

University of Pittsburgh
Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes of September 7, 2004

1. President Bircher called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.
2. The minutes of the Faculty Assembly meeting on June 1, 2004 were approved as written.
3. Introduction of Items of Unfinished Business and New Business
President Bircher said that Professor Jacobson would introduce a resolution concerning student participation on Election Day. He asked if there was to be any other introductions of unfinished business or new business. There were none.
4. Remarks of the President, Nicholas G. Bircher
Professor Bircher welcomed everyone back and extended a special welcome to those newly-elected or re-elected to Faculty Assembly. He also welcomed those who were recently elected to serve as Chair of a standing committee and thanked those who just finished as chairs. He noted that last year was a successful year and he believes the coming year will be successful. He asked if anyone had questions and said that the officers work as a team and thus one should feel free to contact any of the officers.
 - The Expanded Executive Committee, which consists of the Executive Committee and the Chairs of the Standing Committees, met on September 3. Each of the Chairs of the Standing committees was asked to give a brief report regarding the activities of the committee over the past year as well as the agenda for their committee for the upcoming year. The following are some of the issues discussed at that meeting.
 - The Anti-discriminatory Policies Committee, chaired by Richard Tobias, has an agenda item on safe zones. Professor Bircher noted that domestic partner benefits will be offered beginning in January. He saw this offer as an indication of the success of shared governance. This year the committee will also look at accessibility and ADA compliance.
 - The Athletics Committee, now chaired by Bill Zamboni, reviewed the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics proposal on the shared governance of campus athletics. It recommended that Pitt not join at this time. A modified report is to be prepared and sent to COIA with a letter from the Senate President. Professor Bircher said he had received an e-mail from Professor Eno, who heads COIA, but he had not yet had an opportunity to review it in detail. The basic content is another invitation to join. As part of this ongoing discussion, the current front running topic for the Spring Plenary Session scheduled for Wednesday, March 23, 2005, is "Athletics: Do we have enough say?" Chair Zamboni has tentatively accepted this as a topic and he will try to get Prof. Eno or a COIA representative to be the keynote speaker.
 - The Benefits and Welfare Committee, co-chaired by Herb Chesler and Jim Holland, reported that faculty access to recreational facilities continues to be an issue of concern. B&W will request that faculty access be expanded by allowing payment for fitness facility memberships similar to that available in other health plans. Renegotiation of the health plan rates with UPMC will also be a major issue, as will several other elements of the self-insurance plan. The committee and the Faculty Assembly have been asking for wider distributions of Automated External

Defibrillators (AEDs). There are now three in the Cathedral of Learning. Professor Bircher said they would look into training for these devices, though even without training they are quite effective.

➤ Budget Policies, now chaired by Steve Carr, reported that last year's series of initiatives met with some success characterized as "weak infield grounders."

Professor Bircher thanked the outgoing chair, Phil Wion, and said the committee deserved more credit than that characterized by the baseball analogy.

➤ The Commonwealth Relations, now chaired by Debbie Rougeux, had its usual excellent schedule and provided an opportunity to speak up as constituents. Professor Bircher encouraged faculty members to attend these luncheons.

➤ The Community Relations Committee, now chaired by Linda Hartman, is on the agenda for an update on the Fall Plenary, scheduled for Wednesday, November 3, on the "Scholarship of Community Service."

➤ The Computer Usage Committee, chaired by John Close, had a very busy but productive year. The committee dealt with dual accounts, e-mail accounts of deceased faculty, e-mail list for whole University, and electronic publishing. This coming year, Professor Bircher hopes the committee will look into the policy for computer choice and the monitoring of email by deans.

➤ The Educational Policies Committee, now chaired by Tom Metzger, considered the campus climate report last year. It benchmarks our campus in terms of the manner in which we treat students and the manner problems are resolved. He asked Professor Metzger what recommendations they made. Professor Metzger replied that they did not make recommendations because they do not have solid information.

They met with the Rainbow Coalition, but it purposely does not keep records.

Questions and Comments

Professor Balaban asked why the Rainbow Coalition could not keep unidentified records as is done for IRB-related matters. Professor Metzger said he did not ask, but this is a group of student volunteers. Professor Bircher said perhaps they could keep records of number of phone calls.

Professor Goodhart asked what the campus climate survey was and how it was conducted. Professor Bircher said that Professor Metzger could explain it later.

Professor Goodhart requested a report from the Educational Policies Committee on this report at the next meeting. Professor Bircher agreed to have a brief report on the methodology of the survey at the next meeting.

➤ The Library Committee, with Kathryn Flannery as interim chair, is in search of a new mission. One of the major issues is ensuring that our libraries are making maximum possible use of electronic resources, and that they are up to industry standards.

➤ The Plant Utilization and Planning Committee, with Carolyn Carson as interim chair, is also in search of a mission. The officers will request that the administration provide information prospectively to the committee so that it can have some input at planning stages rather than at the "done deal" stage. This is an issue for all the standing committees, but the PUP committee has had several cases of being presented with "done deals." Among the issues in its purview is letting people who are going to be dislocated temporarily know about it and have some input into how they will be moved around.

