

BROWN UNIVERSITY

Minutes of Faculty Meeting— April 7, 2009

President Simmons called the meeting to order at about 4:07 p.m. The customary motion to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. was made, seconded, and passed.

The Faculty went into Executive Session until 4:15 p.m.

The Minutes of the February 3, 2009 Faculty Meeting were approved. The Minutes of the March 3, 2009 Faculty Meeting were approved; three minor editorial changes will be made.

Professor Dreier, Chair of the FEC, commented that a suggestion had been made to the FEC that faculty members take a pay cut because of the present economic situation. The FEC suggests that faculty supporting the idea instead contribute to the Annual Fund or make a gift to Brown in another way. Later on in the meeting Prof. Valente asked if the matter could be discussed further. President Simmons commented that it would be a mistake to cut faculty salaries now, after the major effort to improve them—faculty members are free, of course, to make a gift to Brown.

Prof. Dreier recognized Prof. Andrea Simmons, Chair of the Nominations Committee. Prof. Simmons noted that the vote approving appointment to committees at the last meeting needed to be ratified because of the lack of a quorum. The vote was retaken and passed unanimously. The Nominations Committee has been working hard and support from the faculty is appreciated.

Dean Bergeron described a plan to change the time of opening convocation to 4:00 PM, on the Wednesday that the University opens in September. The Faculty Meeting formerly held at that time would be moved to the following week. The present time of the opening convocation is disruptive to classes. This schedule will be tried in 2009 and a decision on a future schedule will be made after that. Some discussion followed about the importance of business conducted at that first Faculty Meeting and about the loss of Wednesday afternoon classes before Thanksgiving. Prof. Hermance asked why Convocation could not be held on Tuesday—the day is needed for advising meetings, or Thursday—the University officially opens on Wednesday.

Prof. Dreier returned to a motion from the previous meeting intended to clarify various deadlines in the tenure process. Action on this motion had been postponed at the March 3, 2009 meeting. The motion had been introduced by the Tenure, Promotions, and Appointments Committee. The Committee now wants to withdraw the motion. Dean Vohra, speaking for the Committee, agreed that the motion should be withdrawn.

Prof. Dreier then returned to the motion concerning the name of the University holiday in October, now called “Columbus Day”. The Faculty had voted, at the March 3, 2009 meeting, to approve the motion but a quorum was not present at the vote so ratification was needed. Prof. Dreier read the motion and clarified the reason the FEC had not endorsed it. Some discussion ensued. Prof. Cutts took issue with part of the rationale presented. Prof. Bossy suggested we celebrate Veteran’s Day and not Columbus Day. The Provost commented that faculty members like a holiday coinciding with children’s school holidays and that Brown students wanted a

holiday in October. Prof. Banchoff believes a holiday is needed in October, approximately mid way between the beginning of classes and Thanksgiving. Prof. Wey-Gomez noted the students were not at the present meeting but he wanted to ensure their position was known. He pointed out that attitudes about Columbus have changed since the holiday was created and the students now feel that recognizing him speaks to the values of the University. Mr. Patterson called the question, a second was made. The Faculty voted to end discussion. The original motion carried on a voice vote but not unanimously.

Prof. Schneider presented a report from the Academic Priorities Committee supporting a change in the name of the Department of Theatre, Speech, and Dance to the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. The new name reflects better what is happening in the department. The proposal and a supporting letter from the Provost had been distributed with the meeting Agenda. The text of the proposal is

MOTION: The Faculty acknowledges receipt of the report from the Academic Priorities Committee supporting changing the name of the Department of Theatre, Speech and Dance to the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. The Faculty recommends to the President and Board of Fellows that the name of the Department of Theatre, Speech and Dance be changed to the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies.

The Faculty approved on a voice vote.

President Simmons then gave her report, dealing with budget cuts for Fiscal Year 2010, budget cuts in future years, and the NEASC accreditation team. In terms of budget cuts for Fiscal Year 2010, the initial focus was on vacant staff positions. The number of positions to be eliminated is 67, of these 36 are presently vacant. The remaining 31 persons have nearly all been informed that they will be laid off. Their supervisors have worked with Human Resources to identify expanded severance, counseling, and possible lateral moves within the University. Vice President Huidekoper and Provost Kertzer will send out a notice to the entire campus about these cuts in the next few days.

The President noted that nothing is more unsettling in the work place than job eliminations. An alternative to these steps would have been steps such as a reduction in Financial Aid, a significant increase in tuition, or cuts in academic programs. It is not that we value staff and administrators less but that protecting the academic core is vital to the future of the University.

A second round of cuts will take place next year, to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2011—the summer of 2010. The President emphasized that we anticipate no further layoffs until then, giving staff an opportunity to regroup. The President noted that she is talking about layoffs due to the budget crisis; departments may have reasons to dismiss employees for other reasons. The President pointed out we could have decided to eliminate positions early but such would be indifferent to the lives of employees and their families. The President stated that we should trim in a way that gives, as much as possible, those affected an opportunity to transition to alternative employment. We are not a corporation beholden to stockholders to maximize financial gain. We must give steadfast attention to the collegial and humane spirit on which the advancement of social good is borne.

