

## **Minutes of the Faculty Meeting November 4, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

The customary motion to adjourn not later than 6:00 p.m. carried without dissent, and the minutes of the meeting of October 4 were approved.

Professor Dzidzienyo delivered a memorial minute for the late Rhett Jones, Professor of Africana Studies, and Professor Tan delivered a memorial minute for the late Robert Beyer, Professor Emeritus of Physics (minutes attached). The Faculty rose in standing votes of respect.

Professor Dreier presented the report of the FEC. He reported, following the meeting of FEC officers with the Board of Fellows, that the Fellows had heard expressions of support for the library and for graduate students and had noted faculty concerns that previously expressed goals for research funding have not been met. The FEC heard from faculty members about the loss of handicapped parking, and learned that Associate Provost Allen has been working with consultants on solutions. The Faculty Forum on the NEASC self-study was not well attended. Professor Dreier apologized for the absence of customary refreshments at the meeting, explaining that the catering unit had forgotten. Forthcoming matters includes the reorganization of Neuroscience, the nomenclature change to a "School" of Engineering, an initiative still in the planning stages, the revision of the grievance procedures, and a motion to revise the academic calendar in respect to the Columbus Day holiday with respect for historical concerns and any potential practical conflicts. Professor Dreier's nomination on behalf of the FEC of Professor Hazeltine to the Nominations Committee replacing Professor Tang for spring semester 2009 was approved.

President Simmons began her remarks by enjoining the Faculty to vote with the desired outcome. She announced that a letter was forthcoming at 4:00 p.m. on Brown's response to the economic crisis and invited Vice President Huidekoper to present an overview to the Faculty.

Vice President Huidekoper began by stating we now know that we were not sure of a month ago: the enormous uncertainty in the markets and the resulting crisis of liquidity will remain for years to come as we learn how big the bubble was. There was excessive leverage in the US and world economies across housing, consumer finance, corporate sector, and the government. Valuations across all sectors were inflated. Deflation began with housing and has swept through other sectors. This led to deep and wide spread write offs and a number of investment bank, commercial bank and insurance company failures, resulting in credit crises and severe lack of liquidity. Government backing has been required to blunt the impact and provide liquidity. Economic slowdown is underway: increased unemployment, especially in Rhode Island, decreased market valuations, potential global recession. Huidekoper reported that at a recent meeting with peer

institutions almost all reported new challenges, and state institutions are particularly vulnerable. All higher education institutions are impacted by the downturn. Revenue sources across the board are expected to be constrained in the near term: tuition and fees, gifts, state support, federal research support, endowment, other. There is a great deal of uncertainty about how long the economic downturn will last and how long it will take to return to July 2008 market valuation. Huidekoper does not expect change before 3-5 years, and calls for adjustments. Most institutions are modeling different multi-year scenarios and making near term decisions designed to ensure some flexibility in the future. At Brown, endowment income supports 20% of the budget. Market value has dropped, but liquidity is being managed closely, and the payout policy allows for some smoothing. We must expect small payout increases in FY10 and 11. We expect pledge payments to be realized but may be spread out over longer period, and new commitments to endowment will be harder to obtain. Student fees support 50% of the budget. We must expect less growth in overall tuition, room and board increases. Increased support for undergraduate financial aid and graduate student stipends has resulted in a decline in net income from tuition increases. Restricted and unrestricted current use gifts support. Current use gifts that have helped fuel the Plan for Academic Enrichment represent 12% of the budget will follow the economic downturn. Sponsored funding supports 15% of the budget. Federally sponsored research is increasingly competitive, and the impact of the federal deficit and any new federal priorities on sponsored funding is as yet unknown. In seeking leverage, there are certain components of the budget over which we have little or no control: financial aid and student support; debt service; utilities; sponsored expenditures. We have greater control over capital projects, headcount, and compensation. To use these levers most effectively, we need to make sure all of our activities and organizations are assessed in light of our key mission to maintain greatest flexibility. The measures that the president outlines are designed to achieve that goal.

