

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting

October 9, 2007

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Corporation Room, University Hall

Minutes

Present: Ruth Colwill, Chair; James Dreier, Vice-chair; Ann Dill, Past Chair; James Campbell, Albert Dahlberg, Svetlana Evdokimova, Chad Jenkins, Geoffrey Russom

Guests: Katherine Bergeron, Constantine Gatsonis, Diane Lipscombe

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Minutes of 9/25/07 were approved pending clarification of a statement made by Rod Clifton regarding the Campaign.

Professor Colwill gave a Chair's Report. At the President's Executive Committee meeting on October 1, topics discussed included Emergency Preparedness and an overview of Energy and the Environment, items that also appeared on the Brown University Community Council's 10/9 agenda. There was an update on the progress of capital projects, the College Task Forces on Graduate and Undergraduate Education, and discussion about the Slavery and Justice Steering Committee's report and how Brown will be implementing changes recommended by the Committee.

The FEC officers met with the Undergraduate Council of Student (UCS) officers. Student concerns included global warming, energy conservation, lack of service learning courses, facilities renovation, and admission and financial aid. Students are particularly concerned about the lack of university support for interdisciplinary studies and the lack of TAs in some courses. They talked about the Banner System, the need for MOCA, and the undesirable way in which technology is driving cultural change at Brown, e.g., the adverse impact of Banner on shopping period. The UCS is planning a survey to poll students about their concerns regarding undergraduate education and other issues. The FEC will be inviting faculty members of the College Task Forces on Undergraduate and Graduate Education to their 10/23 and 11/13 meetings to discuss some of these concerns.

Dean Bergeron joined the FEC for a discussion regarding the College Curriculum Council (CCC) annual report distributed with the agenda. The CCC's Subcommittee on Course Evaluations studied Brown department course evaluations and those at other universities. The Subcommittee made several recommendations to clarify and improve the process of course evaluations at Brown including the implementation of a pilot program for on-line course evaluations. This process was very successful at Yale with a return rate for student evaluations of 98%. This high rate of return is due to the fact that students had to respond before their course grade was processed. Course evaluations were viewed as more informative because students had more time to provide thoughtful feedback. The work will be developed further in the Subcommittee on Pedagogy and Assessment of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education this Fall with the hope of implementing the pilot program for on-line course evaluations in a few courses next academic year. The Subcommittee on Concentration and Capstone has developed a database to organize

information about Brown's 104 concentrations and will be working on it with the Task Force for Undergraduate Education this fall. One of their goals will be to develop recommendations for the senior capstone experience. Writing requirements, learning outcomes, and the grading system with regard to pluses and minuses were also discussed. Dean Bergeron would like to have a faculty forum on assessment of undergraduate education in the near future.

Professor Colwill noted that the CCC charge states there shall be five administrators and the CCC has six listed, which is not in compliance with Faculty Rules. Dean Bergeron noted that one of the administrative members did not attend CCC meetings last year and suggested removing the name from the membership list. Professor Colwill asked that the charge be reported as stated in Faculty Rules & Regulations and that the names of the CCC subcommittee members be provided in the written report. Dean Bergeron will revise the report accordingly and submit it to the Office of Faculty Governance in time for inclusion in the November 6 faculty meeting agenda packet.

Professor Diane Lipscombe, Vice-chair of the Academic Priorities Committee (APC), was invited to discuss a motion to revise the APC's charge. The APC would like to delete a component of the charge that has not been part of its active agenda for some time and to add new language regarding review of new concentration proposals and new graduate degree programs. The FEC advised Professor Lipscombe about some of the potential questions that may be brought up by the Faculty at the University faculty meeting. The process by which faculty are notified of new APC proposals was discussed. Some changes were suggested to the wording of the rationale for the motion after which Professor Lipscombe was invited to present the motion at the December 4 faculty meeting.

Professor Constantine Gatsonis, Nominations Committee Chair, reviewed the Committee's annual report with the FEC which was included with the agenda. A major challenge for the Committee is the lack of availability of faculty to serve on committees, which is not fully adequate to meet current needs. The Committee foresees more problems with faculty participation in faculty governance with the implementation of the new enhanced leave policy. Recruiting faculty to serve on ballot-elected committees is especially challenging and restrictions on eligibility add to the challenge. Professor Constantine encouraged the FEC to consider ways to increase faculty availability and to streamline the needs for service on committees. Many faculty have no desire to serve on committees because they perceive it as busy work; some are discouraged by their department chairs and others see no recognition for their service in terms of annual compensation and professional advancement. Professor Constantine will present the report at the November 6 faculty meeting.

Professor Colwill continued with her Chair's Report inviting discussion about revisions to the motion to amend the Faculty Rules regarding non-voting members of the Faculty. The motion was reviewed by the FEC and it was agreed that members of the administration serving on faculty committees should have non-voting status. Not designating specific titles will eliminate the necessity of constantly revisiting this section of the Rules when old titles change or new ones are created. Guest lists can be designated at the beginning of each year by the administrators and submitted to the Secretary of the Faculty.

Professor Colwill would like FEC to begin addressing issues that came up in the Committee self-evaluations from last semester. FEC discussed the report from the Standing Committee on the Academic Code. The FEC decided to invite the chair and case administrator to their next meeting.

Professor Dahlberg gave a brief report on the first meeting of the FEC ad hoc Committee on Leave Policy regarding (Research) Faculty. They identified two key pieces of information they need, Brown's definition of (Research) Faculty and the number of (Research) Faculty at Brown. They will then be researching the requirements for the positions by speaking with department chairs. Some data were collected by Professor Pelcovits last year. Ms. Moreau will forward the data to Professor Susan Miller, Chair of the ad hoc committee.

An Ombuds survey is being prepared for Faculty to fill out on-line. The FEC has to determine if this pilot program should be terminated, continued as a pilot, or made permanent at Brown. The FEC work load has been lightened because of this position. Has it affected other individuals or committees?

Some minor changes will be made to the motion for renaming academic departments, programs, centers or institutes, the goal being to streamline it a bit more.

Discussion at a recent Talk Back Monday revealed that some junior faculty feel isolated and unsure of where they might take their concerns or questions. The FEC discussed having luncheons once a semester with groups of junior faculty, perhaps at different levels of promotion status, to talk about their issues. The process for how to accomplish this task was discussed and it was decided that the first luncheon meeting should be open.

Diversity and committee issues have come to the FEC's attention. Leadership difficulties, boundary issues and failures to execute the charge have affected to varying degrees the work of several committees including the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC), the Committee on Diversity in Hiring (CDH), and the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). As a result, important issues may be falling through the cracks. An idea mentioned last year was that there should be a new committee focused on diversity and equity issues. Such a committee with a structure that will enhance leadership such as the FEC's structure of vice-chair, chair, and past chair is worth serious consideration. If the FEC creates such a committee, it will be important for FEC to provide a very precise charge with very clear goals. The FEC discussed at length how this idea might be discussed more broadly. It was suggested the Task Force on Faculty Governance be invited to an FEC meeting for discussion. The FEC decided to first gather data on what is not functioning well and then invite discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary