



UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE RECORD

Minutes of the Faculty Meeting December 1, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

Announcements by the Chair of the Faculty

Prof. Michael Payne announced that child care at faculty meetings was not attracting clients and so will be discontinued unless Prof. Libby Vesilind hears from interested parties. The review of faculty governance will commence next semester. The presidential search is proceeding well, with interviews planned for January. The recent Board of Trustees meeting was amicable, with an increased emphasis on communication between the Board and the campus. Prof. Ben Marsh attended financial meetings and reported that the 3:2 teaching load was viewed as an accepted goal. Prof. Glyne Griffith, who attended the Educational Policy Committee, added that one trustee wanted to know how enhanced student-faculty contact as a result of this policy will be measured.

Prof. Payne then opened discussion of the Middle States Issues document, noting that as a report from Faculty Council, a motion would have to be made if the faculty wanted to take any action on it. The Faculty Council has not yet discussed the Finance section.

The first section on Academic and Educational Quality was praised by several people. The main issue of discussion was the section on academic freedom and due process. It was suggested that we acknowledge that academic freedom is not absolute; our inquiries are bounded by other principles, such as causing harm or incurring liability. Another line of discussion was the relationship between the administration and CAFT. Current wording of the document should be changed to read that the administration, as well as other campus entities such as the URC and DRC's, should uphold the authority of CAFT.

The section on Student Life did not elicit comment. Moving on to Leadership, the group agreed with a suggestion that "appropriate boundaries of authority [between all constituencies]" be *clarified* rather than *affirmed*, to convey the sense that changes are being considered, and some are already implemented, such as the Board decision that the president be a voting Trustee.

Moving to the Strategic Planning section, Prof. Marsh thought that it was an omission not to say that decisions need to be made about resources given to each division and Prof. Susman offered the view that we may not want to resume strategic planning, but to institute a new process with a new President. Prof. Susman then opened a discussion of the section on outcomes assessment. Need all our educational goals need be assessable at least over a short time frame? Director of Institutional Research and Assessment Jerry Rackoff was in favor of at least trying to assess all our goals, qualitatively if not quantitatively. Several faculty members warned of the potential danger of changing goals just so they can be assessed. Prof. Gary Sojka added his perspective as someone who helped draft the current Middle States standards (as former

Bucknell President): Everyone understands that some things cannot be assessed, but we should ask regularly if we are doing what we say we are doing.

At this point, the COI report on the Middle States Standards section was presented by Prof. Tom Cassidy (noting that the page numbers in the report presented in the Agenda refer to the October version of the document). He highlighted COI's concern in Standard 9 that the tone is unlike the rest of the document and the writer appears to have settled questions about the "competitive" relationship between academics and athletics that others think are still open. Dr. Rackoff said that efforts were in progress to even out the tone, and also pointed out that some Standards and sub-standards can be addressed by descriptive sections but others need analytical language.

Prof. John Peeler noted that it was unfortunate that the document was not complete enough for the faculty to endorse. Prof. Payne reminded us that the Faculty Council and COI between them have reviewed the whole text, and also that further input from the campus is solicited at upcoming open forums.

New Business

Prof. Marsh next presented the report from Planning and Budget. CPB is recommending a comprehensive fee increase for next year of 5.8%, albeit with some reservations about an increase this large. The unease stems from the still fragile state of the economy and the lack of compelling arguments for such an increase at the present time. The long-term concern is to make sure we stay affordable for nonwealthy students. However, we do have real budgetary needs and Trustees think that price is one indicator of quality. Our closest reference schools are Lehigh and Lafayette, which are very similar in price to us. Our larger (and more diverse) list of comparison schools averaged fee increases of 5.47%.

The next recommendation was for compensation increases. The current staff model is CPI + 1%, and the model for faculty is a complex one involving being in the middle of the range of comparable institutions. The models would suggest a compensation budget increase of 3.2% for staff and 4.75% for faculty. However, in light of recent improvements in faculty salaries, CPB recommends 3% for faculty and staff, although this makes the merit system work badly (people can receive net cuts at higher pay ranks). An additional .5% increase is budgeted for staff reclassification. In response to questions, Prof. Marsh noted that this figure is for salaries, not benefits, and that even with this modest increase, the budget is still in the red for 2005.

Prof. Marsh next addressed the item in CPB's published report regarding the improvement in faculty salaries. Our relative ranking within our group of comparison schools rose for Professors and Associate Professors. Assistant Professors did see a drop in rank, but this may be due to demographic factors rather than a salary loss for continuing faculty. Because merit increases are the same dollar amount at all ranks, Assistant Professors tend to increase their salaries faster than others. Turning to enrollment targets, Prof. Marsh said CPB was comfortable with a target of 3350 students on campus; the previous target had been 3250 including those studying off campus. Our new facilities need to be fully utilized. In response to a query about moving all students to campus residence, Prof. Marsh said that we do not yet have enough residence facilities for that, but we can pay for them with new revenue.

The final item in the CPB report was an overview of the Operating Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003. We had \$213,000 in unspent unrestricted revenue, due to some savings in health care and utility costs. This sum is available for costs associated with the presidential search.

The next item on the agenda was a motion by Prof. Janice Mann, currently serving as Assistant to the President, to amend the *Faculty Handbook* by adding the extant procedures for selecting faculty representatives to Board of Trustee meetings. The motion was seconded and will be voted on at the February, 2004 meeting.

We next turned to the report from COI on a proposed policy for administering course evaluations. COI conferred with department chairs about current practice, although the proposed policy does differ somewhat from some current practice by having the professor stay in the room while students fill out the forms. After a second to the motion, Professor Deborah Abowitz, who consulted with COI on good practice for administering evaluations, noted that reliability of responses is better when the professor stays in the room so that students do not converse among themselves. Having other proctors would be difficult to effect. Prof. Marsh expressed concerns about the prescriptive nature of the policy and thought a better approach would be for COI to offer a guide to best practice in administering course evaluations. The proposal also mentions "exceptions" but these are not specified, and security of the forms after they are collected is not addressed sufficiently. Prof. Marsh moved that *the proposal be sent back to COI to get campus reaction and to elicit a report on the proposal from the URC, these should be returned to the Faculty at their earliest convenience.* This was seconded and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Halpern
Secretary of the Faculty