

FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of October 8, 1997 - (approved)

E-MAIL: ZBFACSEN@ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

The Faculty Senate met at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, October 8, 1997 in Talbert Hall 107 to consider the following agenda:

1. [Approval of the Minutes of April 29, May 13, and June 17, 1997](#)
2. [Report of the Chair](#)
3. [Expedited Resolution on the SUNY Press](#)
4. [Report of the Provost](#)
5. [Report of the Budget Priorities Committee](#)
6. [Report on the Budget \(Senior Vice-President Wagner\)](#)
7. [Report of the BPC Subcommittee on National Indices of Academic Reputation](#)
8. [New Business](#)

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of April 29, May 13, and June 17, 1997

The Minutes of the Faculty Senate meetings of April 29, May 13, and June 17, 1997 were approved.

Item 2: Report of the Chair

Professor Nickerson welcomed the senators to the first meeting of the 1997-98 academic year. In the interest of extending and improving communication, he asked them to submit their preferred e-mail addresses in order to set up an electronic discussion list, similar to one already in use for the FSEC. He also requested that they designate alternates who could attend the Senate meetings in their absence. He said he would conduct the meetings as efficiently as possible, and would consider cancelling any meeting lacking substantive issues for discussion.

Among his activities since taking office as Chair, he reported the following:

Giving a presentation on faculty governance at an orientation for new faculty, organized by

Vice-Provost Fischer;

Meeting (along with Professor Welch) with Mr. Louis Howard, who was recently confirmed by the New York State Senate as a member of the SUNY Board of Trustees;

Participating in a new interview format for The Reporter;

Attending the UB Council meeting;

Attending the first of a series of Deans' Luncheons with the Provost;

Delivering a presentation at a moderated roundtable discussion on the prospects for child care on the North Campus;

Moderating the meeting of the Voting Faculty;

Attending a commemorative dinner on the Silver Anniversary for the Professional Staff Senate;

Participating in a forum for campus governance leaders, sponsored by the SUNY Faculty Senate.

After reporting briefly on the first four FSEC meetings of 1997-98 (Minutes of which are available on UB WINGS), he reminded the Senate of the University Convocation on October 15, and urged them to attend.

Item 3: Expedited Resolution on the SUNY Press

The Chair, noting the need for timely action, asked the Senate to suspend the usual rules of First and Second Readings in order to expedite discussion and approval of the resolution under consideration; the motion was made and approved.

Professor Sussman presented a brief history of the SUNY Press, stressing its openness to a wide variety of authors, subjects, and points of view. As a member of its editorial board, he was proud that, despite little State subvention (about \$250,000), the Press publishes and sells over \$6 million worth of books per year.

There is now genuine concern that there is a concerted effort to change the mission of the SUNY Press, to politicize its operations, and to tamper with its intellectual integrity and independence. Anecdotal evidence (stemming from various meetings) includes comments from a senior administration official about the dissolution of the editorial board, suspension of procedures, and ideas of altering the publishing policy toward a more conservative bias.

Professor Sussman appealed to the Senate to approve the resolution, which calls for an open search for a Press Director and the continued governance of the Press by an Editorial Board composed of scholars chosen from SUNY campuses.

Professor Hare voiced support for the resolution, noting that the SUNY Press has a philosophy publication list which is "the richest in academic presses, period". Professor Benenson, also impressed by its quality, likewise urged the Senate to support it. Professor Welch noted that a phrase in the text, "without benefit of financial subsidy from the state or the SUNY system", contradicted an earlier statement by Professor Sussman. Professor Faran moved to amend the statement to read "without significant benefit...", and the motion was approved. Professor Frisch pointed out that the real issue is not to endorse everything about the Press, but rather to voice our concerns over attempts to by-pass faculty and peer review governance procedures, which should neither be ignored nor interefered with.

The Senate approved the resolution unanimously.

Item 4: Report of the Provost

The Provost, who is working on the second draft of the planning document, mentioned first that he will not have a final plan or blueprint that will specify in great detail what will happen. Instead, there will be a series of decisions which will shape the direciton of hte University; some "clear choices" will be made at all levels, and only later might one see, looking , an overall plan which emerged from these decisions. He described the planning process as "an evolving process".

The present academic year will see intense effort among the academic units in working out what their futures will be; they must forge long-term plans, and not short-term adjustments to particular conditions. The units "cannot engage in the replication of the past", but must come to grips with their missions and how they fit in with the mission of the University.

Contrary to what some may fear or expect, "this Provost will not do it to or for any academic unit; the units must do it for themselves"; they must fomrulate their plans in "a context of financial and academic reality" --- establishing priorities, deciding how best to manage the resources they have, and doing things which demonstrate their commitment to innovation and creativity in what they do.

The Provost said he would demand from each unit four things:

Focus on important issues;

Good analysis supported by sound information and data;

Honest treatment of strengths and weaknesses;

Clear communication and explanation of their plans for wide dissemination.

He would not substitute his judgment for each unit's expertise; but he will ensure that its expertise has led to sound judgments, consistent with the goals and responsibilities of the academic unit and with those of the University as a whole.

What has been accomplished to this point? First, we are on the way to creating a College of Arts & Sciences --- "not one to recapture the past, but one designed for the current and future climate and environment of higher education". He thanked the Faculty Senate for its support for moving in this direction. Secondly, he is in the process of assembling a committee to examine the establishment of a collective policy for all proposed interdisciplinary structures, since there is a clear need to review past efforts and to establish appropriate guidelines.

Third, Provost Headrick will "push very hard" in getting units to bring their academic plans to the "advanced" stage; currently, only about one-third of them have achieved this.

In this context, he mentioned that the President did not want any unit to make a tenure-track appointment unless there were a clear plan in place. The Provost himself is reluctant to embrace this policy as a hard and fast rule, but added that it will be a strong operating assumption; a case must be made that there is a clear need, "no matter what plan emerges from that unit".

He added that the University must improve the basic academic information that we have, and must develop performance measures that are tailored to each unit; to this end, he has created an Office of Academic Information and Planning, and is folding into this the Office of Institutional Analysis.

Professor Schuel asked whether any task force has examined a proposed reorganization of the biological and medical sciences, and if so, when will the faculty be involved. The Provost replied that a task force did prepare a report on this, and that there have been discussions with various departments. Because there are several proposals, each with its own problems,

the issue has not yet been resolved. He added that UB does not receive recognition for its schools of Medicine and Biological Sciences commensurate with the level of its investment of resources in these units.

Professor Baier remarked that, for the most successful interdisciplinary structures --- organized research units --- , the key to their original definition was that they had to cross decanal boundaries; "but as administration came to bear on these, it became a provostal decision that they all report through a single dean". This reduced them to "less than interdisciplinary" centers. He wondered if the plan would correct this, particularly as it would apply to promotion procedures for junior faculty. Provost Headrick responded that he is concerned about these issues, and that it certainly was not his intent that young faculty would be foreclosed from being properly evaluated; one of his committees must investigate the set of reporting relationships.

Professor Schack wanted to know if the units' plans are, in the end, those prepared by deans, chairs, or the departments themselves. The Provost said he expected all to be involved, beginning at the departmental level; if a chair did not have the support of the majority of the faculty in the department, this problem must be first resolved.

Reminding the Faculty Senate of its clearly stated responsibility to deliberate, prior to adoption, all plans affecting the reorganization of the University, Professor Benenson urged his colleagues to develop a process which would enable them to fulfill this responsibility in a rational and careful manner, to be pro-active so that they would not lag behind, trying to catch up with something already well in progress.

Professor Adams asked about the delineation of responsibilities for Information Technology between Vice-Provost Sullivan and Vice-President Innus. The Provost said that the delineation, to some extent, grows out of the allocation of resources. Although there are clearly areas where the two must work together, Vice-Provost Sullivan has been and will continue to be responsible for the distribution of monies and of education technology nodes within the academic action plan.

Item 5: Report of the Budget Priorities Committee

Professor Gates, Chair of the Budget Priorities Committee (BPC), began his report with the thesis that the faculty "need to know more and do more about the budget"; in particular, the faculty must be entrepreneurial, which is to say: creative, flexible, hard-working, and results-oriented.

He then summarized three categories of action for the BPC under the rubrics Collaboration, Communications, and Committees:

Collaboration

The BPC, Professor Gates reported, has consistently supported all efforts of finding new ways to generate revenue or save money, and has not supported efforts to keep budget policy and resource allocations under wraps. The BPC is examining new aspects of the budget decentralization process, begun several years ago, including:

the buyout of most of the IFR tax;

a proposal to consolidate on-campus business functions;

a reorganization of the Research Foundation in order to achieve some efficiencies;

the development of several information systems.

