FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 26, 2003 - (approved)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 2003, in 567 Capen Hall to consider the following agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of January 29 and February 12, 2003
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President/Provost
4. President Bush's Council of Academic Advisors update -- James Campbell
5. Center for Computational Research update -- Russ Miller
6. Charging the Faculty Senate Bylaws Committee
7. Old/New business
8. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of January 29 and February 12, 2003

Both sets of minutes were approved as distributed.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

Chair Cohen said that next week's full Faculty Senate meeting has a long agenda. There will be a report from the Elections Committee and the second reading of the two resolutions from the Computer Services Committee. With regard to the resolutions, UB's Chief Information Officer, Voldemar Innus, has been invited to attend and

participate in the discussions. Dr. Innus has also been asked to report on the status of the Microsoft contract (which is up for renewal soon), University support of Linux, and the Computing Center's response to homeland security concerns. Senior Vice Provost Bruce Holm is also on the agenda; he will discuss the SUNY response to homeland security preparedness.

The Chair said he's spoken to the Provost about FSEC's concerns pertaining to grant-related hazardous waste following last week's meeting. He also asked the Faculty Senate Research & Creative Activity Committee (chaired by Professor John Ho) to address the ramifications of who should pay for waste disposal when the costs aren't covered by grant monies.

A summary report from the University Governance Committee recommends that reviews of deans or other administration officials should be explained in documents specific to the unit involved. Also, there should be a procedure established for selecting deans when a vacancy occurs. That procedure should clarify how faculty will be involved in the selection process. This is intended to prevent recurrences of cases when deans have been chosen without faculty input. The Chair has instructed Governance Committee chair Malone to turn these recommendations into resolutions for FSEC consideration in the coming month.

Item 3: Report of the President/Provost

None

Item 4: President Bush's Council of Academic Advisors update -- James Campbell

Political science professor Campbell was invited to serve on the Republican National Committee's (RNC) Academic Advisory Council in the fall of 2001. This is a group of a dozen or so political scientists from around the U.S. who meet occasionally (three times so far in the current administration) to discuss political matters and how to make them more advantageous to Republicans. They form panels, share research data, and offer outside input to President Bush's political staff on matters such as policy initiatives and strategies for targeting specific kinds of voters.

Professor Campbell said that participating in the Council has gotten him access to political data that wouldn't have been available to him otherwise, and he's published a couple of papers using their data.

Much of his research on elections and voting behavior is based on data collected by University of Michigan from every election since 1952 and a NSF national election study of the past 20 years of U.S. elections.

Contrary to a popular notion that Republicans and Democrats are becoming more alike, Professor Campbell said that the parties have become more dissimilar since the 1980s. Although both parties have to have some centrist leanings to get anything accomplished, they must nonetheless hold the party line when it comes to the roll-call vote.

Item 5: Center for Computational Research (CCR) update -- Russ Miller

Dr. Miller, Director of the Center for Computational Research, said that the CCR is currently the eighth largest supercomputing center in the world. Around 70 research groups have been utilizing this computing power, but only 40 or so are active at any one time. Forty faculty and their students from 27 different departments have been the main users, but 13 local companies and 10 institutions have also run projects in the CCR. Bioinformatics aside, the scientists who have been using the CCR have brought in $108

million worth of research grants since the Center was created in 1999. Over $41 million has been donated by corporate vendors, and more than 350 publications and presentations have acknowledged CCR's support.

There are two Dell clusters - one comprised of over 4000 processors dedicated to bioinformatics research, and another comprised of 624 Pentium 4 processors (the 22nd most powerful supercomputer in the world) that is available to the UB community for high-end computing needs. Other manufacturers' products are also available, and the CCR staff tries to match research needs to the appropriate system.

CCR supports a wide variety of research in many fields, including computational chemistry, engineering, medicine, business, and interdisciplinary topics. All of the projects they're involved in are listed on the CCR Web site at http://www.ccr.buffalo.edu.

Most CCR machines use the Linux operating system; Microsoft Windows is only used on their administrative PCs.

High-end visualization via a 20-projector display wall offers superior graphics. The video-conferencing capability can save time and money traveling to distant meetings. A stereoscopic projector can create three-dimensional images via special goggles. This has been used on many engineering and medical projects as well as in urban planning projects such as the Peace Bridge and the Williamsville toll barrier.

CCR has patented several software products used in medical imaging and urban visualization and simulation.

A relatively small staff helps users and keeps the machines running. Their mission is to support research that requires high-end computing. Faculty and staff with standard computing needs should use departmental or grant-funded machines, but for people with interesting ideas requiring supercomputing power, CCR is available and cost is not an issue.

