

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting

October 23, 2007

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Corporation Room, University Hall

Minutes

Present: Ruth Colwill, Chair; James Dreier, Vice-chair; Ann Dill, Past Chair; James Campbell, Albert Dahlberg, Svetlana Evdokimova, Chad Jenkins, Geoffrey Russom, Gabriel Taubin

Guests: Sheila Blumstein, Tony Bogues, Ross Cheit, Claudia Elliott, Gregory Elliott, Christina Furtado, Cynthia Garcia Coll, Robert Hurt, James Morone, Michael Paradiso, Luther Spoehr, William Warren, Arnold Weinstein, Michael White

Professor Colwill called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Minutes of 10/9/07 were approved.

Professor Colwill gave a Chair's Report. The FEC officers had very productive and candid discussions at separate meetings with the Board of Fellows and the new Vice Chancellor, Jerome Vascellaro. They discussed many of the same topics at both meetings including Brown's mission, promotion criteria, University-wide diversity issues, the importance of supporting core faculty, and assessment of the progress being made with the Plan for Academic Enrichment. The FEC officers voiced faculty concern to the Fellows about the potential effect of the personnel turnover in the Dean of the College office on students and operations, and its possible impact on the culture of Brown. Professor Colwill reported that the Fellows voiced strong support for the President's awards for excellence in service to faculty governance, and agreed that our faculty governance system is more demanding of its faculty than those of our peer institutions. Professor Colwill also drew the FEC's attention to topics of interest on the Dean of the Faculty's website. It was noted, for example, that more information on diversity and ranks is available and that there is a statement on Teaching Relief for Departmental Administrative Duties.

Professor Leslie Bostrom was invited to discuss the annual report from the Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees. The Committee solicited nominations from the Brown Community beginning last spring through September 14, deliberated at several meetings during September, and presented a list of 9 honorary degree nominees to the Board of Fellows on October 12. In addition to their recommendations, the Fellows will also consider nominations from other sources including the Corporation and Alumni. The final decision of the degree recipients rests with the Board of Fellows. Professor Bostrom will be sending thank you letters to all who submitted nominations this year and will present the annual report to the Faculty at the December 4 faculty meeting.

Professor Colwill continued with her Chair's report. The Chancellor and Mrs. Tisch recently made a generous donation to Brown's Campaign for Academic Enrichment to establish five endowed "Chancellor's Professorships" and to support academic initiatives in the College. The FEC officers prepared a letter on behalf of the FEC and the Faculty extending their thanks and appreciation for his generosity.

The FEC officers met with President Simmons and discussed the results of their meeting with the Fellows. After talking with her about concerns regarding administrative turnover in the Dean of the College office, the President suggested the FEC make a list of items to discuss with Dean Bergeron that could help her administration.

The FEC was asked to reserve upcoming events on their calendars. On November 13, there will be a UCS/FEC Roundtable discussion from noon-1:30 p.m. in Dining Rooms 8-9, Sharpe Refectory, to discuss academic issues of mutual interest to students and faculty. The UCS will organize groups of students to attend. On December 11, the FEC, Committee on Diversity in Hiring (CDH) and President Simmons will meet at the Faculty Club from noon-1:30 p.m. to discuss CDH's role in the Tenure, Promotion and Appointments Committee (TPAC) process. December 13 from noon-1:30 p.m. is reserved at the Faculty Club for the FEC's first open meeting with junior faculty to discuss their issues and concerns voiced at a recent Talk Back Monday session.

Professor Russom gave a brief report on the 10/15 Medical Faculty Executive Committee meeting. A document on the relationship of medical faculty to Brown University was discussed. Questions were raised in the document as to whether or not hospital-based faculty whose salaries are not administered by Brown should have comparable benefits to those of Brown's regular faculty. Dean Gruppuso reported on support for teaching by clinical department faculty including hospital-based faculty. The current level is \$380K, the estimated goal being \$750K. The MFEC feels that campus parking should be made available to hospital-based faculty who travel from the hospitals to teach at Brown.

Faculty members of the Task Force for Undergraduate Education joined the FEC for an informal discussion about their work, which is linked in several areas to the re-accreditation process. Professor Colwill explained that the FEC is interested in ensuring a system of strong and independent faculty participation in the process. Faculty members were very positive about the work of the Task Force. They have been engaged with the Administration in a series of conversations struggling with some challenging issues together, the faculty writing many of the reports. The Task Force has discussed the assessment of pedagogy and learning outcomes. Their efforts are generating a lot of ideas that will be brought to the academic community for discussion. We must go beyond the curve to be imaginative and creative for Brown. The FEC asked if some of their group might be willing to lead faculty discussion after the Task Force completes its work. They would be delighted to help.

Professor Robert Hurt, vice chair of the Research Advisory Board (RAB) and Professors Warren and White, both members of RAB, joined the FEC for a discussion with Faculty guests about issues regarding the Institutional Review Board (IRB). RAB members were there to learn about the issues and to ask questions of the Faculty guests who were invited to talk about the problems of recent changes in IRB policy and the impact on student and faculty research. There was a sense of frustration about the failure of the Administration to respond to concerns raised last year first by the CCC's working group on the IRB and then by the FEC Officers. Several serious matters were brought to the table for discussion, including review time, scope of IRB review, faculty advisors and the concept of independent student research, and the lack of an independent appeal mechanism. There was some discussion of whether some of the issues were ones of academic freedom. It was decided that Professor Hurt would consult with his colleagues on the RAB and get back to the FEC with a plan for a process to address the concerns they had heard.

Professor Gregory Elliott and Dean Christina Furtado were invited to discuss issues raised by the Standing Committee on the Academic Code on last year's committee survey. For the past several

years, the Committee has been functioning with co-chairs rather than chair and vice-chair. This became necessary when the code hearing process was changed from being case administrator-chaired to a faculty-chaired process. Professor Elliott feels it is important that two people rather than one are in charge because of the sensitive issues they deal with, critical ones that affect students' lives. No one person should be making the final decision on a case. Last spring, the Committee heard 30 cases. Because there are so many hearings held during normal working hours, it is impossible for one chairperson to attend them all. Co-chairs share the workload. They would also like to add a provision for renewable terms in the staffing section of their charge and would like to expand the pool of experienced members on their committee who might chair hearings. It was also suggested that an ad hoc standby group of past committee members could fill in when needed for an extra workload or if someone goes on leave. Their proposal will be taken under consideration by the FEC later this semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary