

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Meeting of September 4, 1996 (approved)
revised 10/3/95)**

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The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM in Room 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of Minutes of August 21, 1996](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the Academic Planning Committee](#)

ITEM 1: Approval of Minutes

Pending the addition of the names of the colleagues who died during the summer, who were remembered in a moment of silence, the Minutes of the FSEC meetings of August 21, 1996 were approved.

ITEM 2: Report of the Chair

The Chair announced that neither the President nor the Provost would attend the meeting; he planned to meet with both of them and with Senior Vice-President Wagner tomorrow, and solicited from the Committee members any questions and issues they thought the Chair should bring to their attention. Professor Jameson remarked that the FSEC had pared down its agendas for the entire year to allow time for the President to interact with it, but as yet the President has not attended any of the meetings. The Chair said that he will inform the President that the FSEC had made this adjustment for him, and assured FSEC members that the President will indeed begin interacting more with the Committee. He also said

he would ask about the possibility of more easily identifying GFT faculty.

Professor Welch said he would suggest areas of concern that the President should touch upon at the annual meeting of the Voting Faculty. Professor Schuel inquired about the status of the search for the new dean of the Medical School.

The Chair announced the expansion of Faculty Senate material available on WINGS, including the minutes of the previous year's meetings and an updated set of Senate resolutions. He added that a Search function is now available for rapid access to information on a variety of topics. Professor Malone asked whether there was any way of knowing how many UB students can use the internet or WINGS, since the computer is a great way for students to access information. The Chair answered that he did not know, but that we could check with the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education or Director of the Computing Center. Professor Meacham suspected that the answer to Professor Malone's question varies according to discipline; an informal survey indicated that while many students were knowledgeable about computers, a very small percentage used Netscape. One reason for this is the small number of public terminals on campus with Netscape installed; however, this is currently changing, so that within one year or so many more students will have access. Professor Meacham commended the Chair for getting the Senate materials on WINGS. He also wondered whether there is any way to encourage either the SPECTRUM or the REPORTER to print a "fun story" to walk students through the material on WINGS. Professor Albini cited a study conducted at Alfred University which showed that students spend about twenty hours per week on the Internet.

The Chair then introduced two new members, Professor Fournier (Natural Sciences and Mathematics, replacing Professor Bruckenstein for the month of September), and Professor Hoot (Graduate School of Education).

Professor Welch reported that he had written to the Director of Campus Parking with respect to issues raised at the previous meeting, namely, of creating a campus-wide parking committee and the possibility of facilitating the renewal of faculty hang-tags; he had

received no response as yet. He had asked Vice-President Palmer to respond to the question concerning the disparity in teaching minutes between MWF and TTh schedules; he added that Palmer would be meeting with the FSEC next week to discuss this and related issues. The Chair announced that Kevin Durkin will attend the next FSEC meeting to talk about the Admissions Retention Policy at UB. Professor Welch noted that the current admissions policy, in effect since 1971, was based on three criteria -- class rank, grade average, and test scores; yet roughly one third of the schools do not supply any data on class rank. He voiced the hope that the FSEC, in conjunction with the Committee on Admission and Retention, would develop a resolution that would revise the existing standards. Professor Malone asked whether the Admissions Committee had yet dealt with the NCAA policy as well; the Chair replied that he had sent periodic reminders to the committee. Professor Fournier stated that we also need to recruit more freshman and transfer students from out-of-state, since UB tends to be a very "parochial" institution. Professor Frisch asked for clarification on the NCAA issue. The Chair replied that, according to NCAA policy, students should have a certain range of courses in high school; he added that New York State high school graduation requirements (Regents' diploma) meet most of these standards.

The Chair informed the Committee that the proposed Chair of the Affirmative Action Committee is unable to accept the position, and requested a brief executive session to discuss other candidates.

