

## **FACULTY SENATE**

Minutes of December 10, 1997 - (approved)

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The Faculty Senate met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, December 10, 1997 in Talbert Hall 107 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of November 12, 1997](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Resolution on the New Paltz Issue](#)
4. [Update on the Faculty Promotions Checklist](#)
5. [Remarks of the Provost](#)
6. [Report of the President](#)
- 7 [Report on Distance Learning at UB](#)

### **Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of November 12, 1997**

With the correction of a word in Item 7, the Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of November 12, 1997 were approved.

### **Item 2: Report of the Chair**

The Provost held an open meeting with the deans on Monday (December 1), at which Professor Nickerson raised the issue of the Deans' lack of attendance at Senate meetings, as well as the broader issue of how deans wish to interact with the Senate. In the spirit of collegiality, the deans were included as *ex officio* members of the Faculty Senate when the Bylaws were revised. It was suggested that specific deans be invited when the items under discussion directly affect their faculty.

At the same meeting, Senior Vice-Provost Levy discussed participation in the honorary degree process, and encouraged the deans to use their own administrative/governance structure to engage the faculty in the process in securing nominations and in filling the five slots available for academic convocations.

Also at the meeting, Vice-Provost Goodman reported on enrollment and various initiatives, noting that we need to use methods similar to those employed last Spring, involving the departments and faculty, to reach out to students in the hope of improving the retention rate. To improve yield enhancement, the deans will send a letter to accepted students who may be interested in their areas. The Chair planned to encourage the Admission and Retention Committee to meet with Professor Goodman to discuss these issues.

The Secretary announced that four faculty have accepted nominations for the election of a SUNY Senator to replace Professor Jameson, whose term expires after this semester. However, no nominations have been submitted for a successor to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate.

The Chair announced a SUNYSAT conference this Friday (in Clemens 120) on the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), arranged by the University Faculty Senate. He also announced the "Time Tracks Campus Calendar", a series of glass-case bulletin boards, in which announcements of various events will be posted.

### **Item 3: Resolution on the New Paltz Issue**

Professor Boot, Chair of the Academic Freedom Committee, presented the resolution circulated prior to the meeting. He noted that the Chancellor had appointed a Special Assistant to the President for Campus Relations to file a report on the issue, one which is "in line" with the sentiment expressed in the resolution. Professor Boot advised that we wait until the Chancellor reads the report and releases an official statement, and then --- if necessary --- allow a committee to respond in the name of the Senate.

Professors Welch and Swartz had misgivings about delegating the responsibility of the Senate to "an unnamed group during a period when many people are not physically on campus"; instead, the group should report to the Senate, as is appropriate for questions of academic responsibility and freedom.

The Senate agreed to postpone action on the resolution.

Professor Boot then reminded the Senate of the Committee's attempt to formulate a code of academic ethics banning sexual relations between faculty and students. Although it proved unsuccessful, he warned that "the issue will not die", and related that Yale University had recently passed a similar resolution. He intended to resurrect the issue for Senate consideration early in the Winter 1998 semester, and welcomed suggestions. Professor Swartz advised the Committee to provide a supplementary report which is informative and which would aid the Senate in its deliberations on the issue.

#### **Item 4: Update on the Faculty Promotions Checklist**

Professor Acara, Chair of the Faculty Tenure and Privileges Committee (FTPC), presented a draft of the *Checklist for Promotion Dossier* revised by Vice-Provosts Levy and Fischer, as well as a summary of recommendations by the FTPC. Most controversial was Item 5, because its proposed revision included the requirement that external reviewers evaluate the candidate's teaching portfolio; the Committee felt that external reviewers were often not the most capable to evaluate a candidate's teaching, and proposed changes to make this optional. The FTPC also proposed reducing the number of the candidate's statements to one, in which he/she can address his/her contributions to the three categories of research, teaching, and service. Finally, the FTPC suggested that individual units develop their own, discipline-specific criteria for teaching portfolios.

Although he recognized the initiative to act with dispatch, Professor Swartz expressed the following concerns:

- A teaching portfolio is an unfamiliar notion to many of the academic units, and needs to be "spelled out" in greater detail.
- The portfolio may have "no close connection with the quality of teaching".
- Given the fact that we compare ourselves with peer institutions, it would be helpful to know what they are doing in this respect.
- The procedures of the President's Review Board (PRB) and external reviewers have become "increasingly bureaucratized", characterized by rigidity and a concentration of form over substance. Furthermore, it is becoming more and more difficult to find

distinguished external reviewers to examine a candidate's portfolio; adding a teaching portfolio would be "an invitation to some kind of routine response".

- Current procedures already allow for an external reviewer to comment on a candidate's teaching, if they have knowledge of this; although units should be free to solicit reviewers' opinions on teaching, there is no need to require it.

Professor Welch pointed out that the issue has been under discussion for two years already, and commended the Committee for developing a checklist superior to the one which already exists. He added that teaching portfolios are known, and are used at a wide variety of institutions. Persons preparing for tenure, he argued, should have the "fullest opportunity to express their concerns and talents". As former Chair of the PRB, he appreciated the value of giving the candidate the chance to speak as an individual on the interrelationships among his/her research, teaching, and public service, thus providing the PRB with "a coherence of understanding and prospect for future development".

