FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 24, 2001 (approved)

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The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2:00 PM on October 24, 2001 in Capen 567 to consider the following agenda:

1. Report of the Chair
2. Report of the President/Provost
3. Spring 2002 Academic Calendar
4. Blackboard Technology – Associate Vice Provost for Educational Technology David Willbern
5. Report of the Grading Committee: revised version of the Class Absence Policy – Professor Baumer
6. Old/New Business

Item 1: Report of the Chair

The Chair, speaking as a physician, expressed his amazement and concern at how many UB students smoke. Smoking poses serious, long-term health issues, and he believes smoking should be treated as important an issue as drinking. The students' consciousness of the consequences of smoking should be raised.

Item 2: Report of the President/Provost

Commenting on the difficulty of scheduling semesters, President Greiner suggested that shortening the break between semesters would be a possible strategy for increasing the length of the Spring semester. He also announced that he has settled responsibility for the Academic Calendar squarely on the shoulders of the Provost's Office, specifically on the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs with the advice of the Faculty Senate. Professor Nickerson reminded the President that the Calendar Committee had been created when the Faculty Senate removed itself from the calendar business.

· Students take short courses at other institutions during the long inter-semester break; UB should consider offering more short, intensive courses during the break like the Law School does (Professor Fourtner)

The President then spoke in executive session, first noting that the State's Open Meeting Law applies on this campus only to meetings of the UB Council and within SUNY only to meetings of the Board of Trustees. He stated that conversations between colleagues may appropriately to held without the presence of the press.

Item 3: Spring 2002 Academic Calendar

 Professor Baumer reported that he, Vice Provost Grant and Professor Fourtner are working on the matter of the Spring 2002 Academic Calendar. They will be ready to present a resolution at the October 31, 2001 meeting of the Executive Committee. The addition of an extra week of instruction seems probable.

Item 4: Blackboard Technology

 Blackboard is a course management tool, developed at Cornell University, that has been on the market for about three years. Associate Vice Provost for Educational Technology David Willbern, Director of the Educational Technology Center, and Rick Lesniak, CIT's Director of Academic Services discussed the use of Blackboard at UB.

Associate Vice Provost Willbern showed Blackboard screens from his Shakespeare course. He has an additional web site for the course but uses Blackboard for interactivity. He send e-mail to students, either individually or as a group, he has set up discussion boards for student comments, the most interesting of which he uses in class, students send him papers electronically, he posts and charts grades electronically, etc.

Some 350 classes are already using Blackboard. In January the updated 5.5 version will be introduced, and for Spring 2002 every course in the calendar will have a toggle switch option for using Blackboard under the UB Learns logo. This expansion requires a full scale, enterprise-wide system that is linked to the student data base for automatic creation of course rosters.

· how does an instructor access Blackboard to put a course online? (Professor Cohen)

· call the Office of Educational Technology Services or access the Blackboard web page <http://ublearns.buffalo.edu/>, specify the class for which Blackboard is wanted, and the next day a shell with the names of all registered students will be created; the instructor then inputs the material which is needed for the class, but Blackboard does a fairly good job of putting the material into HTML (Mr. Lesniak)

· the ETC will be offering numerous courses in Blackboard (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· will Blackboard accept recordings of lectures? (Professor Fourtner)

· will accept Real Player recordings (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· Blackboard will allow you to link to material or store it on the server; heavy use of video will challenge the system (Mr. Lesniak)

· great teaching device; put up pre-exams for my courses which I grade quickly and get to students (Professor Fourtner)

· Libraries have experienced problems printing off the Power Point screens from UB Learns; is there a component for assessing a course? (Professor Adams-Volpe)

· Blackboard has the ability to survey students anonymously, but there is no course assessment component per se (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· can students view each others' grades and evaluations? (Professor Cohen)

· students can view only their own grades and evaluations; also for privacy instructor can opt not to allow students to view the course roster (Mr. Lesniak)

· is it possible to test out Blackboard before using it for a class? (Professor Sridhar)

· the ETC website gives guest access to view some sites (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· take the introductory, 2 hour training course at ETC; participants are given their own site (Mr. Lesniak)

· do most students own their own computers (Professor Cohen)

· 92 % have own equipment; others use public computing facilities; extent to which graduate students are expected to have computers varies with the Schools (Mr. Lesniak)

