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Spring 2005**

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION SPRING ISSUE, 2005

**Peter Wegner, Editor
Peter Richardson, Coeditor**

We are pleased to introduce the Spring 2005 issue of the Faculty Bulletin. The 11 essays are varied in their subject matter, and group naturally into administrative and faculty contributions.

We begin with an article by an alumnus of Brown and former Provost William Simmons, who discusses the philosophy of former President Henry Wriston, and who left a strong imprint on Brown - Bill shows how close we remain to Wriston's vision.

In Wriston's time the Graduate School was in its early days, and Karen Newman (its retiring Dean) shows how well it has evolved and achieves high selectivity. The sustained commitment of many current graduate students to take up academic appointments underlie the opportunities for professional development provided through the Sheridan Center, which also offers assistance in pedagogy to regular faculty and attracts people from RISD as well, as described by Rebecca More. Lewis Lipsitt (famed for his work on child development) has stretched the age-scope of his activity to embrace the ElderBears, the majority of whom are retired faculty and senior administrators, and describes recent developments and foci of the group.

The evolution in our faculty governance is discussed in a group of articles. The incoming Chair of the Faculty and FEC, Bob Pelcovits, describes FEC activities as well as the added regular contacts with the senior administration that many faculty members may know little about. Jim Padbury adds briefly about the Medical FEC, a younger committee that helps integrate faculty off-campus with on-campus. David Rand explains how the Academic Priorities Committee (APC) has focused its energies in several directions, and Peter Weber describes how the Faculty Affairs Committee has been tackling items in its charge.

Two articles are focused on departmental matters: John Tyler describes for us the latest stages in the progressive adaptations of the Education Department, especially in the quality of the faculty. Steven Sloman uses the student course evaluations in Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences to encourage us all to think about improving the instruments we use for this purpose.

Peter Wegner comments on the significant weaknesses of a few well known philosophers like Descartes, Kant, and Aquinas whose widespread acceptance by their peers has been rarely displaced in popular thought by later thinkers or teachers of philosophy. He suggests that this surprising resistance to paradigmatic change also occurs among politicians, scientists, and religious fundamentalists whose status depends on retaining philosophical or religious principles of faith or behavior.

Finally, Peter Richardson reminds us of the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII in Europe, recalling some effects of the war and its aftermath at Brown, and a personal connection made very recently at a museum in London.

HENRY M. WRISTON ON LIBERAL EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

William S. Simmons
Professor of Anthropology

“If I were to name a single characteristic which is essential to the life...of a university, it would be hospitality toward ideas.”

“Your real vocation is not that by which you will earn your living; your great vocation is that of citizenship....the quality of your citizenship far transcends in importance the manner in which you seek to earn your daily bread.”

“Intellectuals are often highly sensitized to the dangers that inhere in a social system; their warnings may be storm signals which we continue to ignore at our peril.”

(Henry M. Wriston 1957: 134, 135, 228)

Brown University President, Henry Merritt Wriston, had firm ideas about the character and purpose of liberal education that continue to animate Brown's values and practices even today. My purpose here is not to critique or expand upon these ideas but to condense them, to make them explicit, and thus provide a snapshot of Wriston's sense of Brown during his presidency from 1937 to 1955.

In his book, *The Nature of A Liberal College* (published in 1937, the final year of his Presidency at Lawrence College, and his initial year at Brown), Wriston made the interesting point, reminiscent of the eighteenth-century notion of the internal call to the ministry, that a liberal education is a profound experience, not something that happens to the person, but “something which occurs within him, makes some organic change in the structure of his life and thought, and leaves him permanently different. The effects are not transitory; they are part, thereafter, of that mysterious entity which we call his personality” (1937: 1). This organic change in the individual is strongly based in emotion, which has an important formative role in liberal education: “The feelings of most people are both more intense and more influential upon their lives than are their thoughts. Moreover, it is fair to say that their emotional experiences are as valid, as truthful in bearing news of the outside world to them, as are their intellectual experiences. Education...cannot escape the cultivation of an expanding emotional life. That the emotions are capable of discipline and direction is indubitable” (1937: 99). Faculty must have “a faith in the emotional life equal to their intellectual zeal, believing that happiness comes not from distraction but fulfillment. Under their example and leadership students may learn to cultivate a zestful receptivity toward sound and color and form; they may have all the spiritual enrichment inherent in beauty, imagination, and emotional experience distilled by reflection....The ideal is a personality enriched by many kinds of harmonious experience. To that end let the college employ all its powers, residential and curricular, architectural and aesthetic, personal and professional” (1937: 121).

Wriston noted the power of architecture to enrich the liberal educational experience in the dedication to his attractive booklet on the reopening of University Hall after extensive renovation: “ This booklet is published because the reopening of University Hall has great meaning for the University....And it is dedicated to future Brown men with the hope that they may become aware, through their knowledge of the history and significance of the building, of the great liberal tradition for which Brown University has stood for 175 years” (Wriston 1940: 3).

According to Wriston, (and consistent with the earlier assertions of John Henry Newman 1852: 3-4) the experience offered by liberal education is valuable for its own sake. Great experiences “which alter life as a whole most significantly, as education and love and religion most certainly do, are all things the values of which are direct, immediate, subjective, and intrinsic” (Wriston 1937: 2). Liberal knowledge is capable of being its own end. Given that knowledge is channeled through numerous academic disciplines that are in turn becoming more specialized and complex, Wriston acknowledged that “It is inconceivable that education should include all knowledge” and advised that “We should choose that which appeals to us as the most vital—but our emphasis should be not only upon the content, but upon its relationships to other fields of study, and upon its most characteristic disciplines” (1937: 162).

Living in what he described as an age of engineering and applied science, Wriston perceived that triumphs in these fields cast shadows of doubt over the relevance and worthiness of liberal arts disciplines: “One of most stubborn obstacles to a proper appreciation of a liberal education is the latent suspicion that it is impractical” (1937:4). As these shadows of doubt lengthened, academics were increasingly “pilloried” for “crack-pot theories” [cause for reflection on legendary Professor Josiah Carberry’s Department of Psychoceramics] (1957: 226). Their inadequate salaries reflected the growing lack of respect for intellectuals. In his 1955 address entitled “Liberal Arts at Mid-Century” he declared that the liberal arts “have suffered from lack of faith in their validity for the modern world.... many students come to college afraid of the word ‘culture’, eager for skills, the more obviously marketable the better....those who should have the profoundest faith in their validity nonetheless attach labels to them to make them seem ‘practical’” (1957: 40-41).

However, Wriston argued, engineering and applied science are in a sense superstructures, made possible by pure research motivated by a love for discovery and truth: “Pure science is well named; at its best it is pure from any taint of ulterior motive. The fact that it proves the bedrock upon which applied science is to be reared is often, indeed usually, of no profound concern to the worker in this field. His approach is through love of truth, the beauty of an intellectual pattern, or the spirit of adventure and discovery. He does not ask for other dividends upon the investment of time” (1937: 5). In his 1948 address “Fire Bell in the Night,” Wriston observed that “The theorist, the technologist, and the production man are in an indissoluble partnership; each has his place; but the initiation of the productive cycle is with the professor. It is folly to sell his work short” (1957:231).

Pure research requires freedom from external control, whether by government, private, or any other extrinsic interests. In his 1946 pamphlet about Brown University, entitled *The University College*, Wriston stressed this point: “Liberal education cannot be carried forward except under conditions of complete independence....Colleges and universities which draw support from federal funds inevitably suffer from pressures which impair or destroy a genuine liberal arts program....without complete freedom to write its own program, a university can never make the whole-hearted commitment to devote itself to liberal education that has been made by Brown” (1946:17). A strong liberal arts institution must rely heavily, at best entirely, on yield from endowment, gifts, and student fees. But this had become a difficult ideal for the private university to realize in the post-World-War II environment of increased support for scientific research: “I must emphasize the fact that it is not alone the professor in publicly supported institutions who is now dependent upon public funds for his salary and research support. Most of the larger private institutions are drawing a high percentage of their budgets, indeed predominant shares of the costs of research in the sciences, from contracts with the federal government” (1957: 233).

Wriston expressed alarm that “Professors whose livelihood and labor are not supported by private enterprise, [by which he seems to have meant unrestricted gifts, endowment yield, student fees, and the like] who look to federal funds for both, are not going to resist federal ‘encroachment,’ either there or elsewhere” (“Fire Bell in the Night,” 1957 : 234). Intellectuals are in danger of watching their freedom being destroyed: “And I say to you in all seriousness that those who have an interest in the preservation of the [free] enterprise system will be well advised to see to it that the private institutions are not weakened further and that government does not engulf or even dominate higher education” (1957: 234).

