FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of April 16, 1997 (approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM in Capen Hall 567 to discuss the following agenda:

1. Report of the Chair
2. Educational Technology Action Plan
3. Primacy of Commitment and Conflicts of Interest
4. University Honors Program

Item 1: Report of the Chair

Professor Welch reported the following items:

- He had written to the two new members of the UB Council, Jeremy Jacobs and Gerald Lippes, extending his congratulations and an invitation to become better informed about the role of the UB Faculty Senate.

- The President's Review Board needs new members; the Chair circulated a sheet for nominations.

- He urged strong faculty participation at the University Open House on Saturday, April 19.

- An asthmatic faculty member had submitted a memo expressing concern about smoking in the vestibules.

- In addition, Professor Nickerson reported that the SUNY Senate Public Relations Committee will "develop and implement a consistent program of advocacy for the State University of New York on a state-wide and regional basis to various publics, including, but not limited to, students, parents, alumni, faculty and staff, media,

government, the private sector, and Trustees of the State University". The goals of the program are:

- To promote SUNY;
- To provide a voice for the SUNY faculty and professional staff;
- To be the voice of the SUNY Faculty Senate in responding to issues and actions that affect SUNY faculty.
- To educate the faculty and public as to the work and worth of SUNY.
- He added that, if the Committee can accomplish any of these goals, it would be "a big plus".
- Professor Nickerson then asked the faculty to submit any suggestions for improving the North Campus bookstore, since Follett's said it is ready to implement necessary changes.
- Professor Hoeing announced that there would be a run-off election for SUNY Senator between the two candidates with the most votes, namely, John Fisher and Powhatan Wooldridge.

Item 2: Educational Technology Action Plan

In response to a good deal of frustration about Instructional Technology (IT) support on campus, the late Provost Bloch had appointed a committee, which recommended that CIT be transferred to the Provost. Since this proved not to be a feasible short-term approach, Provost Headrick decided to set aside funds to develop a *distributed* IT support infrastructure. Vice-Provost Sullivan outlined the accomplishments of the academic year 1996-97, as well as the agenda for 1997-98.

- Instead of providing staff support to every unit, which would have been exorbitant in cost and unwarranted in demand, the Provost's office opted to develop a more nodal structure. Thirty-three additional hires doubled the support staff in those nodes. In addition, the Office
- established/upgraded 22 special distributed IT facilities;

- provided workstations to all willing faculty and staff members;
- established a systematic faculty/staff workstation replacement program (at present, on a five-year cycle);
- decentralized PC repair;
- established a priority data communication program and provided network connections for all willing faculty and staff;
- appointed a Distance Learning Advisory Committee;
- established on the North Campus a "prototype"distance learning facility in Baldy Hall.
- As yet unresolved issues and concerns about the Plan include communication, morale in the IT professional community, insufficient evaluation, defining responsibility distributions, the financial underpinnings, and the need to invest in clear "value-added" activity
- On the 1997-98 agenda are the following:
- improving communication and advisory structures --- "as a prerequisite to Year 2 funding, each node must identify a more thorough communication and advisory structure, where faculty, staff and students they are responsible for are clearly involved";
- investing around nodal needs to fulfill distributed responsibilities;
- the Classroom Technology Project, designed to outfit 26 classrooms with baseline technology support;
- a Competitive Projects Fund, a seed funding effort to encourage the development of projects which lead to external funding or significant improvement in existing programs;
- restructuring the approach to equipment replacement;
- addressing salaries for IT professionals;
- addressing the problem of student access to computing, including dormitory access and possibly requiring students to own a computer, since access demand has outstripped the capacity of the labs.

Professor Faran asked what is being done with the old PCs. Vice-Provost Sullivan replied that disposal remains a problem; at present, they are stored in one of two temporary "staging areas". Because the old computers are useless for new software and expensive to maintain, the program to distribute the used machines to local schools "fizzled".

Professor Nickerson asked if the Student Technology Fee was being used in part to fund the entire initiative. Vice-Provost Sullivan affirmed this, saying that "a big chunk of our investments [...] supports students". Thus a large portion of the Fee is used for meeting students' technology needs. Furthermore, he argued, "investing in distributed staff is supporting students".

Professor Jameson wondered if Arts & Letters lost any funding in the process of forming a node in itself; she also asked about faculty access to data, and what is to be done about problems arising from the "parallel bureaucracies" (CIT vs. provostal/nodal), such as differing upgrade schedules. Professor Meacham expressed concern about having and getting enough computing sites for students. Vice-Provost Sullivan doubted that UB has enough space to continue building new labs, adding that UB currently has no systematic plan for upgrading the labs.

To Professor Jameson's first question, he replied that Arts & Letters had lost "not a nickel"; instead, the original allocations have been adjusted to reflect the new nodal arrangements. On the issue of faculty access, Vice-Provost Goodman stated that any faculty member who wants access to data need only ask for it. Vice-Provost Sullivan, addressing the problem of parallel bureaucracies, remarked that his office is in the process of establishing complementary, rather than competing, responsibilities for the two groups; this should also facilitate communication between them.

