Union now has a new, spacious atrium.

The next master Plan update has been postponed --- much more complicated in coordinating the various entities involved in the Downtown campus.

8. Also in July, VP Sean Sullivan met with the FSEC in another special meeting to deliver a budget update, when things did not seem so bad after all; and a retreat was planned for all VPs and Deans to develop a three-year action plan.

This had to be modified, due to the most unpleasant turn of events occasioned by Governor Patterson's dire budget message in August.

Instead, there is now the **University-Wide Strategic Financial Management Advisory Group**, which meets weekly, learns about and discusses budget details in depth, and freely tosses ideas around about what to do.

The group will soon be inviting all of UB to submit ideas, and plans to keep that process as transparent as is practicable.

9. The Dean Search for PPHP conducted interviews in/around mid-August; 5 candidates in all.

10. The Faculty Senate website will be down soon for upgrading and updating (the Charter is not the most recent version, for example). The chair said he wanted to make the site more visible, immediately accessible, and "interactive" for faculty input.

11. There are two matters that the chair said he needed to inform the FSEC about in Executive Session because they may come up for the FSEC's consideration or action.

#### **Item 4: Report of the President/Provost**

President John B. Simpson began by saying he would defer any discussion of the budget to the Provost who is "better positioned to give comments about it." He then mentioned the search for a new chancellor for SUNY, a search he thought had gone on far too long, especially at a juncture when SUNY needed strong representation in Albany. The committee, he said, will meet next in early October.

The President then reminded the FSEC of the Commission on Higher Education Eliot Spitzer had put together to recommend to him what might be done to improve public higher education. The commission had produced a report that was issued in January in preliminary form and in final form in June 2007. The Governor last summer had officially received that report in September and expressed that it identified the right kinds of things especially with respect to state issues which are regulatory business process requirements as well as issues about how tuition is collected. President Simpson said that while "we should do some things that are recommended there, but we cannot do anything in that report that requires any financial commitment."

Janiece Kiedrowski from the Professional Staff Senate inquired whether tuition increases would take place this year or next. The President replied that this year being an election year, the Assembly would not entertain the question.

Satish Tripathi, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, took the floor to share some good news with the senators. This year's undergraduate class, he reported, is better than last year's which was already the best ever (based on SAT scores). He also mentioned the 83 new tenured or tenure-track faculty hired this year (which is more than last year). The total hiring actually exceeds 100, the Provost specified, if one were to include non tenure-track faculty. He met many of these incoming scholars during the two days of orientation and reported that their excitement at being here was palpable and energizing.

The provost then tackled the budget question. He reminded the senators of the series of cuts with which the university had been hit since last Spring: an initial 2.9 percent budget cut in the Spring had been followed by another 0.4 a month later as well as by an additional 7 percent cut this summer (the latter affects SUNY, but also CUNY and other state agencies). Altogether, this equals a 10.3 percent or about \$21 million cut in state funds to UB. To illustrate the potential impact of this cut on UB, Tripathi translated it into faculty salary figures: "If you think about the average salary of staff and faculty as about \$50,000-60,000, you are talking about 300-400 people." He added that this certainly did not mean that the money is all being taken from salaries and further explained what while the first cut could be addressed with an across-the-board 3% cut to all units' budgets at UB, the 7% cut could no longer be dealt with the same way. He also noted that since the decrease in state funding had not

affected the revenue from tuition, the across-the-board reduction resulted in extra cash to return money to some units and invest the rest. This, however, was not a viable option with a 7% cut.

The provost then mentioned the University-Wide Strategic Financial Management Advisory Group that had been formed to provide the upper administration with valuable perspectives concerning the university's budgetary situation as well as with a long-term view of how to ensure that UB achieves its fullest potential in terms of its core values of service, teaching, and research. The Advisory Group will also advise the president about potential investments and the cultivation of alternative revenue sources. It is made up of seven faculty members, four staff members and two students.

Janiece Kiedrowski inquired whether there were a lot more students on campus this year. The provost responded that the total number might be 50 to 100 more than last year but that there was no major alteration.

The Chair emphasized the need to confront the budgetary problem in positive and proactive ways, by soliciting, for instance, suggestions from the SUNY population. The Provost concurred that his talk with the Academic Planning Committee (ACP) and the Budget Planning Committee (BPC) had been fruitful and lots of good ideas are circulating. He urged faculty to give further input as to how they thought additional savings could be achieved.

