

**Report on the SUNY Faculty Senate Plenary
April 7-8, 2006, SUNY Plattsburgh**

- Runi Mukherji of SUNY Old Westbury has been collecting data dealing with the change in faculty workload and ramifications of this on the allocation of resources, especially in terms of support services provided by professional non-faculty personnel. This has been a two-year study originated at the request of the faculty senate and Runi provided a preliminary report. She and her committee are beginning to sift through the data, and I suspect there will be a more comprehensive report on this in the near future.
- Steve Worona of Educause gave a presentation *Faculty Governance, Computer Policy, and Law*. In this presentation, Steve discussed issues concerning the use of the internet on campuses; in particular, who decides the policies on a campus with regards to censorship of pornographic websites, monitoring of student and faculty webpages, etc. It was Steve's experience that many campuses do not take a pro-active approach to these issues and that quite often these decisions are made in an ad-hoc fashion by (typically) IT staff. In many instances, faculty and students are unaware of which sites are being blocked. He made the case for a more systematic, proactive approach involving IT staff, administration, faculty, and students. Each summer, Educause provides workshops dealing with issues on internet use at Cornell University. For more information, Steve may be contacted at sworona@educause.edu . Further information can be found at www.educause.edu .
- It would seem that the Academic Bill of Rights Issue has not made it out of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. It seems that the consensus is that this is a solution looking for a problem and that there are already safeguards built into the system to address the concerns brought up by ABoR. The Academic Affairs Committee is not willing to bring this issue to the full board and other than Trustee DeRussey, the BOT is satisfied with the current measures. My impression is that the state legislature is also satisfied.
- The issue of the open meeting policy came up a number of times during the plenary, and I tried to pin people down as to recommendations for campuses concerning this. I could not get a direct answer, as people seemed reluctant to take a stand. It seems that legal counsel has told the Faculty Council of Community Colleges that the sunshine laws do not apply to advisory boards in the system but that on campus committees that affect policy, the laws might come into effect. It was pointed out that no campus is in full compliance of this law. Again I found it very difficult to get a direct answer, but the best advice I got was an off-the-cuff remark which was not to worry about this issue until someone with deep pockets wants to sue us.
- In the report of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, the FCCC President Kimberly Reiser mentioned that the presidents of the community colleges are putting together documentation on the costs of the strengthened campus based assessment of general education. As you may recall, the Provost has insisted that systems

administration will pay for all of the costs incurred but to this date specifics have not been given either from the provosts office nor it would seem from the campuses in terms of specific documentation as to costs. In fact, later in the plenary Chancellor Ryan said that he was working with Betty Capaldi and Provost Salins on this issue. It might be wise for Fredonia to be prepared to provide a budget dealing with the costs of designing, implementing, and gathering data from gened assessments.

- The Provost put together a panel discussion dealing with bridging the gap between colleges and K-12 schools in terms of the preparation of teachers and in fact more general problems in education in New York State. The panelists were
 - Janis Somerville, Senior Associate, National Association of System Heads and Director, NAS/Education Trust State P-16
 - Joseph Frey, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Quality Assurance, NYS Education Department
 - Provost Salins
 - Suzanne Weber, Associate Dean – SUNY Oswego
 - Pamela Sandoval, SUNY Assistant Provost for P-16

This panel presented data concerning problems with US student achievement in schools and gaps due to gender, socio-economic status, ethnic background, etc. To tell you the truth, there was nothing new to me in this presentation and as this panel discussion was interrupted by a fire alarm, there was very little time for discussion afterward. I was disappointed that there was no mention by the panel of the role of in-service teachers in terms of mentoring both student teachers and beginning in-service teachers. It appeared to me that there has not been any contact between this panel and the professional associations in this manner. I brought this up to Pamela Sandoval after the presentation and she agreed to speak at the fall 2006 conference of the Association of Mathematics Teachers' of NYS (I'm on the executive board). In my opinion this cooperation is vital otherwise the panel's initiative is doomed to failure. I also think that the traditional teacher colleges such as Fredonia need to take the initiative in these partnerships. I'm not confident that SUNY Central has the direct experience in teacher training to do this without our help. They also seem reluctant to seek this help.

The Chancellor was on hand to address the concerns of the various sectors. In addition to some of the issues outlined above, the issue of involving Faculty Governance in the search for a new Provost arose. Personally, I think that this issue is being blown out of proportion by certain members of the Faculty Senate. The Chancellor was visibly disturbed by the attacks that he has received regarding the make-up of the search committee. Clearly, it is easy for the committee to grow to a size where it cannot function. The Chancellor explained that he tried to include a number of College Presidents who have had experience as provosts. To me, it makes sense to limit this committee to people who will be working directly with the provost. A case can be made that the University Faculty Senate has direct contact with the provost and it would make sense for someone from the senate to be on the committee. Having said that, I think that the Chancellor has made a

good faith effort to keep an open process when in fact the current provost was appointed with little or no process. I really think that the Faculty Senate could back off on this issue.

The issue of the electronic sharing of library resources was presented by Marilyn Kramer. Basically the issue is that electronic sources are not shared to the extent that they could be and that there should be more coordination among SUNY campuses under the direction of Systems Administration. Ziya Arnavut serves on this committee and first brought this issue to light. Any questions can be directed to Ziya.

These are what I thought were the main issues at the Plenary. More detailed minutes can be obtained on the Faculty Senate Webpage www.suny.edu/facultysenate

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