

FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of April 30, 1996 - (approved)

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The meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order at 2:00 PM in Room 100, The Commons, to consider the following agenda:

1. [Report of the Chair](#)
2. [Approval of the Minutes](#)
3. [Report of the President](#)
4. [Appreciation for Carol Ann Sellers](#)
5. [Faculty Productivity](#)
6. [Resolution on Support of University Libraries](#)
7. [Resolution on Privacy in Electronic Communication](#)
8. [Resolution on Academic Good Standing](#)

Item 1: Report of the Chair

Professor Welch briefly reviewed the Senate activities during the past year. Many of the eighteen Senate standing committees had submitted reports in writing, which had been distributed prior to the meeting. The Chair thanked the committee chairs, the senators, and Professor Carol Sellers, serving the Senate as Secretary one final time.

The Chair first mentioned the revised Bylaws of the Voting Faculty and Charter of the Faculty Senate, now fully in effect; the revisions included non-voting, ex officio Senate membership of the academic deans. Secondly, he applauded the co-operation of senior administration officials with respect to Senate resolutions. Most proposed changes to University policy had been adopted rapidly; in areas of disagreement, there has

nevertheless been much dialogue to resolve these conflicts. The Chair expressed hope and optimism in further advancing the faculty's role in budget priorities of the various units, and in sharing information about these budgets. Thirdly, the Senate had discussed many broad institutional issues, such as the future of SUNY and faculty productivity.

Among the areas of concern, Professor Welch noted the "sense of uncertainty as to what our directions are" -- the uncertainty of the budget, the roles of the different campuses, retention of faculty, insuring faculty quality, and so on. Secondly, much of what is referred to as "academic planning" has been put on hold; academic planning requires information and understanding, and we need to know what decisions will be made, by whom, when, and most importantly, with what degree of faculty input. Thirdly, the reduction in the budget has endangered certain academic programs. Finally, the Chair was extremely troubled by the apparent "vacuum" in SUNY Central and rights between the SUNY administration, the governor, and the Trustees. He reminded the Senate of a Greek saying that "the fish rots from the head down"; without effective, understanding, sympathetic central leadership, it becomes increasingly difficult for the several campuses to fulfill their missions.

He then listed issues for the Senate to consider the following academic year:

- the re-apportionment of the Senate, normally conducted every five years, due to the inclusion of large number of Geographic Full-Time faculty members in the Voting Faculty and their representation in the Faculty Senate;
- the "acute disjuncture" between the direct responsibilities of the Senate and the actual concerns of the Senators themselves, particularly in curricular matters and in issues of governance;
- a more timely execution of elections to the Senate;
- Senate-internal matters, particularly the new complaint procedure included in the revised Standing Orders;
- faculty productivity;
- important policy matters, including conflicts of interest, budget priorities, criteria for promotion to the rank of Full Professor, and internships for undergraduate students.

The Chair then welcomed questions and comments.

Professor Jameson asked whether the re-apportionment of the Senate would be delayed, and if so, on what basis. The Chair replied that the Elections Committee must first compile a full, confirmed list of the Voting Faculty before re-apportionment could take place. Professor Ebert urged the Senate to allow credit for undergraduate internships only on a pass/fail basis.

Item 2: Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting from March 1996, with minor editorial corrections, were approved unanimously.

Item 3: Report of the President

President Greiner informed the Senate that there was "an unsafe crowd" over in Capen Hall, one which seemed to have gotten out of control and now lacked any leadership. He announced plans to have an open discussion with the students in the Student Union the next day. He interpreted the student unrest as a barometer of concern, and added that their concern arises from what they read in the press and hear on the street, both being incomplete sources of information. President Greiner explained that his position on "this kind of behavior" was primarily seeing to it that no one gets hurt, and not allowing any kind of uncivil behavior. He mentioned that although he was perfectly willing to converse with the students, he could not because of the jeers and epithets being screamed at him; only through reasonable and civil discussion could issues be raised and real communication take place.