Brown’s historic dedication to the liberal arts shaped its transformation from a college to a university. Whereas a number of prominent public and private institutions expanded their graduate programs to include professional schools (and even created undergraduate concentrations in professional fields), Brown chose the independent path of the university college. Persuaded by arguments from Presidents Ezekiel Robinson and Benjamin Andrews, the Brown Corporation authorized graduate programs in the traditional liberal arts disciplines and held back from creating professional schools: “Unlike the early New England colleges, Harvard and Yale, which have grown into great universities, Brown has not added schools of law, medicine and theology to the original college;* The short-lived medical department of the early nineteenth century is the only qualification of this statement* nor has she, like them, established a separate school of applied science” (Fowler 1908: 2-3). By this strategy, Brown enhanced its undergraduate liberal arts departments by adding the academic benefits of graduate-level quality to these programs, while the College remained central to the University: “The alumni of Brown who are devoted to the cause of the liberal arts may rightly rejoice in the fact that their University has a graduate school....The graduate work....brings freshness, vigor, and vitality to the instruction of the undergraduate body. The College remains the center of the University, but the College profits by the strength which is added to its instruction by the presence of a graduate department” (Wriston 1946:16-17).

Again, in Wriston’s words: “Against the tendency to allow the liberal arts to occupy a secondary position Brown has been almost uniquely emphatic. Brown, for example, is one of the very few members of the Association of American Universities which incorporates even engineering education within the liberal arts college instead of segregating it in a separate school....Brown is convinced that the impairment of the liberal program does not pay adequate dividends on the technical side and impoverishes education in terms social effectiveness. Its central business remains the increase of knowledge, the inculcation of wisdom, the refinement of emotional responses, and the development of spiritual awareness. The University has concentrated its energies deliberately and with more and more conviction and assurance upon the undergraduate colleges of liberal arts and graduate work in the arts and sciences” (1946: 9-10).

While Wriston led Brown in an earlier and simpler time, many of his issues are also ours’. Major research universities today are even more dependent upon federal sources for research and related aspects of operational support, but we assert that we have guarded our autonomy through the integrity of carefully constructed peer review processes in the allocation of these funds. The worries that Wriston had about loss of intellectual independence through dependence on extramural support have reappeared dramatically, however, in the burgeoning literature about corporate sponsorship of university research and teaching and the penetration of university culture by corporate values and practices, which were only incipient issues in Wriston’s time (see for example recent works by Derek Bok, Roger Geiger, Eric Gould, David Kirp, Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, and Jennifer Washburn, included in the bibliography). The shadows of doubt over the value of pure research have not gone away, and are even longer and darker over the neighborhoods inhabited by humanists and social scientists. Surely Wriston would be moved by

Brown University's recent and unprecedented attention to areas that he felt to be necessary for the health of liberal education, including faculty quality, generous gifts for the endowment and current use, need-blind financial aid, support for graduate education, tone and character of the campus community, and an approach to campus planning that respects community, tradition, sense of place, and contemporary intellectual ambitions.

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THE BEST CLASS EVER: GRADUATE EDUCATION AT BROWN

**Karen Newman
Dean of the Graduate School**

A key goal of the Plan for Academic Enrichment is to strengthen and enhance graduate Education at Brown. A strong Graduate School is vitally important to achieving another goal of the plan, recruiting one hundred new faculty, a process that began two years ago and which will continue over the next several years. Each year we hear from the Director of Admissions for the College and the President that “this is the best class ever.” Without disparaging our students on the grounds, I’m delighted to report that our incoming cohort of first year graduate students is “the best ever.” With over 5,592 applications, we accepted only 17%. We are admitting only the very best and brightest to study at Brown.

Since the 2001-02 admission season, applications to the Graduate School have increased forty-six percent. Yet our graduate programs have grown only modestly which means we have become increasingly selective. Between 1996 and 2001 we received some 3700 applications annually and accepted about 40%. Since 2001 we have averaged nearly 5,800 applications per year and our overall selectivity is within a percentage point of that of the College. In some fields in the humanities, for example, we accept significantly less than 17%.

What has changed? Why are our graduate programs receiving so many more applications? Though conventional wisdom has it that a downturn in the economy sends students to graduate school, our increase has been far higher than our peers some of whom have even seen a decline in applications. We believe that more students are interested in Brown’s Graduate School because the University has made a very deliberate, and very public commitment to enhancing graduate education and research as well as offering the best undergraduate education. New faculty, for example, have had immediate and dramatic effects on graduate admissions for departments such as Anthropology, Biology and Medicine, and Music to name only a few.

To implement the Plan, more than \$4 million dollars in additional funding has been allotted to the Graduate School. Our stipends were at the bottom of our peer group; now we are solidly in the middle and look forward to bettering our position. We now offer not only competitive stipends, but health insurance for all supported doctoral students, increased summer support for students in the humanities and social sciences, grants for conference and research travel, and a host of other resources that help in our recruiting efforts. Our new website and print communications materials for prospective and accepted students have made all the difference.

The Provost, the faculty, the Graduate School staff and deans, Career Services, the Sheridan Center and the many offices and centers around campus, with whom we partner to provide service and support for students, have enabled our success. The renewed commitment to graduate education may have been started and initially funded by the Plan for Academic Enrichment, but it has been carried forward by many people from all across the University and outside.

New partnerships and collaborations with Trinity Repertory Company, the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, RISD, the Mellon Foundation, and Wheaton College, to name a few, have changed the scope of what Brown offers graduate students. Some partnerships have resulted in new degree programs, such as the Trinity Consortium MFA; others have resulted in completely new professional development and programming opportunities, such as the Brown/Wheaton

Teaching Laboratory in the Liberal Arts and the Mellon Graduate Workshops; others have led to vastly expanded research opportunities, such as our partnership with MBL and a pilot program between the National Institutes of Health and neuroscience.

The Graduate School is growing as it must as the faculty grows. Increases in first year fellowships in the sciences where there was excess grant capacity, modest increases in programs that lacked a critical mass, and new master's and doctoral programs, account for our growth over the last three years from some 1400 students to some 1650. New programs in Modern Culture and Media, in Development Studies, in Public Policy, in Computer Music, and in the Public Humanities--many of them multidisciplinary--have also brought new students to Brown. The knowledge economy means numbers of our own undergraduates are pursuing additional education and skills through master's degrees before seeking employment. Brown's investment in graduate education is enabling the university to fulfill its responsibility to participate in the production of new knowledge, to solve critical social, scientific and cultural problems, and to produce future generations of faculty. It has been a privilege to be part of these changes and I look forward to helping as a faculty member as the Graduate School continues to grow and flourish.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT BROWN AND THE ROLE OF THE SHERIDAN CENTER

Rebecca Sherrill More, Ph.D., Director

Professional development for staff is a crucial tool in the ongoing effectiveness of all successful organizations, including those in higher education. Brown University is no exception. While professional development in research is conducted within departments and national/international organizations, professional development of pedagogy has been less clearly defined across the academy, but the establishment of centers for teaching and learning at virtually all major institutions of higher education in the United States testifies to identified needs by faculty and graduate students. Under the aegis of the Dean of the Faculty, the staff of the Harriet W. Sheridan Center work to support the Brown community (faculty, graduate students, coaches, and undergraduates) with a variety of programs, consultation services and publications on all aspects of relevant pedagogy.

When Prof. Harriet W. Sheridan established the Center for the Advancement of College Teaching (CACT) in 1987 her goal was to provide professional development support in pedagogy for Brown graduate students. At that time, there were centers for faculty development at Harvard, Stanford and Michigan, but little offered for graduate students in research institutions. Prof. Sheridan, drawing upon her experience as Dean of the College, believed that professional development in pedagogy was required to prepare graduate students to be effective Teaching Assistants while at Brown and for their future careers in higher education. Over the past eighteen years, the Center has evolved to serve the needs of both faculty and graduate students at Brown. In 1987 the Brown Corporation voted to rename CACT as The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. The Center's new location at 96 Waterman Street provides a central meeting place for faculty and graduate students from across the disciplines. In addition, it has attracted the interest of faculty and graduate students from nearby Rhode Island School of Design.

The Sheridan Center has developed slowly in direct response to faculty and graduate student needs. The Mission Statement of the Center was drafted in 1992-1993 by the Center's Advisory Board and remains the focus of its many different endeavors:

The mission of the Center is to improve the quality of teaching at Brown University. The Center builds upon the unique and historic commitment of the University to excellence in teaching by recognizing the diversity of learning styles and exploring the richness of teaching approaches. In order to encourage the exchange of ideas about teaching and learning, both within and across disciplines, it consults and collaborates with the faculty, administration, graduate and undergraduate students. The Center offers a broad range of programs, lectures and publications that address interdisciplinary pedagogical issues; in addition, it assists departments and programs to realize the specific needs and potential of their disciplines. Thus the Center supports the ongoing improvement of teaching for the benefit of the University and the community-at-large.