President Simmons stated that the biggest challenge is uncertainty. We need to adjust expectations and services in light of protecting academic excellence and supporting our students and research. We must maintain a stable work environment for our employees, be mindful of students and their families in reduced circumstances, a goal being addressed by adjustment in financial aid deadlines and policies for semester two. But no matter how dire the financial picture is, Simmons stated, we must not lose focus upon the academic mission of the University. We must judiciously continue to build in order to emerge stronger from the threats of the present. There is an immediate pause in administrative and staff hiring. With outside contractors, a committee will review current structures and possibilities of organizational change. Currently scheduled faculty hiring will continue, but appointments will be reviewed with a cautious eye to priorities. All infrastructure and technology plans will be likewise reviewed with caution. We continue to seek resources for essential expenditures such as financial aid, as was suggested at an event in Boston last week. We must be cognizant that no growth is anticipated, and that some services will be affected. Some institutions like Cornell have already begun layoffs. We plan to focus on the values of our community without layoffs. In the last weeks, we have seen productive meetings on the status of programs, reviewed investments. The President stated how impressed she is with the hard work of Vice President Huidekoper and the whole staff whose talents and hours were put to the test at

short notice. Recalling the good work invested in governance over recent years, she affirmed that the test of governance is how it works in the worst of times. She called the attention of the Faculty to a letter to be distributed immediately.

Mr. Patterson asked how much standing obligations represent in the total budget. Ms. Huidekoper said these amount to about \$30 million. In response to a question about how best to support the PAE lest we return to the old days of stagnation, the President insisted upon our commitment to new ideas and growth, to reorganizing and regrouping, and to using our existing planning structures to review all priorities in light of supporting excellence in what we now do and of all new ventures. Professor Colwill asked if existing structures like the APC would be used, and the President stated that the current APC/URC review for academic and expenditure matters would continue. Asked by Professor Colwill for clarification of who decides and of the relation of academic and capital priorities, of capital projects against compensation or other expenditures, the President responded that many committees contribute to the overall setting of priorities. Capital projects pass through the CPAB, the Space Committee, and the URC before going into the planning stages for Corporation review. Technology projects would see similar review through such venues as the Computing Advisory Board. We always consider, life, safety, and the advancement of the PAE as the critical factors. No capital project would proceed without 90% funding in hand for construction and program. She stated that she found the thought sobering that those whose generosity we have depended upon for capital projects have likely been experiencing staggering losses, caught up in the maelstrom, and that we must anticipate that some funds pledged to us will not come in despite the good will and good intentions of those who pledged. In response to a question about whether the focus of the PAE can be sustained, the President stated that the Corporation was committed to forward movement. While some items may be deferred, we will not make arbitrary cuts and remain committed to community decision-making, and we remain committed to growth. Other institutions may not emerge whole from this crisis, but we intend to fulfill our responsibility to the future by emerging stronger. She recalled how the University remained resolute as the seeming cataclysm of the Civil War approached and expressed her hope and confidence that we shall maintain such resolve. Professor Emigh asked about what it means for approved searches to go forward subject to review. Provost Kertzer that staff searches would be subject to review through a newly formed committee, and that there was no freeze and no change in faculty hiring but that the highest hiring standards would apply, so that hiring would go forward unless the pool looked weak, for example, or one was going from a top to an inferior choice in the final ranking. Asked about her take on the economic future, the President declined to speculate, citing the psychological economy of confidence and fear with its rapid and radical swings of investor and consumer feelings and behavior, and she promised to keep in touch.

Provost Kertzer, noting anticipated budget reductions, called the attention of the Faculty to the letter from the President just distributed. He stresses our obligation to humane to our employees, who are also under economic pressure, to protect our academic goals, and not to be in denial.

Dean Vohra commented that his work as a theoretical economist had little to do with the immediate affairs of Wall Street as a preface to his review of faculty hiring. As of now, the Faculty at 689 is the largest ever, compared to 587 in 2002. There are 239 women on the Faculty, the largest percentage ever and an increase by 17% over the last six years. With 36% of new hires being women, the female faculty is concentrated at the junior level. Minority hiring presents a similar profile at 271. About 40 new minority hires are being made yearly as compared to 20 ten years ago. Of the minority faculty members, 71 or 40% have been here six years or less. This data is available on the web site. Of the 100 new positions projected in the PAE 74 have been filled and we are now in the last phase. Some may remain unfilled to allow room for targets of opportunity. Asked about data concerning scholars Brown failed to hire, Dean Vohra stated that we are competitive although success varies across departments. Professor Colwill asked about diversity in the composition of the tenured ranks, and Dean Vohra answered that there are more women at the junior level, but that tenured numbers are increasing.