Upon re-opening the meeting for public session, Professor Welch reminded the Committee of the upcoming meeting of the Voting Faculty on September 24. Professor Nickerson asked how many people the Chair expected to attend; the Chair estimated that about 75 to 100 would attend, mainly members of the administration, adding that it is somewhat embarrassing that only few faculty attend. Professor Jameson observed that unless the meeting were interactive, few people would bother to go. Professor Welch said he would stress that point with the President at their meeting tomorrow. Professor Malone wondered whether the President

understands that he needs to listen more than talk at such meetings, and suggested we submit questions beforehand which he could address. Professor Miller agreed, noting that it is regrettable that there is no parliamentary question-and-answer period. Professor Jameson suggested entering questions on the computer, linked to the Senate home page. Professor Meacham pointed out that the President does indeed field questions -- and does it reasonably well -- on radio broadcasts, and that perhaps the session could be taped and re-broadcast; Professor Frisch suggested that other modes might be considered, such as small-group roundtable discussions during one part of the meeting. Professor Meacham said it is also possible to take leadership in this matter and suggest items for discussion, and furthermore to present the discussion in the format of a debate among faculty, asking the President to comment on it afterwards. Professor Nickerson pointed out that the President is the Chair of the Voting Faculty, and doubted whether the faculty has much control over the agenda. He also asked whether the President would speak at both the meeting of the Voting Faculty and at the Academic Convocation. Professor Welch responded by saying he would find out. The Chair made known his intention to send out letters to all Senators urging them to attend. Professor Miller suggested a secondary reminder of the meeting two days or so before the meeting. The Chair agreed, noting that it will be publicized in the REPORTER. He also mentioned that he would speak on behalf of the Faculty Senate, emphasizing the actions the Senate has taken over the past year. He then gave a brief preview of two meetings in October, one with the Committee on Public Service, and the other concerning potential conflict of financial interest for faculty. Professor Miller recalled the late Provost Bloch's keen interest in pursuing "conflict of commitment", and asked whether this issue was still being pursued. Professor Welch said he had asked each of the deans this past summer about the policies in various schools with respect to consulting and other forms of compensated service; he received the uniform answer that there was no formal written policy.

The Chair asked Professor Nickerson for a report on the new Interim Chancellor John Ryan. Professor Nickerson observed that Ryan possessed "good people skills"; Ryan had recently

retired as Chancellor of Indiana University, but was also instrumental in solving difficult problems at the Universities of Florida and Maryland. Furthermore, he clearly understands the problems confronting SUNY and seems to be a fast learner; he recognizes and analyzes problems, especially in the tremendous turnover in the Board of Trustees, in building support for SUNY instead of mistrust, in identifying SUNY as "our" university, one belonging to the state, the people of New York. Specifically, Ryan announced his intention to implement presidential evaluations, although which method of evaluation (varying in degree of faculty input) was uncertain.

Professor Malone agreed with Nickerson's sketch of Ryan's character, adding that Ryan would be not simply a "place-keeper", but rather would take an active role as Chancellor. His impression is that Ryan considered faculty input essential to presidential evaluations. He reported further that Ryan had made some insightful characterizations of the Board of Trustees (not repeated here), and that the budget problem confronting SUNY is severe, but not quite as severe as it could be. Professor Malone's only concern had been that Ryan might treat SUNY like Indiana University, i.e., as a system with one main campus and several branches, but feels now that Ryan understands that SUNY is indeed different. Professor Nickerson added that Ryan mentioned further down-sizing central administration.

Professor Welch supplemented the report by noting that former Chancellor Wharton started presidential evaluations; Wharton would send a note to the Council of a SUNY unit and ask for detailed, off-the-record discussion with its members to discuss the effectiveness of the campus president -- a process which allowed only limited faculty and student input.

Professor Jameson -- referring to a proposal to have all SUNY students start at community colleges, as well as the problems it entailed of commensurability and of a proposed General Education program applicable across all SUNY institutions -- noted that the University Faculty Senate is sponsoring a conference on General Education, and wondered whether "any rational person" felt the need to have meetings to decide on a such GenEd curriculum. Professor Welch said that the Vice-Provost Goodman will speak on General Education at the planned meeting; UB will try to send a delegation of up to ten faculty members to this

conference. Professor Jameson remarked that it is one thing to include a GenEd program on each campus, but another to coordinate such a program across all campuses; she wanted to know whether the University Faculty Senate has "bought into" the proposal for a state-wide GenEd program. Professor Malone said that the opponents of the proposal were primarily representatives from the University centers, while several members of the Board of Trustees view the proposal quite favorably. He then asked whether the UB Senate is paying for this conference; Professor Welch replied that the UB campus, not the Senate, would pay.