His measure of these activities is the extent to which they "help faculty contribute to the educational, research, and public service missions of the University". Although decentralization has allowed campus administrators increasing autonomy and flexibility, as well as their capacity to shape educational policy, its merits have yet to be assessed --- "the jury is still out". For this reason, Professor Gates has constantly attempted to place the BPC's involvement ahead of those points at which policy decisions are made: "We want to collaborate with the work, rather than respond to the report".

Rather than resting content with abstract evaluations of all activities associated with the implementation of the Provost's academic plan --- such as the development of academic accounting and information systems, All Funds Budgeting, Responsibility-Centered Management, and several others ---the BPC continues "to push for results-oriented definition within these systems".

Communication

To support faculty involvement with the Budget, Professors Gates and Seitz are working on an introduction to UB's budget, with an emphasis on budget processes in all funds at the unit level. The intent is for the faculty to realize their stake in the maximization not only of efficiency, but also of revenue possibilities. In addition, they will develop a page in the Faculty Senate web site for information bulletins, agenda items, reports of BPC activities, and requests for input.

Committees

Professor Gates had originally planned to assign subcommittees to "specialize in some aspect of our budget processes"; the members of the BPC, however, "proved to be interested in all of it". As a result, he intends to provide them with a menu of topics on which to react, and will attempt to make the holistic approach work.

In conclusion, he viewed the academic department or service unit as the place to find the most active and specific examples of All-Funds Budgeting, as well as creative ways to support the plans and actions of the faculty, staff, and students. He believed we should take advantage of this for the institution, and serve as incubators, rather than as clients of central administration. "This kind of end-run on the entrepreneurship and information-system problems, coupled with the further development of the Incentives and Resource Allocation proposal, will more quickly make the infrastructure changes we need to make our results better".

Item 6: Report on the Budget

Senior Vice-President Wagner quickly summarized the main points of the Budget: Restoration, no base-level reduction, and no tuition increase. UB's internal campus financial plan, however, required balancing which involved (1) increasing the savings factor by \$3 million, and (2) liquidating \$2 million of "quasi-endowment" (\$1 million restricted, \$1 million unrestricted) in order to meet program needs and help balance the financial plan. With increased flexibility, UB now has the opportunity to carry forward the resources from one fiscal year to the next, known as a "stabilization fund". In addition, the Vice-President's

office must find some way of managing expenditures of revenues reduced by a shortfall in enrollment.

Professor Baier asked, if some group were to re-open the South Campus radiation facility as a research, educational, and monetary enterprise to irradiate medical devices and food, how the University would distribute any generated revenue. Vice-President Wagner responded that it could be handled through any number of processes; any campus-generated revenue would stay here. The Provost added that, were the enterprise to lease University land/property, this would complicate the problem somewhat in the State legislature. Vice-President Wagner said we would have two options: (1) Submitting to the Trustees the proposal of leasing University property, or (2) entering into a contract with the entrepreneur. Although not simple, it can be done.

One resource we have not maximally utilized, Professor Ram noted, is Continuing Education. Since we have the facilities and the people necessary, he suggested we mount a serious effort to utilize these in summer and at night. The Vice-President commented that in the past, UB had an allocation to operate Summer sessions, but there was no incentive because the campus was not allowed to keep the revenue generated; to help correct this problem, the business officers proposed five years ago that we move Summer Sessions to an IFR, thus giving the campus the opportunity to keep some of the revenue. Provost Headrick thought the campus should eventually operate "from 8 AM until 10 PM", throughout the year, since the distinction between day and night students is disappearing; students take courses to fit their schedules. He believed we could attract new groups of students to the Summer Sessions, partly by making Millard Fillmore College (MFC) the experimental arm of the University.

Professor George added that, if we wished to be a great State University, we needed (1) a Law School, in order to populate the State legislature, (2) a Division I football team, and (3) a Continuing Education Center, through which we could "have the attention and the love of the community for what we deliver to them".

Professor Cowen remarked that MFC and summer school programs at other campuses were more attractive because standards are often lower and classes consequently easier; since

students run for the bargains of easier grades and courses which they can transfer to UB, it is no surprize that our summer enrollments are down.