Finally, the President described the NEASC accreditation visit. The team is lead by President Amy Gutmann of the University of Pennsylvania. It has been at Brown since the previous Sunday afternoon, exploring all aspects of the University. The team will meet with senior administrators on the Wednesday following this Faculty meeting and present their findings. A formal report and a recommendation on accreditation will follow in several months. NEASC normally does not make their reports public, although the President believes such reports should be public. President Simmons thanked Brenda Allen who led the campus team very effectively, on top of her many other duties.

Prof. Russom asked for clarification on the dates of the second cuts—they will be effective June 30, 2010. Prof. Fausto-Sterling asked about the process for determining cuts. The Organizational Review Committee will take a lead role. The process will involve as many people as possible and cuts will be distributed throughout the University. A question was asked about the total magnitude of the cuts. Vice President Huidekoper explained that we are trying to cut \$90-\$95 Million from the projected E&G budget over 5 years. Thirty-five Million has been cut from the Fiscal Year 2010 projected budget and we will need to get another \$30 Million from Fiscal Year 2011's projected budget. We were able to get the first \$35 Million out of the Fiscal Year 2010 by freezing salaries (achieved about \$9 Million), from negotiating a very favorable utilities agreement (about \$10 Million), and from actually cutting about \$6 Million from the budget via position reductions and operating budget cuts. Those cuts, with inflation, will help us achieve the needed \$35 Million by Fiscal Year 2013. The Registrar asked about hiring new people—we will forego hiring as much as is feasible. The President reiterated her determination not to come out of the financial crisis with a faculty salary scale lower than our peer institutions.

The Provost introduced Vice President Clyde Briant and Associate Vice President Regina White to discuss the Draft Conflict of Interest Policy. A copy of the Draft had been circulated with the Meeting Agenda. Vice President Briant explained that an impetus for the new policy was a request from the Audit Committee of the Corporation last spring. The former policy was dated, relevant problems have become more sophisticated, and the national climate surrounding conflict of interest has changed. Goals for the policy are to maintain a positive environment for research at Brown and to manage conflict, rather than legislate. He explained that the Draft has been widely reviewed. He and Vice President White have made presentations to many groups within the University. The basic changes are: 1) Faculty members in clinical practice comply with the policies of their employers. 2) No dollar limit below which a report is not required. 3) The role of the Conflict of Interest Review Board is clarified. 4) Support is given to students. 5) An expectation that faculty members will bring possible conflicts of interest to the Review Board for discussion.

Some discussion followed. A question was asked about why hospital-based faculty are not included—basically because we cannot enforce our policy in such cases, if the research does not go through the University. Prof. Van Dam asked whether a change was made about the amount of time a faculty member can commit to outside professional activities—no change. Prof. Diebold asked when the new forms for faculty will be distributed—in the fall. Prof. Hermance noted a confidentiality concern about these forms; they pass through many hands. Prof. Hermance also was concerned about some of the items specifically prohibited on page 58 of the Agenda (page 12 of the Draft.) By limiting interaction between faculty members and businesses, the University is losing opportunities. Vice President Briant suggested that particular situations be discussed in another setting. President Simmons agreed. Prof. Colwill asked about funds not

received through Brown, such as political campaign donations—not covered. Prof. Diebold asked for clarification about money given to faculty members, for example, through a prize for professional work—these should be assigned to a departmental account. Money given to Brown to assist a faculty member’s work cannot be used for personal gain. Prof. Van Dam noted that use of such funds for summer salary could be interpreted as personal gain. Vice President Briant urged that in cloudy situations “Call us first”. Prof. Savage suggested a wording modification, which was accepted. The Draft will now go back to the Audit Committee.

Dean Bonde then made a presentation about the Graduate School. She noted that a Forum will be held in a few weeks. In a time of flat funding, it is important to preserve the research mission. Many grant proposals for graduate student support are being written and the reward structure for writing such grants has been improved. An advisory group has been established to look at stipends for Teaching Assistants. The number of Teaching Assistants has stayed stable over the last decade at about 370. The advisory group has made recommendations, which are in a report that will be on the web site. The assignment of Teaching Assistants to courses from now on will consider the size of course enrollments. Various new kinds of Teaching Assistant appointments, for example in graduate programs that do not have a doctoral component, will be created. The Graduate School is working with the Sheridan Center is preparing and supporting Teaching Assistants. Different kinds of activities for Teaching Assistants will be established. Students who come to Brown with an outside fellowship, such as a Fulbright, are eligible to be Teaching Assistants. Dean Bonde pointed out that tuition is never “waived”. Her office may cover tuition costs in some cases. Prof. Valente pointed out the need to reconcile the need for graduate students to gain teaching experience with the effect on undergraduates. He feels the present system is working.

Dean Bergeron presented the report of the College Curriculum Council. The report had been distributed with the Meeting Agenda. She spoke of the various activities of the CCC. No questions were asked.

Vice President Karen Davis presented the report of the Human Resources Advisory Board. The report had been distributed with the Meeting Agenda. She noted that Prof. Pelcovits was Vice-Chair and was also present. Among the issues the Board has been considering is a contract with Work Options for backup care. The Board has reviewed several compensation policies. Prof. Lipsitt noted with pleasure the inclusion of retiree health insurance in the report and suggested the Board work with the Committee on Faculty Retirement. Vice President Davis thanked Prof. Lipsitt for the suggestion.

There being neither Old Business nor New Business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barrett Hazeltine
Interim Secretary of the Faculty