For example, programs such as the three annual Sheridan Teaching Certificate programs (I, II and III) support graduate students in their preparation as the future professoriate. Services such as Grant Consultations offer faculty support for research grants which require evidence of pedagogical innovation. Presentation/Conference Consultations help faculty, graduate and

undergraduate students communicate their research, whether in classrooms, at conferences, for fellowships, or beyond the academy. In all cases, Sheridan Center activities are inspired by and revised in accordance with requests and feedback from the University's faculty and graduate students. The Center's slow organic growth has ensured that it responds to and meets the needs of its constituency.

Current Sheridan Center Initiatives

The account below of some of the Center's current initiatives is brief. Interested colleagues may wish to check the Center's web site at http://www.brown.edu/sheridan_center for a complete account of all the various programs, services and publications available to the Brown community.

Faculty

The University is currently embarked upon a strategic plan of academic improvement, the *Academic Enrichment Initiatives* (AEI). A large number of **new and junior faculty** have arrived at Brown to conduct their research and to communicate the results of their research in the classroom and beyond. The Brown curriculum requires faculty to provide sophisticated academic preparation and advising for students with diverse educational preparation. The Sheridan Center provides an annual **Orientation to Teaching at Brown** in August for incoming faculty and a **Junior Faculty Roundtable** which meets throughout the year. The Junior Faculty Roundtable is open to all pre-tenure faculty and provides them with opportunities to learn about teaching at Brown from senior colleagues and the senior administration in a relaxed and convivial setting.

In addition to individualized services such as **Individual Teaching Consultations** (ITC), **Course and Research Grant Consultations**, the Center offers a wide variety of **seminars and workshops** for faculty. During the past year, these include seminars on "Writing Assignments and Feedback", "Teaching Large Classes", "Teaching First Year Seminars", and the Brown Teaching Collaborative's ongoing series on "Ethics in the Academy" which brings together faculty, administrators, coaches and staff.

Many departments sponsor **Departmental Professional Development Seminars** (although not always so entitled) which focus on discipline-specific professional development, whether in research or in teaching. The Center offers support to the faculty who organize and oversee these activities - and encourages all departments to call upon the Center as needed.

Graduate Students

The Center has continued to develop means to assist the University's graduate students to teach their discipline in a variety of modalities to non-expert undergraduate students. In addition to an annual **Orientation to Teaching at Brown for Teaching Assistants**, the Center offers three Sheridan Teaching Certificate Programs. The participation in these has grown steadily and on May 4 2005 some 130 graduate students from Brown and some 40 from RISD will be honored for their commitment to participate and meet the requirements of these programs. Each of the Certificate programs features presentations by distinguished Brown and RISD faculty, who serve as role models of professional development across the University.

Sheridan Teaching Certificates: Certificate I helps graduate students develop the basic elements of a reflective teaching practice through participation in lectures and workshops, completion of assignments, practice teaching in their departments, and an observation of their teaching by the Center's trained Teaching Consultants (an ITC). **Certificate II** focuses on in-depth development of useful classroom tools, such as web-based materials, multimedia and artifacts to enhance student learning across the curriculum. **Certificate III** prepares advanced

graduate students, nearing completion of their doctorate, for presenting their pedagogical development at the same professional level as their discipline-specific research. The seminar culminates in presentations before the Dean of the Graduate School and the Associate Provost.

The seminar in **Facilitating Effective Research** (FER) was developed by Associate Director Janet Rankin (*Engineering*) to address graduate student mentoring of undergraduate research in the sciences. The involvement of undergraduates in basic research necessitates careful preparation of graduate students to serve as constructive mentors and teachers. This seminar was pioneered in the division of Engineering, but could be successfully adapted to research mentoring needs across the sciences. The Center for Language Studies (CLS) and Language Resource Center (LRC) has worked with Associate Director Laura Hess to develop a **Graduate Technology Certification Program in Language Instruction**. This enables graduate students in language instruction to use technology to facilitate student language acquisition.

The innovative **Brown-Wheaton Teaching Laboratory in the Liberal Arts** (TLLA) is a joint enterprise of the Graduate School, the Sheridan Center and Wheaton College in nearby Norton MA. Wheaton offers an internship to selected graduate students who have demonstrated commitment to comprehensive professional development (in both research and teaching). The internship gives them the opportunity to teach their own course and to be included as adjunct faculty at Wheaton during their internship. This is proving to be a remarkably productive collaboration for all constituencies and there are plans to seek grant funding to expand and export the model to other area colleges.

Undergraduates

Many undergraduates apply for national and international **fellowships**, such as the Rhodes, Marshall and Truman fellowships. The Center's Teaching Consultants assist the Office of the Dean of the College to prepare these applicants for presentation of their research interests to the selection committees of these fellowships. In addition the Center has worked with undergraduate **service organizations**, such as Project Health, to develop ongoing training programs which use effective pedagogical practices.

Who is Involved in the Sheridan Center?

The Sheridan Center strives to serve as a voluntary gathering point for members of the Brown teaching community who are interested in professional development of pedagogical practice. All the Sheridan Center's many activities on behalf of professional development in pedagogy at Brown are based upon the dedication and commitment by many faculty, graduate students and members of the administration. These stalwart colleagues serve as members of the **Advisory Board**, as **Faculty Fellows**, as **Speakers** at the Junior Faculty Roundtable, Faculty Seminars and the Sheridan Teaching Certificate programs. Others serve as faculty and graduate student representatives to the Center as part of the **Departmental Liaison Network**. In addition to letting the Center know of departmental needs, the Faculty and Graduate Student Liaisons assist their departmental colleagues by running discipline-specific practice Micro-Teaching sessions. The **Teaching Consultants** are an extraordinary group of graduate students from across the disciplines who are trained to observe the teaching of colleagues and to provide them with constructive feedback. Such consultations may be ITCs or Presentation Consultations. The Center's Teaching Consultants have served as models for the development of similar programs at Chicago and elsewhere.

Without the collaboration of these remarkable colleagues, the staff of the Sheridan Center would be unable to fulfill the mission of the Center to the University. We look forward to hearing from

any and all faculty who have ideas and suggestions for ways in which the Center can assist them to develop professionally.

OLD PROFESSORS STILL PROFESS

Lewis P. Lipsitt, President of the Elderbears
Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Medical Science, and Human Development
Research Professor of Psychology

Faculty members who have retired are sometimes seen as individuals who have closed their offices, no longer teach or see students, and have hung up cap and gown for good. This image is mainly incorrect. Many retired faculty members at Brown fill in for regular faculty members who are on leave or are unable because of emergencies to meet their classes. Emeriti also lecture at other universities, at professional meetings, and to alumni groups. Many continue to write articles and to edit chapters and books. Some continue to do research, often as “research professors” supported by grants or contracts. Of course, some elderly emeriti professors (and all of us eventually) may not be able to participate in any campus activities but occasional discussion groups, a nostalgic walk through campus, or the very special celebratory dinner sponsored annually by the Dean of the Faculty to honor newly appointed emeriti. Few professors suddenly disappear without any further contact with the Brown campus or its intellectual life. The retired faculty are still faculty members, listed as such in the Brown Catalogue. Many attend the monthly faculty meetings, where we can and do vote. Recently we have formed ourselves as a group, to help the university accomplish its goals and to further the quality of life for retirees.

The Elderbears are now organized. The Society of the Elderbears at Brown University was organized formally in 2003 as a brother- and sister-hood of older faculty members and administrators, with officers, an executive committee, and a constitution. Most members of the Elderbears are emeriti. Not-yet-retired members, however, are welcomed and do join. (Our secretary-treasurer is not yet retired.) The Elderbears executive committee meets about every six weeks, and we generally hold one large meeting of the “extended family” of emeriti and other interested parties once each semester. (The next meeting will be held in Petteruti Lounge on May 12 at 4pm. See notice below.) We now have a website; information about our activities will appear there regularly. Among those activities will be regularly scheduled lectures and discussions, especially on topics of great interest to emeriti. Our program committee, headed by Peter Wegner, will arrange these.

Many older faculty members, especially emeriti, are not on University e-mail and/or do not read e-mail or access websites regularly. We would like to hear from all interested persons, to obtain their non-University e-mail address, if they have one, or their preferred mailing address. The University’s retiree lists, as we have come to realize, are not updated systematically, and the Elderbears hope to help with that.

Health insurance concerns. The Elderbears are greatly concerned with problems associated with maintaining good health care and medical support of retired personnel. It comes often as a surprise to imminent retirees, and indeed to younger Brown faculty members also, that there has been no subsidy of health benefits for newly retired faculty at Brown for more than 10 years, when subsidized retiree health care was terminated for those not already in a University-subsidized plan.

Recent reports from other universities indicate that retired faculty of all disciplines, and many retired administrators as well, are forming groups to address issues of common concern. Among those issues is that of health benefits for retired faculty members and their families. While other

questions are also on the agenda of retiree groups, the soaring cost of health insurance is of striking importance for all. Of special concern is that all surveys of which we are aware indicate that more than half of all universities and colleges provide some financial or in-kind health-benefit support to their retired faculty. At Brown, there is presently no subsidy whatever provided for post-retirement health coverage. New emeriti cover their own and their families' health insurance completely; as all retirees know, these medical costs including prescription and dental coverage constitute major expenses, especially for the aged. We are happy to note that the Brown administration and the Human Resources staff have responded sympathetically in recent months to the emeriti health-coverage dilemma. In March of 2005, group coverage rates for retirees were negotiated with major providers. No university subsidy is involved in this transaction, and thus this does not rise to the level of support that faculty members of many other institutions enjoy; it is nonetheless a step ahead.