Item 7: Report of the BPC Subcommittee on National Indices of Academic Reputation

Professor Hamlen and her subcommittee had examined the NRC and Stony Brook productivity rankings, since these appeared to be heavily used in evaluating programs and setting goals, and because there was some indicatiopn that they might be used in determining future resource allocation decisions. (A report summarizing their conclusions had been distributed prior to the meeting.)

She explained that the NRC rankings are reputational rankings, characterized by (1) scholarly quality of program faculty and (2) effectiveness in educating research scholars and scientists, both of which are (allegedly) highly correlated. At least 100 faculty raters judge each program. She noted that the NRC is well aware of the limitations of its rankings, as indicated by the caveats included in the report; also, the NRC points out that the rankings focus only on doctoral education. In addition to problems of accuracy of the data underlying the rankings, reputation is correlated with the size of a university; and although there is much agreement among the raters about institutions in the top and bottom quartiles, rankings of universities in the middle quartiles can be very unreliable.

The Stony Brook rankings, developed by Lawrence Martin, Dean of the Graduate School at Stony Brook, are based on NRC descriptive statistics of four factors:

- percentage of faculty publishing;
- publications per faculty member;
- percentage of faculty with research support;
- number of citations per faculty member.

Each program is ranked on each factor, and then the rankings are averaged. The purpose of the system is to provide a ranking system on productivity comparable to the NRC rankings on reputation. Factors ae only included if they correlate with reputational rankings; if they do not correlate, they are thrown out. Martin plans to complete the ranking system by December.

The subcommittee concluded first that, since these rankings focus on doctoral education, they may not be appropriate for evaluating B.A. and M.A. programs. Secondly, flaws in the programs limit their effectiveness; nevertheless, they are influential, and to dismiss them would likely be construed as defensive behavior. Thus we should work to improve the rankings by providing accurate information and by working to improve performance in these rankings. UB must develop a system to monitor how well a program performs in terms of fulfilling its goals at this institution.

Having analyzed the Stony Brook productivity index for Mathematics programs, Professor Schack remarked that one should expect an accuracy ranking, or correlation, with the NRC of roughly 95%; he found that it had one below 67%. Furthermore, the Stony Brook index ranked Clarkson and Southern Methodist University in the first quartile, which Professor Schack called "absurd", and Yale and the University of Chicago in the third quartile, which he called "worse than absurd".

One could easily find the factors which produced such ridiculous conclusions, he continued. The computation method allowed, for one ranking category, a raw score gap between programs ranking I and II was eleven times that between the programs ranking II and III. "Let me translate it: You just gave an exam. Your top student got a 99, your second student got a 96, your third student got a 63, and you regard your second student as being as fully as comparable to the first as to the third. Idiotic. This happens all over the indices."

Secondly, the rankings are averaged straight away, as if the figures were independent, although they are "anything but".

Third, tremendous inaccuracies in the data, which have significant impact on the raw scores, render them unreliable. To achieve a higher core in the rankings in a given category, such as number of faculty publishing, a department need only omit a judiciously chosen portion of the faculty. Similar flaws apply to the category of faculty citations.

If UB wishes to demonstrate academic leadership in individual departments as well as institutionally, he concluded, it should recognize which indices are meaningful and have predictive power, and which ones do not.

Professor Bono, as President of the Phi Beta Kappa chapter of Western New York, wondered whether the "larger UB" would have as easily gained chapter recognition as it did years ago

when it was simply a local University at Buffalo. She reminded the Senate of our undergraduate and liberal arts mission, and hoped that we could work this into our program assessment. She also suggested that some of our own productivity criteria as a research institution should not just reflect our careers and our productivity, but also our recruitment and placement of high-quality graduate students.

Professor Malone pointed out that the Stony Brook index simply averages numbers without regard to sample sizes, which he termed "a sophomoric statistical blunder". He reminded the Provost that the Academic Planning Committee stated three years ago that it could not do much without valid measurement criteria with which to evaluate programs, and that it was a matter of some urgency. He wondered who would develop these criteria, as well as how and when.

Provost Headrick replied that the problems with evaluations in the past were that they were intermittent, unsystematic, and involved bringing in outside evaluators --- usually favorably disposed toward the unit they were to evaluate --- who did not write any standardized report. Instead, we should develop an accurate measuring system to be used on a regular basis, performance measures which measure each program against its stated goals. This would provide us with a basis for countering other, improper ratings. Developing these measures is a top priority of his office this academic year. The NRC ratings are flawed, he admitted, "but people use them. And when people use [this rating system], it will have an impact on us" in terms of applications and how we are regarded by other institutions. We cannot ignore them, but we can counter with our own, more accurate, data.

Professor George noted that although it is important to understand the shortcomings of these ranking systems, we should perhaps be "more creative in the presentation of our data", as are the more highly ranked institutions.

Professor Hadighi brought to the Senate's attention the fact that certain fields of study are not measured in publications or citations, but rather in exhibitions and competitions, which do not enter into these rating/ranking systems.

Picking up on the last few comments, Professor Gates urged senators to submit their observations to the Provost's web page on criteria for Incentives and Resource Allocation.

Professor Wooldridge commented that the indices evaluate the faculty, rather than the

product of a given doctoral program; in his view, any attempt to evaluate the quality of a doctoral program that does not take into account truly reputable assessments of our doctoral dissertations is "inherently so flawed as to be almost useless". How we improve our reputation in the existing indices, and how we evaluate the true quality of a program, are essentially separate issues --- both need to be addressed.

Professor Newman suggested that, if we wish to further this debate, we ought to consult the extensive research on performance management.

Item 8: New Business

Professor Welch asked about the status of Senate resolutions passed last year which are still awaiting action; Professor Nickerson replied that he would provide updates at the next Senate meeting.

Professor Adams, Senate Representative on the Alcohol Review Board, announced that John Grela and the Chair of the Board, Madison Boyce, worked over the spring and summer with Main Street bar owners to try to stop advertising and offering binge-drinking parties, and reported that they were successful in this effort. Given the recent nation-wide attention to a drinking-related death, she wished to make this publicly known and commended the Board, and especially Grela and Boyce, for their effort and success, since we owe them some public gratitude.

Professor Schack, noting the irony of the many messages he receives from administration, on 100% bond white paper, requesting him to use recycled paper as much as possible, asked the Chair to use his good offices to request more consistency in this matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing,
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

PRESENT:

University Officers: R. Wagner, T. Headrick

Faculty Senate Officers: P. Nickerson, R. Hoeing

Architecture: M. Hadighi

Arts & Letters: B. Bono, L. Chisholm, V. Doyno, M. Frisch, M.-E Gutiérrez, M. Hyde, J. Ludwig, J. Rickard

Dental Medicine: R. Baier, M. Easley, G. Ferry, R. Hall

Educational Studies: L. Klenk, L. Malave, T. Schroeder, L. Yang

Engineering & Applied Sciences: D. Benenson, W. George, S. Mohan, R. Sridhar

Health-Related Professions: S. Nochajski, J. Tamburlin

Information & Library Studies: G. D'Elia

Law: L. Swartz

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

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: M. Acara, M. Alashari, B. Albini, R. Batt, E. Fine, W. Flynn, S. Gallagher,

C. Leach, B. Noble, S. Rudin, A. Saltzman, H. Schuel, M. Spaulding, A. Vladutiu, A. Wakhlo

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: J. Berry, S. Bruckenstein, M. Cowen, J. Faran, M. Ram, K. Regan, S. Schack

Nursing: M. Johnson, M. Marecki, P. Wooldridge

Pharmacy: N.

Social Sciences: D. Banks, G. Beck, J. Charles-Luce, V. Ebert, P. Hare, J. Meacham

SUNY Senators: J. Fisher, M. Jameson, D. Malone, C. Welch

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

Guests:

H. Sussman, Associate Dean of Arts & Letters

Faculty Senate Budget Priorities Committee:

T. Gates, Chair

S. Hamlen

S. Schack

EXCUSED:

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: D. Amsterdam

ABSENT:

Architecture: S. Wallace

Arts & Letters: A. Efron, N. Grant, R. Mennen

Dental Medicine: A. Aguirre

Educational Studies: B. Johnstone

Engineering & Applied Sciences: C. Bloebaum, M. Ryan

Health-Related Professions: L. Gosselin

Law: I. Marcus

Management: J. Boot

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences: S. Greenberg, R. Heffner, R. Perez, F. Schimpfhauser, C.

Smith, J. Sulewski,

B. Willer

Natural Sciences & Mathematics: P. Calkin, M. Churchill, C. Fournier

Pharmacy: R. Madejski

Social Sciences: C. Sellers

University Libraries: D. Woodson