

University of Pittsburgh
Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes of November 2, 2004

1. President Bircher called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM.
2. The minutes of the Faculty Assembly meeting on October 5, 2004 were approved as revised. President Bircher said that his comment that the expedited grievance procedure needed an additional change was incorrect and would be removed from the minutes. The new procedure already allows a faculty member who is not satisfied with the appointed hearing officer to revert to the regular grievance procedure.

Questions and comments

There followed some discussion on whether the expedited grievance procedure should be extended to tenure and promotion issues. Professors Pinsky, chair of the Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee, said there were no problems with the current procedures for tenure and promotion and he would be reluctant to have an expedited procedure for those cases. Professor Baker, who is also a TAFC member and was a member of the ad hoc committee to look into an expedited grievance procedure, also said he did not think the procedure was good for tenure and promotion cases. Professor Bircher spoke of the possibility of inviting Professor Hershey back to discuss this issue.

3. Introduction of Items of Unfinished Business and New Business

President Bircher asked whether there were any items of unfinished business or new business. There were none.

4. Remarks of the President, Nicholas G. Bircher

Professor Bircher noted that his remarks would be brief because of Elections. He recommended that in the future Faculty Assembly not be scheduled for an election day.

- He reported first on activities of the standing committees.
 - The Senate Athletics Committee plans to invite Professor Eno of the COIA (Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics) to speak at the spring plenary session which will be on “Athletics: Do we have enough say?” Rather than rewrite its report on the COIA, the committee will add an appendix to summarize discussion at Faculty Assembly both in May and June. Then Professor Bircher and the Co-chair, Professor Zamboni, will produce a cover letter which (1) prefaces the Committee’s report regarding the decision not to join at this time, and (2) invites Professor Eno to the Plenary. He mentioned that in September he received a draft document from the COIA entitled “Academic Integrity in Athletics: Principles, Rules, and Best Practices.” He has asked the Athletics Committee to review the new draft and report at the February or March Faculty Assembly meeting.
 - The Commonwealth Relations Committee just completed two successful luncheons. Eighteen people attended the lunch with Rep. Martin Causer on October 22 at the Bradford campus. Twenty attended the lunch with Rep. Paul Costa on October 29. Luncheons will be scheduled for later in the month.
 - The Community Relations Committee is on the agenda to give an update of the November 3 Plenary. The topic is “The Scholarship of Community Service.”
 - John Close of the Computer Usage Committee is on the agenda to give an update of his committee’s activities.

- The Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee is reviewing the Statement on Academic Freedom issued in June 2003 and will report some time in the future.
- Professor Bircher then reported on other Committees.
 - As noted earlier, the Expedited Review Process is now posted on the University's website. He hopes to have a meeting of the Expanded Executive Committee on December 6. On November 16 the Senate Officers will meet with the Faculty Senate Presidents of the Regional Campuses. One of the issues that will be discussed will be comparative faculty salaries for the regional campuses. The Johnstown campus Faculty Assembly voted to submit a letter to the *University Times* regarding comparative faculty salaries, but it has not yet appeared.
 - The Property and Facilities Committee of the Board of Trustees met on October 15 and approved step one of the Benedum Hall New Nanotech lab, steps one and two of the 3343 Forbes Avenue systems upgrade, step two of the Chevron Science Center Ventilation upgrade; and step one of the Plum Boro Research Center renovations and addition.
- Professor Bircher ended his remarks by announcing meetings. These included the Plenary on November 3, the Senate Council meeting on Monday, November 8, the Faculty Assembly meeting on Tuesday, November 30.

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

Ms. Hartman, chair of the committee, said that the committee had a resolution on the Port Authority's budget which it wishes to have the Faculty Assembly approve. The resolution reads:

The Port Authority of Allegheny County is pursuing dedicated funding for public transit. Without the funding, service cuts and fare increases will take place making it harder for people to get to work and school, impacting businesses and the local economy.

The Community Relations Committee recommends that the Faculty Assembly encourage faculty to contact their legislators urging passage of pending legislation to provide the dedicated funding for public transportation in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Hartman also said the committee had sample letters to legislators.

Questions and Comments

Professor Chesler said he was concerned about how to disseminate the information to colleagues. He asked if the *University Times* could alert people to the resolution.

Professor Frieze asked about the urgency. Ms. Hartman said the vote will be on November 23. There was a hearing at the Sheraton on Thursday and one needed to pre-register to testify. She said John Wilds would be at the hearing but she did not know if he would testify.

The resolution passed unanimously by voice vote.

Next Professor Soska provided an update of the plenary session to be held the following day on "The Scholarship of Community Service." In the morning they are expecting between 80 and 100 people for the Symposium. There will be concurrent workshops on service learning; community outreach, service and leadership; and

scholarship and applied research. At the plenary, Lorilee Sandmann will talk about national efforts on scholarship around community service. There will be a panel discussion afterwards of people from in and outside Pitt. There will also be roundtable discussions. A report will be published afterwards. At lunch there will be a spotlight on service with displays about service learning and scholarship. There will also be an experiential learning forum. He listed a number of opportunities for students and faculty.