ITEM 3: Report of the Academic Planning Committee

Professor Welch reminded the FSEC of the centrality and importance of academic planning; he referred to both the Bylaws of the Voting Faculty and the Charter of the Faculty Senate, which explicitly state the Senate's duty to review all proposals concerning the formation, reorganization, and dissolution of academic units. He noted that the Senate has been active in this over the past ten years; the compendium of Senate resolutions contains many resolutions concerning the organization of the university, including the transfer, combination, and split of some departments.

Vice-Provost Triggles conducted a presentation with overhead transparencies on graduate education set against the larger picture of higher education in general. He began by stating that, locally, UB has one last chance to "face our future". Three questions which we need to address are, first, how would we create UB today if given the chance to start all over; secondly, how do we get there from here; and thirdly, given likely social and economic projections for the next ten years, how do we achieve the following:

- a. enhance student learning;
- b. reduce expenses and costs;
- c. meet the needs of the larger society;
- d. provide a positive and accountable faculty career.

Vice-Provost Triggle stated that many universities (including UB) are in a state of flux and great uncertainty, due in large part to its changing role; since the end of World War II, he said, the universities assumed the role of the nation's research and scholarship in return for support. This "contract" is currently being transformed, or as others would argue, broken. Growing numbers of students and changing expectations of both students and society in general pose increasing demands on higher education, which is being ever more challenged on what it is doing and on what it will be asked to do in the near future. Vice-Provost Triggle quoted from a Toronto radio show in which one participant emphasized the need for a much more marked differentiation between institutions of higher education, and in this context, homogeneity would breed mediocrity.

Similarly, the nature of research is also in the process of change. Changing federal and state principles will necessitate sweeping reforms in the area of research; at present there are too many researchers chasing after too little funding -- funding which will decrease drastically in the near future. National budget projections for the next few years indicate a total research and development funding reduction of about 25% in "real dollar figures". Exacerbating the problem is the "overproduction of routine scholarship", which by its sheer volume tends to conceal truly important work and constitutes a major waste of valuable resources.

Extended projections (for the years 2005-2010 and beyond) paint an even bleaker picture: Deficits in Social Security, health care funding, and elsewhere portend a negative impact on federal funding as well as on "a whole host of social and human services". Pressures from the federal government will translate into pressures from state and local governments.

Vice-Provost Triggle believes these will have a major impact on the way in which universities view their programs. As an example, he cited the 1995 Pew Commission Report on Health Education, which he found valuable for its comments both on health education specifically and on higher education in general. The Pew Commission argued that, just as the health care system will be held accountable for costs, consumer satisfaction, and overall

quality, these same standards will be increasingly demanded from educational programs. Education, Vice-Provost Triggles argued, will become more demand-oriented and will be tailored more to meet the needs of students rather than the lifestyles of the faculty. Vice-Provost Triggles cited several characteristics of the emerging health care system described in the Pew Report, which he believes can be generalized to apply to the changing educational system. These include:

- the intensive use of information;
- the use of constrained resources;
- a focus on the consumer;
- a focus on outcomes;
- an increased coordination of services;
- a reconsideration of human values;
- an expectation of accountability;
- a fundamental alteration in the processes that govern education.

Vice-Provost Triggles also cited the 1995 COSEPUP Report on graduate education in science and technology. He felt that several of the conclusion in that report were relevant to (higher) education in general:

- more focus on non-research careers;
- more focus on non-academic settings;
- a broader curricular emphasis;
- discouraging students from over-specialization;
- changes in the support mechanism.

In addition, he asked the FSEC to consider the impact of changing technologies on education. He said that universities have been able to survive virtually unchanged for thousands of years, but that new

technologies and the resulting dissemination of information as well as easy access to this information already provide alternatives to traditional education.

