

Chair's Report
Faculty Senate Meeting
Dec. 3, 2004

Since last meeting:

As indicated in the minutes, at our last meeting the Senate endorsed the initiative proposed by President Butts, to have a team of faculty do the final revision of the Mission Review II document. Ed Bever, Amanda Frisken, and Rita Colon-Urban agreed to take on this task and worked with remarkable industry and speed to get it done by the deadline, Nov. 30. On November 24, there was a meeting of them, President Butts, Dr. Cox, and Mona Rankin, which the Senate Chair also attended. At that meeting, the President responded to comments that the team had indicated on the penultimate draft, dated 11-23-04.

The Executive Committee met on November 29, to discuss issues related to today's agenda.

On November 17, the Senate Chair, along with the At-Large Representative to the Executive Committee, Anthony Barbera, attended the Taste of Long Island event. As usual, this fund-raising event for the college was elegantly staged, featuring an array of foods from local restaurants and wines from local wineries. The Chair did have one suggestion, which she subsequently wrote to Mike Kinane, in the Office of Institutional Advancement, asking if faculty who had received College Foundation awards in the preceding year might be recognized in the presentations. (At least one of these faculty members, Zenaida Madurka, was mentioned in the written program, but there was no verbal recognition.) To date, there has been no response to this suggestion.

The Senate Chair and the committee chairs have been working hard to keep the Senate Office adequately staffed and organized in the absence of a secretary, although the outcome has not been perfect. We apologize to faculty who have been inconvenienced. There is good news, in that one applicant for the position was interviewed this morning, with two more interviews scheduled for December 7. Hopefully things will go well so that we do not have to renew the search. There will be a decision by Monday the 13th.

President Butts has announced the appointment of the five of the six faculty candidates recommended by the Senate to fill the vacancies on the Budget and Planning Committee: Rita Buttermilch, Tom Del Guidice, Bob Hoyte, Jim Llana, and Fernando Nieto. The Senate Chair will serve ex-officio, per the Bylaws. Len Davis's Office has written to ask committee members about a suitable meeting time and to request suggestions for what the Committee should discuss. There is an ample file of faculty and Senate documents on governance and BPC that should be easy to pull from to make such suggestions, and of course Senate representatives should submit their ideas to the Executive Committee.

Upcoming:

Because of the large amount of work facing the Senate this semester, the Chair is calling for the Senate to meet on the scheduled "possible" date, Dec. 17. Even though this is in the middle of exams, it is hoped that people will attend. The focus of the agenda will be the NCATE process, which affects faculty across all departments, and the whole college, as you know. The plan is to have reports from various people on campus who have been involved in the NCATE process. As you also know, there are substantial connections between NCATE and plans that are brought out in the Mission Review II document. Thus, some of the discussion from today's packed agenda can be pushed over into this next meeting.

As announced at the last meeting, Chancellor King will be on campus next Friday, Dec. 10. The Executive Committee has been invited to breakfast with the College Foundation, where he will speak. The Senate Chair has been invited to lunch with him and others at the President's house. The Executive Committee has also been working with the President's Office to see if a meeting with the Chancellor might be arranged with faculty, in the Academic Village. This would have to be after 2 p.m., when his other engagements are finished. If this comes about, the Executive Committee would try to ensure that all faculty are invited. We will inform you as soon as possible.

The TLC chair, Alireza Ebrahimi, has discussed with the Senate Chair a proposal for setting up an Old Westbury Faculty Senate website. Other SUNY campuses have such websites, where minutes and agendas can be posted, among other things. This seems to the Chair like a good idea.

Remarks:

With the extended deadline for the Mission Review II having been met, thanks to the efforts of the above-mentioned faculty, and the administration, the Senate can now review the document and the procedure of drafting it as a concrete plan and a completed task. As mentioned in a parenthetical note in the minutes, the Academic Affairs Office has submitted a revised report on the Mission Review II process as well as an expanded listing of its committees. Noticing some errors and omissions, the Chair wished to give the AVP a chance to revise these documents, so the original versions were circulated with the minutes instead. The AVP agreed to make one necessary change in connection with a faculty member's service. The Chair also suggested to the AVP that some of the Executive Committee's report be incorporated into his report, especially since what he drafted made no reference to what was reported or discussed in the Senate, so that what did in fact transpire in terms of governance procedure was omitted. To date, however, the AVP has not amended his report. Unless something changes between now and early next week, when the minutes go out, we will circulate the AVP's report as stands.

The Senate now has the opportunity to review the Mission Review II document, in consideration of their perspective on the best interests of the College as it moves toward the future. The chair here would like to note several points of comparison between the penultimate (11-23) and final (12-1) drafts. As indicated above, the redrafted document is significantly improved. But the 11-23 version includes comments and suggestions of the team of faculty. The final version thus shows what was accepted or not of those comments. [Several of these observations were submitted to the Chair by other faculty involved in the drafting process. These stand in addition to other faculty comments and suggestions submitted in the drafting process but not taken up.]

- **Section 5**—suggestion of discussion of diversity by economic background was not taken up.
- **Section 9**—suggested wording about avoiding permanent damage to full-time faculty teaching ratio was removed in the final version. Instead, the last line of the section includes an additional statement about improving faculty quality by hiring new faculty rather than by improving resources for existing ones.
- **Section 10**—suggestion of reference to a faculty club was not taken up.
- **Section 23**—despite suggestions, still fails to address the College's responsibility for promoting and supervising SUNY-based international programs for our students.
- **Section 32**—Improved, but still no information about employer feedback, geographic location of graduate schools that alumni attend.

- **Section 33**—Still does not address student concerns about transportation services and their impact on retention.
- **Section 35**—Does not address the state of the budget for repair and renovation for the Academic Village, nor questions of land use, as suggested.
- **Section 36**—According to the Campus Capital Plan, the Academic Village cannot be said to be “in compliance with” ADA regulations, in terms of elevators, bathrooms, door hardware, corridor width, water fountains, switch heights, alarm systems, signage. [While the AV may come under technical exception as an older building, a number of these features could and ought to be altered/ repaired.]
- **Section 37**—Does not provide time frame for renovations and repair, as suggested.

Finally, as the Senate pursues its deliberations regarding substantive proposed changes in academic life and structure—especially the establishment of graduate programs, pursuit of certifications, establishment of schools and installation of deans—the Chair would urge them to reflect on the relationship they have had and wish to have with the senior administration, and with each other. Have we all—faculty, staff, and administration—done as much as we can with the resources we have? Would we express resignation to failure in that regard by hiring yet other administrators to do the jobs we have not been able to accomplish yet? Have we done as much as we can to communicate fairly and honestly, and keep the best interests of the College—indeed, ultimately the students—in mind? Have we consulted effectively with all concerned before taking action; and have we taken our guidance from those people and principles by whom we are best served? Have we stood up strongly enough for the good, and taken courage to speak our minds about the wrong, while remaining judicious and collegial? Certainly, as Chair I have seen good signs of courage and wisdom in the work of the Senate this semester. Let us continue.