

# **FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of March 26, 2008  
(unapproved)**

**The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, March 26, 2008, in the Jeannette Martin Room of Capen Hall (567) to discuss the following agenda:**

1. **Approval of the meetings of March 19, 2008.**
2. **Report of the Chair**
3. **Report of the President/Provost**
4. **Interaction with Shelley Frederick, Assistant Vice Provost**

## **Final Exam Schedule**

5. **Report of the Grading Committee –William Baumer, Chair**
6. **Proposed Resolution on Student Wellness**

## **FS Athletics and Recreation Committee-Gayle Brazeau, chair**

7. **Executive Session (if needed)**
8. **Adjournment**

### **Item 1: Approval of the minutes for the meetings of March 19, 2008.**

The minutes were unanimously approved after Dr. Baumer's amendment was accepted.

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

- The Chair and Prof. Wetherhold met with Prof. Shibley and Sean Sullivan on Thursday, March 20, to discuss some faculty concerns and to seek some clarification about the Master Plan.

- Prof. Shibley also met with the Academic Planning Committee on Friday, March 21, to present and discuss the latest ideas about the Master Plan.
- Prof. Shibley asked the Chair of the Senate to encourage faculty to participate in the next interactive presentation of the Master Plan this April 22 (Earth Day); it is extremely important for the faculty to offer feed on this.
- The Budget Priorities Committee met on Monday, March 24, to discuss the latest projected economic growth model for the University.
- Nominations are in for the President's Award for Faculty Excellence; candidates are being considered by a selection committee and recommendations will be forwarded soon to the Provost's office.
- The Chair encouraged all Committee members to attend the 'Campus Conversation' event --- "Connecting the Dots" --- on April 8 at Alumni Arena. This event is sponsored in part by the UB Faculty Senate.

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

The Provost welcomed questions and comments. Since there were none, the chair moved to the next item on the agenda.

### **Item 4. Interaction with Shelley Frederick, Assistant Vice Provost**

#### **Final Exam Schedule**

Shelley Frederick, assistant vice provost for student academic processing services, attended FSEC in order to field questions and address concerns regarding final exam scheduling. Melvyn Churchill, professor of chemistry, began by asking what has been done to prevent the type of incident that occurred in the fall semester: a student was hospitalized with hypothermia after coming to an 8 a.m. chemistry exam on a freezing Saturday morning when no transportation to campus was available. "Has anyone looked at the times we schedule exams and whether these are optimal?" he asked. Frederick explained that while her office had not coordinated with transportation in the past, it was now informing them of the exam schedule in advance: "We're hoping we won't have the same

situation as last semester with Saturday." Most examinations that take place on Saturday are in chemistry, she added.

Frederick then testified to the daunting task it is to accommodate exam schedules for the entire campus, noting that each exam requires a three-hour block of time and double seating. "It is a full-time job working out the final exam," she said, all the more so since there are only 135 or 136 centrally located rooms that are appropriate for examinations, only one of which actually seats more than 450 students. In addition, Frederick explained that there are also issues with faculty who do not want to be in different rooms for their final exams and that changes have to be constantly entertained. On Saturday, exams are scheduled till 6:30pm, she added.

In response to a question about student preferences, Frederick said that students had been polled last year about the potential issues *they* had with exams and scheduling. Students, she reported, stated that they did not always need or use the three-hour block of time scheduled but felt very strongly about the importance of reading days which they did not want to lose. They also expressed a preference for having their exams in the same room in which they had been instructed and would very much like to have access to the schedule as early as when they register for classes. Frederick further commented that in light of the university's growing student population, other options such as limiting exam times to two hours and opening up more classrooms for testing were being considered.

Kara Saunders, Student Systems Assessment project manager, explained that most campuses-- including those supported by the PeopleSoft's student information system that UB is purchasing-- follow a course-centric rather than the student-centric model UB currently has. When student schedules are what motivate exam scheduling, she stated, there is no 100% guarantee that students will not have a conflict. SUNY Senator William Baumer stressed that the advantage of a schedule based on when classes are offered is that the exam schedule can then be put out along with the class schedule. Peter Horvath from the School of Public Health & Health Professions also emphasized that students needed to know about their exam schedule upon registering since they are often unaware of the ways in which signing up for five classes in one day might impact their final exam schedule. Saunders commented that changing the final exam scheduling from a student- to a course-centric

model could not happen until 2010 anyway, so that there would still be a couple of more years of the same system in place.

Gayle Brazeau, from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, asked whether with enrollment going up, moving from a 3-hour block to a 2-hour one would not make more sense. Frederick said that her office did some benchmarking in this area as well as in other areas, and that most peer institutions surveyed do have a 2-hour exam (although 3-hour exams can and do get accommodated).

Peter Hovarth asked that whether there is any way the departmental force registration window could be dealt with more effectively. If a student needs to get into a course that is already full, he said, the department has its hands tied until April 23, because of the practice of "shopping for courses" and the drop/add policy. Kara Saunders explained that due to complaints, the deadline had been moved repeatedly already and that this is something that needed to be investigated. The office can offer assistance in resolving some situations, Frederick added.

