

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)
Meeting

September 26, 2006
3:00-5:00 p.m.
Corporation Room, University Hall

Minutes

Present: Ann Dill, Chair; Ruth Colwill, Vice-chair; Bob Pelcovits, Past Chair; Lundy Braun, Svetlana Evdokimova, Nancy Jacobs, Jody Rich, William Rakowski, and Geoffrey Russom.

Guests: Kim Boekelheide, Phil Brown, Joan Lusk, Vincent Mor, Kathryn Spoehr, Eric Suuberg, Rajiv Vohra

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. Minutes of the 9/12 FEC meeting were approved with a minor amendment.

Dean Vohra asked the FEC to consider his proposal for clarification of Brown's policy on faculty holding appointments elsewhere, the changes to the language distributed with the FEC agenda. Last year, the current policy was discussed in various forums with faculty and chairs after which a memo explaining it was mailed to the Faculty in December. The policy has been applied consistently. Since the question about other appointments is asked in the Conflict of Interest disclosure form, which refers to the Corporation policy on Conflict of Interest, the Dean thinks it would be appropriate and useful for faculty to have this stated in the policy. He feels that Brown has an obligation to its Faculty to provide a clear statement about conflict of commitment. Dean Vohra would like the Corporation to take a look at this modification at their October meeting. The policy is important enough to be written somewhere other than in annual reminder memos. At some point in the future, it may be written into the Handbook for Academic Administration. Discussion ensued whereby the FEC inquired as to whether or not Dean Vohra studied similar policies at other institutions. He did and found them to be very clearly stated. The FEC thanked Dean Vohra for giving them the opportunity to review and comment on his proposal.

Professor Kathryn Spoehr, Past Chair of the Nominations Committee and Professor Joan Lusk, the newly-elected Chair, were invited to discuss the annual report from the Nominations Committee distributed with today's agenda. Professor Dill thanked them for a very informative report which described the Committee's activities, method of operation, and the challenges they faced last year. Getting faculty members to serve on committees is always a challenge, over-commitment being the primary excuse for not getting involved. Service on committees of a very large number of senior faculty members is lost because many are academic department chairs and directors which makes them ineligible to serve on many faculty committees. Additionally, their administrative duties leave them little or no time to serve on committees for which they are eligible. Is there a way of making department chairs eligible to serve on faculty committees without risking conflict of interest? Departments very often discourage junior faculty from participating in faculty governance until they achieve tenure. When asked by the FEC if electronic submission of committee preference sheets rather than a paper mailing would help, Professor Spoehr did not think it would matter. She suggested having an incentive program such as entering a faculty member's name into a drawing for a gift certificate if they fill out and submit

a committee preference sheet. Perhaps the Dean of the Faculty could make it mandatory that departments do a certain percentage of faculty governance work. It is important that faculty get more involved. Professor Lusk was invited to present the Nominations Report at the November 7 faculty meeting.

Professor Dill gave a chair's report. The FEC officers presented the Provost with the FEC's suggestions for faculty to serve on the Internationalization Committee. The VP for CIS search, science studies issues, and a Medical School Strategic Planning Committee were also discussed. The latter has as its primary focus to study the Medical School's relationships with the hospitals.

At the faculty agenda meeting for October 3, it was decided to deviate from the usual order of business as outlined in the Faculty Rules in an attempt to make the faculty meeting more focused on faculty issues. A two-thirds vote of approval at the faculty meeting will allow for this change in the order of business. On October 3rd, Professor Dill will ask the faculty to send the FEC their ideas for discussion at future faculty meetings.

Professor Kim Boekelheide presented a proposal for a new Center for Environmental Health and Technology (CEHT). Professors Phil Brown, Eric Suuberg and Vincent Mor were also present. The proposed CEHT is the product of an interdisciplinary effort at Brown that brings together faculty in the Division of Biology and Medicine, the Division of Engineering, and the Departments of Geological Sciences and Sociology. It is intended to be a research-oriented center investigating the complex health-related, scientific, engineering, and society issues related to remediation and reuse of contaminated land and hazardous waste sites. The CEHT proposal builds on an award of 11.5 million dollars from the Superfund Basic Research Program. The Academic Priorities Committee supports this proposal and encourages its consideration by the Faculty.

Discussion ensued about the disciplinary aspects of the proposed Center, joint recruitment with the Department of Public Health, and research relationships. Will the Center be doing some long-term thinking in terms of what research questions could be developed to address occupational health hazards? Professor Boekelheide responded that such efforts are already under way. Professor Brown noted that he has been collecting data on the history of how toxic contamination came into existence. The Center is expected to be very successful. Professor Boekelheide will prepare an abridged version of the CEHT proposal for inclusion in the November 7 faculty meeting agenda packet and will be present at the meeting for discussion.

The FEC discussed the list of nominees for the Faculty Committee for the Campaign taking into consideration gender and ethnic diversity. It was determined more humanists were needed and hospital-based faculty will be added to the list.

At a meeting with Dean Vohra, Professor Dill brought up the FEC's question of flexibility with the new Leave Policy. The Dean expects to build in some flexibility, but any leave taken will still reset the clock until the next leave opportunity. The FEC would like to see more explicit language about a window of time for flexibility, options to make up the 25% cut in pay, timing of clock resetting, and a process for appeal. Professor Dill will bring these comments to the FAC and Dean of the Faculty for consideration and will ask for a public version of the proposed policy for posting to the Web. The FEC plans to send a bulk e-mail referring faculty to the web site and will ask that they use the sounding board as a vehicle for their feedback or contact Professor Dill.

In closing, Professor Dill stated that although it is not a perfect sabbatical policy, it would do the most good for the majority of the faculty. It also leaves room for ways to deal with it more at a later date.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Moreau
Secretary