

Summary Report
AS&E Executive Committee Meeting
December 16, 2003

Attending: Kathleen Camara, Paula Aymer, Gary Goldstein, David Harder, Linda Abriola and Steven Marrone.

The Committee began by meeting with Provost Bharucha in his office.

P. Aymer opened by asking the Provost for his views on how the Executive Committee should operate in its role of directing faculty business on the floor of the faculty. Provost Bharucha replied that the key should be to keep faculty-administration dialogue open. His position is that strong faculty governance is good for Tufts.

K. Camara then mentioned the frustration expressed by many on the faculty that AS&E meetings consist of so many presentations, with faculty business often secondary and squeezed for time. G. Goldstein added that he, too, had heard from many members of the faculty about their frustration, and also the considerable ire of some that the Executive Committee had not succeeded in directing faculty business efficiently.

S. Marrone stressed the need to bring the faculty into the decision-making process in such a way as to affect the setting of priorities. He mentioned the apparently peripheral role of the Committee on Budget and Priorities as an example of the problem. In a similar vein, K. Camara noted how faculty had complained to her that their involvement with important undertakings, such as that of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience, was reduced mostly to listening to presentations and not being asked for advice. Partly in response, L. Abriola commented that the University was currently in transition on budgeting procedures. An attempt was being made to move away from previous centralization in the budgeting process so as to allow more local control. The results might include more effective faculty involvement. Provost Bharucha confirmed Dean Abriola's remarks, saying that the administration is working to parse out the budget process in order to give different sectors of AS&E greater control over their own budgets. There will now be, for example, separate budgets for Arts and Sciences and for Engineering, under the direction of the respective deans, and then a common budget, where the two deans would work collaboratively, and if necessary the Provost would get involved. He explained his belief that the faculty should have input into the setting of budgets and priorities, interjecting that it was symptomatic of a governance problem for the faculty to feel shut out of the process.

S. Marrone asked to return to systemic questions of how governance actually worked. He thought both the Committee on Budget and Priorities and the Educational Policy Committee were critical for faculty governance. How could Tufts' governance be reworked so as to integrate these two more fully into the decision-making process? D. Harder observed that the Budget and Priorities Committee was normally allowed to deal with only one year's budget at a time; perhaps it ought to be included in long-term planning.

It was K. Camara's suggestion to think about bringing key faculty committees (or their chairs) together with the administration to work on the systemic problem. Most important here would be the Committee on Budget and Priorities, the Educational Policy Committee, the Executive Committee and the upper administration.

G. Goldstein added, with regard to EPC, that decisions about matters such as what fields of teaching and research ought to be emphasized in AS&E or where to put resources for new hires

needed faculty input. At present the way decisions were made on these issues was anything but transparent. Provost Bharucha remarked that many such decisions, as in particular with the case of hiring, belonged primarily with the deans. K. Camara then questioned how often the deans of A&S and of Engineering had an opportunity to meet to discuss common concerns and planning.

At this point, the Executive Committee adjourned its meeting with the Provost in order to continue discussion on its own. After a general review of the previous meeting, K. Camara turned to the practical problem of how to organize the planned discussion of benefits at the February 4 AS&E meeting. It was decided to separate consideration of the two issues: post-retirement health benefits and the possibility of a general standard for terms of retirement. D. Harder suggested that we work to keep discussion to specifics—for example, on post-retirement health benefits to focus on spousal benefits, the 2% per annum cap on increased contributions, and the exclusion of one group of the faculty from any benefits at all.

The Committee agreed to move forward with the two issues mentioned above, and to proceed by dividing the faculty into smaller groups for round-table discussions of the specifics. K. Camara will draw up a draft of an explanatory statement for distribution to the faculty before the meeting. We shall discuss the statement at our next meeting, January 21, 2004.

(Reporter: Steve Marrone)