➤ The Student Affairs Committee, now co-chaired by Teresa Donegan and Marian Hampton, is also in search for a mission. They were concerned last year with issues of alcohol and depression.

- The Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee, chaired by Michael Pinsky, did outstanding work on the IRB issues. Professor Bircher thanked Professor Pinsky for all his work. He also mentioned that Professor Frieze helped improve the Psycho-Social component of the IRB by chairing the Psycho-Social committee. Professor Pinsky added that the IRB issue is still not fully resolved, but there has been significant progress.
- The University Press Committee, chaired by Maggie Kimmel, and the University Press continue to be very productive.
- Professor Bircher reported that Stephen Wisniewski, GSPH, was reappointed to a three-year term on the University Planning and Budgeting Committee.
- The new members of the University Review Board are: James Craft, Katz Graduate School of Business; Irene Frieze, Psychology, A&S; Marah Gubar, English, A&S; and Ann Mitchell, Nursing. Mainak Mazumdar, Engineering, was reappointed.
- Professor Bircher said that he will be meeting with the Staff Association Council officers some time this month.
- Professor Bircher listed all the faculty members on Board of Trustees committees, most of whom were continuing for another year: Academic Affairs/Library: (David Brumble, A&S; newly appointed: Heidi Feldman, Medicine); Affirmative Action: (Thomas Buchele, Law; newly appointed: Randi Koeske, Psychology, Univ. of Pittsburgh at Greensburg); Athletics: (R. Tony Eichelberger, Education; William Zamboni, Pharmacy); Audit: (Vicky Hoffman, KGSB; newly appointed: Michael Spring, School of Library and Information Sciences); Budget: (Kim Sutton-Tyrell, GSPH; Phil Wion, A&S); Health Sciences: (Nathan Hershey, GSPH; newly appointed: Ellen Olshansky, Nursing); Institutional Advancement: (Tara Meyer, A&S; Carol Redmond, GSPH); Investment: (Jay Sukits, KGSB; newly appointed: Sandra Williamson, GSPIA); Property and Facilities Committee: (Susan Neuman, ULS; newly appointed: Tracy Soska, Social Work); Student Affairs: (Madeleine Carlin, KGSB; Anthony Silvestre, GSPH).
- The Chancellor will host a reception for members of Faculty Assembly and Senate Council immediately following the September 15 Senate Council meeting.

Questions and comments

Regarding Plant and Utilization, Professor Jacobson asked them to consider electric power reliability on campus. He said it has been unstable, particularly in recent weeks. Professor Muenzer raised an issue related to the Library Committee. He said that Hillman is in the process of moving things into storage again so that the computer science collection can be moved in. He asked for a reconsideration of open stack access, as it is getting smaller. Faculty also need to be involved in the planning for renovation of Hillman. Professor Balaban said the Library Committee needs to consider alternative methods of access.

Professor Close asked about the question of financial aid for out-of-state graduate students. He asked if the Admissions and Student Aid Committee was considering it. Professor Olson said the Provost was reviewing that issue. Professor Bircher said he would ask the Provost at the Executive Committee lunch.

Professor Goodhart asked when the University last considered the problem of cheating. Professor Metzger said the Educational Policies Committee considered it about 15 years ago. There was discussion about whether there was a university code of academic standards. Professor Olson said that every school has its own, but it has to conform to university standards. It was noted that there are sophisticated programs for detecting

plagiarism and that there are ways of designing an assignment so that it is difficult to plagiarize. However, Professor Goodhart said he was talking about what we do about cheating when it is detected. He said the university's policy is too vague and lenient. Professor Muenzer said there is a dichotomy at Pitt. We are legalistic but we do not take it seriously enough. He said he wished we had an honor code. Professor Close said the School of Dental Medicine has an honor code. A student was dismissed and he took it to court. Professor Bircher said this issue will be referred to the Educational Policies Committee.

5. Reports by and Announcements of Special and Standing Committees of the Senate

Anti-discriminatory Policies Committee

Professor Tobias, Chair, said the committee received the news of domestic partner health benefits with great delight. [Applause.] His committee will monitor the program and try to make sure that everyone who is entitled and needs it gets it.

His committee wants to bring a resolution before Faculty Assembly for a "safe zone program." A subcommittee has been working on it for some time. The committee has prepared a statement and the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Faculty Assembly requests that the University support the Safe Zone program in all of the ways that other universities are doing, i.e., office space, budget for a facilitator, and general endorsement.

This is a program beyond the official offerings of the University. TAFC always promises absolute confidentiality, but the university lawyers tell them they cannot do that. If they have any papers that they have prepared, they must make those papers available and those papers can be brought before others. Students prefer to go to a low-key, unofficial place. The report included a list of other universities that offer this service. Professor Tobias said Professor Lisa Brush, who is a Faculty Assembly member but could not be there today, asked him to tell the Assembly that she has worked closely with the proponents of this concept. She has reviewed the training and her professional opinion is that the proposed program is an excellent one; she recommended that the Faculty Assembly accept the resolution. Professor Tobias said two members of his committee were available to answer questions.

