



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

MINUTES

A. Amendments to and approval of February 2009 minutes

No amendments were made to the February 2009 minutes.

B. Announcements and remarks by the Chair of the Faculty

Faculty Chair Massoud announced that the Faculty Council is planning an open forum at noon on March 17 for faculty to discuss the recommendations from Committee to Review Promotion and Tenure (CRPT) report. At this forum faculty will consider the recommendations from parts II and III of the report dealing with DRC makeup and documents, the role of the DRC, and promotions to full professor. Chair Massoud next turned to the many upcoming vacancies on university and faculty committees, and he encouraged all faculty members to consider participating in this crucial component of faculty governance. Three faculty members, Keith Buffinton, Ned Ladd and Janet Jones, have been named to serve as the CAFT nominating committee. In addition, the Faculty Council has appointed Tom Rich and Tim Strein to serve on the URC for the Spring 2009 semester.

C. Announcements and remarks by the President

President Mitchell began his remarks with news about the comprehensive campaign. Bucknell has received \$103 million so far, and this does not include a \$5 million gift soon to be announced. Overall, gifts are up 48% for the year. Nonetheless, the current economic crisis has caused Bucknell's endowment to decrease from above \$600 million to around \$400 million. This decrease will impact future budgets as well as this year's budget. In response to the crisis, the administration is watching student enrollment. Overall applications are down 5% but early decisions are up. There has been a 10% increase in number of applicants asking for financial aid. The administration is also watching peer institutions to see how they react to the economy. There will be an open forum on the economic crisis and Bucknell's budget at noon on Tuesday March 24 in Trout auditorium. The forum will serve as a preview of plans made by the Committee on Planning and Budget and the administration. It will also be an opportunity to raise questions. The President concluded his remarks by thanking all those who have helped Bucknell respond to the crisis, including Dave Surgala, the Committee on Planning and Budget, Nancy White and even Karl Voss.

D. Announcements and remarks by the Provost

Provost Smyer began his remarks by providing some context for the upcoming forum on Bucknell's budget. President Mitchell had asked the Provost and Vice President Surgala to make a contingency budget for the new fiscal year. The open forum will include a report on these plans. In addition, some FAQ's that arose in the planning process will be posted on the Provost's website after break, along with information on other campus budget activities. Faculty are encouraged to submit cost saving or greening ideas through the suggestion box in myBucknell. The Provost also announced that Bucknell has now hired a director for the office of sponsored research, a biologist who will join Bucknell around the beginning of April.

E. Committee Reports:

1. Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee

Motion 1: Revise the Faculty Handbook regarding the timeline for reviews.

Geoff Schneider, FAPC chair, explained that this motion is based on the CRPT report, feedback from the URC, CAFT and the President's office. The timeline for reviews is the only area in which Bucknell is seriously out of step with peer schools. Professor Schneider said that it is unreasonable and unwise to rush the process. He explained that 2nd year reviews cannot be postponed because faculty in the second year of an appointment are not given an additional year of appointment if their review is unsuccessful. AAUP guidelines and Bucknell policy give an additional year to faculty who fail their 4th or 6th year review. FAPC considered delaying 4th and 5th year reviews rather than tenure reviews, but decided that the 4th and 5th year reviews should take place sooner so that these candidates will have time to respond to the URC concerns before their next review. CAFT is making plans to change DRC documents should this motion pass at the April faculty meeting. The schedule of reviews has been added to make the handbook clearer.

Motion 2: Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Administrative Searches.

Geoff Schneider explained that this motion will bring the handbook up to date with current practices. Kim Daubman asked if it would be appropriate to elect committees for all searches. Faculty Chair Massoud explained that appointments are sometimes needed to balance committees, and former Faculty Chair Ligare explained that in the past the faculty did not always elect committee members for certain searches, for example a Vice President of Finance.

Motion 3: Change the Role of the Provost and the President in 2nd and 3rd Year Reviews.

Geoff Schneider explained that the CRPT report highlighted some URC scheduling problems. This change would free up the President and Provost unless there is a negative review. In addition, this change provides information about where to go in the handbook to find a description of the President's authority in reviews.

In response to a question from Marj Kastner, Geoff Schneider explained that “problematic” would be defined by the URC. In response to a question from Ben Marsh, Geoff Schneider explained that unless the URC sees a problem, the Provost or the President would not need to be involved. In response to a question from Gary Grant, Provost Smyer explained that although the Provost could be brought in as a tie breaker, he would expect there to be a full discussion with the URC, rather than just a Provost decision.

Motion 4: Adopt the implementation plan for hiring with tenure, outlined below (pp. 12-13).

Faculty Chair Massoud explained that the faculty had asked for this implementation plan. Geoff Schneider explained that in writing the plan, FAPC tried to operationalize the sentiments expressed at the faculty meeting when the handbook amendment regarding hiring with tenure was approved. Specifically, the faculty wanted guarantees that hiring with tenure would be a rare event. This plan was created with feedback from CAFT, CSP, Faculty Council and the President’s office.

The motion was seconded. In response to questions from Don Dearborn and Mark Spiro, Provost Smyer explained that endowed chairs would fit into the six categories described in the plan, and that a tenure decision in these cases would take 4 to 6 weeks. Provost Smyer said that candidates for these sorts of positions would understand this timeframe, and that strong external letters speaking to scholarship would probably be part of any application. Marj Kastner pointed out that how “internally” is interpreted in number 5 could affect a department’s argument for a search with tenure.

George Exner, speaking as a faculty member and not as chair of CAFT, made a motion to postpone. He explained that the implementation plan provided no provisions for appeals, and that it was unclear whether a candidate for hire with tenure would be allowed to appeal a negative tenure decision. The motion was seconded and in the ensuing discussion George Exner explained that he is not advocating that candidates should have the right to appeal decisions, but he is requesting that the implementation plan clarify what rights, if any, these candidates have. Provost Smyer spoke against Professor Exner’s motion, arguing that appeal processes are inappropriate for hires with tenure, and that he has never heard of a candidate for such a position appealing a tenure decision. Kim Daubman pointed out that the absence of an appeal process in the plan indicates that no appeals are allowed.

The faculty voted against George Exner’s motion to postpone, and then voted to adopt the implementation plan for hiring with tenure.

H. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Cassidy
Secretary of the Faculty