Computer Usage Committee

Professor Close, Chair, reported that his committee met at the beginning of October and last year's annual report was approved. Other issues discussed included whether a reporter from the *University Times* could attend their meetings. They voted no as they felt it might hurt open discussion and confidential reports from CSSD. However, they could be invited to meetings on particular issues. Another issue was the status of the automatic reply for email of deceased faculty members. The early request for an extension of the account beyond two weeks was turned down by legal counsel and CSSD. Instead, CSSD offered an auto-reply that would let the sender know that the account was no longer active and whom to contact. CSSD sent wording for the draft: "The email account is no longer active. If your message is a personal matter, correspondence can be directed to [an email address or phone number will follow]. If this is a university-related matter, please contact [another address will follow]." As soon as it is determined that a faculty member has passed away, the department will contact CSSD to have the blanks filled in.

Questions and comments

Ms. Friedman asked who would have access to the account. Professor Close replied that no one would have access to the account, including relatives. She said she thought this procedure seems rather harsh. Professor Close said that was the issue, but once the University Counsel ruled that there were real legal issues, there was nothing more that could be done.

Professor Munro said he was under the impression that privacy laws did not apply to corporate email accounts. Professor Close said that was true and there is a related issue, but the problem is that information on students might be on email and that is protected by the FERPA Act.

Ms. Hartman asked if there was an issue about a student in email, does that mean no one will ever get a response. Shouldn't someone in the university be able to get into the account? Professor Close said the university can access the account but there is no real procedure. If there is a request from someone to get information, CSSD could go into the account. But, they will not go into the account to close up the faculty member's personal business. The basic argument is that the account is only for university business and the family member cannot access it. Family members have no right to get into the account. The auto-reply will tell the correspondent whom to contact regarding the email account. Ms. Hartman asked whether that has to happen within two weeks. Professor Close said that these accounts are archived for a couple of years. The accounts are also often not closed down within two weeks.

Professor Munro asked whether the concern is student or personal information. Professor Close said it is student information because of the FERPA Act. Professor Munro asked whether the department chairman should look through the account.

Professor Bircher said the realistic option for people who have business with the deceased is to get in contact with a representative of the university. He has 10,000 emails and it

would be unreasonable that anyone could make sense of it. Professor Munro said there might be something important in limbo and the person might not know the professor is deceased. A knowledgeable person could go through the email and find what is important. Professor Close said this is the function of the auto-reply, telling a correspondent whom to contact.

Professor Pinsky said the problem should be compared to rules for paper files. Family members can't go through your paper files. This is consistent with the management of personal documents.

Professor Nelson asked who was responsible for notifying faculty of this policy. Professor Close said this policy information will be sent to deans, directors and department chairs.

Professor Nelson asked about new faculty. Professor Close said this will be sent out as policy. Discussion followed about how policy is disseminated. Mr. Pike said these policies are on the website and these policies are primarily the responsibility of the department chair. There are lots of policies regarding deceased faculty and other policies that are not well known. As a department head, it is incumbent on him to contact Human Resources to determine what to do, including what to do with the email account.

Professor Bircher asked if there was a checklist for deceased faculty linked to the relevant policies. Professor Close said there are no university-wide policies about deceased faculty.

Professor Flynn asked what are the policies when a faculty member dies in the middle of the term. In some cases another teacher has to finish the course and needs information on other students. Professor Close says that is unlikely to be in a person's email. When someone dies, the university brings in a substitute and tries to get grades. Professor Frieze said she took over for a deceased faculty member and has no records. Professor Close said that is not always the case.

Professor Pike suggested that some of these issues be discussed at new faculty orientation. The bigger issue is that faculty are using their university accounts for unauthorized personal activities.

Professor Chesler said the Benefits and Welfare Committee originally brought this up because of the death of a faculty member. The faculty member's family was using this account for communication and email was cut off suddenly. They proposed the account be left opened for a month for leniency. This idea got lost in legal issues and now there is no slack. The committee is working with Human Resources to get a death "checklist." He will suggest another item advising survivors about the email account being terminated. How the University communicates with family members of a deceased faculty member is very important. He mentioned that the Human Resources department is also preparing a checklist for retirement.

Professor Bircher asked whether CSSD should send a memo to faculty on this issue.

Professor Close said he thought that was possible, but perhaps it should come from Legal Counsel. Professor Bircher said it would be good for faculty to know that they should not use their university account as a private account.

Professor Wion reminded people that policies like this can be in the Faculty Handbook.

Professor Close also argued that most faculty are not using the modem pool and can get private accounts from DSL.