One health insurance prospect. We have come to appreciate that health coverage in retirement, for all university personnel, not only faculty, must be a career-long concern, not an issue that one should be confronting for the first time upon retirement. We are therefore educating ourselves about the plan of Emeriti Health Solutions, a national consortium of educational institutions founded by current and former faculty members. A retired director of TIAA-CREF is its president. Their plan involves investing, just as many of us have done for years in TIAA and other retirement plans, in a health benefits program that "kicks in" upon retirement to supplement the retiree's Medicare and Social Security benefits. The Emeriti Solutions group, however, requires that just as with present retirement plans (like TIAA/CREF), the University must partially subsidize the enrollment of its employees. Information may be found about this plan at www.emeritihealth.org.

Space is another concern. The Society of the Elderbears is not a one-cause organization of faculty retirees. We are concerned, among other things, with office support for faculty members who have chosen to retire. (It *is* a choice.) Depending upon department space needs, some faculty members find themselves suddenly without an office or office support, and other amenities that go with faculty status. While it might be thought that once an individual is retired, he or she has no further obligations to the University, the fact is that retired faculty members continue to have implicit obligations -- for example, to respond to student requests for letters of recommendation. For some retirees without secretarial aid, this is a problem -- both for the faculty person and the student. Moreover, many faculty are willing and able, and do, make visits to alumni chapters, to provide continuing education and to aid in the work of our development office.

The Elderbears need a campus space -- a suite that serves as a collegial meeting place for emeriti, a place where they may hold discussions and seminars, and provide ready contact for students who seek advice from retired professors with special talent in areas of student concern. This location would have modest services to help emeriti maintain a relationship with the university environment in which they have spent their productive careers. A locus for coordination of the helpful activities of emeriti would help in enabling the emeriti to better serve students, to carry on further scholarly activities, and to serve the larger community. In a city where the public school system is in serious trouble, a corps of retired university faculty could be of great service. Yale University has an elegant and well-run center for emeriti activities, provided through the largess of an alumnus who enabled renovation of a beautiful house on campus and provided for operating costs for many years to come.

The challenge: During this decade in which restructuring of the University is proceeding at a great pace, and many new faculty are being hired, faculty members who are retiring, making

room for young faculty, should be provided with resources that will better enable them to continue functioning at and for the University. The Elderbears are a valuable resource.

Lewis Lipsitt, *President* (Psychology, Medical Science, Human Development)

Patricia Arant, *Vice President* (Slavic Languages)

Peter Richardson, *Secretary-Treasurer* (Engineering)

Jose Amor y Vazquez (Hispanic Studies)

Mary Arnold (BioMed)

Ernest Frerichs (Religious Studies)

Maurice Glicksman (Engineering, former Provost)

David Greer (BioMed)

Bruno Harris (Mathematics)

Seymour Lederberg (BioMed)

Lois Monteiro (Community Health, BioMed)

Robert Reichley (Administration)

John Savage (Computer Science)

Mark Schupack (Economics, former Graduate School Dean)

Merwin Sibulkin (Engineering)

Peter Wegner (Computer Science)

Geoffrey Ribbans (Hispanic Studies)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Society of the Elderbears will take place Wednesday, May 11, at 4 p.m., in Petteruti Lounge, Faunce House. At 5 p.m., we will be addressed by Prof. Vincent Mor, on the topic "Health and Aging." All are welcome to attend, retired or not.

THE FEC: A CONDUIT BETWEEN THE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

**Robert A. Pelcovits
Professor of Physics
FEC Vice-Chair**

In my position as current Vice-Chair and incoming Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), I have been asked by the editors of the Faculty Bulletin to provide some personal observations on the role of the FEC in faculty governance at Brown.

To start, I thought it would be helpful to engage in one of our favorite pastimes at Brown, “peer comparison”. In this case, we can pose the question: “What is the form of faculty governance at our fellow Ivy League institutions?” With the exception of Penn (which has a Faculty Senate with a Faculty President), all of the Ivies have university faculty meetings chaired by the Presidents. Each institution has a governing entity similar to our FEC. In contrast to Brown, at Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard and Princeton, these FEC counterparts are chaired by the President or Dean of the Faculty rather than by a faculty member.

While I believe the Penn model of a faculty-chaired Senate might be advantageous insofar as it could offer the substantial benefit of making faculty feel more empowered and thus encouraging them to attend faculty meetings in greater numbers, we have a more faculty-empowered system of governance than our peers with FEC counterparts chaired by administrators. It is unfortunate that attendance at our faculty meetings is poor (typically 20% of on-campus faculty at best), as these meetings provide an important venue for discussions between the faculty and the administration. With poor attendance this interaction can be skewed by the views of a small number of faculty. Poor attendance also conveys a message of apathy from the faculty to the administration regarding issues that are of importance to all of us.

Although we may be lacking a form of governance and the will of the faculty to maximize the interaction between the faculty and administration, I believe at present we have a suitably empowered FEC and a senior administration that encourages a collaborative relationship with the faculty. The Faculty Rules charge the FEC with serving “as a conduit between the Faculty and the Administration, Corporation, and students concerning faculty issues.” But the rules do not specify what form this “conduit” should take, and thus it is a matter of custom and the preferences of the senior administrators that determine the form of the conduit and (to use some physics imagery) how well it “conducts” information.

I suspect that most Brown faculty do not appreciate the level of interaction between the officers of the FEC and the senior administration. It was unfamiliar to me until I began my term as Vice-Chair of the FEC this spring (I was never a member of the FEC, so I was unfamiliar with the reports to the full FEC of the meetings between the officers and the administration). The FEC officers meet monthly in separate sessions with the President and Provost. My understanding is that the meetings with the President were instituted more than thirty years ago; these have been private meetings between the FEC officers and the President except during the Gregorian administration, when the Provost and other senior deans were invited to participate. According to my source in these matters, Jim Baird, the private meetings with the Provost were instituted during President Gee’s brief tenure.

The agendas for the meetings with the President and Provost are set primarily by the FEC officers, though, of course, the President and Provost bring up whatever issues or points of information they believe are of interest and relevance to the faculty. We discuss a wide range of topics, including specific faculty personnel issues, such as controversial tenure cases or faculty grievances, and general policy issues, such as the new intellectual property and retirement policies. These meetings provide the senior administration with an opportunity to inform the FEC about policy or programmatic initiatives under consideration by the administration and a chance for the FEC officers to respond and offer feedback. Most importantly, these meetings provide us with an opportunity to raise issues of concern to the faculty and discuss them at length with the President and Provost. Faculty should be aware that as they bring issues to our attention, we have ample opportunity to discuss them with the President and Provost.

Thus, faculty can use the conduit provided by the FEC officers to voice their concerns to the administration. However, faculty also can raise issues of concern in more direct ways. One method is to pose questions to the President in advance of University faculty meetings. The FEC reviews these questions before passing them on to the President. It is also possible to ask questions of either the President or the Provost immediately after their reports at the monthly meetings. Both senior administrators appear happy to answer questions at this time, and I know from our meetings with President Simmons that she would very much welcome better attendance and participation at faculty meetings.

A second direct route for communicating concerns of which faculty can behoove themselves exists thanks largely to the efforts of the past chair of the FEC, Anne Fausto-Sterling. We now have a conduit for the faculty to pass information to the FEC and then on to the administration in the form of an online “Sounding Board”, which can be accessed at http://www.brown.edu/Faculty/Faculty_Governance/sounding/index.php. This online forum is meant to encourage discussion among the faculty about any issue of concern. While the discussions need not lead to questions posed to the administration, it is only natural that this could happen.

While I believe we have a reasonably healthy form of faculty governance with good means of communication between the faculty and the administration mediated in part by the FEC, it is important to emphasize that much of this interaction is at the discretion of the senior administration. We are fortunate that we currently have a senior administration that welcomes and encourages faculty participation in university governance. But the regular meetings of the FEC officers with the President and the Provost are a matter of custom, not legislation, and these meetings could ultimately disappear or be rendered less meaningful under future administrations. Clearly the best way for faculty to maintain their role in university governance is by regularly attending faculty meetings and engaging the administration in discussion. If we establish a vibrant tradition of faculty participation at our monthly meetings, we can ensure that the faculty will continue to maintain its role in university governance.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge my fellow officers, Michel-Andre Bossy, Chair of the FEC, and Anne Fausto-Sterling, Past Chair. In a very short period of time I have learned a great deal from them, and many of the observations I have made in this article grew out of very helpful conversations with Michel-Andre and Anne.