Item 6: Charging the Faculty Senate Bylaws Committee

Chair Cohen charged the Bylaws Committee, chaired by Professor Hopkins, to formalize a procedure for selecting faculty representatives to presidential search committees.

Professor Hopkins responded that the Bylaws probably aren't the appropriate place to add such procedures. The Charter of the Faculty Senate, which covers the duties of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, or the Standing Orders of the Faculty Senate, which cover the duties of FSEC representatives, seem to be more appropriate.

Professor Schack agreed that the Bylaws shouldn't be revised on this matter, because they're very difficult to change. SUNY changed its procedures since the last presidential search, so we should note our own procedures where it will be easy to change if SUNY revises the guidelines again.

Chair Cohen suggested that our own procedures should explain how UB is different from most of the other SUNY institutions, so our procedures might have to localize aspects of SUNY's rules to function properly. The Chancellor's guidelines want schools to assemble all faculty for a secret ballot to select presidential search committee representatives.

The Bylaws Committee should consider all of these points and draft a resolution in time to be presented for a first reading at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

Item 7: Old/New business

Chair Cohen asked Will Hepfer to report on his activities as chair of the Elections Committee so we can get a sense of the faculty's willingness to participate in university governance.

Professor Hepfer said that an attempt to add four senators from the Institutional/General faculty last October resulted in 10 nominations, but only one person was willing to serve.

In November, the Committee solicited nominations for two University Senator positions: one from the Health Sciences and one from the Academic Core. Four faculty were interested in running for the Health Sciences seat, so ballots were sent only to Health Sciences faculty. Those ballots were recently counted, and Professor Nickerson was re-elected for another two-year term.

Academic Core faculty didn't receive ballots because only one candidate submitted a platform statement by the deadline. Professor Baumer will be elected at the March Faculty Senate meeting when the Secretary is instructed to cast one vote.

The election for a new chair of the Faculty Senate is underway, and all members of the Voting Faculty should have received ballots. The deadline for submitting those ballots is March 18th. Professors Baumer and Nickerson were the only willing candidates from 20 nominees.

Most faculty who are nominated decline respectfully citing time constraints or other commitments.

Professor Schack said that seeking faculty nominations and soliciting their willingness to run near the end of a semester is bad timing, because that's when faculty are the busiest and most aware of time pressures.

Professor Hassett said he thinks we're doing well in getting 90+ senators from 2000 faculty to participate in a voluntary organization.

The Chair suggested that more faculty might be willing to get involved if they knew what goes on in the Faculty Senate - the President and Provost regularly attend our meetings, we are the only recognized group that can recommend policy to Administration, and it's a very good way to learn what's going on in our dynamic institution.

Professor Nickerson said there could be a group whose function is to identify prospective leaders. Faculty orientation is a good time to inform new faculty about the role of the Senate in university governance.

The Chair suggested that a good time to encourage faculty involvement is when they become associate professors. Those faculty would have been around long enough to have a commitment to UB, and they wouldn't be pressured by the demands of getting tenure.

Professor Schack recommended that we publicize the topics we'll be discussing via e-mail and the Faculty Senate Web site. Messages could encourage faculty to contact their FSEC representatives with opinions, ideas, etc.

Professor Hepfer commended The Reporter for its coverage of our meetings. He asked whether the faculty version of MyUB might also be used to publicize our upcoming topics of discussion.

Professor Jensen agreed that The Reporter articles are well written. The online version is easily searchable so you can find stories from archived issues.

Item 8: Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Hepfer
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Present:
Chair: M. Cohen
Secretary: W. Hepfer
Architecture: S. Danford
Arts & Sciences: W. Baumer, S. Bruckenstein, S. Schack
Education: R. Stein
Engineering & Applied Sciences: J. Jensen, R. Mayne
Law: L. Swartz
Management: J. Boot
Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: C. Granger, J. Hassett
Public Health: G. Farkas
SUNY Senators: M. Kramer, P. Nickerson

Guests:
J. Campbell, CAS
K. Grant, VPAA
J. Hopkins, Senate Bylaws Committee
D. Longenecker, Reporter
R. Miller, CCR
L. Stewart, EDAAA

Excused:
SUNY Senators: J. Adams-Volpe
University Libraries: CA Fabian

Absent:
Arts & Sciences: C. Smith, K. Takeuchi
Dental Medicine: D. Garlapo
Informatics: F. Tutzauer
Graduate School of Education: R. Stein
Institutional/General: O. Mixon
Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: F. Morin
Nursing: E. Perese

Pharmacy: G. Brazeau
SUNY Senators: H. Durand