

FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of February 6, 2007

(unapproved)

The Faculty Senate met in the Center for Tomorrow at 2:00 PM on February 6, 2007, to consider the following agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of December 5, 2006
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the President
4. Interaction with Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources
5. Report on the SUNY Senate Meeting in Stony Brook
6. Old / New Business
7. Adjournment

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of December 5, 2006

The Minutes of December 5, 2006 were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

The Chair distributed a written report prior to the meeting. One item concerned construction of a final examination schedule for the Spring semester; there is interest in notifying students at the beginning of the semester when the exams are scheduled. Another item is whether the exams should be 2 versus 3 hours in length. The FSEC is currently examining these issues.

The Graduate School Executive Committee met in December and continued discussion on final submission of undergraduate transcripts; these would need to be obtained during the first semester of graduate study, and are required for receipt of a graduate degree. The GSEC is still exploring whether to require a tuition deposit for accepted students. It reported there will be a minimum undergraduate

QPA for admission to graduate programs starting Fall 2007, and ETS scores older than five years will likely not be accepted for GRE. The GSEC further reported that it is in the process of collecting completed questionnaires for the NRC assessment of research doctorate programs, and that Interim Dean Ho is on the housing study group for graduate and professional students, which is discussing how many units would be needed and what costs students would be able to afford.

The two governance leaders and the SUNY senators attended the meeting of the University Faculty Senate in Stony Brook for the winter plenary meeting; a report drafted by Dr. Durand was circulated prior to the meeting.

The **Computer Services Committee** heard about course-casting and the current teaching models employed by the School of Management. It also heard from Peter Rittner, Assistant Dean for Educational Technology in the College of Arts & Sciences. As part of the IT Strategic Transformation, Dean Rittner is working as team leader for workstation standardization.

The **Academic Planning Committee** reviewed the current progress on the dissolution of the School of Informatics, and will work on the Memorandum of Understanding II between UB and SUNY.

The **Budget Priorities Committee** met on Monday, February 5, to discuss how faculty should interact with their units in the process of budget planning.

The **Affirmative Action Committee** met and discussed the status of its draft of a *Recruitment and Retention Guide* . It will request a copy of the policies for use of the new People Admin program that will manage recruitment of new faculty members.

The **Information and Library Resources Committee** announced that it will meet in the next few weeks.

Item 3: Report of the President

President Simpson reported that he has been spending a good deal of time outside the University talking with community groups, editorial boards, business leaders, and delegations to the State legislature to apprise them of UB's activities and its progress on *UB 2020* . The purpose, aside from

simply providing information, is to make them advocates for the University and for its plans to change and grow. This is a non-trivial task, since it is necessary to change the public's perception that UB maintains its own status quo, outside the mainstream society and without any measurable economic influence. The economic paradigm of the region, and of the country as a whole, has changed drastically --- from heavy manufacturing to the use of ideas, inventions, creative thinking, and intellectual property; thus the University is central to providing the research and training necessary for the present and future economy.

President Simpson noted that he must also clarify misconceptions about *UB 2020*, the first being that it is nothing more than a plan for growth. However, the genesis of *UB 2020* was an effort on behalf of the faculty, and by the faculty, to consider how to concentrate on a small number of strategic strengths which would help define a better use of our resources. It also implies re-aligning other areas of support, such as Human Resources and IT, optimally in concord with the mission; this has already proven more efficient, freeing up monies which were used to hire some new faculty. The second misunderstanding is that *UB 2020* is just a capital planning process for expansion of the three campuses; however, this planning process should be seen as another effort to streamline our support facilities to better utilize our resources and realize our academic aspirations.

He also commented that the Governor's recent budget reveals a stark contrast between the huge amounts of change he is promoting --- and funding --- for pre-K through 12 versus the budget he put forward for higher education. The latter is neither positive nor negative, preserving basic operating costs of the University, funding negotiated salary increases for faculty and staff, and providing for anticipated increased energy costs and deferred maintenance capital issues. In President Simpson's opinion, the Governor has forestalled any decision-making about higher education until he considers the results of a major task force, whose charge is to examine how to convert SUNY from being a good system to a great system. It is unlikely that the task force will include anybody from inside SUNY --- which President Simpson finds appropriate. Despite the lack of any major budget advancement or change in policy, UB seems poised, much better than any of the other campuses, to benefit most from the outcome of the task force study.

Item 4: Interaction with Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources

Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources, reported that his office is responding to the question most frequently asked by faculty and staff, namely, 'How do I fit in to *UB 2020* ?' Given that *UB 2020* is a simple set of core principles designed to make UB one of the great public research institutions in the country, Mr. Nostaja stated that this essentially boils down to two major strategies: becoming bigger, and better.

Addressing the first ("bigger"), he pointed out that, in its goals to increase its growth by 10,000 students plus corresponding faculty and staff, and in light of the fact that the average retirement age is now at 60 years and 2 months, UB will need to replace about 600 faculty and 900 staff in addition to its planned new hirings. This presents an opportunity for them to stay where they are needed and grow along with the institution. UB will need to find ways of keeping them an average of 6 years beyond the current retirement age, and thus will need to be more flexible in allowing them to contribute in the manner they wish.