THE MEDICAL FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (MFEC)

**James Padbury
Professor of Pediatrics, Women & Infants Hospital
Chair of the MFEC**

The Medical Faculty Executive Committee is alive and well! As many of you know, the MFEC is composed of elected representatives of the hospital-based faculty. The MFEC's charge is to be the faculty voice in medical school governance process investigating matters that are of particular concern to the medical faculty, making recommendations and advising leadership of the University and Medical School on faculty issues.

The full committee meets no less than monthly. The Officers, past Chair, Chair and Vice Chair, also meet regularly with the Dean of the Division of Biology and Medicine. The MFEC sends representatives to serve on the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), the President's Executive Committee, the Biomedical Faculty Council and the President's new Community Council.

Recent issues of importance to the medical faculty adjudicated by the MFEC include input into the revised Intellectual Property Policy, contract advising for the Pediatric faculty with Rhode Island Hospital/Lifespan and faculty grievances. The Committee also receives reports of the Committee on Medical Faculty Appointments, the Medical Curriculum Committee, the Committee on Academic Standing and the Graduate Medical Education Committee.

There are currently 15 members on the committee; however, MFEC will grow to a total of 18 with the next election. We are particularly excited that there have been 36 nominations and/or individuals who have expressed interest for the open positions.

The implementation of Shared Governance by President Simmons and Provost Zimmer has clearly ushered in significant expansion of the opportunities for hospital-based faculty to participate in university and faculty affairs. We look forward to enhanced involvement in faculty governance and to participating in the academic enrichment programs which will have such a vital and lasting effect on our University.

**REPORT TO THE FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COMMITTEE 2004-05**

**David Rand, Professor of Biology
Vice-Chair of the Academic Priorities Committee
Brian Casey, Assistant Provost**

The Academic Priorities Committee (APC) has discussed four general classes of agenda items during the current academic year: 1) Academic policy and structure, 2) Academic affiliations with other institutions, 3) New administrative configurations of Centers and Departments, and 4) Requests for faculty positions as part of the ongoing Academic Enrichment Initiative. Recommendations have been made regarding a number of the agenda items in the first two categories (academic policy and structure, and academic affiliations) and the Brown Corporation has approved some of these recommendations. The APC is in the midst of discussion concerning the 3rd and 4th agenda items (configuration of Centers and Departments, and request for faculty positions). These two issues are interwoven as the establishment of some Centers is contingent on approval of new faculty positions and successful recruitment of desired faculty. Below we summarize the key Agenda Items covered this academic year.

1) Academic Policy and Structure

Clinical Faculty Titles. The APC endorsed the new titles for clinical practitioners for those degree programs, which would benefit from the talents of those who made their mark in fields outside of the academy. These new appointments were approved by the Corporation in the fall. The University anticipates that such appointments will be made in connection with the Theater Consortium and with the new Education Policy Program. The new titles parallel the faculty ranks of campus faculty: Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, and Clinical Professor.

Undergraduate Concentrations and Faculty Resources (APC – CCC Statement). Concerned about those concentrations that rely on one course or on the efforts of one faculty member, the APC and the College Curriculum Council together called upon the Dean of the College to review the depth or resources available in each concentration. The goal of this analysis is to ensure that concentration requirements can be covered by multiple regular faculty so that sabbatical leaves do not hinder students' ability to fulfill their concentration requirements in a timely manner. A large number of requests are made to hire temporary Adjunct faculty to teach those courses typically taught by faculty who are away on leave. The Dean of the College is now conducting such a review with the CCC.

Language Certificates. The APC considered a proposal to award some form of certificate for those who complete a sequence of language courses or otherwise demonstrate competence in a non-English language. The proposal cited the growing popularity of such certificates at a number of peer institutions. Despite this trend, the APC rejected the proposal based on concerns about the rising pressure for over-certification of minor foci during a student's undergraduate years. The APC further noted the difficulty in maintaining comparable standards for certificates across different fields where specific skills were acquired (such as computer science, music, engineering)

Review of Summer and Continuing Studies. The APC has just begun consideration of the principles that might guide the development of new certificate and other programs offered

through Summer and Continuing Studies. The discussion was not about traditional Brown courses that are offered to Brown students during the summer months. Rather, the question is whether any form of Brown University credit can or should be awarded for courses completed through newly developed programs offered to non-Brown students through this unit. While a number of attractive and creative educational opportunities exist outside the context of the formal Brown academic curriculum, the APC felt that a clearer case needed to be made for how faculty resources might be devoted to the development, oversight, and teaching of such courses. Ultimate approval of any new certificate or degree programs would, of course, have to be endorsed by the Faculty as a whole and implemented by the Corporation.

Faculty Fellowships (Sabbaticals). The APC considered a proposal from the Dean of the Faculty to implement new faculty fellowships to be awarded on a competitive basis between standard sabbatical cycles. Under the proposal, faculty could apply for salary support for scholarly leaves over and above the standard seven-year cycle of sabbatical leaves. The APC generally endorsed the proposal but raised questions about the program's implementation. The Dean of the Faculty has presented the plan to other Committees on campus and is working to develop a consensus on the implementation of the policy.

2) Academic Affiliations

The APC has been apprised of continuing developments in the following affiliations:

- Oak Ridge National Laboratory – Discussions are ongoing to establish formal affiliations between Brown and ORNL in the areas of nano-sciences. These discussions are in a preliminary stage.
- The Marine Biological Laboratories (MBL)– About a dozen MBL faculty have been approved by TPAC to be appointed as Professor (MBL), affiliated with several Departments in the Division of Biology and Medicine. As with the Clinical Faculty Titles discussed above, an MBL parenthetical suffix is used to identify these faculty as having primary appointments at MBL. The following titles are used: Assistant Professor of Biology (MBL), Associate Professor of Biology (MBL), and Professor of Biology (MBL).
- RISD - The APC will continue to be apprised of nascent initiatives that might form between Brown and RISD. No formal proposals have come forth to the APC in this affiliation.

3) New Administrative Configurations (Centers, Programs, Institutes) and Programs

The APC has received updates and proposals about the following new academic configurations. As mentioned above, some of these Centers or Programs are related to the approval of faculty positions, so discussions of how to proceed with these administrative units are being conducted in parallel with discussions about FTEs. As of this date, no action has been taken on the following:

- Literary Arts and English Department Separation
- German Studies Graduate Program Reinstatement
- Slavic Language and Literatures to Slavic Studies
- Proposal for the Creation of a Center for Nano-Science and Soft Matter
- Proposal for a Vision Research Center

4) Requests for Faculty Positions

The Dean of the Faculty, Prof. Rajiv Vohra, provided the APC with an update on the progress of the Academic Enrichment Initiative (AEI). Dean Vohra noted that, of the roughly 100 new positions proposed at the start of the AEI, approximately 65 had been filled, or are already committed. Target of Opportunity positions accounted for approximately 25 additional faculty (about half have been filled and the rest are planned). This total of 90 positions leaves roughly 10 additional open positions to be filled as part of new searches under the AEI. The APC is aware that the University is beginning to plan for a continued modest increase in the size of the faculty after the allocation of these initial positions. As of this report, the APC is evaluating a number of proposals for new faculty that total more than 40 positions. While some of these positions are to be funded through accumulated overhead recovery, the APC faces a number of difficult decisions in evaluating these requests.

The APC decided to consider all of the proposals in an initial review so the requests for faculty positions can be evaluated in an appropriate context. After this initial review, Faculty representatives from the Departments or Centers requesting FTEs will be invited to discuss their proposals with the APC. The goals of these discussions will be to determine the most effective strategies for advancing the Academic Enrichment Initiative and the needs of individual Departments or Centers within the constraint of a limited number of new FTEs.

The following proposals are being reviewed:

- Commerce, Organizations and Entrepreneurship
- Engineering (separate funding model)
- Economics-Taubman
- English (Expository Writing)
- German Studies
- History Department
- Literary Arts
- Mathematics and Physics
- Modern Culture and Media
- Nano Science and Soft Matter
- Pembroke Center
- Portuguese and Brazilian Studies (Lusophone)
- Science and Technology Studies
- Toxic Legacy Coalition (BioMed and Engineering)
- Urban Studies

**THE FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:
IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES 2004/05**

**Peter M. Weber
Department of Chemistry
Chair of the FAC (2004)**

Brown University's Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) is a fairly young committee that was created during the recent restructuring of the faculty governance to represent Brown Faculty in many important personnel matters. Now in its second year, the FAC is gaining traction and finding its niche in the University's committee structure. This account outlines some of the topics that were discussed in the current academic year, and summarizes the recommendations that the FAC is making. A detailed report will be submitted to the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and the Academic Priorities Committee (APC) in the near future.

