

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Science
October 2, 1990

The meeting was called to order by Dean Lutzer at 3:30 in Rogers 100. In a preliminary move, the Dean, observing that the secretary's desk was vacant, appointed George Rublein acting secretary. No objection was raised.

Minutes of the meeting of May 1, 1990 were approved without correction.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Dean

- i) Reminded the audience that only members of the Arts and Sciences Faculty may vote at the meeting.
- ii) Thanked Michael Rohrbaugh for long and faithful service as Secretary to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
- iii) Introduced Andrew Langer as the new SA liaison to the Faculty.
- iv) Amended the published agenda by adding a mystery item from the Educational Policy Committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

**The Provost's report

Mr. Schiavelli explained plans for implementing salary increases. Full raises would go into effect in the October 16 check for those on an eighteen payment schedule and on November 1 for others, but on the December 16 check, and for the remainder of the academic year, salaries of all employees would be reduced by approximately 2%. Certain technical corrections would be made to account for the shift from 20 to 18 pay periods and for possible minor inequities for those on a 24 pay period schedule.

A number of non-adversarial questions were raised. Mr. Welsh asked why the College had not used the original unreduced salary prescribed in the "contracts" of last Spring. That was simply not possible, the Provost said. The University had committed itself to 7 months of the nominal increase, and was instructed by the Secretary of Education to use the resulting edited salary as a base figure against which the 2% reduction was to be taken. Mr. Eckhause asked whether the technical corrections would be lumped with salary in a single check and why even graduate assistants, who earn very little, are also to suffer 2% salary cuts. The Provost's understanding was that each person's correction would be part of a single draft (or EFT) which would include the normal salary as well as the correction. Insofar as graduate assistants are concerned, he explained that the Attorney General's (unpublished) opinion appeared to take the view that the 2% reduction could be defended against legal assault only if the reduction were applied in an absolutely uniform way to all state employees. Mr. Winter asked whether the reduction applied to grant-supported personnel as well. The Provost said "Yes", since they are state employees. In fact,

compelled by equity considerations rather than by the Governor's dictum, the University would also apply the 2% cut to those fully supported by private funds. Mr. Johnston wondered how he would explain all of this to graduate assistants who were lured here by the promise of lavish stipends. Again, the Provost said that the Attorney General seemed to want it this way, and, moreover, that this regressive procedure had the advantage of passing the burden of its defense from the University to the Commonwealth.

Mr. Selby asked how the "base salary" would be defined in considering next year's salary changes. One's base salary would be determined by the salary after the 2% reduction is applied, that is, by the last salary check of the 90-91 academic year, said the Provost.

Ms. Djordjevic added her voice to those worried about the effect of the cut on graduate students. The Provost asked the Faculty to read his lips: "Everybody has to be treated the same, or the reduction cannot stand legal challenge."

Mr. DeFotis asked whether the potential tuition surcharge being discussed in the press might give relief against the salary reductions. "No" was the reply, any such new funds would be used, almost entirely, to defray severe cuts in library acquisition budgets.

Mr. Kreps asked: Could one determine, in retrospect, that the scheme adopted by the administration to implement the "7-month increase" was not an optimal choice, now that the reduction had been announced, and, what would become of the salary funds reverted by people who are paid out of grant funds. The Provost pleaded ignorance to the first question, but quite accurately pointed out that it was moot. He explained that unspent salary funds from a grant are simply returned to that grant, possibly for other uses. Mr. Scholnick asked whether such returned funds might be reimbursed to graduate assistants at some later date, perhaps through mid-year salary increases or travel assistance. The Provost said that authorities in Richmond would not tolerate any attempt to subvert the 2% reduction by a subsequent salary increase to, say, grant supported personnel. Otherwise, the State's legal position would be jeopardized. On the other hand, travel expenses are perfectly acceptable grant expenditures. The Provost seized the opportunity to state that, though much of the current discussion was taking place in the context of salary increases of continuing faculty, new faculty, with new "contracts", were also subject to the 2% salary reduction. In his view, this is an equitable arrangement. Furthermore, the possible tuition surcharge was still very much in doubt, and while it had not been rejected out of hand, it was unlikely that the full amount requested for the surcharge would be permitted by the Governor. Mr. Scholnick pointed out that a surcharge on top of a salary reduction would punish graduate assistants a second time.

****Dean's Statement on the State of the Faculty.**

The Dean made some extended remarks on activities of the Faculty

last year, and anticipated activities during in the coming year. The full text of his remarks is added as an appendix to the archival copy of the minutes. In particular, some science highlights from last year were essentially replicated from the Dean's comments in the May 1990 meeting and so minuted. One notable exception is that external awards to Henry Krakauer, John Delos and David Kranbuehl had come too late to be announced in the May meeting.

