



Faculty Chair Tony Massoud called the December 2008 meeting of the University Faculty to order at 12:03 p.m. on Tuesday, December 2 in the Langone Center Forum.

MINUTES

A. Amendments to and approval of November 2008 minutes

No amendments were made to the November 2008 minutes.

B. Announcements and remarks by the President

President Mitchell spoke about the current economic crisis and the University's financial situation. The University continues to be fortunate relative to other schools, particularly those in the public sector and some less well-endowed private institutions. The President has been in communication with the Trustees who share his opinion that careful planning is crucial. Provost Smyer and Vice-President Surgala will now oversee planning for contingencies that may be required by economic conditions. Specifically, they will identify decision making processes that will include the appropriate governance structures. The Committee on Planning and Budget has already started this process, and appropriate committees will be called on as this plan develops. The President indicated that drastic cuts are not expected, and that Faculty hiring will continue this year as planned. We should be prepared to enact decisions and have a sound basis for these decisions. The President concluded by presenting recent numbers from the development office contrasting year to date fund raising for this fiscal year with the previous fiscal year. These numbers do not indicate trouble.

C. Announcements and remarks by the Chair of the Faculty

Faculty Chair Massoud discussed the recent meeting of the Board of Trustees. The President's office has provided a good summary of the meeting. Professor Massoud was able to attend most of the open meetings and the full board meeting on Saturday. He found the Trustees to be concerned about the economy but not acting in a crisis mode. No major decisions were made, but the board is committed to safeguarding Bucknell's academic mission and maintaining financial aid. In particular, the board is concerned that no student should leave for financial reasons. The board is expecting the administration to present scenarios related to possible changes in enrollment.

D. Reports from Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees

Written reports from Faculty Representatives were included in the appendix to the December faculty meeting agenda.

E. Committee Reports:

1. Committee on Staff Planning

This report was not given because the Chair of the Committee on Staff Planning was not present.

2. Report from the ad hoc Committee to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures

Faculty Chair Massoud explained that this report is purely informative. There will be an open forum in January to discuss the recommendation coming out of this report, and subsequently the faculty will be presented with motions related to these recommendations.

Ben Vollmayr-Lee thanked the committee members, former URC members, the Deans, the Provost, Sue Conway and Jerry Rackoff. Professor Vollmayr-Lee then presented an overview of the committee's work. The full report can be obtained at the committee's netSPACE: R:\committees\crtp\public

The bottom line is that our promotion and review system works well and is similar to what our peer schools do. Nonetheless there is room for improvement. The committee leaves it to the faculty whether or not to accept its recommendations. In response to a question from Sue Ellen Henry, Ben Vollmayr Lee indicated that the data on our tenure rate was broken down only by year of hire, by division, and by gender. He pointed out the worrisome trend that although the tenure rates for men and women are comparable, women do leave Bucknell before tenure at a much higher rate than men.

3. Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee

Geoff Schneider introduced a motion from the Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee to amend the faculty handbook with multiple changes that correct mistakes and update language to reflect current practices. This motion was introduced at the November meeting. The details of these changes appear in the Appendix to the December meeting agenda. The motion was seconded.

Speaking for the Faculty Council, Ben Marsh presented the following motion to amend the FAPC motion: "Sections 3 and 8 of the proposed handbook changes should be deleted." This procedural amendment is made without prejudice about the merits of the sections deleted. In part 3, the Faculty Council wants time to consult with the committees to clarify whether they would work as well without the Provost. Committee charges are due for review, as a consequence of the External Faculty Review, and changes in membership might be made at that time. In part 8, the Faculty Council wishes to see language that requires committees to separate the parts of their reports that are actual recommendations from what is merely informational. In addition, the 3-day rule should be clarified to distinguish whether 3 calendar days or 3 working days are required. This motion was seconded.

Provost Smyer indicated that he would be happy to have the relevant committees consulted, and that he does not want to change current practice.

The motion from the Faculty Council was then voted on and approved. The faculty then unanimously approved the (amended) motion from FAPC.

F. Adjournment

The December 2008 Meeting of the Bucknell Faculty was adjourned at 12:51 p.m. on December 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Cassidy
Secretary of the Faculty