The charge of the FAC is to represent the Faculty in aspects relating to personnel matters. Specifically, we are charged with reviewing the salary structure both as it concerns internal equity issues, as well as competitiveness with respect to peer institutions; with assessing the benefits provided by the university, and comparisons to the outside world; with representing the Faculty in matters relating to leaves; and with an assessment of the diversity of the Faculty. This latter issue is taken on by the standing Subcommittee on Diversity in Hiring, which is, technically, a subcommittee of the FAC.

As the agenda for the academic year 2004/2005 unfolded, we found that many important questions fall within the overall charge. While briefly touching on many important issues, the committee focused on salaries and benefits. During the academic year 2003/2004 no salary report had been given to the FAC. Hence we had some catching up to do.

Salary reviews are important in two regards: first, the FAC wishes to be convinced that salaries at Brown are fair with respect to rank, discipline, gender, and race. Secondly, we would like to see that salaries at Brown are on par with our peer institutions; or at least that we are catching up. At a meeting in December, Dean of the Faculty Rajiv Vohra presented statistics concerning salaries for the 2003/2004 academic year. Salary averages, as well as 25 and 75 percentiles, were itemized by discipline, rank, and, to some extent, gender and race. (In order to maintain confidentiality, only overall statistical data was presented.) The FAC was satisfied to learn that, as far as can be gleaned from the statistical data, no gross inequities exist. As previously observed, Brown's salaries are low compared to our peer institutions. Nevertheless, as promised by the administration, Brown's salaries are now catching up. While it is interesting to conjecture that the averages may be affected by recent hires of senior Faculty at higher salary levels, any support for such a statement was not possible to glean from the overall statistical data. The FAC was pleased to see the salary gap with respect to our peers is closing, and commends the administration for its efforts.

The salaries for the current academic year will be discussed during an upcoming meeting. This will bring the FAC up to date on the salaries, and will enable us to follow the progress made within the academic enrichment program over a longer period of time.

A second focus of the FAC over the past months concerned the benefits that Faculty (and staff) at Brown University enjoy. Given the nature of the program, there are no issues relating to equality or discrimination. Indeed, as is the case in our peer institutions, Faculty receive the same health, dental, and life insurance benefits as staff employees. We therefore decided to compare Brown's

benefits to those at peer institutions. Since benefits include a broad range of programs, we decided it wise to concentrate on one of the most important ones, namely health benefits.

We are indebted to Drew Murphy, Director of Benefits, who worked very closely with us and was extremely helpful in obtaining data from peer institutions. After a considerable amount of legwork, Mr. Murphy was able to assemble a fairly detailed table with the costs of comparable health benefits at Brown University, and a selection of representative peer institutions. Several surprising details emerged from this comparison.

It turns out that Brown University's health plans are, by a large margin, the cheapest among the peer institutions! The differences are significant, and extend to all types of coverage: individual, 2-person, and family. Thus, while we mostly see rising health insurance costs deducted from our paychecks, we are indeed in an enviable position compared to our colleagues at peer institutions. Brown University's benefits office, and indeed all employees at the University, are to be commended for keeping the costs down.

The next question is who reaps the benefit of the lower health insurance costs; after all, the expenses for health insurance are shared between the University and the employees. The answer is that it depends on the salary of the employee and on the choice of coverage (individual, 2-person, and family). In order to derive a meaningful comparison with peer institutions, we itemized the comparison by choice of coverage, and for two salaries representative of Faculty at the Associate and Full Professor rank.

For Faculty who choose individual coverage, the employee costs of health insurance are comparable to those at our peer institutions: our costs are right on the median. Thus, while our Faculty can be at peace with the knowledge that they pay no more or less than their peers at other places, the savings from the lower overall health insurance costs accrue fully to the University.

Looking further at 2-person and family coverage, we find an interesting divergence: even though Brown's overall health insurance costs are the lowest, the employee share is among the highest of the peers with comparable health plans! Thus, Faculty choosing such coverage pay a higher monthly dollar amount than faculty with comparable income at our peer institutions, even though the cost of the insurance at Brown is far lower. Needless to say, Brown University's contributions to the health insurance costs of Faculty, for 2-person and family coverage, are dramatically less than those of our peers!

The observed disparities of health insurance contributions are significant. They should be considered as Brown University strives to catch up to our peer institutions, as the total compensation comprises both salaries and benefits. Even so, the FAC struggled with suggesting a solution: as long as the University maintains that health insurance costs must be a zero-sum game, adjusting the employee costs of higher paid faculty and staff to match those at our peer institutions would require raising the costs for the lower income employees. Nationwide trends are indeed toward higher employee contributions even for low-income employees, motivated by the rationale that medical insurance and expenditure choices should be driven by a consumer mentality in order to keep costs down. Nevertheless, while the University may contemplate moving toward higher employee contributions for its low-income employees, the FAC makes no recommendation on any such policies. We do strongly suggest, however, that 2-person and family coverage for Faculty and higher income staff at Brown be adjusted to a level that is commensurate with that of our peer institutions. Details of the benefits comparison can be found in the report of the FAC to the Faculty.

Having spent much time on salary and benefits issues, at the time of this writing the FAC is looking at the Faculty travel fund. Much work remains to be done: many important issues that

we could merely touch upon in the present year remain, and, undoubtedly, will be picked up in coming years.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT @ BROWN

John Tyler
Department Chair
Associate Professor of Education, Economics, and Public Policy

Some of the most pressing and interesting social questions of our day are being played out at the school house door—the quality of the teacher workforce, affirmative action in higher education, education in the “information age” economy. The backdrop for these and other issues is an environment where traditional schools or colleges of education are increasingly being seen as a part of the problem, rather than a part of the solution. The primary reasons are that “ed schools” are often associated with low levels of scholarly inquiry and rigor, along with a defense mentality designed to protect “education professionals.” As with any broad brush set of characterizations, there is some truth and some hyperbole in how we think of ed schools these days. Nevertheless, the current perceptions of ed schools are so ubiquitous as to have power both in the policy arena and in the marketplace.

In this milieu sits the Education Department at Brown, a place that is uniquely poised to take a leadership role in education over the next decades precisely because it does not fit the current “ed school” stereotype. The Education Department is organized around a research faculty composed of social scientists and a clinical faculty of practitioner/scholars, and the curricula, both undergraduate and graduate, decidedly does not fit the traditional mold of education department as “teacher certification factory.”

The undergraduate Education Studies concentration at Brown is an interdisciplinary liberal arts field where students choose to focus their studies on either human development as it intersects education topics or on education history/policy. The faculties in both areas are characterized by distinguished scholars with national reputations. Developmental and social psychologists comprise the Human Development faculty, and among this group is Cynthia Garcia Coll, who is currently the editor in chief of the leading journal in the field, *Developmental Psychology*. Sociology, history, and economics are the disciplines currently represented in the History/Policy faculty, with a nationally recognized political scientist likely to join the faculty next year. Of the current faculty, Carl Kaestle is perhaps the preeminent education historian in the nation, and John Tyler is considered to be one of the nation’s experts the labor market outcomes of low skilled individuals. The department will add two new lines to the history/policy group, searching for two junior social scientists next year.

The research faculty of social scientists developed the courses and course sequencing that is the undergraduate Education Studies concentration. These courses are designed to provide Brown undergraduates with an understanding of the leading topics and issues of the day in education, along with the history, theory, and extant research that will allow them to think clearly and analytically about these and other questions in education. Noticeably absent from the undergraduate education curriculum at Brown is a focus on courses in curriculum and instruction that are commonly found in the course offerings of education departments and colleges at other institutions. At most postsecondary institutions the role of the education department or the college of education is to provide professional training for undergraduates who want to teach. At Brown “education” at the undergraduate level is seen first as an area of scholarly inquiry where theory and applied research from the reach of social science disciplines—psychology, economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology—intersect to structure and discipline thought

on inevitably complex education-related questions. The broad array of course offerings in the Education Studies concentration cover topics from education policy analysis to the history of American school reform to cross cultural perspectives on child development to an examination of contemporary social problems through the lens of education and human development.

Undergraduates at Brown who desire a teaching certificate can work with the Education Department in pursuit of this goal. The department's UTEP program (Undergraduate Teacher Education Program) is not an undergraduate concentration program. Rather, the Education Department works cooperatively with other departments at the university to offer a teacher education program that leads to certification for teaching at the secondary level. At present certification programs are offered in the biological sciences, engineering, English, and history. Students in this program must fill their degree requirements in the department of their teaching field and complete an additional five courses relating to teacher education in the Education Department. The UTEP program has 5 to 10 students annually.

The Education Department also engages in graduate education. There is currently one masters-level graduate program in the department, with a second masters program scheduled to come on line in the Fall of 2006. The graduate program currently available, the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), sits on a one hundred year history of teacher education at Brown. Like the undergraduate Education Studies concentration, the MAT program is unique in its own setting—the world of teacher education programs. Intentionally small in size, the MAT program at Brown joins students with clinical faculty who are practitioner/scholars dedicated to a “clinical model” of teacher education wherein the faculty interact closely with the aspiring teachers in the program, spending considerable time observing their students in the classroom as they hone their craft. The closely-supervised, hands-on, performance-based structure of the MAT program sits in stark contrast to many teacher education programs across the nation where economies of scale often dictate large student to faculty ratios, greater emphasis on classroom instruction relative to mentor involvement in student teaching episodes, and substantial use of adjunct professors who have little incentive to merge personal scholarship with the practice of teaching. The MAT program at Brown is a highly regarded twelve month program that graduates about 50 students per year with teaching certification in either elementary education or certification to teach either English, science, or social studies at the secondary level.

In the Fall of 2006 the new Master of Arts in Urban Education Policy (UEP) program will receive its first cohort of students. This program is a joint venture with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown and will join the policy expertise of the Education Department faculty with the resident experience and expertise in urban education at AISR. The hallmark of this twelve month masters program is the merging of theory, research, and practice to prepare students for positions in the growing field of urban education policy. The urgency associated with improving our nation's urban K-12 schools, combined with an increased emphasis on using data to inform the decision process have led many education-related entities including urban school districts, state departments of education, mayoral offices, education funding organizations, and school reform support organizations, to create or expand policy and planning divisions and positions. These developments have created a need for early career individuals who possess training that allows them to focus on and address the problems and policy solutions of today's urban schools.

The intellectual leader of the UEP program will hold a joint Education Department-AISR appointment and as such will occupy the Walter and Lenore Annenberg Chair for Education Policy. An announcement on the first holder of the Annenberg chair is expected soon. This new line in the Education Department will be augmented by the addition of two more junior social

scientists whose work focuses on education policy. The department will search for these new positions next year.

This past year has been a busy one at the Education Department...developing a new masters program, engaging in a national search for the first holder of the Annenberg chair, exploring substantive ways to better collaborate with AISR and the Education Alliance, remodeling and re-landscaping our home at Barus Hall, revamping our website. Individually, each of these activities is exciting; collectively they are part of a strategic plan to position the Education Department as a more visible, active, and important voice on education-related at the local, regional, and national levels. Education in the U.S. and across the world is a complex, contentious, and incredibly important field. The Education Department is working with the administration and with other departments and centers across the university to ensure that Brown will be a place recognized for its scholarship and reach in this area that affects us all.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS IN COGNITIVE & LINGUISTIC SCIENCES

Steven Sloman
Professor of Cognitive and Linguistic Science

The course evaluation form in Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences strives to get a broad picture from each student of their experience in a course. The form obtains information about students such as their concentration, year, experience in the discipline, and expected grade. We also ask students to rate on a 5-point scale their agreement with a number of specific assertions about the instructor (e.g., “Instructor held my interest”), the textbook (e.g., “was interesting”), the supplemental reading, examinations (e.g., “were too difficult”), papers, general issues (e.g., “I learned a lot from this course”, “This course was challenging?”), and TAs. Finally, we have three open-ended questions asking students for specific suggestions about teaching and organization and about what they learned in the course.

It’s 4 pages and takes maybe 10-15 minutes to complete. Is it worth it?

The obvious problem with course evaluations is their susceptibility to being treated as a beauty contest, rather than an assessment of an instructor’s ability to increase students’ skill, knowledge, or degree of wisdom. Beauty has its virtues, but it doesn’t reveal everything. My sense is that Brown students are, on average, quite able to pick out an instructor’s degree of articulateness and enthusiasm, their degree of organization within a lecture, their facility with catch phrases, and how quick they are on their feet. I think students are much less good at picking out the instructor’s depth of knowledge and understanding, the degree of high-level organization of a course, and how much in the end the course is going to have educated them. Students differ in these regards and indeed course evaluations tend to exhibit a fair amount of variability.

I also think that when we, as instructors and as evaluators of instructors, look at course evaluations, we tend to scan our eyes down the rows and get a sense of the distribution of checks in the first column or two without much regard for what they represent. We all have lots to do, and we’re usually skimming multiple summary evaluation forms in succession, with the result that we tend to treat the evaluations as if the particular questions asked aren’t important; we’re just looking for an overall impression. In other words, the faculty’s treatment of evaluations makes a greater contribution than the students’ to the likelihood that course evaluations serve as beauty contests.

So I think departments have to make a choice:

Option i. Accept that evaluations just give a very limited kind of information and find ways to supplement it (by having other faculty attend lectures, by examining syllabi and readings, by independently evaluating what students have learned, etc.). On this option, I don’t think the form of the evaluation matters all that much. Students can be asked very general questions about how much they like a course and an instructor and the overall image will be clear. Of course, students always have to be given a chance to answer open-ended questions about the course both so that they feel like they’ve had the opportunity to say what they have to say, and so that instructors who really want to use the evaluations to improve their teaching will be able to find any patterns.

Option ii. Strive to make the student course evaluation process more than a beauty contest. Here are three recommendations for doing so:

a. Try to get students to evaluate the course from the perspective of the course's goals. Students need to write down what they think the course's goals are and then they need to evaluate how well the course did with respect to each goal. Questions about "how much you like this professor/course?" should probably be omitted.

b. Present the results in a way that makes eye scanning for overall form impossible. This can be accomplished by reversing the goodness scale at random points through the list of questions. That way, whoever is looking at the form won't know whether the evaluation of a particular aspect is good or bad without actually reading the question.

c. Ask good questions that give as complete a picture as feasible of the dimensions of teaching that the department believes are worth assessing. Remember that the quality of students' answers will decrease with the amount of time they have to toil at the task.

My sense is that my own department has implicitly opted for Option ii; we rely almost exclusively on student evaluations – but also on word of mouth – to evaluate instructors. I think we do a reasonable job of satisfying recommendation c. The questions on our form are pretty good and 10-15 minutes isn't overly burdensome on students. But we don't even try to do a. or b. and as a result I think we've turned ourselves into beauty contestants. This has not helped the quality of our teaching (never mind how we look in swimsuits). What's worse is that we haven't made the decision consciously and with deliberation. As a result, we ourselves may believe there are better ways than the ones we are actually pursuing. My own sense is that our evaluation forms need to either be streamlined (Option i) or made more effective (Option ii).

GOALS OF PHILOSOPHY

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Bertrand Russell's comprehensive *History of Western Philosophy*, published in the late 1940s, examines both the strengths and weaknesses of Greek, scholastic and modern Western philosophy. On rereading Russell's book, I found that the assertions of many highly-regarded philosophers seem much less valid than I had previously thought. This article questions Descartes, Kant, and Aquinas, and explores the impact of philosophy on religious and political beliefs.

For example, according to Russell, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the reputed founder of modern Western philosophy, believed that indubitable truth eliminates false beliefs induced by demons created by Satan to deliberately confound human understanding of nature and society. His choice of "I think therefore I am (*cogito ergo sum*)", as the essence of indubitability focuses on thinking, and on the mind as opposed to the body as the essence of human existence. But it is very far from the empirical principle of experimental verification adopted by natural scientists as a basis for scientific truth. Moreover, the choice of demons as a basis for indubitable truth is quite strange, since it is based on unverifiable, unnecessary assumptions. Descartes' reasons for requiring indubitability as a scientific principle are strongly related to his belief in God's existence, whose truth is accepted so axiomatically that it need not be questioned, presumably because demons cannot question God's existence, though they can question all other human assumptions.

Descartes was educated as a Jesuit and continued to associate with Jesuits during his life in Holland from 1629 to 1649. He renounced his book on scientific principles, completed shortly after Galileo's punishment for heresy, because he viewed some of his own scientific writings as potentially heretical. He was widely acclaimed as a leading philosopher by religious leaders, in part because his postulates permitted acceptance of scientific and philosophical views that, unlike those of Galileo, did not negate religious principles. His published books were as much concerned with the validity of Catholicism as with science, at a time of strong conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

Descartes connected the idea that human thought is the primary proof for existence with the idea that the mind dominates the body as a basis for human behavior, and that mental concepts are more substantive than sense perceptions as a form of knowledge. He adopted rationalism as opposed to empiricism as the proper basis for scientific and religious knowledge. The conflict between mental (rationalist) views of Descartes and experimental (empiricist) views of Locke and Hume has persisted throughout the last 300 years, and are in part responsible for the world wars between Britain and Germany in the 20th century and the decline of European contributions to international ideas.

Rationalism predominates over empiricism in the principles of Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Marx, and likewise in the political philosophies of communism, fascism and religious fundamentalism. Kant's "*Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)" focuses on the distinction between rationalism and empiricism as a foundation for "pure" reasoning and comes down on the side of rationalism. He distinguishes between analytic propositions like "a tall man is a man", which are self-evidently true because the predicate is part of the subject, and synthetic propositions whose truth must be rigorously established. He asserts that synthetic propositions are true if they are "a priori", and that the existence of God is a priori and therefore true. In the latter part of the text he shows that

the existence of God cannot be proved by the ontological or cosmological proofs used by early philosophers, but follows from Kant's fundamental analysis. Kant's arguments about reason and truth are used by Hegel and other philosophers as a principle for reasoning. Kant asserts that his principles of pure reason are as fundamental for philosophy as Copernican principles are for physics. But neither Descartes' nor Kant's principles are acceptable to many modern philosophers and they lead to errors of political reasoning such as those of Hitler and Stalin.