Vice-Provost Triggles mentioned a final aspect of this change, namely the change of the faculty members themselves. He stated that the "assumptive" world of academia -- one in which research was the dominant professional endeavor, one which assumed that knowledge is found in discipline-based departments, and that the faculty were rewarded for their research and for increasing their reputations -- is coming to an end, as a consequence of the other changes taking place.

Having presented the overall national picture, Vice-Provost Triggles turned his attention to the SUNY system. In his opinion, SUNY faces five challenges:

- a continuing budget erosion, with little or no hope of a turnaround;
- enrollment pressures;
- a declining commitment;
- a declining reputation, as evidenced by the 1995 NRC ratings;
- the lack of a sense of direction -- although there are many ideas of what should be done, there is little consensus.

The overall picture, he suggested, is one of extreme uncertainty. Change is definitely coming, but will be "a slow and painful process".

He then displayed a variety of figures and indices (enrollment, funding, elections to the National Academy of Sciences) comparing UB with other institutions, particularly the University of California, to illustrate how poorly we fared nationwide. He stated that the figures have powerful implications for the wealth and prosperity of New York State, and "as that goes, so do we".

In examining the programs at UB, Vice-Provost Triggles continued, the Graduate School considers five particular factors: centrality, size, cost, input/output, and future importance. More broadly, the Graduate School asks what the mission of each program is, whether it is still worth pursuing, and whether we would do it today if we weren't already doing it. Vice-Provost Triggles displayed a graph illustrating the possible quality/cost ratios of a program; one axis represented quality, the other cost, and both ranged from "low" to "high". The ideal target in the graph shown was the quadrant characterized by the features "high quality, low cost". Such a graph could be devised for each of the five factors mentioned above. On a graph which compared quality with centrality, for example, the target would be the quadrant with the features "high quality, high centrality". Nevertheless, he concluded, one cannot make decisions about programs on a two-dimensional basis, since the process and the programs are much more complicated.

In conclusion, he stressed that first, we must assume responsibility for our future. Secondly, we must clarify our mission, something we "have done very badly in the past". Thirdly, we must make difficult choices consistent with our mission, involving reallocation of resources and vertical cuts. Finally, we must realize that we cannot be all things to all people.

Professor Welch opened the floor for discussion. Professor Malone, Chair of the Academic Planning Committee, said that Vice-Provost Triggles covered all the important points. Of the three most critical issues, he emphasized the importance of defining our mission, a very difficult but very necessary task; without a well-defined mission, planning is impossible. Secondly, he wondered whether "quality" and "access" were compatible notions, and expressed doubt that they were; also, we must define "quality". The third critical issue was that of centrality. Professor Malone said we all must realize that "sacred cows" are no longer sacred, that we can no longer rely on age-old adages and assumptions about what constitutes higher education, and that we may well need to cut some programs we previously considered very basic and important.

Professor Jameson objected to what seemed like "an a priori attempt" to characterize any protest against whatever the university may be doing "as just a reflection of angst that

results from change [...] as something we have to treat as pathological and try to get past"; she noticed "one might make an analogous move in the opposite direction by quoting a remark by Vice-Provost Triggler, the gist of which is that it is "boring (in a sense) if every year you get 5% more to spend and all you're expected to do is the same as last year but spend more money doing it". She thought any apocalyptic mood or tenor is unnecessary. Professor Jameson also expressed concern that decisions about a program's value, quality and centrality would be made in large part by people who evaluate so broadly across several programs, and found the idea rather questionable. She doubted whether any committee could evaluate the quality of all our programs, and was nervous that we might get a committee that imagines it could do so.

Vice-Provost Triggler remarked that he wouldn't off from what he said, that opportunities for change are always exciting, giving us the chance to go in new directions, which we may well be forced to do; he drew an analogy to "one of those punctuated periods in evolution where major changes occur".