Questions and Comments

Professor Balaban said they are asking for university resources and he wanted to know the cost and needs assessment. Professor Feuer said they did not do a formal needs assessment, but a graduate student on the committee brought up the issue. They generated the list of institutions and they talked to people from CMU and IUP about their programs. Their opinion was that this kind of program improved the atmosphere of the university community. There are a number of faculty members who would volunteer and the question is what kind of support the university will give. There are lots of different plans, but none involves a lot of money. CMU has a graduate student and IUP does it out of their counseling center. The resolution is

asking for a general endorsement and then there could be a needs assignment. Professor Balaban said that Faculty Assembly could not give resources. Professor Tobias said that this was a program of volunteers outside the official university system. Professor Munro said this was confusing. He asked if a faculty member just takes training and then put a sticker on his or her door. The sticker would indicate a safe place where a student could talk. Professor Chesler said the resolution is incomplete and goes beyond what some people would support. He suggested modifying the resolution to ask the university to explore the idea of the safe zone. Professor Tobias said it is to get outside of administration. Professor Tobias suggested removing “office space” from the resolution as this is a voluntary program. Professor Friedman said it is not clear. It would be useful to have some examples of how this would come into play. The idea of a physical token concerned her. She was familiar with stickers in a neighborhood for children. Since this has nothing to do with physical danger, what is the purpose of the token? Would you take it to your classroom? The token also could indicate that only those with the tokens are sympathetic. Professor Goodhart said this emphasized the need for a climate survey. More discussion of the program would be useful. Professor Feuer said they could have an educational session for Faculty Assembly. It was recommended that the motion be tabled until the Faculty Assembly could get more written information.

The motion to table was approved by a majority in a voice vote.

Professor Bircher said it would be the first item on the agenda at the next Faculty Assembly meeting. Professor Frieze asked that the committee also clarify to whom the facilitator would report. Several others asked for more information on the training. Professor Balaban argued that it might be worth having a broader program, including, for example, a place where students could go when they were depressed. Professor Friedman said that not having a sticker might have the connotation of not being safe. Professor Feuer reminded people that being gay is not the same as being depressed. It is murkier and has to deal with an identity that needs to be concealed. People are not opposed to CPR, but there are people opposed to being gay. Complete certainty and definition are not likely. She said they would try to address some of the issues raised in a new resolution.

Community Relations Committee

Professor Hartman, Chair, said she was turning the floor over to Professor Soska, who is co-chairing the fall plenary. Professor Soska said the fall plenary session is scheduled for November 3rd and the topic is Scholarship of Community Service. In addition to the plenary, there will be other activities. There will be a symposium in the morning for other schools and universities co-sponsored by the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education that will focus on scholarship on service learning, community outreach and applied research. There will also be a showcase of community service initiatives on applied research and scholarship. There will also be a lunch forum. The plenary will be more internally focused.

6. Unfinished and New Business

Professor Jacobson read his proposed motion:

Resolved: Because our academic community cannot and should not function in isolation from American society, Faculty Assembly suggests that all faculty avoid scheduling exams or submission of major items of student work on Election Day, November 2, 2004 or on Wednesday, November 3, 2004 to facilitate student participation in the electoral process.

Professor Metzger seconded the motion.

Professor Muenzer asked where else do people get Election Day off and commented that it is too bad that we do not vote on Sundays like the rest of the world. There were comments about the fact that some people like garbage men do get off on Election Day. Professor Belle said he lauded the resolution; it is important for students to get involved. The question was raised as to why two days. Professor Jacobson said that it would be hard to work on the election if a major assignment is due the next day. Professor Wion said that he liked the careful wording using “suggests.” Professor Pinsky asked whether this was realistic. Professor Goodhart noted that our very low voting rate may be because elections are on a work day.

The question was called.

The resolution was passed by the majority in a voice vote.

7. Announcements

Vice President Frieze asked for volunteers to write the “Senate Matters” column. President Bircher announced that the meeting room is now 2700 Posvar Hall. The Senate Council meeting is next Wednesday, September 15, and the Chancellor will host a reception immediately afterwards in his office.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Josephine E. Olson, Secretary

Members Attending:

Baker, Balaban, Beatrous, Belle, Bergen, Bircher, Cain, Carr, Carson, Cassaro, Cassing, Chaparro, Chesler, Close, Costantino, Cothran, Czak, Daley, Deasy, Flannery, Flynn, Friedman, Frieze, Goodhart, Greenberg, Hartman, Holland, Jacobson, MacQuarrie, McKinney, Metzger, Muenzer, Munro, Nelson, Olson, Pike, Pinsky, Puri, Ross, Saunders, Savoia, Skledar, Soska, Steinmetz, Sukits, Tobias, Troesken, Weber, Wion

Others Attending:

Blair, Fedele, Feuer, Hart, Higgins, Klinzing, Lombardi, Rohrer, Schackner, Zlatos