

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## Minutes of April 9, 2008 (unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, April 9, 2008, in the Jeannette Martin Room of Capen Hall (567) to discuss the following agenda:

1. Approval of the meetings of March 26, 2008
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President/Provost
4. GenEd Update – Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Mike Ryan
5. Old/New Business
6. Executive Session (if needed)
7. Adjournment

### **Item 1. Approval of the minutes of March 26, 2008**

The minutes of March 26, 2008 were approved with an amendment (Peter Bradford's institutional affiliation on the roster was corrected to SUNY Senator).

### **Item 2. Report of the Chair**

1. The Campus Conversation, "Connecting the Dots", took place yesterday at Alumni Arena and was well attended overall, although faculty participation was somewhat low.
2. The UB Council met yesterday afternoon:
  1. Acheson Hall on the South Campus will lose its name; instead, a lecture hall within the Natural Sciences complex on the North Campus will be designated the Edward Goodrich Acheson Lecture Hall.
  2. The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences on the South Campus will be named after distinguished UB alumnus John N. Kapoor.

3. Professor Alan Rabideau (Civil, Structural, and Environmental Engineering) delivered a research presentation on UB's ERIE program (ERIE = Ecosystem Restoration through Interdisciplinary Exchange). The program is supported by a new \$3.1 million grant from the National Science Foundation's IGERT program.
4. Vice-President Beau Willis reported on the planned campus rehab projects to be carried out this summer, including
  - i. the next phase of the restoration of Founder's Plaza
  - ii. an updated security assessment of South Campus
  - iii. replacement of ageing underground infrastructure on South Campus

### **Item 3. Report of the President/Provost**

Professor Simpson discussed the impact the passage of the new 2008-09 New York state budget would have on UB. He reported that UB's operating-funds budget would be reduced by 2.9 percent and that SUNY will be cutting an additional \$2 million, i.e. about 1 percent of the UB's annual budget, as part of the plan to reallocate funds from UB, Stony Brook and SUNY Downstate Medical Center to Albany, Binghamton and the system's comprehensive colleges. "This is a redistribution scheme away from the two so-called flagships into the rest of SUNY," the President noted. "This cut is for what SUNY claims to be some understandings that were put into place 10 years ago about funding associated with their paying campuses that do research," he added.

The good news, the President said, is that there is a substantial funding of a capital budget that will provide the resources to

1/complete construction of the new engineering building on the North Campus

2/finish renovations of Acheson Hall on the South Campus for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

3/ fund the EOC building for which we are providing the land

4/ downtown building for clinical and translational research.

The President noted the irony in “giving us one-time money to build, while at the same time taking away the money to heat, light and staff those buildings.”

#### **Item 4. GenEd Update – Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Mike Ryan**

Before initiating discussion of the general education curriculum, Michael Ryan, vice provost and dean of undergraduate education introduced Andreas Daum, professor in the department of history who is also serving as associate dean in the office of the vice provost for undergraduate education. The vice provost then handed out copies of the program for the 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Academic Excellence to take place on Thursday 17 April in the CFA.

Like all institutions of higher education, Ryan reported, UB has a core general education program as mandated by several accrediting agencies so that students acquire college level proficiency in various areas and some essential skills (such as scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, written communication, etc.) “A general education program,” Ryan said, “should express the educational philosophy of our institution; it should connect to our institutional mission and ... we should be able to articulate the connection with UB2020. It should incorporate

- an understanding of values and ethics.
- It should enhance students' intellectual growth
- draw students into new areas of intellectual experience
- expand their cultural and global awareness and sensitivity and
- prepare them to make enlightened judgments within and outside their own discipline”

In 1998, SUNY mandated certain requirements for all schools within the SUNY system in terms of general education. Ryan explained that at the time, our extant general education program was in compliance. Evolving from that was a requirement to assess the Gen Ed program which lead UB to develop an assessment plan. While the assessment is about assessing how we comply with the SUNY mandate and state general education guidelines, Ryan stressed that parts of the assessment is a larger one that involves looking at the

program itself in a more holistic sense that focuses on the value, the aim, the goal, the learning outcomes of a general education program. "It is my view that a purposeful, cogent, rigorous program needs to be defined, delivered and reviewed by the faculty," Ryan added.