He then argued that the "better" dimension of growth --- i.e., through growth in quality instruction, research, grants, etc. --- would be best expressed if the employees of UB were to regard the University as one of the best places at which to work. He and his office were inspired on this point by a local business, Wegman's, which consistently ranks at or near the top of the list of *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For. His goal is to make UB the first university to be included in this list as one of the best employers in this country. This includes two major strategies: First, providing the right programs and facilities, such as a well-run training and development organization, day-care center, wellness program, and others which we must determine. Secondly, we need the establishment and maintenance of the right cultural environment, focusing on how to best treat the employees of UB. Discussion of the idea with various administration, faculty, and staff representatives elicited a generally favorable response in support of the plan.

Vice-President Nostaja solicited thoughts from the Senate. One faculty member pointed out that one reason to pursue this plan is because of the unfavorable image of Buffalo regarding its weather; even when the weather is beautiful, the impression/assumption is that it is not. We have it in our control to change this perception. Professor Welch warned that the Wegman's model is a *corporate* model, and that it would behoove us to examine programs at some of the better universities for comparison. He

suggested also that, even in a constantly and increasingly rapidly changing culture, when we hire new or replacement faculty, we must do so on university/academic terms to ensure our integrity as primarily an academic institution, rather than a corporation. Professor Mang suggested looking at the model at the University of Alberta at Edmonton, a top-notch, internationally esteemed research institute which has been successful in attracting many research scientists --- despite the climate being colder than in Buffalo. Vice-President Nostaja added that we should also consider some innovative corporate culture models, such as that at Google. Professor Srihari mentioned that he had visited Google last week, and what struck him was the prevalence of free food, as well as availability of convenient services such as a laundry and a medical office, all designed to maximally enhance the productivity of its young work force; thus, this company, although impressive, might not serve as the ideal model for UB. Mr. Nostaja countered that it could still teach us about the different expectations of the younger work force. It was also pointed out that UB does compare favorably to UNC-Chapel Hill in terms of faculty satisfaction with respect to our pay increases, due in large part to strong unionization.

When asked what our next steps should be, Vice-President Nostaja responded that we should first identify programmatic priorities, and then crafting a strategy for realizing them --- no doubt with significant financial investment. We then must target the necessary cultural changes and tear down any barriers to creativity. At present, he is re-organizing parts of Human Resources, reassigning people to functions more valuable than processing paperwork. Professors Nickerson and Welch both encouraged greater consultation with the faculty in this effort.

Item 5: Report on the SUNY Senate Meeting in Stony Brook

Dr. Durand had circulated prior to the Senate meeting an outline report on the SUNY University Faculty Senate Plenary meeting held January 25-27, 2007, at Stony Brook. Professor Baumer presented the report at the UB Faculty Senate meeting. What follows are some of the highlights of that report.

SUNY Senate President Carl Wiezalis is assembling a committee to study the feasibility of a Service Corps of retired faculty who could engage in volunteer service to SUNY in areas of interest and need

(research, energy, environment) and for helping to prepare students in the "STEM" --- science, technology, engineering, mathematics --- disciplines. He also talked about the following issues:

- the need for Centers for Teaching and Learning in SUNY institutions;
- the concern that proceedings from the SUNY Senate meetings were not being sufficiently disseminated, not reaching the "rank and file" faculty for better feed;
- an ongoing search for a Vice-Provost for Diversity and Academic Equity.

The Vice-Chancellor for Budget and Finance, Kim Cline, in answer to a question about the research funding formula, said her office was trying to encourage a different type of funding, a method of matching those national grants, dollar for dollar, that were not as competitive or more State-oriented. She then discussed the Empire Innovation Program; increasing the "Margin of Excellence" funding for graduate students; academic performance and innovation; the need for better advisement at the graduate level; the need for constructing a budget that would make SUNY a first-choice institution; and the need for collaboration among central administration, UUP, faculty, etc. in advocacy issues.

State Senator LaValle, chair of the NYS Higher Education Committee, expressed a desire to continue to push for a more "ambitious" budget, and spoke at length on the importance of community colleges as the gateway to higher education for many students in the State, as well as the need for more seamless articulation between these and four-year colleges. Another topic was the desire for campuses to become more environmentally friendly, "greener".

A presentation on Faculty Leadership Development followed. Then Provost Risa Palm addressed the Spellings Commission report, as well as the National Center for Academic Transformation Project concentrating on continuous student assessment and feed in efforts to improve retention and graduation. She quoted a statistic showing that there are 11 courses across SUNY which alone constitute 32% of undergraduate credit hours, AND have exceptionally high failure rates --- about 15% in the four-year colleges, about 50% in the community colleges.

The University colleges sector inquired into the Chancellor's satisfaction with the General Education requirements, and expressed concerns about part-time faculty remuneration and particularly about the loss of faculty development centers.