Item 4: Appreciation for Carol Ann Sellers

The President then presented Professor Sellers with a plaque in honor of her service as Secretary of the Faculty Senate during the past two years.

Item 5: Faculty Productivity

Professor Johnstone reported on his meetings in Albany and in California with the university-wide faculty senates and academic unions concerning faculty productivity. He explained that the general public really does consider university faculty unproductive, and suggested several items in his report which the faculty must address, including evaluation, acknowledgement and dimensions of productivity, tenure, and differentiation of work-loads.

The floor was opened for questions and comments. Professor Swartz asked Professor Johnstone for his thoughts about a process for discussing this in the Senate. Professor Ebert believed the academic community in general suffered from a type of schizophrenia in that it considered itself sometimes exempt from criticism, which we are not; secondly, in referring to an item in the report, "public education must continue to become more productive even while it continues to improve", he strongly objected to the word "even", since we could do both simultaneously anyway. Professor Mattei asked what the next step would be, and suggested we would need to do something active to counter the public's image of the faculty. Professor Sulewski considered the document potentially dangerous in these trying times; in view of the reduced number of faculty and increasing numbers of students, she insisted that the faculty is indeed productive. She also objected to the possible re-evaluation of tenure after faculty have already gone through an exhaustive mechanism to achieve it. Professor Kuo, as a junior faculty member, expressed uncertainty and confusion over what exactly was expected for promotion, and asked for clarification in this matter. Professor Albini suggested we emphasize two principles in evaluating faculty -- peer review and the recognition that academic freedom, management, and higher education are sometimes difficult to correlate. The interference of management hampers faculty productivity. Professor Doyno noted that the SUNY makes little effort to explain its role to the public; he wondered what could be done to make the citizens understand and be proud of the university.

Professor Johnstone first addressed the question of process. Although he was not sure of the next step, he suggested as a start that we not bother about the language of the report, but rather concentrate on its content. He emphasized that it is a management document in

the sense that, if one really cares about what the "outside" thinks about SUNY, then we must address the items in the report.

Item 6: Resolution on Support of University Libraries

Professor Nickerson, on behalf of Professor Lee, chair of the University Libraries Committee, presented the resolution, unchanged after its first and second readings, to be voted on. He noted that in the most recent edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the UB library system was ranked 44th. Nickerson asked the Director of the University Libraries to respond to the question posed at the previous meeting concerning the budget allocations to the libraries.

Professor von Wahlde explained that the ranking was determined by five factors: the size of the collection, the staff size, the budget figure, the serial titles collected, and the volumes added in the year. Because of the decline in the budget, staff size, and number of serial titles, she projected that our score will probably drop a little next year. She added that she had remembered another question, namely, why librarians might want to train faculty in computer use. To the latter, she responded that a survey revealed that several faculty were not always technically competent at using computers and needed help as well as equipment; moreover, libraries and librarians have always instructed and taught in the identification, use, and evaluation of informational resources. To the first question, she replied that the libraries have reduced the acquisitions budget by \$385,000; with few exceptions, the cuts have been proportionately spread over all units.

No amendments were proposed, and the motion passed by voice vote.

Item 7: Resolution on Privacy in Electronic Communication

The resolution on privacy in electronic communications, which was moved and seconded at the previous meeting, was presented for discussion. Provost Headrick related that UB has been threatened with a libel suit by someone from Australia because of material on the home page of someone in the academic community; for this reason, the issue must include the individual's responsibility as well

as right to privacy. Professor Welch had forwarded a draft policy from the University of California to Professor Cowen, Chair of the Computing Services Committee, for consideration. Professor Baumer asked why we are asking administration to do this rather than doing it. The Chair replied that this was developed by the FSEC, and that such an establishment of policy should proceed from dialogue between faculty and administration.

The resolution was voted on and passed.

Item 8: Resolution on Academic Good Standing

Professor Schroeder asked that the senators who proposed the six amendments to the resolution explain their positions.

