

Minutes of a Faculty Meeting

September 6, 2011

President Simmons convened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. The minutes of the meeting of May 27 were approved with corrections.

Professor Shank, reporting as Chair of the FEC, welcomed colleagues to the opening of Brown's 247th year by remembering his predecessor's repeated "buenas tardes," a greeting a virologist might only echo with reference to a virus of the day, and recalling as well that his long presence among us was brought into sharp focus by having recognized among his first-year advisees the child of someone he had advised as a first-year medical student. He signaled the service of continuing and new members of the FEC, including immediate past chair Cynthia Garcia Coll, whom the FEC will be consulting by electronic means while she is on leave abroad, and Reid Cooper, Geological Sciences; Peter Monti, Behavioral and Social Sciences; Seth Rockman, History/Ethnic Studies; Philip Rosen, Modern Culture and Media Studies; and Harold Roth, Religious Studies. He also noted vacancies on the FEC soon to be filled. He reminded members of Convocation to be held outside on the Green at 4:00 the next day, with an address by the Provost. Inviting members to bring issues before the FEC, he reviewed pending matters, including IRB protocols and procedures, the academic calendar, ROTC, and the tabled motion to redefine guidelines for CFED. Noting the interesting line-up of a new provost and a new dean of the faculty, he stated that many issues residual from the previous year relating to tenure and promotion would be under discussion with Dean McLaughlin, and specifically an extension of that policy discussion from the treatment of promotion from assistant to associate professor to the treatment of promotion from associate to full professor. Another topic of continuing interest is faculty conflict of interest policy, which may be the subject of a Faculty Forum.

Professor Savage (Computer Science) spoke for the Nominations Committee, bringing to the floor the nomination of Professor Samuel Perry (East Asian Studies) to the Committee on Academic Standing; the nomination carried unanimously. He also called to the attention of the faculty open slots on the FEC for Vice Chair (humanities) and for an assistant professor.

President Simmons offered her greetings, happy to open a new year and confessing that she found it disconcerting to see Rajiv Vohra so relaxed, a condition that ought to be punished. She offered welcome to everyone to the new school year, especially 40 new faculty members who have joined us this year. She introduced and welcomed new appointments in the senior administration: Lina Fruzzetti Professor of Anthropology, as Associate Provost and Director of Institutional Diversity; Kevin McLaughlin, former chair of the English Department and German Studies, as Dean of the Faculty; Larry Larson joining us from the University of California San Diego to become Brown's inaugural dean of the School of Engineering; and Mark Schlissel, formerly Dean of Biological Sciences at Berkeley, as our new Provost. Also joining us this year is the class of 2015, which is the result of the most competitive admissions process in Brown's history with an overall admit rate of 8.9%. 30% of the incoming class are valedictorians;