· for Spring 2002 Blackboard will be available for all instructors who wish to use it; an instructor may use other course management systems but will not be supported in doing so (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· what are the intellectual property issues in using Blackboard? (Professor Cohen)

· ownership of the content in the Blackboard shell remains with the instructor, except perhaps in the case of an adjunct who is hired to teach particular material (Associate Vice Provost Willbern)

· another intellectual property issue is the need to comply with copyright restrictions when putting up material for students (Professor Baumer)

· Blackboard has the capacity to restrict outside access to material in a shell (Mr. Lesniak)

· students have trouble managing password access (Professor Fourtner)

· in the new version, students will use their IT names and passwords (Mr. Lesniak)

Item 5: Report of the Grading Committee

Professor Baumer, Chair of the Grading Committee, presented a revision of the Committee's recommended policy on class absence. He thanked Professor Adams-Volpe for her help to the Committee. He reviewed the status of the report which had received its first and second readings at the April and May 2001 meetings of the Faculty Senate and was subject to extensive debate.

· consider qualifying the phrase "personal and family emergencies" to "documented personal and family emergencies" (Professor Malone)

· support Professor Malone's suggestion; adding the word "documented" will limit the amount of interpretation needed to apply the policy (Professor Adams-Volpe)

· accept that emendation on behalf of the Grading Committee (Professor Baumer)

There was a motion (seconded) to forward the amended report to the Faculty Senate with the Executive Committee's recommendation for approval. The motion passed unanimously.

· suggest that when presenting the revision to the Senate, the differences between the original and revised policies be pointed out (Professor Nickerson)

Item 6: Old/New Business

The Chair announced that the Report will shortly publish an announcements of Dr. Douglas Lederman's presentation to the Faculty Senate on November 6. The meeting is open to all faculty.

The Chair has received a letter of resignation from Professor Obst because of his inability to comply

with the attendance requirements of the Executive Committee. The Chair will communicate with the Dean of the School of Nursing, stressing the importance of having the School represented in both the Senate and the Executive Committee.

 Professor Malone noted that the October 9 meeting of the Faculty Senate failed to achieve a quorum. He asked the Chair to encourage attendance. Professor Nickerson suggested that the Chair should talk to the Deans.

 The Chair stated that the SUNY Senate will meet over the weekend in Fredonia. He and the SUNY Senators met with Professor Gold to discuss issues that may arise at the meeting, viz. implementation of the General Education requirement, and in particular how it is handled for transfer students. He asked if the Executive Committee had other issues that should be discussed.

· may be possible to raise issues beyond the agenda in executive sessions but not in the plenary meetings (Professor Nickerson)

· the use of adjuncts should be discussed (Professor Bono)

· the Budget Priorities Committee is gathering data on this topic (Professor Nickerson)

· would be useful to include letter grades for transferred graduate credits, rather than just a notation of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (Mr. Patel)

· most universities only record S or U grades for transferred graduate courses (Professor Cohen)

· many universities only recognize a completed Master's degree, but do not recognize individual courses (Professor Baumer)

After an executive session, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn McMann Kramer

Secretary of Faculty Senate

Present: Chair: M. Cohen

Parliamentarian: D. Malone

Arts & Sciences: W. Baumer, J. Bono, C. Fournter

Dental Medicine: J. Zambon

Engineering & Applied Sciences: R. Sridhar

Health Related Professions: G. Farkas

Informatics: J. Ellison

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: A. El Solh

Pharmacy: A. Luzier

SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe, H. Durand, P. Nickerson

University Libraries: J. Hopkins

University Officers:

W. Greiner, President

Guests: D. Willbern, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Technology

R. Lesniak, Director of Academic Services, CIT

S. Wuetcher, Reporter

S. Watson, Buffalo News

S. Paulson, The Spectrum

 R. Patel, Programming Coordinator, Graduate Student Association

E. Courtney, Academic Affairs Director, Undergraduate Student Association

W. Coles, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

Excused: Secretary: M. Kramer

Architecture: R. Shibley

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: C. Granger

Absent: Graduate School of Education: L. Malave

Law: I. Marcus

Management: J. Boot

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: B. Noble, S. Spurgeon

SUNY Senators: J. Boot