Professor Wetherhold proposed adding to the original wording the clause: "Nothing in this policy shall prevent individual academic units from implementing additional requirements for graduation." Professor Benenson seconded the proposed amendment. The idea behind the amendment was to verify/ratify that this process already occurs. Professor Welch asked if there were any distinctions to be drawn between university-wide good standing and good standing as defined by individual units, i.e., within a particular major. Professor Wetherhold responded that the proposed amendment was in the nature of the Constitution, i.e., that all things not specifically granted to the larger body are reserved for the individual units. He added that he did not want any resolution to interfere with what was already in place. Professor Jameson pointed out that the wording of the proposed amendment mentioned graduation requirements, but that the issue at hand concerned requirements for academic good standing, and suggested he alter the wording to fit the intention of the amendment. The change in the wording from graduation to departmental good standing was moved, accepted, voted on, and approved by voice vote.

Professor Wooldridge moved to delete item B2, which requires that at least 75% of all credit hours for which a student is registered be completed. The proposed amendment was seconded by Professor Bennett. Professor Wooldridge explained that most students who do not complete 75% of their courses are unduly jeopardized. The chair of the Grading

Committee, Professor Schroeder, pointed out that the reason for this stipulation is to prevent "transcript pruning". Ms. Nina Kaars, Director of Advisement, noted that there are several issues associated with this item -- Drop/Add period, resignation during weeks 3-8 and receiving R grade, the process of retroactive withdrawal contingent upon the approval of a faculty member. Deletion of records as described by Professor Wooldridge has been done occasionally and discretely in extreme cases, again with faculty consultation. She added that the enormous number of resignations ultimately denied other students available seating in the courses from which they resigned, which she believed hurts the institution considerably. Professor Cowen agreed that the carry-over of a bad semester is unfair to students, but that on the other hand, students do abuse the system. He proposed that the appeals process be left in the resolution, but that students be put on probation only if the situation continues for more than two semesters. Thus he opposed the proposed amendment. Professor Harwitz wanted to see "clear data" on the abuse of the system, pointing out that this was rational behavior of ambitious students and could not be prevented; the real issue, then, was to decide on "what it [the abuse] would cost [the student]". Professor Wooldridge said he had nothing against referring the student to an advisor, yet the problem was that withdrawals were being done automatically by computer. Professor Schroeder replied on behalf of the committee that they supported the 75% rule, but not the "75% every semester" rule; he added that after one violation, the student receives a warning, and that only after the second would the student be put on probation. The amendment was voted on and defeated by voice vote.

Professor Wetherhold presented his second proposed amendment to move the semester 2.0 GPA requirement from the section on satisfactory and timely progress to the section on good standing. The proposed amendment was seconded by Professor Bialas. Professor Schroeder opposed the amendment as being too harsh on students suffering real problems. Professor Benenson argued that the student should be notified as soon and as strongly as possible of any poor standing to prevent any further problems, and supported the proposed amendment. Professor Adams spoke against the amendment, saying that the idea was to have a policy that was effective. Although she is sympathetic to the concerns of those favoring the amendment, it would shed a bad light on the university to have an inordinate

number of students on probation every semester. Professor Malone argued against the proposed amendment, primarily because of its differential impact on different groups of students; students in leadership positions, for example, would not be able to occupy those positions if they were on probation. Students in Athletics would face similar but more difficult problems. Professor Cowen remarked that Professor Malone has really made the point why we should approve the amendment. The proposed amendment was voted on and defeated by voice vote.

Professor Wooldridge presented his next proposed amendment to separate the issue of choosing one's major in a timely fashion from the issue of having a poor first semester in the sophomore year. The proposed amendment was seconded by Professor Cowen. Professor Schroeder believed the two issues were not entirely separate, and considered this item in the resolution not unreasonable. Dr. Kaars pointed out that the proposed amendment could directly jeopardize students with TAP assistance, as well as the integrity of UB. Furthermore, the threat of probation is effective, and is never on a student's permanent record. Professor Wooldridge pointed out that his amendment sought to treat all students equally by removing the clause dealing with the first semester of the sophomore year. The proposed amendment was voted on and defeated.