91% are in the top 10% of their graduating class; 59% come from public high schools; 16% are the first in their families to go to college; 34% are students of color; 15% are international students; 17 are in the Brown-RISD dual degree program; and 55 are in the Program for Liberal Medical Education. The Graduate School welcomed 325 students to masters programs and 256 students to PhD programs. Finally, 109 students began their medical school career in the new Medical School building, 222 Richmond Street. The Warren Alpert Medical School opened its new home with distinguished guests including both Rhode Island senators, both Rhode Island congressmen, Governor Chafee, Mayor Tavares and Gordon Fox, the Speaker of the House. Governor Chafee called the event "a catalytic moment in the history of Rhode Island," as public officials see the building as the foundation of future economic growth in the Jewelry District and Providence. More importantly, the immediate beneficiaries of the building are our medical students, who finally have a place to call home. The building provides them with state-of-the-art facilities for teaching and learning as well as an abundance of informal space for group studying. The President thanked Dean Wing for his leadership of the Medical School and of this project and for his tireless commitment to this building and to the Medical School. Turning to the volatility of the market and effects on Brown revenue, the President recalled the most recent cataclysms on Wall Street as well as the very sorry state of the debt-ceiling debates in Congress. The most recent jobs report confirmed what we suspected - that ongoing high unemployment would continue to be a drag on the prospects for a robust recovery. With predictions of another downturn, there is a sense that the long nightmare of uncertainty over the state of the economy is not yet over. This will inevitably mean that with a more constrained growth of the endowment and a more sober donor mood we will be weighing even more carefully additions to the budget. The URC will once again have its work cut out for it as we balance the necessity of moving forward with new initiatives while supporting ongoing needs at the necessary level. Currently, we expect the FY11 return on the endowment to be 18.5% with the market value of the endowment at approximately \$2.56 billion as of July 30th; we expect stronger returns from many of our peers given our asset classes and the steps we took to mitigate the effects of the 2008 downturn. Going forward, we project a return on the endowment of 8.5% a year, in regard to revenues, we are assuming a 4% growth in the payout per year, but there is concern among some that this projection is too optimistic. Sponsored funding is Brown's second largest source of income, and with the end of the ARRA (America Recovery & Reinvestment Act) funding, we will see a decrease in revenue in this area. Any growth will be dependent on an alignment of our faculty research with the priorities of federal government grants. Fundraising, while a successful source of revenue for Brown, will be affected by an overall weak economy. We do hope to keep the overall cash giving level at Campaign level in this post-campaign period. Given all these factors together, we will need to identify new sources of revenue to support incremental investments in our faculty, students and facilities. The President noted that we are set to resume discussion on two important questions that were left unresolved at the end of last year. The ROTC committee submitted its final report in July. She thanked Katherine Bergeron and the Committee for their work in elucidating this issue and giving guidance on how we should proceed. The Athletics Committee, led by Dick Spies, submitted its report in April. We suspended work on the report until the fall, and, again, now that we are back the President is asking the campus to resume the

discussion so that we can move toward a conclusion over the next month. She plans to issue recommendations on athletics in time for the October meeting of the Corporation. Finally, the President updated the faculty on discussions with the city about how Brown can help with the severe fiscal problems our city is having. She met again with the Mayor last week and found it very helpful to receive an update from him on efforts he is making to address systemic problems that have brought the city to its current financial state. He assures us that, while the city is asking Brown's help in addressing the budget gap, it is doing so in the context of very serious on-going measures to institute a change in the way the city handles its affairs. He also emphasized that he is asking other not-for-profits and universities to provide PILOT payments in excess of what has already been negotiated under the previous mayor. We have brought a proposal forward to the Corporation that sets out what Brown might do to increase its payments to the city. The Corporation is very cautiously considering the proposal.

In response to a question, the President stated that the entering class comprises 1485 students and slightly over 123 transfers.

Provost Schlissel stated the he found it a pleasure to have the opportunity to say hello and introduce himself to colleagues on the Brown Faculty, using “colleagues” because he is a professor of biology. He has served as a professor for 20 years, first at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and more recently at the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught graduate, medical, and undergraduate students, most recently the introductory biology course (650 students, webcast). He has taught freshmen seminars in AIDS and health reform. And he started an NIH-funded research lab studying the immune system—antibodies, autoimmune disease, leukemia. He has mentored 20 successful PhD candidates with four more in the pipeline. He believes that this demonstrates his identity as a faculty member and a lifelong educator and scientist, and he commented that he does think of a Provost as being on the “dark side” of administration. He commented that he has been brought to this stage in his career by multiple, increasingly responsible leadership jobs at Berkeley in the past decade. He enjoys looking at a complex situation involving people, opportunities, finances, and competing interests and finding an optimum solution or path forward. He views administration as community service and the ultimate expression of faculty self-governance. He stated that from early observations, Brown is vibrant, collegial, energetic, ambitious place. Its value system is deeply held and it includes strong focus on undergraduate education and commitment to scholarship. He came here because Brown has great strengths and the ambition to become an even more important university. The Plan for Academic Enrichment built capacity by adding 100 faculty (a 17% increase in size), growing the graduate school, new and renovated buildings (Granoff; Alpert School of Medicine). He views the next phase as using that capacity to make important contributions to society—through creative modes of education, through research in the lab, library, archives, through scholarly creativity in the humanities and the arts. He believes in taking the long view—to make the world a better place for our grandchildren. New ideas for centers, programs, and institutes always come forward and we will proceed with some of these. But he has also made a commitment to provide current faculty with tools they need to be successful in their teaching and scholarly activity. There are big challenges for the years ahead. Financial uncertainty requires great prudence, but we need to maintain momentum in such areas as