Professor Meacham commented that the dimensions of comparison of institutions of higher education in Vice-Provost Triggler's report came from "how higher education used to be", and speculated that, if indeed higher education is going to change, then the dimensions of comparison will soon be different. For example, we might look at our students rather than our research as a product, in which case a dimension of comparison might be how well we have taught them, or how well our students have made discoveries five years down the line, or how well our retention rate holds or improves. We should then consider what other new dimensions there might be in the year 2000, and try to build our programs around them.

Vice-Provost Triggler agreed that the assessment of outcomes will be a very important yardstick. Professor Nickerson asked Vice-Provost Triggler what sense of time-frame we had, i.e., how much time do we have to act. Vice-Provost Triggler replied that the next two years are critical for deciding which direction we will take. Professor Frisch followed up on Professor Meacham's comment by suggesting that we need to get more adventurous and more imaginative in the changing academic environment, but added that, although we may understand the need to change, the nature of the pressures upon us often leads us to

retreat into the things that we know; as a result, we end up increasing the "cognitive dissonance" between what we actually do and what we realize we have to do. Vice-Provost Triggles agreed, and quoted from a book, the gist of which was that we cannot change "as long as we hold on tight to what doesn't work". Professor Schuel commented that our only hope may be in creating a faculty and programs that cut across departmental lines, a faculty that can interact. Professor Noble expressed dismay at how slowly issues are discussed and resolved; he reminded the committee that the issues at hand require an immediate response, far beyond the normal rate of faculty and institutional consideration, and said that this might only be possible if we change the way in which the faculty governance bodies function.

Professor Taub suggested that one possible response to the problem would be to realize that we have the resources to become world-renowned in one or two fields and plan accordingly. She then suggested that UB could have the goal of simply making money, and thus put its resources into money-making types of education. She also wondered what the common person in New York State thinks our role should be. Professor Faran observed that we need to identify certain underlying principles, something we can latch onto which would help us identify who we are. Vice-Provost Triggles replied that he had concerned himself with this issue, and that there were similar problems elsewhere. He added that he did not say that we needed to accomplish a change in eighteen months, but rather we need to define our mission in that time, to establish a sense of where we're going. Vice-Provost Fischer said we need to keep in mind that these are problems which every institution faces. He also reminded the FSEC that there are "multiple conversations going on out there" among institutions, that this is a national issue, and that the faculty should not lose sight of this. David Toscana-Cantaffa wished to remind the faculty that the students need to be considered also in these discussions, as well as be included on faculty committees; he further urged that these committees be composed of members from diverse disciplines. Professor Fournier lamented the fact that the faculty has not taken any leadership in stopping funding cuts over the last ten years. Professor Danford detected a possible conflict between the aspirations of UB/SUNY and the wants of the people of New York State: Whereas the university may need to narrow its focus on those few areas in which it has the

potential for excellence, thus making those programs less accessible, less affordable, and less broad, the public wants just the opposite. This would only further weaken the support of our constituency.

Professor Welch suggested three tasks for the Academic Planning Committee: First, to consider ways of expanding its membership; secondly, to look at groups working in related areas; third, to plan a meeting with the Budget Priorities Committee. Finally, he urged the FSEC to make use of its opportunities to press the President and Provost on the issues discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

THOSE PRESENT:

University Officers: W. Fischer
Chair: Claude Welch
Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing
Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford
Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch, Nathan Grant
Dental Medicine: William Miller
Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold
Graduate School of Education: James Hoot
Health-Related Professions: Atif Awad

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Margaret Acara, Boris Albin, Herbert Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran, Chuck Fournier

Nursing: Mattie Rhodes

Pharmacy: Nathan

Social Sciences: Jack Meacham

SUNY Senators: Maureen Jameson, Dennis Malone, Peter Nickerson, Claude Welch

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Ex officio: Carol Ann Sellers

Guests:

Graduate Student Association: David Toscana-Cantaffa

REPORTER: Sue Wuetcher

Other Guest(s):

Academic Planning Committee:

Dennis Malone, Chair

Sharon Dittmar

Mark Gottdiener

Robert Noble

Mary Taub

Myron Thompson (Graduate School)

David Triggie (ex officio)

Excused:

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein

Absent:

Educational Opportunity Center: Areta Buchner

Law: Errol Meidinger