



UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE RECORD

Minutes of the Faculty Meeting

October 7, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 5PM by Prof. Michael Payne.

Announcements by the President

President Rogers thanked the faculty for helping make the recent Parents' Weekend a success. He then addressed the University's current financial situation. The size of the endowment has shrunk, and the 9.5% growth rate factored into current financial models is now unrealistically high. While no drastic cuts are planned, belt-tightening is in order, and we need a new financial model to reflect the current realities. He will share financial information with the Committee on Planning and Budget and other committees as he gets it.

On a more positive note, the President reported that the ABET accreditation process for the College of Engineering is ongoing, and congratulated the Engineering faculty on their fine self-study. He requested, in forceful terms, faculty input on the Vision 2010 process. Finally, he announced that naming rights for the new athletic pavilion went to late trustee Bob Smith, who donated a large sum towards the project. The new pavilion will be named after former President, and current Professor of Biology, Gary Sojka. Sustained applause greeted this announcement.

VP of Enrollment Management Kurt Thiede reported on the composition of the class of 2006. He highlighted strengths in geographic and ethnic diversity, growth in average SATs and the percentage of enrollees in the top 10% of their high school class. He requested support from the faculty for the upcoming Open House on November 16, emphasizing the need to convince applicants about the value of a Bucknell education in the current economic climate. In response to a question, he confirmed that not all financial need was met by university money, although some loan requests are still being processed. Prof. Glyne Griffith wondered why ethnic minority student numbers are listed along with those of international students. Several staff members replied that the US government and prominent surveys require us to report these numbers separately, but that they will take a look at how the information is presented.

Prof. Matt Silberman asked about the costs associated with the new benefits options; this discussion was deferred until the November meeting.

Announcements by Chair of the Faculty

Prof. Dee Casteel will be our parliamentarian. Our faculty meetings follow procedures in *Roberts Rules*, except that our parliamentarian can vote. Announcements were made about that evening's Class of '56 Lectureship given by Tom Solomon, and the Stop the Hate vigil.

Prof. Payne went on to announce two special faculty meetings: on October 14 for merit aid and October 28 for performance review. We need to finish discussion of both issues before the Board of Trustees meeting in November. Finally, he noted that the Faculty Council will shortly meet with Provost Bowen to discuss issues relevant to the Vision 2010 process.

Old Business

The substitute motion by Paul Susman on the Living Wage was on the floor from the last meeting (see September, 2002 Minutes). He and Prof. Geoff Schneider began with a presentation reviewing why \$10.54/hr should be considered a living wage for the local area. Prof. Susman noted that the delay of four years to implement an even lower \$9.00/hr wage floor called for in the CPB report is arbitrary, and that his motion calling for an immediate implementation is consistent with our mission statement extolling civility, compassion, and a sense of justice. Prof. Schneider added that having a two-tiered wage system could be viewed as a disincentive for employees.

Several professors asked about the costs of this motion, figuring in the number of employees affected and the costs associated with "decompressing" wages for workers already at higher salaries. The cost information requires complex analysis, and VP Jo-Ann Lema said that she could not give a figure today, but could do so within two weeks.

Prof. Ben Marsh spoke against the motion and in favor of the original CPB motion. He reminded the group that CPB couldn't accept one living wage because of the variability in family situations and also because the salary structure of part-time workers needs to be considered. He said that some committee members found the labeling of the issue to be offensive, in that no one favors a "dying wage"; others believed wages should be set by market forces. Some employees would not benefit by the Susman motion, including those with lower skill levels or people not working up to standards due to impairments, in that they may be replaced. Few hourly workers replied to a request for comments on the proposal; of the eight comments received, seven were against the living wage idea. Prof. Marsh said that budget resources could be better allocated to developing the potential of each worker.

Prof. Susman replied we should not delay for four years implementation of what is essentially a poverty wage of \$9.00, and that this wage floor will not remove incentives for good work performance. While we do need to address compression, he thought the size of the labor pool would shrink, if necessary, by attrition and not layoffs (studies reviewed by the Bucknell Caucus for Economic Justice show that implementing a living wage does not result in layoffs).

Several faculty members spoke in favor of the principle of assuring each worker a living wage, and thought that money to fund this initiative could come from cost savings in other parts of the budget. Others were concerned that the monetary and human costs associated with the motion on the floor, particularly with regard to compression of salaries, are not known at this time. A principle without clear implementation followthrough is an empty gesture. Prof. Erik Lofgren wondered how benefits are factored into the living wage calculation. Prof. Susman said that benefits are assumed; if not, then another \$1.00/hr would

need to be added. Prof. Jerry Mead was concerned that the hourly workers themselves were not participating in this conversation.

Prof. Mary Evelyn Tucker offered a statement of principle in the form of a substitute motion, which was seconded: *We as a faculty endorse a principle of a living wage and request that implementation reports be given back to the faculty at appropriate intervals.* She noted that she did not want to micromanage the process, although President Rogers thought that the administration would need more guidance than this motion offered.

In the remaining minutes of the meeting, several speakers asked if the Susman and Tucker motions could be reconciled in some way, although others reiterated concern that voting on a course of action was difficult without implementation figures. As the group was not coming to resolution, Prof. Marsh moved that the motion be tabled, which was seconded and passed, just as the meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Halpern
Secretary of the Faculty