

FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of February 6, 2001 - (approved)

E-MAIL: ZBFACSEN@ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

The Senate met at 2:00 PM on February 6, 2001 in the Center for Tomorrow to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the minutes of November 7, 2000](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Report of the President/Provost](#)
4. [What's new is the School of Law - Dean Nils Olsen](#)
5. [Second reading of the Faculty Senate Computer Services Committee's recommendation on baseline IT support and computer access for faculty - Professor Lorna Peterson, Chair](#)
6. [First reading of the Faculty Senate Grading Committee's recommendation on the Fresh Start Policy- Professor William Baumer, Chair](#)
7. [Old/new business](#)

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of November 7, 2000

The minutes of November 7, 2000 were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

The Chair's written report was distributed with the agenda. He invited the following updates:

- the President's Task Force on Racial and Ethnic Diversity will shortly be distributing a questionnaire to faculty, staff and students asking about the racial climate at UB; please complete and return your questionnaire and urge others to do so; the data will be very helpful to the Committee in completing its work (Dr. Durand)
- ballots for Chair of the Faculty Senate have been distributed and are due by February 23 with results available soon afterwards; ballots for SUNY Senator will be distributed as soon as the Faculty Senate Office receives a supply of envelopes and will have a return date of March 7 (Professor Kramer)

- February 9 is the Professional Staff Senate's Wellness Day; some 250 people have had blood drawn for pretesting; there will be numerous displays, booths, activities and tastings (Dr. Coles)

Item 3: Report of the President/Provost

Today being UB day in Albany, there was no report of the President/Provost.

Item 4: What's new in the School of Law

Professor Nils Olsen, Dean of the School of Law, gave an overview of the School.

- The School has restructured its teaching schedule:
 - offers a 60 minute, rather than a 50 minute, instructional hour, reducing the instructional period from 14 weeks to 12 weeks; within a 12 week period classes are scheduled in four week blocks
 - 1 credit requires 12 hours of student contact which may be scheduled within a single four week block, within two four week blocks, etc., up to six four week blocks
 - this flexibility allows short, intensive courses which are particularly appropriate for teaching skill sets and has made it possible to bring in outstanding visiting faculty; allows faculty to individualize how they meet their teaching obligation
- The School has revised its curriculum:
 - offers upper division subject area concentrations; students graduate with a J.D. and a certificate of concentration
 - requires faculty to teach more required courses rather than primarily courses that fit their interests and research
 - mixes critical and theory courses with practice courses
 - faculty like the flexibility in scheduling, students and prospective employers like the practice component; the American Bar Association accreditation group was very intrigued by UB's mix of theory and practice
- The School has a greater presence in the University than is typical for a law school:
 - faculty has a strong interdisciplinary ground; there are 10 Ph.D.'s and many other faculty have an M.A. in the liberal arts
 - the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, which runs out of the School of Law, spends 2/3 of its budget outside the School and has over 100 affiliated faculty
 - cross lists many courses; has dual degree programs with the School of Management, the School of Social Work, is working with the Department of Geography and is developing a program in public health
 - the Baldy Center usually has 30 Ph.D./J.D. students

- The School is growing:
 - 40 tenured and tenured track faculty; 60% are male, 40% female
 - 31 faculty are tenured full professors
 - student demographics have improved as the School's applicant pool has increased
 - currently there are 730 students up from a low of 680 several years ago
 - students are 50% male and 50% female
 - 17% of this year's class are out of state students; the School recruits successfully in the North East market because of its relatively low tuition
 - 20% of the class is minority, which percentage should increase to 25% within the next several years; the School is one of the few North Eastern law schools to recruit in the southern historically black colleges

- The School has nurtured an independent development capacity:
 - conducts its own annual campaign, using alumni and students
 - has a tradition of alumni support
 - has allowed the School to increase its scholarship support from \$30 K five years ago to \$300K today
 - has successfully raised funds for capital improvements such as the transformation of the Moot Court Room, which was a large, high ceilinged and ineffective teaching space, into five classrooms and a suite containing a Mission Style oak paneled courtroom, a judge's chamber and a jury deliberation room; the suite will be used for actual court proceedings of the New York Supreme Court, the Family Court, the New York Appellate Court, the U.S. Magistrate Court and some alternate dispute resolution systems

- The School has an active clinical program:
 - emphasizes complex transactional activities
 - had the first affordable housing clinic in the United States; over the last ten years in partnership with the Diocese of Buffalo has done \$70M of affordable housing development and is the major engine for affordable housing in Buffalo
 - has a clinic on domestic violence which works state wide and receives its own line in the state budget; the clinic focuses on getting agencies involved with domestic violence to work toward the same goal; for example, while criminal justice agencies encourage the reporting of domestic abuse, social agencies consider delayed reporting to be evidence of an unfit parent, creating a serious dilemma for an abused spouse who delays reporting
 - works on University affairs, for example is exploring a possible housing benefit program for UB employees that would target selected neighborhoods in Buffalo and is helping the University develop a consistent approach to dealing with students with disabilities and finding funding for necessary accommodations

There were questions for Dean Olsen:

