

**Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)  
Meeting**

**March 17, 2009**

**3:00-5:00 p.m.**

**Corporation Room, University Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: James Dreier, Chair; Gerald Diebold, Vice-chair; Ruth Colwill, Past Chair; Lina Fruzzetti, William Rakowski, Geoffrey Russom, Gabriel Taubin, Nicolas Wey-Gomez

Guests: Katherine Bergeron, Harriette Hemmasi, Michael Pickett, Rebecca Schneider

Professor James Dreier called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. Minutes of the 3/10/09 meeting were approved.

Professor Dreier gave a chair's report. President Simmons expressed her disappointment with a recent *Brown Daily Herald* (BDH) article about Vice-President Kennedy and the Watson Institute. Some faculty members concerned with the way the Watson Institute is being run expressed their views about the matter to students through the BDH. This is not the appropriate venue for faculty to use to get their message to the students. The President asked if the FEC would be willing to take on this issue. Should we offer the FEC as a venue for airing faculty concerns about the Watson Institute and other issues? It was suggested the FEC be the first recourse and then they will decide how to proceed from there. Perhaps an announcement at the faculty meeting would be in order.

Professor Boekelheide notified Professor Dreier that TPAC will be withdrawing their motion regarding changes to the Faculty Rules about contract renewal and promotions from the April 7 faculty meeting agenda. There may be a motion in May for some alternative changes.

Professor Rebecca Schneider was invited to discuss a proposal to change the name of the Department of Theatre, Speech and Dance to the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, which has been endorsed by the APC. A copy of the proposal was distributed with the FEC agenda. The name change will better reflect overlaps in existing programs within the department as well as current scholarly practice in the field. The proposal is supported unanimously by the department and well-supported by arts and humanities chairs and other affiliated faculty. There was one concern raised by Professor Hu-Dehart about performance not covering dance but that was addressed. Professor Schneider expects that would be the only focal point for possible discussion at the April 7 faculty meeting.

Dean Bergeron was invited to discuss a second report from the CCC regarding its activities for the current academic year. It is the Dean's desire to focus future CCC annual reports on the current year's activities rather than on the previous year. The written report was distributed with today's agenda. The joint subcommittee of the CCC and Graduate Council continues to work well approving 154 courses since the beginning of AY 2008-09. They are in the process of finalizing a new course proposal form that will serve both graduate and undergraduate courses which should be available on-line later this spring. Dean Bergeron has been brainstorming with Mike Pesta, Registrar, about ways to improve Banner. Pin numbers for students will allow for a

one-step process. Banner has a list of the new courses in the past year. New courses are sometime listed on the web site as “pending approval”, which means it’s been tentatively approved by the subcommittee of the CCC and awaits final approval from the full CCC. This allows students to register with confidence since the course will most likely be offered. Department chairs have been provided with comparative information about the various courses in their departments. The role of Undergraduate TA’s was reviewed by the CCC and members agreed that the former guidelines should be revised and then sent to departments and concentration advisors on a yearly basis. It was suggested the draft guidelines be posted to the Web for feedback from the Brown Community. Dean Bergeron is concerned about training of TA’s and would like to work with the Sheridan Center to create a new layer of TA orientation. Per the FEC’s request in spring 2008, the CCC reviewed the Registrar’s methods used to determine the award of magna cum laude. Although the Registrar’s method is supported, there is concern about the role grade inflation has played in diminishing the idea of “distinction”. The Council would like to continue with researching the issue and perhaps have further discussion with the full Faculty. The FEC suggested having a full blown discussion about grade inflation with the full Faculty later rather than earlier, and thought it would be useful for the CCC to consider the percentage of large classes vs. smaller classes in their research. The Dean will present the report at the April 7 faculty meeting.

The FEC revisited a proposal to revise the Research Advisory Board’s (RAB) charge to include language that would require FEC’s review of policies that require faculty’s signature. Professor Diebold advocated for the cause asserting that Faculty should have a strong voice in review of policies that directly affect the Faculty and that they should be able to consider a vote of adoption of such policies at faculty meetings. The President does not think this will work because the Corporation will simply adopt what is mandated by Federal Law. They will abide by the Rule only when it does not threaten their liability. Professor Dreier noted that rules concerning Conflict of Interest or legal liability are controlled by the Corporation; a vote at a faculty meeting would be pointless because it would have no effect. The faculty is best served by having its input taken seriously, so that problems in these policies can be identified and corrected before the policies are implemented. Professor Colwill also noted that if the FEC were to be mandated in the RAB’s charge to review all policies that went before the Board, they would be overseeing what the RAB is doing. We do not want to do the work for them. Some alternate language to RAB’s charge was suggested by the FEC so as not to be so assertive. Professor Diebold preferred that we try it in its strong form instead of weakening it. Prof. Dreier suggested that perhaps the FEC should consult legal counsel on this. Professor Russom noted that there are ways in which the FEC can express disapproval of this without challenging the law. Perhaps we should get faculty input on the proposal. The FEC was sympathetic to Professor Diebold’s cause but the general consensus was that mandating the FEC to review and vote on policies that go before the RAB is not going to work. Professor Diebold then proposed a motion to present the changes to RAB’s charge at the May Faculty Meeting. The motion was seconded but failed.

University Librarian Harriette Hemmasi and Vice-President Michael Pickett joined the FEC to discuss a draft Institutional Records Policy consisting of a set of requirements for responsible management of University records. A working group was formed last year to look at the question of records management including electronic and paper records, its charge written by the Provost. Professor Michael White, vice-chair of the Library Advisory Board last year, was an active member of the working group. There is a lack of consistency in record keeping at Brown. The draft policy is a general statement about guidelines which will apply to all constituencies University-wide. All records in tangible format are the property of Brown University and are classified into three categories: public information, regulated information and confidential information. People need to know what is considered confidential material and what records

need to be destroyed. There are many electronic files on computers that should be preserved. They would like the opportunity to speak with people across the University about this to get a sense of whether or not the proposed guidelines in the Policy will work for them and to learn what issues need to be addressed. They plan to include the policy in the Handbook for Academic Administration. Mr. Pickett acknowledged the hard work and dedication that Ms. Hemmasi has put into this project noting the importance of having such a policy. He spoke about the spirit of privacy and confidentiality of the records we keep on file. A question was raised about emails—do they become legal records if kept? Should teaching materials such as course syllabi remain permanent records of the University? The policy's guidelines are intended in a general sense to apply to offices at Brown and not just faculty. There is a need to establish who should be the keeper of records in various offices. Ms. Hemmasi and Mr. Pickett looks forward to receiving the FEC's feedback on the draft policy, especially with regard to preservation of records held by faculty that are created or received in the conduct of student advising, teaching, and committee work.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau  
Secretary