Chair Hoeing asked for some clarification regarding NY State law and the 15-week instruction requirement. Bill Baumer explained that although the final exam does stand for the 15th week of instruction, it did not by law have to be 3-hour long.

#### **Item 5. Report of the Grading Committee—William Baumer, Chair**

William Baumer, chair of the Grading Committee, reviewed the proposal to shorten UB's "add/drop" period from two weeks to seven days for enrollments and to six days for cancellations. A debate ensued concerning the proposed policy.

Barbara Rittner, director of the graduate program in the School of Social Work, reiterated that a two-week drop/add period should be kept in place for graduate students and argued that the policy change only truly applied to undergraduate students. She asked whether it would be possible to make one policy effective Fall 2009 and then have a separate one for graduate students and undergraduates once the university's new scheduling software is in place in 2010. Kara Saunders recommended

that, should the faculty decide that a differential policy for both constituencies makes sense, the FS simply hold off the whole thing altogether to minimize confusion.

Baumer strongly objected to the suggestion that the time limit on drop/adds not be the same for all categories of students. "I find it startling that you can look at a graduate seminar that's scheduled to meet 14 times in a semester and say that the first two are so unimportant that it doesn't make a bit of difference whether the students get there or not," he said. Rittner responded that courses are taught the same irrespective of whether students are dropping/adding or not. Students, she argued, are responsible for keeping up-to-date with the material covered during the time they missed. Baumer insisted that the statistics show that the number add/drops among graduate students during the second week is not significant enough to justify a differential policy. He also pointed out that faculty have the option of force-registering students in a course after the drop/add period expires. Gayle Brazeau objected that forcing students into a course after the drop/add period is over is currently a "nightmare" in terms of time and paperwork. Kara Saunders interjected that under the new scheduling system in Fall 2010, faculty will be able to drop/add students to courses electronically. She added that from an administrative perspective, it would be easier to have a unified policy for both graduate and undergraduate students, but that administrative difficulties would simply have to be put up with if there is an academic justification for the differential policy. A number of graduate programs, she noted, have indicated however that they would like to see the drop/add period be limited to one week (e.g. School of Management).

Robert Hoeing said that the changes recommended by the Faculty Senate Grading Committee would go before the full Faculty Senate for discussion at its 1 April meeting and that the Graduate School Executive Committee would be looking at the policy tomorrow. The motion on the floor to forward the policies to the FS for a first reading was approved.

#### **Item 6. Resolution on Student Wellness – Gayle Brazeau**

Gayle Brazeau handed out a draft of the proposed resolution on Student Wellness on behalf of the FS Athletics and Recreation Committee. The resolution calls for the inclusion of a fitness component into the undergraduate curriculum as a general education requirement. Brazeau explained that physical

education used to be part of the UB curriculum many years ago but was taken away when the requirements dropped from 128 to 120 hours.

The questions raised by the senators in response to the proposal centered on:

- Whether this requirement would substitute for another
- Whether people involved in a team sport or taking nutrition would be exempt
- The limitations of on-campus facilities and the atrocious facilities hours
- The difficulty for non-traditional returning students and students with disabilities to fulfill the requirement
- The reluctance of some students to have gym appear on their transcripts when applying to competitive schools

The chair reported that during a presentation to the Academic Planning Committee last Friday, Bob Shibley mentioned plans for a new Recreation Fitness Facility on North Campus. A discussion ensued about the difficulty of instilling a lifelong commitment to wellness in students through a 3-hour requirement they would simply need to take care of to graduate.

Chair Hoeing clarified that the proposal would be sent to the Athletics and Recreation Committee for further revisions. Possible alternatives on how to meet this requirement would have to be considered before additional readings of the proposal by the FSEC. Kara Saunders remarked that the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee would need to be consulted also.

#### **Item 7. Executive Session (not needed)**

#### **Item 8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:21PM.

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 (E)

Stanley Bruckenstein (P)

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 (E)

Peter Ostrow (A)

**Nursing:**

Cynthia Curran (A)

**Pharmacy:**

Gayle Brazeau (P)

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

Peter Horvath (A)

**Social Work:**

Barbara Rittner (P)

**SUNY Senators:**

William H. Baumer (P)

Peter Bradford (E)

Henry Durand (P)

Marilyn McMann Kramer (A)

**Parliamentarian:**

William H. Baumer (P)

**Ex-officio:**

Peter Nickerson (P)

**University Libraries:**

Dorothy Tao (A)

**Guests:**

Satish Tripathi (Provost)

Barbara Burke (EDAAA)

David Bray (EDAAA)

Janiece Kiedrowski (Professional Staff Senate)

Kevin Fryling (The Reporter)

Jonathan Clayton (The Spectrum)

Shelley Frederick (VPUE)

Kara Saunders (VPUE)