Professor Daum urged senators to redefine general education not as an administrative challenge and a "long list of mechanical general education requirements," but as an "intellectual challenge." He emphasized the importance of informing students about how they are served by a strong general education program. We need to "begin rethinking the very purpose or goals of our general education program," he said. Transforming our undergraduate education into a distinct and profound learning experience, Daum noted, "is ultimately geared at providing our students with the competence and skill sets and orientation they need in an increasingly global world."

Daum then gave 3 more philosophical reasons behind the process of review

- the very definition of what knowledge is today: not segments but links that tie different forms of knowledge together; accessible, global, more specialized even as it is mediated by different cultures and languages
- the very definition of general education: move beyond disciplinary boundaries toward an interdisciplinary approach that bridges the social sciences and the humanities
- the need to situate our general education in the context of UB2020

Daum then emphasized the transformative quality of undergraduate education at UB and the need to get faculty involved in developing a plan.

Melvyn Churchill, professor of chemistry, expressed concern that general education may be increasingly repeating basic knowledge that students should have acquired in high school. "Are we going to end up teaching the whole of the high school curriculum at the university?" he asked. Ryan responded that general education was not the place to do remedial education. "This is a core curriculum that should enrich the students' educational experience." UB's admission standards are what (should) ensure that students are academically well prepared, Ryan pointed out. Jeri Jaeger, associate dean for undergraduate

education, pointed to the significant differences between the learning experience of a student in high school versus a college course. "If you take an American history class when you're 14 and you take another one when you're 20, you're likely to get a lot more and different kinds of things out of it when you are a more mature person and you can think of it in new and different ways," Jaeger explained. "So I don't think that the fact that a student may have taken an English class in high school can substitute for the much more profound experience they should be able to have in an English class in college. I don't agree with the idea that once you hit 18 you should just specialize from then on. I think we really need to provide a complete liberal arts education at a much higher level. That is the intention of a college education here."

Senator Bill Baumer added that the general attitude towards baccalaureate programs in the U.S. was that one of their functions is to provide a liberal education which includes getting at least some introduction to a broad set of areas of knowledge: "General education is supposed to address that," he said. VP Ryan highlighted the need to articulate to students the rationale for why Gen Ed is of value to them.

Stella Batalama asked whether, in light of the effort to globalize UB's education, there was compatibility between the courses offered throughout the world and those offered at UB? Daum commented that we already have a more complex system of articulation when students come from other campuses but that this has not yet been addressed at the international level.

Claude Welch, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Political Science, provided some institutional by pointing out that significant reshaping of the undergraduate curriculum had been attempted in the past and had included the creation of special undergraduate colleges in the 1980s. A lack of financial support ended the initiative however. Welch therefore urged Ryan and Daum to consider implementing a timetable for their evaluation process and to be mindful of the importance of resources and funding. Daum responded that a task force and timetable could be put into place over the summer. A real sense of where UB is heading in its general education mission could come about as

soon as the end of the 2008-09 academic year, he added. Ryan concluded by asking faculty to engage in an ongoing conversation with his office.

### **Item 7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 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:**

Joseph Woelfel (P)

Melvyn Churchill (P)

Sharmistah Bagchi-Sen (A)

Stanley Bruckenstein (A)

Debra Street (A)

**Architecture & Planning:**

Scott Danford (A)

**Dental Medicine:**

TBA

**Educational Opportunity Center:**

TBA

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:**

Stella Batalama (P)

Rohini Srihari (P)

**Graduate School of Education:**

Thomas Schroeder (A)

**School of Law:**

TBA

**Management:**

Hodan Isse (P)

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:**

David Ellis (A)

James Hassett (A)

Charles Hershey (A)

Peter Bradford (A)

Peter Ostrow (E)

**Nursing:**

Cynthia Curran (P)

**Pharmacy:**

Gayle Brazeau (E)

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

Peter Horvath (E)

**Social Work:**

Barbara Rittner (P)

**SUNY Senators:**

William H. Baumer (P)

Peter Bradford (A)

Henry Durand (E)

Marilyn McMann Kramer (P)

**Parliamentarian:**

William H. Baumer (P)

**Ex-officio:**

Peter Nickerson (P)

**University Libraries:**

Dorothy Tao (A)

**Guests:**

John Simpson (President)

Kevin Fryling (The Reporter)

Jonathan Clayton (The Spectrum)

Mike Ryan (VPUE)

Andreas Daum (VPUE)

Claude Welch (Observer, Political Science)