The Chancellor announced his plans to embark on a "listening tour" across the State over the coming month. He also talked about a graduate research initiative and the Empire Renovation Program, through which he last year asked for \$6 million to fund an increase in graduate stipends; this year, he is asking for another \$14 million. The Health Science centers expressed a major concern about the need for more trained nursing faculty, and for extra classroom space; the Chancellor reported that he is constantly in Albany seeking support in these matters, and is considering adding a senior administrator in his office in the area of Health Care services and other high-need programs.

Chancellor Ryan then addressed the demographics of New York State and the Northeast region in general, remarking that if nothing is done at levels of higher education, there would by 2015 be a smaller percentage of college graduates and a higher percentage of high school drop-outs.

The Chancellor further reported on the ongoing Mission Review, noting that 46 of the 60 units had completed their Memoranda of Understanding

Professor Baumer commented that the winter plenary meeting was typical in the sense that many of the committees had begun work on their charges, but few had action items to bring to the floor; one exception involved the SUNY Senate bylaws, which were problematic in various respects, but had now been "cleaned up". He reported that the Undergraduate Committee has been active in putting together a policy guide to internships, including planning, implementation, and assessment. The Student Life Committee remains concerned about student mental health --- which, he noted, is a nation-wide issue as well.

SUNY Senator Kramer added that the Operations Committee had offered resolutions, adopted by the SUNY Senate and forwarded to the Provost, dealing with a variety of issues concerning library funding, both in terms of the increase in costs of printed materials and the "staggering" increase in costs of electronic materials. The Operations Committee is interested in seeing a more system-wide basis for establishing more suitable economies of scale to deal with these problems. She asked President Simpson to keep this in mind the next time he talks with Chancellor Ryan, since "he only listens to the Presidents in terms of how the money is spent".

Professor Nickerson noted that the SUNY Provost's office is expanding to accommodate a new Vice-Provost for diversity issues, as well as one for research, economic development, and graduate studies.

Item 6: Old / New Business

Professor Welch reminded the Chair that, according to Article 6 of the Charter of the Faculty Senate, each of the 18 Standing Committees shall submit a written report, signed by all members of the committee, to the FSEC, which in turn is to transmit each report to the Senate for consideration. He expressed deep concern that this has not been done over the past few years. Failure to do so has been a profound weakening of the Senate itself. He strongly urged that the Chair revive this practice to allow more active participation of the Senate in the issues dealt with in every Senate committee.

Professor Nickerson assured him that every active committee will submit a report.

Item 7: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hoeing,
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Attendance

Architecture & Planning

Danford (P)

Arts & Sciences

Brancato (A)

Buscaglia (A)

Campbell (A)

Churchill (A)

DeWald (A)

Dryden (P)

Ehrenberg (A)

Faran (A)

Gabriel (A)

Giese (A)

Griffler (A)

Hennessey (P)

Juarros-Daussa (A)

Lamb (A)

Lo (A)

Lulat (A)

Anderson (P)

Shiode (E)

Simms (P)

Street (P)

Subramanian (P)

Takeuchi (P)

Timler (P)

Watrous (A)

Weinstein (A)

Welch (P)

Markelz (A)

Dental Medicine

Bradford (A)

Davis (P)

Hall (A)

Mang (P)

Education

Ageyev (P)

Kibby (A)

Lee (A)

Schroeder (A)

Engineering

Alexandridis (A)

Alphonse (P)

Batalama (P)

Dargush (P)

Soom (P)

Srihari (P)

Titus (P)

Wetherhold (P)

Informatics

Woelfel (A)

Law

Miller (A)

Milles (A)

Management

Cohen (P)

Lin (P)

Simpson (A)

Trivedi (P)

Nursing

Curran (P)

Wooldridge (A)

Pharmacy

Boje (A)

Brazeau (P)

Social Work

Rittner (E)

SUNY Senators

Baumer (P)

Bradford (E)

Coles (P)

Durand (E)

University Libraries

Adams-Volpe (P)

Kramer (P)

Taddeo (A)

Tao (P)

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Amsterdam (E)

Brown (A)

Cherr (A)

Dayton (E)

Dobson (A)

Fiden (A)

Fudyma (E)

Harris (P)

Hassett (A)

Hernan (A)

Hershey (E)

Joshi (E)

Krause (A)

LaDuca (P)

Lukan (A)

Mastrandea (P)

Noble (P)

Sands (P)

Sharp (P)

Snyder (P)

Springate (P)

Spurgeon (A)

Sundquist (A)

Weinstock (A)

Yale (A)

Young (A)

Public Health & Health Professions

Farkas (A)

Horvath (A)

Tomita (P)

Faculty Senate Officers

Peter Nickerson, President (P)

Robert Hoeing, Secretary (P)

Guests

John Simpson, President

Satish Tripathi, Provost

Scott Nostaja, Interim Vice-President for Human Resources

Larry Labinski, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

Janiece Kiedrowski, Professional Staff Senate

Eileen Sirianni, Professional Staff Senate

Barbara Burke, EDAAA