

April 4, 2002

To: Naomi Rosenthal, Chair
Faculty Senate

From: R. M. Hoyte
Distinguished Teaching Professor

Subject: Point of View on the BPC

As additional information, and in response to recent communications by others with Faculty Senators, I am providing the following observations from my perspective as a faculty member serving on the BPC. You may, if you wish, share these comments with the Senate.

While I can agree with most of the "facts" stated in the FACT SHEET that was recently distributed, some of the background statements reflect only one point of view: All of the difficulties of the BPC are laid at the feet of administrators. My opinion is that the difficulties are largely due to style and personality differences between the Chair, Vice Chair and some members of the BPC which make it difficult to establish effective working relationships. The meetings have been too confrontational and criticisms of administrators have been destructive of working relationships rather than constructive. As pointed out in the document *Faculty Participation in the Campus and SUNY Budget Process*, by Ram L. Chugh that was recently provided to Senators, faculty serving on budget committees must be able to "Work Closely with the Budget staff" (p.8). This requires objectivity as well as civil and respectful behavior and speech on both parts in all arenas. In my opinion there is too much that is negative and inflammatory coming from the faculty side. An example is the statement in the FACT SHEET (p.2) that "Faculty members in the Budget Work Group have agreed to engage in - - - decision making on contingencies and cuts". This is not only inflammatory, it is simply incorrect. Also unnecessarily inflammatory are the statements "JOBS MAY BE AT STAKE" and later "The senate needs to address the role of individual faculty taking part in analyses and discussions that could lead to loss of jobs".

The reality is that any analysis and discussion of budget issues can, by their nature, be analysis and discussion that could lead to loss of jobs, especially in the current type of fiscal environment. This does not require that faculty avoid participation in such analysis and discussion. If the latter were the case, then faculty should never serve on any committee related to budget; a rather extreme position with which, I hope, most would not agree. This issue is also dealt with in the Chugh document (see Adopting a Positive Attitude, p.9). The only concern should be whether budget committee faculty participate in decisions regarding loss of jobs. I am unaware of any BPC faculty willing to participate in such decisions.

What we need for an effective faculty-administration budget process are people on both sides who are willing to work cooperatively and harmoniously and who will avoid the politics of confrontation. Perhaps diplomacy should be the operative word.

Subject: BPC Participation

Date: Thu, 28 Mar 2002 08:21:53 -0500 (EST)

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Although progress is very slow on the Budget and Planning Committee, information is starting to become more available. I think the prospect of faculty not being involved in the budgeting process at all is not a wise choice. Therefore, I think faculty should continue on the BPC.

Rita Buttermilch