Item 3: Primacy of Commitment and Conflicts of Interest

Professor Yeagle, Chair of the Committee on Research and Creative Activity (RCA) presented and summarized the draft *Policy on the Primacy of Commitment and Conflicts of Interest*, distributed prior to the meeting. The document explains the rationale for such a policy, and attempts to lay out some indicators ("red flags") alerting faculty and staff to potential conflicts of interest. The overarching purpose of the policy is simply to guide faculty, particularly in these times when entrepreneurship is increasingly encouraged. Professor Yeagle pointed out that the document referred mainly to full-time employees of the University, since it is difficult to determine how this should affect clinicians, for example, who receive only a small part of their salaries from the University; their degrees of loyalty, understandably, would be proportional to their sources of income.

Professor Noble felt uneasy about our policies placing responsibilities of oversight into the hands of unit heads, and asked about the "whistle-blowing process" --- i.e., who would accuse someone of a conflict of interest? To this, Professor Yeagle replied that this was not clear and deserved further examination. The Committee suggested investing power with the unit heads along "normal administrative channels", with the proviso that there also be a special *ad hoc* faculty committee to judge suspected cases. Despite this type of appeal process, "ultimately it does end up in the Provost's hands". Professor Hull added that the unit heads do in fact bear some responsibility for the reputation of the institution; furthermore, the first level of exercising this responsibility, apart from the individual employee, "has to be at the level of the unit head or supervisor, and has to be at the level of prior disclosure", since pursuing an entrepreneurship often shifts undue responsibility onto someone else.

Professor Welch was concerned about the phrase, *"Faculty members may not engage in consulting or outside business that harms the University's reputation"*, and asked whether it would be ultimately a dean's responsibility in deciding what is appropriate. Professor Wooldridge considered the same sentence to be a "very slippery slope", since it could infringe on academic freedom, and suggested that the phrase be rephrased and made more exact. Professor Yeagle admitted there were also several differing opinions about this issue among the members of the RCA Committee, and proposed re-examining the wording.

Although primacy of commitment to the institution may not be the highest commitment one has in life, Professor Hull continued, it must take priority for full-time employees in terms of financial arrangements. Professor Yeagle pointed out that the document did not imply that the things described could not take place, but rather only that they must be disclosed; disclosure is the primary emphasis in this policy.

Subject to proposed changes in wording, the FSEC voted unanimously in favor of bringing the policy to the Faculty Senate for discussion.

Item 4: University Honors Program

Vice-Provost Goodman announced the plan of the Honors Council to extend the University Honors Program into the upper division of undergraduate education. Dr. Capuana delivered a brief history and description of the Program, after which Professor Herreid summarized the main features of the Advanced Honors Program. Modeled upon similar programs at other distinguished universities, it will be open to all students with a 3.25 GPA, since several high-achievers are "late bloomers" who would not have qualified as freshmen; yet they strongly desire not only recognition for their efforts, but wish to pursue an independent study program that will serve as a serious scholarly endeavor. Requirements for successful completion --- most of them suggested by Honors students --- include a 3.25 GPA, a senior thesis or project, completion of three Honors or graduate courses at the 300 level or above, and completion of a "breadth requirement" (such as an internship, overseas study, community service or pursuit of a second major or a minor).

Perquisites for Advanced Honors students are the same ones to which all Honors students are entitled, including priority registration, library privileges, transcript notation, Graduate School advising, summer research information, and an online newsletter.

Professor Herreid expected the Advanced Program to affect positively the "3 Rs" of the University: Recruitment, Retention, and Respect. The assumption is that students seeking

intellectual challenges and are recognized for their contributions are most likely to attend a school that fosters those opportunities, and stay once they see this promise fulfilled. He pointed out that Honors scholars "invariably comment to us that if it were not for the Honors Program, they would not have come to UB".

With the hiring of an Assistant Administrative Director, no additional financial resources would be required.

After discussion of the details of the program, the FSEC voted unanimously to send it to the Faculty Senate for its endorsement.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Present:

Chair: Claude E. Welch

Secretary: Robert G. Hoeing

Architecture & Planning: G. Scott Danford

Arts & Letters: James Pappas

Dental Medicine: Robert Baier

Engineering & Applied Sciences: Robert Wetherhold

Graduate School of Education: James Hoot

Health-Related Professions: Atif Awad

Information & Library Studies: George D'Elia

Law: Errol Meidinger

Management: Ramaswamy Ramesh

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Bernice Noble, Herbert Schuel

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: James Faran

Nursing: Powhatan Wooldridge

Social Sciences: Michael Farrell, Jack Meacham

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

University Libraries: Marilyn Kramer

Guests:

Kenneth Levy, Senior Vice-Provost

Sean Sullivan, Vice-Provost

Nicolas Goodman, Vice-Provost

Faculty Senate Committee on Research and Creative Activity

Philip Yeagle, Chair

Richard Hull

Joseph Cusker, *Office of the Vice-President of Research*

University Honors Program

Clyde Herreid

Josephine Capuana

Jessica Dudek

Excused:

Arts & Letters: Michael Frisch

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: Boris Albini

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Stanley Bruckenstein