



Faculty Chair Tony Massoud called the October 2008 meeting of the University Faculty to order at 12:03 p.m. on Tuesday, October 7, in the Langone Center Forum.

Minutes

1. Amendments to and approval of September 2008 minutes

No amendments were made to the September 2008 minutes.

2. Announcements and remarks by the Chair of the Faculty

Faculty Chair Massoud announced that Gary Steiner has agreed to serve as parliamentarian for faculty meetings. Chair Massoud said that a list of committee memberships would be released soon. He encouraged the faculty to read the President's summary of discussions from the recent Board of Trustees retreat. The Trustees have asked the administration to make a list of financial planning priorities, and in some cases faculty committees may be consulted. He encouraged all committees to cooperate with these requests.

3. Announcements and remarks by the President

The President opened his remarks with comments on the recent Board of Trustees retreat. He explained that while the discussions had been free ranging, the Board is now requesting concrete details. He described the Board as fully engaged.

The President then turned to the recent financial situation. He said that although the crisis is very serious, and some institutions have been compelled to take drastic measures, Bucknell remains in a secure position financially. The university can manage this crisis without moving away from investing in people. We have \$10 million in available cash, and of our \$42 million debt only \$6 million is at variable rates. Nonetheless we do need to watch how this crisis will effect applications and what implications it will have for financial aid.

Finally the President asked Assistant Provost Midkiff to answer the questions from Debby Abowitz regarding the Task Force on Sexual Assault. Midkiff explained that the task force began two years ago and that Tracy Shaynak will write the final report. Meanwhile, as a consequence of the work of this task force, some changes have already been implemented in the student handbook. Midkiff reported that there have been six

reports of assaults this semester, which is a slight increase over last year.

4. Announcements and remarks by the Provost

Provost Smyer explained that current financial uncertainty calls for prudent stewardship, but that now is not the time to pull back from investing in faculty and facilities, and that the Trustees agree with this assessment. The provost highlighted three on-going projects:

a. The Committee on Staff planning has passed a proposal that some sabbatical replacement slots be converted to tenure track lines. This idea has been endorsed by the Provost's Council and has the support of the President. Over the next three or four years up to 12 new lines will be added. More details will come from Jan Knoedler after fall break.

b. Work on the campus masterplan is continuing. Jim Rice is convening working groups for the next phase of the plan.

c. The university is searching for two positions: a director for a new office of sponsored research and a director for the office of corporate and foundation relations.

5. Committee Reports:

a. Committee preparing the Middle States Periodic Review Statement

Tom Solomon began by explaining that every ten years the university goes through a process of accreditation. The last accreditation happened five years ago. A visiting team from Middle States came to campus in the Spring of 2004 and submitted a report that, while granting accreditation, also made a few recommendations that we were required to address; most significantly, on governance, developing a mission statement, and developing a strategic planning process.

Middle States requires a "Periodic Review Report" which is due on June 1, 2009. The Provost is in charge of the Middle States process at Bucknell, however we have a committee that is drafting the report and soliciting feedback from the community. Candice Stefanou and Tom Solomon are co-chairs of this committee. The other members are Jerry Rackoff, both academic deans, Dean of Students Susan Hopp, CIO Param Bedi, J.T. Ptacek, Phillippe Dubois, and Jeff Trop.

Drafting the report is a collaborative effort between the committee and the administration. Once a draft has been agreed on the committee will seek feedback from a wider audience. The University Council and the Faculty Council will be given an opportunity to weigh-in, and then the document will be opened to the wider campus community for feedback.

There will be open forums both for the faculty and administration/staff later this month and next month to solicit feedback. The faculty forum will be at noon on October 28 in the LC forum. A draft document will be made available the week before. Faculty are encouraged to read that draft and make substantive comments.

There is a website for information and comments about the Middle States process: go to MyBucknell, Quick links, Bucknell Information.

Ben Marsh then commented that historically faculty governance committees have been involved in these reports and suggested that this practice should continue. Tom Solomon agreed.

b. Faculty and Academic Personnel Committee

i. A report on faculty background checks

Geoff Schneider explained that the FAPC intends to make a report on this topic later, but the article in the Bucknellian prompted this early report. Currently staff and senior administrators undergo background checks, but faculty do not. Many of our peer institutions are doing background checks, and it seems reasonable that we should know if new hires were ever convicted of a violent crime. But the committee is also concerned about privacy, and does not want a policy that will hinder hiring. The committee is not yet ready to make a recommendation. The FAPC will consult with other campus bodies before making its recommendation to the faculty.

In response to a question from Marty Ligare, Geoff Schneider said that the committee is well aware of the AAUP statement on background checks and that this statement has guided the committees discussions. In response to a question from Debby Abowitz, Geoff Schneider said that the committee expects credential checks to occur as part of the background check process.

ii. Three motions to amend the faculty handbook

- Change the Faculty Handbook policy regarding leaves

Geoff Schneider explained that this change is designed to add consistency to when faculty members must decide whether a leave year should count toward tenure, and also to allow faculty to see their teaching evaluations before making this decision.

- Change the Faculty Handbook policy regarding faculty pay when a faculty member chooses a one-year leave at half pay

This change is purely informational. In response to questions it was established that faculty are still obliged to return to Bucknell in the year after a leave or reimburse Bucknell for the salary they earned during the leave year, and also that it is possible for people to earn less if they choose this option.

- Change the Faculty Handbook to allow hiring with tenure

Geoff Schneider explained that while most of our peer schools allow hiring with tenure, Bucknell does not. Hiring with tenure is a practical way to fill endowed chairs or hire high profile people. The FAPC sees hiring with tenure as something that would happen only in special circumstances and would not be the norm for faculty searches. The decision should be department driven. During the Q&A period it was established that: these amendments would allow Bucknell to hire untenured faculty with more experience; the phrase “are expected to have earned tenure” does not mean “will have earned tenure” since some foreign institutions do not grant tenure; and while we need

guidelines for how hiring with tenure would occur, the FAPC does not expect to be the body to write these guidelines.

c. Committee on Instruction

Roger Rothman reported that COI has drafted a document entitled “Bucknell University Strategic Educational Vision.” The faculty have already approved the list of educational goals contained in this document, and COI has already received feedback on an earlier version of this document. At the next faculty meeting COI will move that the entire document be endorsed by the faculty.

6. Adjournment

The October 2008 Meeting of the Bucknell Faculty was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.; no continuation of this meeting was necessary this month.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Cassidy
Secretary of the Faculty