Professor Benenson reminded his colleagues that the proposed checklist does include information on a teaching portfolio; furthermore, it is intended to be discipline-specific, allowing different units to develop separate ideas of what they consider good teaching. It is also clear that not all reviewers will be asked or expected to evaluate a candidate's teaching. The recommendations are thus flexible enough to enable a complete and fair review.

Professor Cowen asked for clarification of the phrase "permission to review" in Item 5, and it was agreed that the phrase be reworded to read "permission to review *their letters*". He also argued that a teaching portfolio does not necessarily relate to a candidate's teaching ability; although student evaluations are valuable, all other "static" items --- such as handouts, notes, quizzes, tests --- he considered worthless.

Professor Churchill objected to the inclusion of letters from current students, since this seems to present a conflict of interests.

Professor Frisch, speaking as Chair of the Public Service Committee, considered the document a "constructive step forward" in ensuring that candidates who work in unconventional ways can present a legible centrality of their work. One problem of the traditional tripartite system of "bean-counting" is that "often, a lot gets lost in the shuffle".

In response to Professor Cowen, he countered that he found materials such as course syllabi and exams very instructive in evaluating a candidate. Professor Cowen agreed, but replied that it might be more difficult to see how this would play out in the more scientific disciplines; he objected to the fact that the teaching portfolio is not an option, but a requirement.

Professor Schroeder said it is "not a good idea to let people opt out of documenting their teaching in some way". Professor Cowen responded that he has seen the syllabi and exams of both good and bad teachers in mathematics, and could not tell the difference; thus these materials should be optional and discipline-specific. If a teaching portfolio proves to be non-indicative, it is simply an additional, useless burden for both the candidate and the reviewers.

Professor Harwitz pointed out that there are two issues under discussion: First, whether we know if these portfolios measure anything, and secondly, assuming they do present measurable information, we would need to calibrate this information, since it would otherwise tell us nothing. So far, nothing the Committee has presented has indicated that the proposed checklist will provide any reliable information.

Professor Welch moved to adopt the report; Professor Benenson seconded the motion. Professor Malone reminded the Senate that a motion to adopt a report implied adopting everything in the report, without exception; thus any changes must be approved prior to adoption.

It was suggested that the motion be amended to make inclusion of the teaching portfolios voluntary. Professor Woodson argued against it, stressing the importance of consistency in evaluating candidates' dossiers. Vice-Provost Fischer noted that teaching is one of our major responsibilities, and agreed that it would be dangerous to make the portfolio optional; for candidates whose primary activity is research, with little or no teaching, this would be duly noted by chairs and deans. He urged voting against the amendment, since "the natural responsibilities of the process will account for those exceptions".

The amendment failed to pass by a voice vote.

After a few minor revisions in wording and organization, the motion *"That the Faculty Senate adopt the report of the Committee on Tenure and Privileges, and urge that the proposed revisions in the checklist for promotions dossiers be incorporated into it as soon as possible"* carried, again by a voice vote.

#### **Item 5: Remarks of the Provost**

Provost Headrick thanked the Faculty Tenure & Privileges Committee for their work and approved of the changes in the promotion checklist, and felt we could "move forward in improving the amount of information about teaching in these dossiers". Without the inclusion of a teaching portfolio, we could not evaluate a very important aspect of a candidate's role at this University.

#### **Item 6: Report of the President**

President Greiner reported that he will follow up on the recommendations of the Affirmative Action Committee and establish a Task Force on Minorities early in 1998.

On the related issue of salary inequity, he noted that the recently adopted contract between the State of New York and the UUP provides "a somewhat complicated" process of salary adjustments over the next eighteen months, the end-result of which "will be a combination of both across-the-board and discretionary money". UB's first priority will be to examine, and finally resolve, salary inequities.

Professor Woodson thought the President should be lauded for these actions, and the Senate responded with applause.

#### **Item 7: Report on Distance Learning at UB**

Professor Lopos, Dean of Millard Fillmore College (MFC), told the Senate that the Provost had asked MFC last July to assume "the role of a catalyst" in helping to bring distance

learning to market and in advocating it. Instead of the accepted term "distance learning", he preferred to refer to it as "accesslearning", since "the real issue is not distance --- it's access". Access to the University, its resources, its faculty, and access for the University to its various publics can clearly make UB "far more than a regional, a State, or even a national institution; it clearly can make it an international institution". One of the challenges we face is making learning truly accessible to all, lest we exacerbate the differences between the haves and the have-nots.

MFC will act as the standard-bearer for access learning at UB; members will meet with representatives of the various nodes at UB to discuss the issues of logistics, administration, marketing, and to some degree, development. MFC will also develop, as charged, a faculty-centered Distance Learning Advisory Committee, composed primarily of faculty. The Committee's function, although not spelled out yet in detail, will be to guide future strategic investment and development of policies relating to distance learning at UB.