the Humanities Initiative (that we are rethinking), how to take best advantage of the Granoff to enhance our Arts community, how get the Engineering School off to a great start and keep working towards a School of Public Health. We also foresee fostering a manageable number of new campus-wide initiatives such as Brain Science or the Slavery and Justice project. We have to put into practice the results of last year's discussions and votes about tenure processes and keep trying to enhance the teaching and scholarly capacity of the faculty while supporting faculty careers and aspirations. The Corporation continues to keep close watch. He expressed his commitment to work with the FEC and broader faculty to keep improving this already great University, and he stated that he looks forward to our shared successes.

Asked if he would be teaching, the Provost replied that he would plan to do so in the spring, perhaps by participating as a lecturer in someone else's course, followed by a first year seminar the following year, noting that he daughter is a member of the first year class. In response to a question about the process for new proposals, he stated that he looks toward new efforts that play to strengths and that cut across disciplines, using a bottom up principle that depends upon faculty interest, leadership, and support. He also stated that the identity of any given project has to be securely locked into the common interests of the community as a whole and that building infrastructure was as important as striking out in totally new directions. Professor Hermance asked about the university/college concept, and the Provost replied that in his experience there was no understanding of that term in the educational community outside of Providence, but that he himself was committed to clearly labeling Brown historical successes in combining the goals of the best undergraduate teaching with the goals of research.

Dean of the Faculty McLaughlin wished to his faculty and administration colleagues welcome, acknowledging that it was a pleasure to see the faces of friendly colleagues. He stated that he finds it an honor without irony to be entering his new position, because Brown has been a good place for him and for the good work he sees around him. He is thrilled to be entering this job and he is moving at this point towards fully taking on the responsibilities. His general priority may be obvious but bears repeating; it is to strengthen the faculty, and everything his office does is a means to that end. He observed that he would be gratified to learn from the faculty about everything within reason, including complaints. He expressed his thanks to Rajiv Vohra for his generosity in sharing his wisdom and to former associate provost Carolyn Dean, now at the Watson Center, as well as to Janet Blume, who will serve as Associate Dean for the year. He thanked Mark Schlissel, with whom it is a pleasure to work, stating that he is blessed with clarity, focus and great openness. He reported that his first weeks in office have been busy, as work goes forward implementing newly requested searches, with a few still under discussion. He also reported on a few issues being considered: the implementation of new tenure and promotion guidelines to be developed in consultation with the FEC and to be the subject of a Faculty Forum; the establishment of a set of general principles for hiring plans, recognizing the need for a balance of tenured and untenured staff, along with a new form for requesting a search; the creation of a best practices document for the tenure review process; the development of guidelines for the oversight of assistant professors with criteria that work across university as well as guidelines for contract renewal; and finally the development of a best practices document for mentoring and

evaluating junior professors. He intends to use monthly meetings with chairs to discuss strategic identification of areas of research that cut across departmental divisions and to understand better from the perspective of the Dean of the Faculty the work done in departments, so that chair's meetings have more the quality of a seminar than a question and answer session based upon what happens to be one one's mind. He stated that the Humanities Initiative needs to be reconceived and opened up as a comprehensive asset to the Plan for Academic Enrichment, allowing things to be accomplished at Brown that are not now being done. In response to a question about the challenges of a slowing retirement rate, he called attention to the recently released phased retirement plan and expressed the need to look again at questions like health benefits that continue for many to be an impediment. On questions of diversity in faculty hiring, he stated that despite falling short of some expected goals and the challenges of the process throughout higher education, the effort to continue to identify and retain a diverse faculty must continue and that we should not assume failure nor take disappointment for granted.

In view of the reception to come, meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Merriam Foley
Secretary of the Faculty