Professor Wetherhold presented his third proposed amendment, seconded by Professor Benenson, to move the clause "acceptance into a major" from the section on satisfactory and timely progress into the section dealing with academic good standing. He added that there was nothing that would make it more difficult for a student to change majors. Professor Schroeder felt that this requirement was in the right place in the document already. Professor Adams spoke in favor of granting students a one-semester grace period, and opposed the amendment. The proposed amendment was voted on and defeated.

Professor Wooldridge presented his final proposed amendment, seconded by Professor Cowen, to notify students of the appeals process in a more positive fashion and to encourage them to make use of it if they feel treated unfairly. Professor Schroeder said the committee did not consider an appeals process because there has never been one in

previous versions of this policy. He argued that the problem with appeals is that it is open for a wide variety of subjective interpretation. Vice-Provost Goodman thought Professor Wooldridge's proposed amendment would pose insurmountable administrative problems, and "simply cannot be done". Ms. Kaars said she would be happy to change the wording in the letters sent to students facing probation. In regard to the "personal touch" in making these decisions, she agreed with Vice-Provost Goodman that it was essentially inconsistent and unworkable; however, when special conditions do exist, such as illness, there is indeed a personal touch in play. Additionally, students who are dismissed are given the chance to re-apply to UB and be accepted if they had proven to the university and to themselves that they are ready to study here. Professor Cowen argued that in cases in which students were erroneously put on probation, those students should have an avenue to appeal it and have the stigma removed from their records as if it had never existed, and thus strongly supported the amendment. Vice-Provost Goodman said that for cases which question whether the rules have been applied correctly, there is an appeal, and probationary status is from the record if there has been a mistake. He argued that approving the amendment would swamp administration with false cases, and would be unmanageable. The proposed amendment was voted on and defeated by voice vote.

The entire motion as amended was voted on and approved.

> Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Hoeing

Faculty Senate Secretary

for Carol Ann Sellers

Those present:

University Officers: W. Greiner

Senate Officer: C. Welch, C. Sellers

Architecture: G. S. Danford

Arts and Letters: J. Bunn, J. Fradin, A. Henderson, R. Hoeing, M. Hyde, M. Long, M. Metzger, P. O'Toole, J. Pappas

Dental Medicine: A. Aguirre, G. Ferry, C. Garverick, R. Hall, A. Uthman

Graduate School of Education: J. Hoot, L. Ilon, L. Malave, T. Schroeder, R. Stevenson

Educational Opportunity Center: S. Bennett

Engineering and Applied Sciences: J. Atkinson, D. Benenson, W. Bilas, M. Ryan, W. Thomas, R. Wetherhold

Health Related Professions: A. Awad, P. Horvath, S. Kuo

Information and Library Studies: G. D'Elia

Law: E. Meidinger

Libraries: J. Adams, J. Hopkins, M. Kramer, D. Woodson, M. Zubrow

Management: S. Kellogg, P. Perry, R. Ramesh, C. Trzcinka

Medicine and Biomedical Sciences: M. Acara, B. Albin, D. Amsterdam, C. Bloomfield, H. Douglass, W. Flynn, J. Hassett, B. Noble, J. Richert, F. Schimpfhauser, H. Schuel, M. Spaulding, J. Sulewski, A. Vladutiu, J. Wactawski-Wende, B. Willer

Natural Sciences and Mathematics: P. Calkin, M. Churchill, M. Cowen, P. Eberlein, J. Faran, H. King, C. Loretz, J. Reichert, R. Shortridge, R. Vesley

Nursing: M. Ludwig, M. Werner, P. Wooldridge

Pharmacy: N. , W. Conway

Social Sciences: M. Eagles, V. Ebert, M. Farrell, C. Frake, P. Hare, M. Harwitz, D. Henderson, J. Lawler, L. Mattei, D. Pollock, N. Revankar, E. Segal, D. Zubin

Social Work: L. Sloan

SUNY Senators: J. Boot, M. Jameson, D. Malone, P. Nickerson