Returning to his report, Professor Close next addressed the issue of whether university administrators can read email accounts. Jinx Walton assured the committee that it is university policy that no one can access anyone's email account. However, if you have a local email server in your unit that is outside of CSSD's purview, an administrator might be able to look at it. There is corporate precedent for reading your email and

legally they can look at it. The university's policy is not to read email in the spirit of academic freedom and collegiality. The message is not to use your employer's accounts for personal business. On another matter, Professor Close said that CSSD is now looking into spyware/adware programs now that they have done a nice job with spam and virus filters. They are also planning to upgrade the IMAP server but are trying to decide the best time to do that.

Educational Policies Committee

Professor Metzger, Chair, reported on the Campus Climate Reports. The report that Faculty Assembly members received has an error in it. He said the last line of the second paragraph on Document #1 says "Individual universities are not identified, but it does not appear to include Pitt." This is a mistake because this was a survey of only Pitt students. This sentence should have been at the end of the paragraph on Document #2. There was some confusion about the campus climate report and that is because there were two reports. The "Campus Climate Survey" was done by the Women's Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Professor Frieze was involved. The report concluded that "women in particular appeared to be satisfied with their experiences in the classroom. However, African American men respectively expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with their experiences." There seemed to be a substantial minority who felt that professors told sexually explicit jokes unrelated to course content or made jokes that put down women or men. The survey was given to 910 undergraduates and was not statistically representative. The second report is on a different subject. The "Campus Climate" by Susan Rankin is a report of the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force which was issued in 2003. It is a long document and 14 universities were involved with 1669 responses. It makes a number of recommendations that the committee will take up with the Anti-discriminatory Policies Committee. Individual universities are not identified but Pitt does not appear to be included.

Questions and comments

Professor Pinsky asked whether their report was related to the Safe Zones. Professor Metzger said they were not related although the Safe Zones are also related to GLBT. Safe Zones relate to a recommendation being discussed in the Anti-Discriminatory Policies Committee. His committee will discuss the Safe Zone recommendation with the ADP committee but he does not know what, if anything, his committee will do.

Professor Munro asked for a clarification on the statement regarding African American men. Professor Frieze, who did the report, said they asked about classroom experience and about overall satisfaction. The women were satisfied overall despite some negative classroom experiences, but the African-American men were not.

Professor Vanyukov asked what the purpose of the survey was. Professor Frieze said that Women's Studies did the survey because they had heard anecdotal reports about professors making inappropriate jokes, etc. They did the survey to see how wide spread it was. It did not seem to be an overall problem for women, but they picked up this problem with African American men. They forwarded these results to Vice Provost Jack Daniel and Dean Larry Davis for their information.

Professor Close asked if the survey was exempt from IRB. Professor Frieze said that they had IRB approval for their survey.

Professor Bircher asked for a copy of the survey and asked whether the committee thinks there is a need for an update. Professor Metzger said they discussed it briefly but unless someone

can fund and staff it, it is too much work. The committee did a survey of part-time faculty a few years ago and it was a lot of work. That study also should be updated.

Professor Constantine asked whether the survey had enough information from African American men to determine the problem and whether it could be addressed. Professor Frieze said the sample was very small. Their survey was not the appropriate mechanism for getting at that problem.

Professor Wion said he had the impression that the university has on-going studies in relation to retention of students, etc. He asked Vice Provost Daniel to elaborate. Vice Provost Daniel said that the Office of the Provost has conducted for four or five years a longitudinal study of undergraduates and has interviewed many students. They are doing another study that will have interviewed several thousand students over eight domains of student satisfaction. It is being done by UCSUR. The information is confidential since it was done for formative purposes. They have taken formal intervention steps to address satisfaction on the campus and undergraduate satisfaction is extremely high overall. Professor Bircher asked if it would be possible to brief a Senate committee on the study. Vice Provost Daniel said he would have to get the Provost's permission for that. He has a concern that a small area of dissatisfaction might be taken out of context. Vice Provost Daniel said that anyone who wants a briefing should submit a formal request to the Provost. Professor Constantine said it was nice to know that these studies and interventions are being done.

Regarding the issue of Academic Integrity and Cheating, Professor Metzger said the Provost has an extensive website and detailed recommendations on how to deal with it. He will bring the subject to another Faculty Assembly meeting.

6. Unfinished Business and New Business

Professor Munro asked for the status of the suggestion of a faculty club. Professor Bircher said he would bring it up at lunch and it can be put on the agenda for November 30.

7. Announcements

There were no announcements.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Josephine E. Olson, Secretary

Members Attending:

Baker, Bircher, Boston, Carson, Cassaro, Chaparro, Chesler, Close, Constantine, Costantino, Cothran, Czak, Deasy, Flynn, Friedman, Frieze, Hampton, Hartman, Kuller, McKinney, Metzger, Muenzer, Munro, Nelson, Olson, Pike, Pinsky, Platt, Skledar, Soska, Steinmetz, Stoy, Sukits, Sussman, Troesken, Vanyukov, Weber, Wion

Others Attending:

Blair, Daniel, Fedele, Hart, Withiam