As far as the current year is concerned, budget considerations are obviously going to play a decisive role in many circumstances. The Dean will have some difficult priorities to set, for instance, when he has to allot part time positions. In spite of these problems, the Dean reminded us that we cannot simply reject all new initiatives on the grounds that they would compete with currently underfunded programs. Hard choices will continue to be made, and valuable older programs may have to give way to accommodate more valuable new ones.

The Dean explained that the undergraduate assessment, lately run out of the Provost's office, had been transferred to his office. After negotiations to enlist the services of an assessment director from the Faculty had failed, the Dean was pleased to gain assent from Ms. Slevin that she would chair the Assessment Steering Committee in 1990-91. Meanwhile, the two Deans, Lutzer and Haulman, would supervise the assessment on an overload basis.

The Dean congratulated Dean Scholnick on his efforts to locate a number of local outside sources of support for graduate students. Lastly, the Dean remarked on the need for a major review of the undergraduate curriculum and made some veiled comments on what sorts of results might come from such a review.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

** Nominations

Mr. Kiefer, reporting for the Nominating Committee, said that they had failed to find a nominee for Secretary to the Faculty in time to give the notice required in the By-Laws. Struck by a sudden thought, Mr. Fuchs nominated George Rublein from the floor and he was elected by acclamation.

Ms. Houle (later) asked whether the Committee could not have found someone besides Ms. Buck to impress for an extra year's duty on the Academic Status Committee. Ms. Houle said the job was onerous and might be an unreasonable burden on Ms. Buck, owing to her other commitments and non-tenured status. Mr. Kiefer said that the Committee was following the procedure adopted last year for filling temporary vacancies on committees, that it had indeed sought other possible candidates first, and that Ms. Buck had been entirely agreeable in the matter.

**Faculty Affairs

Mr. Eckhause, reporting for the Faculty Affairs Committee first presented candidates for election to the Nominating Committee.

Roger Smith, Paul Stockmeyer and Cam Walker were subsequently elected.

Mr. Eckhause then gave a telegraphic account of items on the recent agenda of the FAC. Budget problems, the search for an assessment director, certain personnel matters, the merit evaluation policy, nominations to appointed committees and issues connected with Honor Council proceedings. Some of these items had been disposed, and others were moving apace.

Mr. Eckhause also reported on the statutory liaison of the FAC with the Faculty Assembly. He congratulated the Assembly on its valiant, though fruitless, effort to protect contracted faculty salaries from the Governor's cutback. He said that the Assembly's concern about other budget problems, viz., library cutbacks, reduced course offerings and loss of faculty positions, was well taken by the FAC.

Mr. Crapol inquired about the status of the Faculty Handbook. Mr. Eckhause said that various committees of the Assembly were charged with the possible revision of various sections of that handbook. Work is in progress. Mr. Selby, an expert in Assembly matters, said that, as a general matter, revisions contemplated were confined to removal of various anachronisms that had been found or might be found in the Handbook.

**Honorary Degrees

Mr. Holmes, reporting for the Honorary Degrees Committee, had a few salient observations on the operation of his committee. He would like to see:

More nominations from the Faculty.

Direct meetings with the Board of Visitors in discussion of candidates.

Improved citations.

Better balance by gender, religious persuasion, etc., among honorary degree recipients.

The possibility that a commencement speaker be chosen because the party is a good speaker, though not necessarily worthy of an honorary degree.

Mr. Schifrin asked whether a backlog of nominations is held over from year to year. Mr. Holmes said, yes, though a name can become "stale" over time. Mr. DeFotis (the incoming chair of the Committee) offered that there is, in fact, a very long list of unused nominees. He said the Committee tries hard to achieve balance, but that negotiations can be hampered by uncertainties in a nominee's schedule, a natural result of that person's stature.

**Retention Promotion and Tenure

Mr. Crapol, reporting for the RPT, announced that its positive recommendations for tenure (7 faculty) and promotion (4 faculty) all enjoyed concurrence from the Dean and had ultimately been approved by the Provost. A full report is attached as an appendix

to the archival copy of the minutes. He also remarked that there had been a noticeable increase in the quality of tenure/promotion case presentations made by the various departments. The Committee, however, is compelled to remind the Faculty that evidence of teaching excellence continues to be a central concern in these cases, especially for outsiders seeking instant tenure. Lastly, Mr. Crapol explained the genesis of his earlier question of Mr. Eckhause regarding the status of the Faculty Handbook revisions. Mr. Crapol said that certain aspects of the decision process needed clarification. The Committee and the Dean were in agreement on these changes, and Mr. Crapol looked forward to seeing them in print.