Professor Simmons presented the following nominations for the CCC and the Graduate Council.

Nominations recommended to the Faculty for Committee Appointments to be effective immediately:

College Curriculum Council (CCC)

Tracy Steffes (Education) replacing Jin Li (Education) to 6/30/09

Nominations recommended to the Faculty for Committee Appointments to be effective January 1, 2009:

Graduate Council

Seth Rockman (History) replacing Marida Hollos (Anthropology) to 6/30/09

The nominations were approved without dissent.

Speaking on behalf of Dean Lassonde in presenting the report of the Committee on Academic Standing, Registrar Michael Pesta signaled initiatives for the proactive identification of students at risk, looking for example at patterns of dropped courses, in order to make possible early intervention to prevent serious academic problems.

Professor Colwill asked about the rise to 40 in suspension. Mr. Pesta stated that a long-term view looks back to 2003-2004 with 52 suspensions and a dip until now. He also noted that many students who might otherwise be suspended are placed on medical leave and thus not reflected accurately in the academic count. Professor Colwill asked about how identified students were addressed, and Mr. Pesta noted that all due consideration for the respect of the individual student was made and that representative of the Office of Student Life were present for the meetings.

There being no Old Business and no New Business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Merriam Foley  
Secretary of the Faculty

## REMEMBERING RHETT JONES

*Even the best drumming session must come to an end.*

--An African Saying



NTEASI

*What I hear I keep, Signifies wisdom and prudence*

Nothing about Rhett Jones was traditional. Coming to history by way of anthropology and sociology, he settled on studying Caribbean history, specifically, the Maroons of Jamaica. In his intellectual companionship with Bill McLoughlin, he examined relations between African Americans and Native Americans. Rhett's abiding interest was the nature of relations among the original core group of peoples in the Americas—blacks, whites, and Native Americans. Here he saw certain commonalities among race relations systems. Any claims to the contrary—most especially, those that placed a positive spin on "exceptional" variants that promoted parallelism among individual groups—he would view with unabashed bemusement.

Well before the current burgeoning of interest in the black Americas, Rhett had begun his pioneering exploration of issues pertaining to the Americas as a conceptual whole, and constantly ruminated on the complex nature of race relations in the Americas. The problem, he argued, could not be neatly bifurcated into good/excellent and bad/horrible; neither the United States nor its hemispheric counterparts enjoyed a monopoly in either virtues or vices. Were the differences a result of certain culturally isolationist practices or ideologies? Did proximity subvert power structures or rank orders of privilege and access to political, economic, and social power? Were the other Americas becoming more like the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century? Was the United States itself becoming more like Latin America? And where did Continental Africa fit into this picture?

To his way of thinking, the distinction between black studies and Afro-American studies was not simply a matter of semantics. Hence, Afro-American Studies at Brown signaled a broad concern with the history, culture, and politics of people of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean, and South and Central America, and ultimately, the interconnectedness of all to Continental Africa. This was a substantial undertaking, which required thoughtful attention to scholarship as much as to developments in different sites of knowledge. Moreover, fundamental as this was, he insisted that the "people" had to be integrated into the very studies and explorations undertaken in their name and on their behalf. Herein lies the genesis of his unique collaboration with George Houston Bass, which found eloquent expression in *Rites and Reason* and the *Research to Performance Method (RPM)*. An essential part of this project was the introduction of Brown students to a novel form of intellectual activity: the findings of archival research and subsequent interviews were transformed into scripted plays; and the subjects of these interviews and conversations were invited to comment on the dramatization of their lives and histories. These Folk Thought sessions in the theater of Churchill House provided unusual dialogic opportunities that brought College Hill and the larger Providence community closer.

