



Faculty Chair Tony Massoud called the February 2009 meeting of the University Faculty to order at 12:03 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3 in the Langone Center Forum.

## MINUTES

### **A. Amendments to and approval of December 2008 minutes**

No amendments were made to the December 2008 minutes.

### **B. Announcements and remarks by the Chair of the Faculty**

Faculty Chair Massoud began by asking the faculty to consider nominating distinguished leaders from their disciplines for honorary degrees. The nominees do not need to be Bucknell alumni. Nominations should be sent directly to the committee on honorary degrees.

Chair Massoud next reported that there will soon be an election for one at-large position on the URC. The candidates nominated by the faculty council are Andrea Halpern from the Psychology department and Debby Abowitz from the department of Sociology and Anthropology. Additional nominations will be accepted until noon on Thursday February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Massoud then turned to the recent meeting of the Board of Trustees in Newark. The board has decided on a 0% compensation increase for faculty, staff and administration. This is consistent with the behavior of our peer school. However there is a contingency fund that will provide promotion increments for those faculty who are promoted. There was vigorous debate among the trustees about the comprehensive fee, with suggestions ranging from 0% to more than 5%. In the end the Trustees asked the administration to look again for opportunities to make cuts. The university is facing budget deficits next year, and the finance office together with the Committee on Planning and Budget are already working on ways to balance the budget. However the deficits for the year after may be even greater. Diminished returns on the endowment will reduce Bucknell's income for several years. The Trustees voted to approve the project to move the university bookstore downtown, with completion expected in the spring of 2010. This will have a budgetary impact.

The Trustees also heard reports on buildings and the need to prioritize academic spaces, ongoing plans for additional dormitories, admissions, financial aid, and the comprehensive campaign. Although Bucknell saw an increase in early admission applications, the overall applicant pool is down 5.2%. There have been few additional requests for financial aid from current students, but there is an 8% increase in requests

from new applicants. The campaign is at 25% of the goal, although it is still in the quiet phase. There has been an increase in gifts over last year.

### **C. Announcements and remarks by the President**

President Mitchell focused his remarks on compensation, the comprehensive fee, and the downtown bookstore. Bucknell is fortunate to have little debt and lots of liquidity. The administration has already begun implementing measures to reduce spending, including canceled searches and budget cuts. Additional reductions will be necessary in the next two or three years because of loss to the endowment. In response to the economic crises, some peer institutions have been freezing wages, cutting people and programs and increasing enrollments. Bucknell is currently facing a budget deficit of \$4-5.6 million for next year. Compensation is the largest portion of the budget. The President indicated that efforts would be made to balance the budget without layoffs. While the plan is to return to the practice of offering competitive salaries, no promises can be made. Meanwhile, this salary freeze should not cause Bucknell to lose ground relative to peer schools.

With regard to the comprehensive fee, the President explained that Bucknell has lost money in the endowment and will need to increase the fee for next year, although by less than in previous years. Families will be told first about the new fee, and then it will be announced to campus. The budget for need-based aid will be adjusted so that all current students will be able to complete their Bucknell education.

The President then turned to the decision to move the bookstore downtown. This is the result of two years of discussion with outside consultants and the Mayor of Lewisburg. Although a private bookstore chain will be involved, Bucknell will own the facility, land and building. Bucknell will arrange transportation to help students get downtown. The decision about whether to invite a private investor has not yet been made. If Bucknell funds the project, the money will come from liquid reserves, which are dedicated to one-time expenses, and not from the operating budget. Bucknell will pay property taxes to the boro. The President then listed reasons for taking this action now: Bucknell must continue to make long term plans even in bad times; Bucknell could lose the state funding if we do not act; Bucknell could also lose out on federal stimulus money if we reject the state money; the new bookstore will be bigger and better than the current store; the move will benefit Lewisburg and a strong Lewisburg helps Bucknell; the move will free up 12500 square feet in the Langone Center.

The President concluded his remarks by decrying the recent acts of anti-semetic graffiti on campus. Bucknell is working with state police to investigate this.

During the question period Sandra Morris asked whether Bucknell could follow the example of Cornell and provide raises for staff with low salaries. The President indicated that the Board is aware of this and will consider it. Duane Griffin stated that the campus greening assessment pointed to ways in which the university could save several million, and the President said that he is interested in any efficiency that does not involve firing people. In response to a question from John Rickard, the President said that the impact of the salary freeze on the merit system has not yet been discussed. Brian

Williams asked whether current bookstore employees would be protected, and the President indicated that the negotiations with the outside contractor would include protections for current bookstore employees. In response to questions from Ben Marsh the President said that the Trustees were told that the campus reaction to the bookstore move is mixed, and that although the BSG has discussed the bookstore move, there has been no formal survey of student opinion. JT Ptacek asked whether cuts would be occurring in areas other than academics, to which the President responded that athletics would see the same level of cuts as academics, and that cuts in administration would be even greater.

**D. Three motions from Faculty Council in response to the report from the Committee to Review Promotion and Tenure**

Mike Toole introduced the three motions, explaining that these come in response to the CRPT report and in response to comments made at the open forum on January 22.

Motion #1: The faculty charges the Committee on Instruction (COI) to A) revise the questions on the standard university student evaluation forms to reflect best practices, and B) examine any relevant issues relating to the dissemination, analysis, and purpose of student evaluations. COI is asked to provide a report to the faculty by the end of fall 2009.

Motion #2: The faculty charges the Committee on Instruction (COI) to explore methods of evaluating teaching for the purpose of reviews beyond the use of student surveys. The committee should examine current practices in higher education and identify evaluation methods that might be appropriate for Bucknell. COI is asked to provide an update to the faculty by the end of fall 2009 and a final report by the end of spring 2010.

Motion #3: The faculty charges the Committee on Faculty and Academic Personnel (FAPC), working in consultation with URC and CAFT, to A) propose handbook changes to extend either the 4<sup>th</sup> year or 6<sup>th</sup> year reviews beyond the current deadline of December 15, and B) to revise the existing review timetable to reflect changes to the calendar. FAPC is asked to bring a motion or motions addressing these points at the March 2009 faculty meeting.

After brief discussion all three motions passed.

**E. Committee Reports:**

**1. Committee on Staff Planning**

Ben Vollmayr-Lee explained the genesis of the decision to convert some visiting positions into tenure track lines. Some departments face chronic needs for replacements, and the committee has identified 5 departments where this need warrants immediate action. Chairs have all been notified that they may submit proposals.

In response to a question about funding, Ben explained that these new lines are intended to be almost budget neutral. Provost Smyer added that the Provost's office will work with the committee to investigate fiscal accountability for every position.

Katie Faull pointed out that the first set of positions have gone to departments in the sciences and engineering and asked whether departments in other divisions can expect to receive positions. Ben explained that the allocation of positions would depend on demonstrable need, and that larger departments are more likely to have this need. However smaller departments might be able to put together joint proposals.

## **2. Committee on Planning and Budget**

This report was not given because of time constraints.

## **3. Committee on Athletics**

This report was not given because of time constraints.

## **F. Introduction of new BSG officers**

- Jaspinder Kanwal, President
- Ali Jones, Vice President of Operations
- Ted Lundeen, Vice President of Finance
- Krista Yancey, Vice President of Administration

## **G. Adjournment**

The February 2009 Meeting of the Bucknell Faculty was adjourned at 12:52 p.m. on February 3.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Cassidy  
Secretary of the Faculty