- describe faculty's research and creative activities (Professor Nickerson)
- traditional legal scholarship appears in student edited law journals; because of the interdisciplinary bent of many of the School's faculty, the majority of their publications appear in peer edited journals (Dean Olsen)
- School is to be congratulated on its innovative schedule and curriculum; difficult to accomplish without control of one's own space, class scheduling and calendar (Professor Fournier)
- harder but not impossible to work through central facilities for space; scheduling and calendar issues more difficult; would be glad to work with anyone who is interested in trying because the system offers great pedagogical advantages, enhances professional development for faculty and the students like it (Dean Olsen)

Item 5: Second reading of the Faculty Senate Computer Services Committee's recommendation on baseline IT support and computer access for faculty

The recommendation of the Computer Services Committee for a baseline of IT support and computer access was moved (seconded). Professor Peterson, Chair of the Committee, opened discussion of the recommendation by noting that a minority of the Committee questioned the need for a standard baseline of IT support for all full time faculty. The minority believed that a faculty member should only be provided with the support and access she would use.

There were comments from the floor:

- have not been persuaded that the University is responsible for providing faculty with computers; perhaps faculty should supply their own computers (Professor Malone)
- computers have been integrated into teaching; it would be analogous to say that faculty should buy their own phones and desks; other institutions that have integrated computers into teaching have first provided faculty with computer access and support before asking students to have computers (Professor Peterson)
- University considers computers to be vital to its mission; traditionally the University supplies faculty with vital supplies (Professor Schack)

The resolution passed unanimously.

Professor Peterson described other activities of the Committee. Chief Information Officer Innus spoke to the Committee about node funding, the Educational Technology Action Plan (ETAP), and how faculty communicate to the nodes. On the issue of support for multiple computer platforms, the CIO said that while philosophically he understands the benefits, realistically the movement is to standardization. The Committee has also looked at plans for a wireless campus, the implementation of Blackboard and expectations for faculty availability once it is operational, and the creation of an IT literacy plan for graduate students.

The Committee will be meeting with the Provost to discuss IT assessment plans.

There were comments from the floor:

- important that the Committee advocate for faculty interests with regard to multiple platforms; there are serious academic reasons for having multiple platforms and systems administration need to be strongly told that (Professor Schack)
- support outside the Committee for multiple platforms helps the Committee speak with more authority (Professor Peterson)
- are there plans for more technology equipped classrooms? (Professor Campbell)
- Committee is very concerned not only about the number, but also the size of e-tech classrooms; Vice Provost Pitman says that 4 new e-tech classrooms will be added; Committee wrote to Professor Zambon of the Classroom Quality Committee urging that there be a mix of large and small e-tech classrooms and that low tech facilities also be made available at need (Professor Peterson)

Item 6: First reading of the Faculty Senate Grading Committee's recommendation on the Fresh Start Policy

Professor Baumer, Chair of the Grading Committee, explained that the Fresh Start Policy adopted four years ago conflicts with other policies and needs revision. The Grading Committee feels that a total replacement for the original policy is necessary rather than just tinkering with the existing policy. The replacement policy provides for a total write off of previous work at UB, allowing a returning student to start de novo. Prior work remains on the student's transcript but is not used to satisfy any University requirement. A transfer student, by contrast, may count courses successfully completed at another institution and exclude unsuccessful courses.

A Fresh Start student like all other students may test out of courses, including courses taken in her first attempt. She may also seek a waiver of prerequisite courses that may be waived by permission of the instructor.

There were questions from the floor:

- may a student who drops out at the end of one Fall semester return under the Fresh Start Policy for the next Fall semester? how are incomplete F's treated under the Policy? (Professor Fournier)
- the Policy requires a full 12 months absence from the University, so a student who drops out at the end of one Fall semester could not return until the Spring semester of the following year; incomplete F's default to F under the Fresh Start Policy, notwithstanding the usual 15 month period allowed for completing the course, and are written off (Professor Baumer)
- very logical procedure (Professor Gentile)
- what compels a student to disclose having been a student at another institution since not disclosing allows them to have a clean transcript? (Professor Amsterdam)
- academic integrity (Professor Baumer)

- seems inconsistent to allow transfer students to bring courses from another institution in which they did well but exclude courses in which they did not do well while excluding all work for Fresh Start students (Professor Segal)
- it is inconsistent but cleaner; current Fresh Start Policy forces advisors to doctor the student's transcript (Professor Baumer)
- beyond the 12 month absence from the University what evidence is required to show that a student is ready for a fresh start? (Professor Faran)
- admission to the program is at the discretion of a committee, 2/3 of whose members must be approved by the FSEC; applicant may make three attempts to be granted Fresh Start status and may be granted Fresh Start status only once (Professor Baumer)
- consider bringing over a transfer student's entire set of grades from another institution rather than picking and choosing among her grades (Professor Segal)
- why is honorable military service evidence of being ready for a fresh start since there is no academic component to military service? (Professor Steiner)
- it is evidence that the student has successfully performed in a disciplined setting; often students fail because of a lack of self-discipline not a lack of innate intelligence (Professor Baumer)
- although I served in the Peace Corps, not the military, I am always happy for students with military experience because they have self-discipline (Professor Meacham)

Item 7: Report on the 127th Plenary Meeting of the SUNY Senate

Professor Adams-Volpe reported on the January 25-27 meeting of the SUNY Senate in New Paltz. She highligh