FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 14, 2007
(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, in 567 Capen Hall to discuss the following agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of January 24 and 31, 2007
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President
4. Report of the Provost
5. Report on Final Exam Scheduling and Centrally Scheduled Classrooms
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of January 24 and 31, 2007

The Minutes of January 24 and 31, 2007, were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

The Academic Planning Committee met on Friday, February 9, and reviewed the recent progress on the placement of the Department of Library and Information Studies (LIS). APC Chair Diane Christian submitted a written report to be received by the FSEC. Vice-Provost and Interim Dean of the School of Informatics Lucinda Finley reported that she and faculty had met with the deans, associate deans, and some chairs within the College of Arts & Sciences and the Graduate School of Education to discuss the feasibility of each as a new home for LIS; the GSE said it would welcome Library Sciences, whereas CAS expressed concerns about whether a professional Master's degree program would be an appropriate fit. After consultation and discussion, the LIS faculty held a secret vote; the results were: 1 for CAS, 10 for GSE, and 1 abstention. The Academic Planning Committee endorsed the results of the vote. Vice-Provost Finley also reported that the Accreditation Committee of the

American Library Association reviewed and approved the Department's accreditation planning process; thus it is highly likely that LIS will regain full accreditation.

The FSEC voted unanimously to receive the report.

The Committee on Athletics and Recreation is scheduled to meet this coming Monday.

The Computer Services Committee is also scheduled to meet Monday, and its agenda includes a report from Dr. Peter Gold on the UBCATS on-line course evaluation system. The Committee will also discuss the anti-plagiarism *TurnItIn* program and privacy issues.

Item 3: Report of the President

President Simpson reported that a meeting of the SUNY Presidents in Albany had been cancelled due to unfavorable weather and travel conditions; however, there will be a phone conference. He considered it a very bad idea to hold such meetings, because, in efforts to work out an agenda that satisfies such a diverse group of interests across the system, these meetings encourage "homogenizing the institutions" which in fact share few common interests. Another unfortunate result is that every Master's-level institution "suddenly wants to become a research university" --- something decidedly not part of their mission. President Simpson considers it critically necessary to *differentiate* in terms of mission, policy, and budget.

Item 4: Report of the Provost

Provost Tripathi expressed gratitude to the Academic Planning Committee for its leadership and efficacy in dealing with the dissolution of the School of Informatics and the re-location of Library and Informational Sciences.

Item 5: Report on Final Exam Scheduling and Centrally Scheduled Classrooms

Dr. Terri Mangione, Senior Associate Vice-Provost and Director of Student Academic Records and Finance, reported first on the final exam scheduling process. It is currently run by a

program developed 15 years ago with defaults set for a 3-hour duration and double-seating, which in turn requires setting a test location different from the course location. It also accommodates combined exams. Originally run later in the semester, the scheduling process is now completed during the second week.

Issues with the current process center on the outdated program, which cannot manage anticipated increases in the number of exams, and is increasingly prone to errors because it schedules final examinations before the Drop/Add period has ended.

At the request of the Faculty Senate to produce a final exam schedule available upon completion of registration, and to best accommodate the needs of those affected, her office conducted both a faculty and a student survey in December 2005 and looked at benchmarking practices at comparable institutions. Following are the results of the survey (222 faculty and 1,129 [mostly undergraduate] student respondents):

Faculty Students

Same room / no preference: 85% 98%

3-hour vs. 2-hour block: 58 / 42% 87 / 13%

Very/Satisfied w/ double-seating: 67% 87%

Very/Satisfied w/ 7-day period: 76% 73%

Very/Satisfied w/ 2 reading days: 74% 60%

Practices at other institutions include final exam schedule availability at registration, a course-centric schedule to reduce conflicts, and a prevalence of 2-hour final exam periods. Based on this information, her office is attempting to create a course-centric final exam schedule with minimal conflict, available at registration, with flexible options for duration and seating. The two reading days and the 7-day exam period are to remain. [Note: "Student-centric" programs try to eliminate exam conflicts based on the courses a student is

enrolled in at the time the program is run; if a student changes courses during Drop/Add, problems arise. "Course-centric" programs eliminate conflicts between/among courses having exams at identical times.]

Her office has received approval to rewrite the final exam scheduling process, and has been working with Administrative Computing on this project for the past 15 months. They intend to develop a web interface for department schedulers, but will need assistance from the faculty in their efforts to develop some type of standard option by course, for example, if all sections of ABC 201 required a 3-hour exam with double-seating. Vice-Provost Mangione also made the case for building a 3,000-seat testing facility to reduce the number of classrooms needed and to alleviate the confusion among students.