Rhett often commented on the housing of Africana Studies in Churchill House. Though fully aware of the fact that the Churchill in question was not His Majesty's prime minister Winston who had famously commented that he had not been appointed to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire, Rhett could not resist the irony. So, here we were in Africana Studies with local and global intellectual interests embracing Africa and the Diaspora, with Kwame Nkrumah, C. L. R. James, W. E. B. Dubois, Ida B. Wells, Sojourner Truth, Antonio Maceo, Luiza Mahin, Yaa Asantewa, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Casely Hayford, Eric Williams, Julius Nyerere, Martin Luther King, Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Nelson Mandela ever present and having to face Churchill daily. Well, Rhett would say, perhaps it is Churchill who is shouldering the heavier burden in this ongoing encounter.

With Rhett's crossing over we are offered an opportunity to reflect on the trajectory of Africana Studies at Brown. There is some comfort to be derived from remembering conversations and discussions with students and colleagues, both near and far, over the years that he was with us, for Rhett Jones worked tirelessly and creatively in the service of making Africana manifest as an institutional project with national and transnational intellectual dimensions. He was indeed a sharer.

*Wisdom is not a commodity to be locked up in containers; it is best appreciated through companionship and sharing.*

An African Saying

Anani Dzidzienyo, Africana Studies  
November 1, 2008

**Memorial Minute**  
**Professor Emeritus and Research Robert T. Beyer**  
**Department of Physics**

Robert T. Beyer joined Brown in 1945. He retired from teaching in 1985, but continued to participate actively in the Physics Department affairs. Bob passed away peacefully in late August at the age of 88.

Bob was a colleague, a mentor, and above all, a friend. He received his AB in mathematics from Hofstra College, PhD. in Physics from Cornell University. For more than forty years, Bob served Brown as a faculty member of the Physics Department, and was appointed the Hazard Chair Professor of Physics. He also served as Executive Officer and Chair of the Physics Department.

Bob was a physicist, linguist, and humanitarian. He was also a fighter. Much of his life was set against a backdrop of serious illness. At age 16, the doctor told his family he had less than a year to live. Bob survived another seven decades. He appreciated and lived life to its fullest. He believed in changing for the better and never gave up hope.

During his illustrious career, he taught physics with passion, and wrote prolifically. He taught physics at all levels, from freshman physics through advanced graduate courses. He also taught non-specialist courses, such as “the physics of music”. He wrote three textbooks on Introductory Physics, and two advanced treatises on “Physical Ultrasonics” and “Nonlinear Acoustics.” His research specialty was Physical Acoustics of “Ultrasound.” Indeed, Brown was the world’s center of gravity on Acoustics. Bob was a Fellow of American Physical Society, Acoustical Society of America, and IEEE, and won the Acoustical Society’s prestigious Gold Medal Award in 1984. His language abilities were legendary, and he translated many scientific works from German and Russian, and for two years, edited the English translation of the “Chinese Journal of Physics (Peking).”

Bob was a gentleman; good-natured and above all, a decent and honorable man. He was a physicist with compassion for others and a man of action. In 1964, at the height of civil rights movement, Bob went to Mississippi visiting Tougaloo and other black colleges in the South. He went to teach and learn.

He wrote a heart-wrenching letter to his daughter after his return from Tougaloo about the injustice and danger in Mississippi. He was clearly moved by the situation. He wrote: “I feel like lecturing and writing on the theme – the world was so different there, and we all seem so unaware of it here, but I suppose that has (always) been the case.”

Perhaps after forty years, change is a- coming!

Right after one of his surgeries, early in George W. Bush's presidency, he was drifting in and out of consciousness. His daughters asked him whether there was anything they could get for him. He stirred a bit, and responded in a croaky voice: "Just get me a piece of paper that says George Bush is no longer president of the United States." He repeated this again in the weeks before he died: "I'm still waiting for that piece of paper." He voted for Obama in the primaries, and sent a check to the Obama campaign a couple of weeks before his death. It would have been so wonderful if Bob had been able to witness the anticipated outcome of today's presidential election.

Chung-I Tan  
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Chair