Among recent developments, he included the SUNY Learning Network, "a creature of SUNY and of the Sloan Foundation", which provides the opportunity for community colleges, four-year colleges and universities to develop a set of offerings through asynchronous learning networks (ALNs) via computers. The Network can also provide some development monies, technical support, and the use of a laptop to faculty who develop courses through this program.

He reminded the Senate that access learning is not just high-tech computers and asynchronous learning networks; it takes on many "low-tech" forms as well, such as video courses, which have been and are being offered in conjunction with PBS over local cable, "turning the living room into a learning room". Also in planning is live, synchronous, two-way video instruction accessing all of Western New York, known as "Project Connect". What we do with the technology depends to a large extent on the faculty; and the issues surrounding access learning --- such as quality of instruction, measures of quality, approval of courses --- are essentially the same which apply to any type of instruction. Furthermore,

transcripts will not discriminate between "regular" classroom courses and those taken through access learning.

Professor Wooldridge inquired into the status of efforts in synchronous distance learning (SDL) in various departments. Dean Lopos mentioned the SDL ("video-") classroom in Abbott Hall, as well as the facility in Baldy Hall which is part of Project Connect. MFC is trying to re-invigorate video-teaching, something that has been underutilized at UB. He pointed out that we can use this and other technologies not only for instruction, but also for public service. He also urged the faculty not to think in exclusive terms, but rather in terms of hybrids of teaching forms, including traditional lectures, video, computers and the World Wide Web.

To Professor Baier's question about its implications for continuing professional education, Dean Lopos replied that Access Learning offered a rich opportunity for this; in addition, continuing education via distance learning is nothing new to the accrediting agencies. Nevertheless, he warned that it is a very competitive area, and that we no longer have a "geographical franchise" when it comes to distance learning.

Professor Lawler wondered about the future of classroom instructors, who are rightfully concerned about their jobs, about "being phased out more or less rapidly" by distance learning. Dean Lopos remarked that he could not really answer these questions, noting that, ultimately, the key is ultimately the quality of education we provide. The students, as consumers, will decide.

Professor Lopos did not regard distance learning as a replacement for faculty, and cited examples of misguided teaching through technology, such as instructional television. Both faculty and administrators have become very sensitive to, and demanding of, quality in technologically aided instruction. It is the faculty's responsibility, he added, to be vigilant in this respect.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Secretary of the Faculty Senate

**PRESENT:**

**University Officers:** W. R. Greiner, T. Headrick, K. Levy, W. Fischer

**Faculty Senate Officers:** P. Nickerson, R. Hoeing

**Arts & Letters:** M. Frisch, M.-E Gutiérrez, J. Ludwig

**Dental Medicine:** A. Aguirre, R. Baier, E. Davis

**Educational Studies:** L. Klenk, B. Johnstone, L. Malave, T. Schroeder, L. Yang

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** D. Benenson, W. George, M. Ryan, R. Sridhar

**Health-Related Professions:** L. E. Gosselin, J. Tamburlin

**Information & Library Studies:** G. D'Elia

**Law:** L. Swartz

**Management:** J. Boot, J. Newman, C. Pegels, R. Ramesh

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** M. Acara, B. Albini, D. Amsterdam, B. Noble,

S. Rudin, M. Spaulding, A. Vladutiu

**Natural Sciences & Mathematics:** P. Calkin, M. Churchill, M. Cowen, J. Faran, M. Ram, K.

Regan

**Nursing:** P. Wooldridge

**Pharmacy:** N. , R. Madejski

**Social Sciences:** G. Beck, J. Charles-Luce, V. Ebert, P. Hare, M. Harwitz, J. Lawler, P. Luce,

B. Smith

**SUNY Senators:** J. Fisher, D. Malone, C. Welch

**University Libraries:** J. Adams, C. Densmore, W. Hepfer, M. Kramer, D. Woodson

**Dean, Millard Fillmore College:** G. Lopos

**School of Education:** E. Bromley

**Professional Staff Senate:** M. Stokes

EXCUSED:

**Arts & Letters:** L. Chisholm, V. Doyno

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** W. Flynn, A. Saltzman

**Nursing:** M. Marecki

**Social Sciences:** C. Sellers

ABSENT:

**Architecture:** M. Hadighi

**Arts & Letters:** B. Bono, A. Efron, N. Grant, M. Hyde, R. Mennen, J. Rickard

**Dental Medicine:** R. Hall

**Engineering & Applied Sciences:** C. Bloebaum, S. Mohan

**Health-Related Professions:** S. Nochajski

**Medicine & Biomedical Sciences:** M. Alashari, R. Batt, E. Fine, S. Gallagher, S. Greenberg, R. Heffner,

C. Leach, R. Perez, F. Schimpfhauser, H. Schuel, C. Smith, J. Sulewski, A. Wakhlo, B. Willer

**Natural Sciences & Mathematics:** J. Berry, S. Bruckenstein, C. Fournier, S. Schack

**Nursing:** M. Johnson

**Social Sciences:** D. Banks, H. Calkins, J. Meacham

**SUNY Senators:** M. Jameson