Professor Horvath noted the inconvenience of having the last final exam day fall on a Monday; Vice-Provost Mangione responded that this could be averted simply by scheduling for Saturdays. She added that the 7-day schedule could be reduced to 5 days if all exams were 2 hours in length. Professor Street pointed out the difficulty of scheduling mid-term exams outside of normal class times; the main problem is in requiring students to take exams during another faculty member's course time; Professor Baumer noted that this must be mentioned at the time the students begin the course, and that it is the student's responsibility. Provost Tripathi suggested that the faculty member have alternatives available for the students. Another, albeit unsavory, solution is to schedule the mid-term either in the evening or on a weekend. Professor Rittner wondered to what degree faculty are encouraged to use *Blackboard* as an alternative to seating; pooling the questions and varying the exams would discourage any cheating. Professor Baumer objected, saying students could use texts, notes, and "ghosts" when taking the exam. Professor Horvath said this would require a facility where the exams could be effectively proctored.

Vice-Provost Mangione then provided statistics on centrally scheduled classrooms. There are 134 of them: 104 in the North Campus Spine, 61 of which are technology-equipped; 10 in the Ellicott Complex (8 with tech); and 20 on the South Campus (11 with tech). Relatively few (47) can seat more than 50 students, and only 26 can seat 100 students or more.

2,415 courses were scheduled for these rooms in Fall 2006, 2,438 for Spring 2007, and 318 for Summer 2007. Because of low demand in summer, renovation of classrooms for tech or aesthetics usually takes place during this time; on the other hand, the short span of twelve weeks restricts the amount of renovation, unless additional and expensive outside contracting is undertaken. She later remarked that aesthetic classroom renovation also usually entails an unfortunate reduction of seating capacity by about 10%.

The national benchmark of classroom utilization is 67% over a 45-hour week (8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday). All building averages on the Spine exceed this mark, but none on the South Campus nor in the Ellicott Complex reach 67% utilization in even a 35-hour week.

Vice-Provost Mangione invites faculty to participate in an Instructional Facility Use and Need Task Group (which she is chairing). Its objectives include:

- Maintaining sufficient instructional facility supply to achieve facility use standards;
- Developing a comprehensive inventory of all classroom space;
- Assessing utilization of all classroom space;
- Developing scheduling policies that meet departmental, faculty, and student needs and ensure achievement of desired facility utilization standards --- instead of maintaining standard time blocks that do not accommodate those needs.

In response to Professor Springate's questions about lab space, she explained that only centrally scheduled lab space is included in the statistics given, and that exams are scheduled in labs only at the specific request of departments. Professor Brazeau wondered if there were any contingency plan in case of a disaster to some building which is heavily utilized. Vice-Provost Ryan commented that they had already been tested on this when the fire ruined parts of O'Brian Hall, and commended Vice-Provost Mangione on finding sufficient space, mid-semester, in a very short period of time. He did concede that this is a nightmare scenario, and that we would be hard-pressed to deal with a similar but larger disaster. Professor Brazeau also voiced concern over the lack of space for holding seminars with invited speakers; this is particularly disadvantageous for a university that wishes to excel in the research arena. Professor Wooldridge commented that some non -centrally

scheduled space could be used more effectively, since many smaller classes are being taught in larger rooms.

In answer to Professor Batalama's question, Vice-Provost Mangione explained that a facilities department manages the aesthetic upgrades of classrooms, whereas the Office of Classroom Technology takes care of the technology upgrades. Professor Batalama also mentioned that the ventilation systems in many buildings do not seem to work very well; the air is often stale and smells. Dr. Mangione answered that Facilities has a long-term plan for upgrading ventilation in a number of places; most of this work is coordinated with aesthetic and tech upgrades, and is therefore subject to the same time restrictions mentioned above. Professor Danford expressed the desire to have the Kiva (Baldy 101) restored to a 200-seat room from its current capacity of 100, and to have its odd acoustics corrected. Sharing of the approximately 152 departmentally-controlled rooms is being planned to more efficiently match class size with room size.

Item 6: Executive Session

Item 7: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hoeing,
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

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

Chair: P. Nickerson (P)

Secretary: R. Hoeing (E)

Architecture & Planning: GS. Danford (P)

Arts & Sciences: M. Churchill (A), J. Woelfel (P), K. Tekeuchi (P), D. Street (P)

Dental Medicine: R. Hall (A)

Education: T. Schroeder (P)

Engineering & Applied Sciences: S. Batalma (P), S. Dargush (P)

Public Health & Health Professions: P. Horvath (P)

Law: J. Milles (A)

Management: W. Lin (P)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: William Fiden (A), M. Dayton (E), James Springate (P), J. Hasset (A)

Nursing: P. Wooldridge (P)

Pharmacy: G. Brazeau (P)

Social Work: B. Rittner (P)

SUNY Senators: W. Baumer (P), H. Durand (P), H. William Coles III (E), P. Bradford (E)

University Libraries: JA. Volpe (P)

Guests: John B. Simpson (President), Satish Tripathi (Provost), Lucinda Finley (Vice-Provost and Interim Dean for the School of Informatics), Michael Ryan (Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education), Terri Mangione (Senior Associate Vice-Provost and Director of Student Academic Records and Finance), Kara Saunders (Assistant Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education), L. Labinski (PSS), C. Crespo (GSA), M. Cochrane (*The Reporter*)