****Addendum**

The last item on the agenda was a request for air-time from the Educational Policy Committee. Ms. Ventis, chair of the Committee, posed a philosophical question: Should the Committee approve a department's request for curricular change based entirely on the need to accommodate burgeoning student demand. The Committee's current view is that it should not, but Ms. Ventis was soliciting opinions from at large.

The Dean, making it clear that a friendly disagreement existed between himself and the Committee, made three points:

1. We cannot ignore economic reality as we consider curricular issues.
2. We need to reorder goals so that less important, though valuable, activities may have to give way to more important ones.
3. Full retreat from our most strongly held views of what is important to a liberal education is not in order. But times are lean and we need to consider new ideas that would permit greater efficiency.

Mr. James Harris asked (of the Provost) whether the current fiscal atmosphere would have any impact on the incoming class size. The Provost said that it certainly might. Nevertheless, some care is needed here since a reduction in Freshman class size would mean fewer people paying (the same) total tuition bill. His view is that the incoming class will not be increased beyond its current level. Mr. Tiefel asked whether the current policy of EPC means that advanced courses promised to exist by the catalog might never be given on account of enrollment pressures at lower levels. Ms. Ventis said that this is not the context of the present question. Mr. Livingston said that perhaps the Committee could study the problem and make a recommendation. Ms. Ventis replied that the Committee is satisfied with the policy it has, though slightly disturbed by some recent departmental requests. Perhaps the Faculty has some advice on economic versus educational priorities? Mr. Livingston said that the Faculty had never been prepared to deal with the issue of what is more and what is less central to our curriculum.

The Dean interjected that it may not be appropriate for the Committee to dismiss, out of hand, a resource-driven curricular change. Mr. Fuchs asked whether the rejection was based solely on

the department's claim of economic benefit or whether there were other shortcomings in the proposal. Ms. Ventis said the proposal did not provide an adequate justification. Mr. Archibald commented that if students are currently locked out of a certain department, for example in seeking to fulfill the sequence requirement, and an alternative curricular scheme makes more courses available in that department, then EPC is wrong. Ms. Ventis said the students could go to other departments to sequence. Mr. Willis said that the EPC's judgement is hard to criticize. It cannot be a rubber stamp. Perhaps in the instant case, a large package of changes might have made sense, where the isolated proposal did not.

Mr. James Harris asked whether the Dean had any estimates of near-term shifts in student/faculty ratios among departments. The Dean replied that he does not have from the Provost any target reduction for the next several years. But he is certain that some unpleasant choices are on the horizon. Absorption of students in large scale courses seems to be in the cards. Ms. Walker said that the EPC needs to stick to educational policy and let other people worry about economics. The Dean agreed that EPC cannot be a rubber stamp, but that EPC may need some sensitivity training in the midst of economic difficulties. Mr. DeFotis said that an inferior educational product is one thing, but an unacceptable one is another. In implicit agreement, Mr. Eckhause said that combining several sections of a small class may not lead to a diminution of quality if a competent instructor is at work. Ms. Ventis said that substantive changes in curriculum, not mere increases in class size, were at issue here. She felt that the proposal evinced a sense of desperation.

Ms. Djordjevic said she felt handcuffed by the secrecy regarding the details of the specific case. Was there any reason why we could not know something about the case? Ms. Ventis said that confidentiality was not a concern here. Rather, she thought, the philosophical issue would be clouded by a discussion of the specific case.

Mr. Axtell said that pressures on particular departments are often a product of whim and fashion on the part of the students. He saw nothing wrong with forcing students out of "popular" departments, at least until an opportunity is given the Dean to make decisions about resources. Mr. Livingston concurred. Ms. Null countered with the statement that some departments are already under exceedingly heavy pressure: too many area requests, too many sequence requests, too many minors, too many majors. Some ways to gain relief are necessary. Mr. Axtell said that short-term pressures should not drive these changes. Let students be disenrolled, then they can complain to the Dean, the Provost, the President and the Governor. Those people have the tools to respond. Mr. Friedman rejected this notion. He claimed that the current situation is far too uncomfortable for some departments.

Mr. Marceau pointed out that there are already many courses designed specifically for non-majors and that the proposed course might make sense viewed in this way. Yes, said Ms. Ventis, but even these students are human beings. Mr. Marceau said that better

information from advisors might be a source of relief. But Mr. James Harris said that students seeking information in the form of an introductory course in an unfamiliar discipline were frequently prevented from taking such a course on account of excess enrollment. Mr. Willis said that the new advising/preregistration scheme, including priority rankings by students, could provide such access if properly used. Mr. Langer said that students often made peculiar use of these priorities to ensure graduation, and that in some sense, these priorities were often not used in the student's own interest.

With nothing else to say, the Faculty adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'George Rublein', written in dark ink.

George Rublein
Secretary to the Faculty