According to Russell, Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) is the greatest scholastic philosopher, whose work on Christian principles has been central to Catholic philosophical teaching for over 100 years. His discussion of God's properties describes God's knowledge of universals and particulars, good and evil, love and hate, and other postulates about humans. Russell asserts that Aquinas is not a true philosopher because he argues only about a priori truths he knows in advance, and relies on revelation for truths that he cannot explicitly prove. His reputation as a great philosopher is based not on the philosophical quality of his arguments but on the strength of his viewpoint for Christian beliefs.

Descartes and Kant, like Aquinas, assume that the existence of God is the central indubitable principle on which philosophy should be based, making philosophy more a religious principle than a scientific one. The use of uncertain arguments in support of a priori beliefs very often sacrifices truth in favor of predefined inherent desires. This led to questionable politics in Germany under Nazi rule and in Russia under Communist rule. In the U.S., recent spurious arguments about Terri Schiavo's mental state and desire to live were often asserted because support of the "culture of life" was more important to protagonists than the truth of their assertions. Descartes "cogito" suggests that thinking is central to existence and that death may be allowed when the brain no longer functions: this Cartesian principle has been questioned by some protagonists, who appear to know the views of God and Aquinas but rarely refer to Descartes, Kant, or modern philosophers like Russell. Scientific questions about Darwinian evolution, or sociological questions about marriage, homosexuality, or female priests, have likewise placed predefined religious dogmas over truth as a basis for formulating religious arguments about knowledge. It is unfortunate that religious systems which many people endorse are being used as a philosophical basis for political principles that degenerate certain forms of human freedom and human values.

Locke is one of the few philosophers whose empiricist principles were adopted by political systems in England and the U.S. to encourage freedom for individuals and separation of church and state as a basis for government. But democracy is increasingly permitting intertwining of church and state and other encroachments on individual freedom as a basis for democracy. Cartesian philosophy is reemerging as a basis for politics at the expense of the empirical principles advocated by Locke for the British and US constitutions.

We hope that universities like Harvard, Stanford, and Brown can continue to pursue open analysis of political and democratic principles in a society that is moving away from the philosophical principles of Locke towards the questionable philosophies of Descartes, Kant, and Aquinas.

My own education in England in the 1940s and 1950s was based on scientific truth. My teaching as a professor of Economics at the London School of Economics and a professor of Computer Science at Cornell and Brown was based on scientific truth, as was my evaluation of colleagues for promotion and tenure. It is a pity that truth is becoming less important in politics, religion, and philosophy than it was in my educational and scientific life. The subordination of truth to political and religious expediency is having a negative impact on our society and is changing the substance of democratic beliefs, legal principles, and human behavior.

God's decree that humans should not eat from the tree of knowledge is the first restriction imposed in the Bible, and man is punished for transgressing this restriction more severely than Cain was punished for murdering Abel. It is therefore not surprising that academic knowledge is challenged and sometimes dismissed as a basis for action, and that our pursuit of knowledge at universities is increasingly being questioned by politicians who blame professors for being too liberal. It is a pity that liberalism has been transformed from a positive to a negative idea and that truth is being converted from scientific and philosophical assertions to a priori principles of political and/or religious doctrine.

**SIXTY YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR II ENDED IN EUROPE:
SOME REFLECTIONS ON ITS IMPACT ON BROWN,
AND A PERSONAL FOOTNOTE**

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In May 2005 we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. That Great War, and its aftermath, had a big influence on Brown University (and on my life). I outline three aspects of its impact on Brown: the establishment of Applied Mathematics, activities in Physics (especially acoustics), and the development of Engineering after the War with several faculty from overseas. A personal footnote describes a random event whereby I have entered into a London museum commemoration of children in that War.

The feared weapons of mass destruction in the mid-1930s were bomber airplanes. The first UK experiment which demonstrated the feasibility of using radar for detection of aircraft beyond the coast was performed early in 1935, and an effective air defense system was developed with the aid of war games. In the late summer of 1939 in Poland, a young man who had started graduate study in London and who had made the mistake of picking that time to visit his family there was making quick decisions to improve his chance of survival. Good decisions, as he (Joseph Kestin) became a professor of Engineering at Brown in the early 1950s, and later we were colleagues; but first he had to cut more wood for the Russians than he cared to talk about.

Many people in the US anticipated entering the war at some time, Brown already had a good reputation in mathematics, and someone persuaded President Wriston that it would be important to establish a post-doctoral program to convert pure mathematics PhDs into applied mathematicians, who would be needed; and William Prager was hired away from the University of Istanbul to organize this. He proved to be a brilliant choice. Fittingly, his portrait now hangs in 182 George Street, the Applied Mathematics building.

The war I saw, heard, and felt directly as a child living south of London was the air war, including the "Battle of Britain". Some children were separated from their families and evacuated over long distances. Peter Wegner had been sent to the UK in the Kindertransport scheme; safer than Austria, but only relatively. I was told, after coming to Brown, that some children evacuated from the combat regions of Europe arrived here, and that Brown faculty who took them in had their children's tuition benefit extended to cover these refugee children.

The first flight of an airplane powered by a Whittle jet engine was witnessed by a select few, among whom was Prof. O.A. Saunders who told me some years later (when he was my PhD thesis supervisor) that there were some distinguished scientists present who questioned - before the demonstration - that something without a propeller would be able to take off and fly! In conducting this war a wide range of scientists was engaged, and there was a sense overall that this was the first "boffins' war", where swift deployment of scientific and engineering skills would be critical. Even so, equipment for the state of the art could be cumbersome, and a member of my family who traveled from Argentina to participate, Lilian Rolph, had to use a relatively large radio set for transmissions when she was a Special Operations Executive "F Section" W/T officer, dropped off in occupied France near her Paris birthplace in April 1944, to join up with the Historian Network of the French Resistance. She made more than 60 successful and accurate transmissions to the UK, and had taken part in an engagement with enemy troops near Olivet,

before being captured on July 31st. I recall my father (who worked in the Ministry of Aircraft Production) coming home one day and saying, "I think they've got Lilian." Subsequently she was transferred to Ravensbruck concentration camp and was executed there, along with Violet Szabo and Danielle Block, early in 1945.

During WWII Brown's Physics Department, having wide expertise in acoustics, had assisted with developments in underwater sound, important for improving detection of submarines, for example. After the War the US Office of Naval Research was a leader in maintaining support for research at universities, and university engineering departments went into re-thinking their curricula as well as hiring new faculty. Brown did exceptionally well in drawing up a more science-based undergraduate engineering curriculum, and made faculty additions of diverse national origins (especially European), with strong capabilities in research as well as teaching. Bill Prager undoubtedly had a major influence in this through the Physical Sciences Council (pre-CONFRAT). By the late 1950s Engineering included faculty of Chinese, Spanish, Swiss, German, Dutch, British and Polish origins (the latter being Joseph Kestin) as well as American. Students in the West had been internationalized too: Peter Wegner, like me, started his university years at Imperial College of London University some years after the War's end (but we did not meet there). Theodore Von Karman (born in Hungary), visiting Brown in that period, joked that the standard language for science in America then was bad English, and that he spoke it very fluently. (When I went on leave to the Medical School in RWTH Aachen, with support from the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung in the 1970s, I noticed legacies of his influence in Aerodynamics from his time spent in RWTH Aachen.) At Brown the legacies of the Bill Prager period, less tangible but nevertheless real, continue to accrue distinction.

War and peace have many chance events. As a matter of chance, the house listed on my birth certificate as the family home (and in which my father lived until he died in 1999) was picked to be the "1940s House" in which a selected family of five lived under accelerated simulated conditions of WWII, wearing the authentic clothes, preparing their meals in the de-modernized kitchen, digging up the back garden to install an Anderson shelter, and coping with other wartime restrictions for several weeks while being videographed. A short TV series was edited from this for (UK) Channel Four (shown here later via PBS). This series became linked for teaching in UK schools about WWII. London's Imperial War Museum built a full-scale replica of the 1940s House inside and told me it had increased visitors to the Museum by 60 per cent. This year the exhibit space around that House has been remodeled into an Exhibit on "The Children's War", and it now includes a few of my personal items - a drawing I had made of an airplane that crashed nose-first behind a house, one of my war-time kindergarten school reports, and pre-war photos at the original 1940s House - all, I am pleased to point out, as a very small part of the overall exhibit which is assembled with great care for authenticity. Eye-glasses for the period were borrowed from the British Optical Association Museum in Craven Street, London, for example, and the air raid siren recording is exact enough to prove to me the indefinite persistence of Pavlovian conditioning; it digs amazingly deep.