#### **Item 5: Interaction with Dr. Jason Adsit, Director of the Teaching & Learning Center**

Chair Hoeing introduced Jason Adsit, the new Director of the Teaching and Learning Center. Adsit, a UB grad from the Department of Philosophy, explained that the T&L Center was the result of the merging of two centers, namely the Educational Technology Center (ETC) and the Teaching & Learning Resources (CTLR). He then outlined the various services the T&L Center provides to help faculty members perform better as educators, including supporting instructional technology and faculty professional development. He listed the broad range of workshops available to faculty and staff: on how to use UBlerns, the new clickers, how to develop multimedia presentations, investigate emerging technologies, website development, etc. One-on-one sessions or group sessions were both available, Adsit said. Other special services offered to faculty include: scanning, digital video, web streaming. In

addition, faculty can have access to a large range of equipment hardware and software through T&L Center: desktop computers (Mac and PC), laptops (Mac and PC) digital cameras, LCD projectors, etc.

The T&L has also been organizing a Teaching effectiveness and Pedagogy series that has been extremely successful, Adsit reported. His program is also coordinating the new faculty orientation and looking for a more sustained model of orientation through an effective mentoring system. Adsit further mentioned the revamping of the website in its effort to provide better web-based pedagogy resources and to identify discipline specific resources. The center will also be developing more discipline specific workshops and seminars (eg. Health Sciences Lecture series).

Adsit concluded by emphasizing the importance of sharing the best practices across the disciplines (exploring how studio work can inform clinical work for instance). He stated that the goals of the T&L included: highlighting the scholarship of teaching and facilitating faculty research on pedagogy by identifying internal and external resources and developing a sustained model of faculty professional development and new faculty orientation. The Center, he stated, worked "to make our teaching lives easier and more effective and to re-energize faculty excellence in teaching."

#### **Item 6: Charging the Faculty Senate Teaching & Learning Committee**

##### **Professor James Jensen, Chair**

A brainstorming session ensued about what faculty would want the T&L committee to work on for the coming year. Jim Jensen emphasized the necessity of rethinking the relationship between FS and the T&L committee. The Chair suggested as a starting point his concern about a lot of junior faculty whose tenure dossier suffers because they are not good at teaching. The Committee could work at identifying these people and assisting them.

Dorothy Tao seconded that: "Working closely with new faculty as a library liaison gives me some insight into this," she said. When she is asked to go to a class, she realizes the extent to which the paper assignments do not really specify what the faculty wants the students to learn in the paper. Usually students have no idea what is expected of them. Tao said that someone needed to be proactive and reach out to newer professors about what would help them. Gayle Brazeau said that one

of the areas that the committee could be charged with is try to identify the methods by which more people would get engaged with the center. What are the barriers that prevent faculty from utilizing it? The second thing Brazeau mentioned was surveying teaching recognition programs at other universities. She also emphasized the need to educate the next generation of educators. Lucinda Finley discussed the limitations of using student evaluations as part of the tenure dossier. Sometimes student evaluations are more about a popularity contest, she said. She suggested that the committee could research what other AAU universities have come up with more sophisticated and nuanced ways of evaluating teaching effectiveness including in relation to adjuncts and non-tenured faculty. Also of interest would be researching ways of increasing student responses, she said.

Chair Hoeing also commented on the "learning aspect" which often goes unaddressed when teaching is the focus. Indeed, the chair stated, a lot of students don't know how to learn. They seek information on wikipedia and very few use books. Connecting with the student body and instilling critical thinking and learning may be another charge for the committee, the chair suggested. Brazeau also commented on the students' inability to take notes, while Dorothy Tao emphasized the importance of integrating writing, reading, and learning. "Every teacher should be a writing teacher as well [because] students don't really understand what a critical paper is," she said.

The chair concluded by suggesting that during the next year, the T&L committee focus on three to four of the points raised during the brainstorming session including the comparative assessment of teaching practices mentioned by Lucinda Finley.

**Item 7: Old/New Business** n/a

**Item 8: Executive Session: The FSEC went into executive session to discuss three items.**

**Item 9: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carine Mardorossian, 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 (P)

Stanley Bruckenstein (A)

Stephen Dyson (P)

### **Dental Medicine:**

Thomas Mang (P)

### **Educational Opportunity Center:**

TBA

### **Engineering & Applied Sciences:**

Paschalis Alexandridis (P)

Sargur Srihari (E)

### **Graduate School of Education:**

TBA

### **School of Law:**

Mark Bartholomew (P)

**Management:**

Hodan Isse (E)

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:**

David Ellis (P)

James Hassett (A)

Charles Hershey (P)

**Nursing:**

Sherry Pomeroy (A)

Linda Steeg (P)

**Pharmacy:**

Gayle Brazeau (P)

**School of Public Health and Health Professions:**

Peter Horvath (A)

**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)

**Ex-officio:**

Peter Nickerson (P)

**University Libraries:**

Dorothy Tao (P)

**Guests:**

Satish Tripathi (Provost)

Kevin Fryling (The Reporter)

Janiece Kiedrowski (Professional Staff Senate)

David Bray (EDAAA)