

Report of the Executive Committee to the Faculty of Arts, Sciences & Engineering for the Year 2006-2007

September 5, 2007

At the end of the 2005-06 academic year the new chairs, Boris Hasselblatt and Kent Portney, introduced initiatives aimed at making the Executive Committee more proactive in issues of faculty governance and in re-assessing the broad needs of the faculty in consultation with AS&E committees, deans, the provost, the president, other administrators, faculty members, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. There was a sense that bylaws changes, though important, require hands-on work involving committees and other constituencies of the university – not only through the committee structure but in collegial debate with other communities at the university. Dialogue was identified as a key tool for achieving a broad consensual agreement of the faculty.

At almost every regular AS&E meeting the Committee chairs presented new bylaws changes, ran the discussion on them and chaired open fora (town meetings) which were designed to solicit opinions from the faculty about what needs to be done in a very refreshing free-for-all spirit and with strong passions.

These included:

- Revision of the **Executive Committee** bylaw noting that the deans of AS&E "shall be members *ex officio* without vote." It broadened the scope of the Committee's purview by taking on the role of "ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of elective and appointive committees," and through consultation with a given committee may remove a member of a committee "if there is sufficient cause and need for such action" (introduced on September 27 and approved by majority vote on November 1). On both occasions there was a wide-ranging discussion and debate.
- On November 29, there was an open forum chaired by Hasselblatt that addressed the possibility of rejuvenating "Committee X" (on faculty women's salaries); a question about how vigorously the Faculty Advisory Board would be involved in the evaluation of Provost Barucha (which included a wide range of interviews with faculty interviews and questionnaires).
- On January 31, two bylaws changes were introduced: 1) revised language in the bylaw for a **Committee on Student Life** that added a student representative from the Graduate Student Council, new *ex officio* members without vote (a Judicial Affairs Officer and the Director of Student Activities), stipulation that both a student and a faculty member chair meetings, that the University Archives will keep records of minutes with "modifications to

- preserve anonymity"; 2) additions of *ex-officio* membership which will involve administrators and other officers of the university whose expertise is of use to the **Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity**, and will address itself to "promote efforts to attract, support and retain students, faculty, and administrators, and staff from all segments of society."
- On February 28, the chairs (as a tag-team) presided over the approval of revisions of for **CSL** and **EEOC** ; proposed were a number of textual revisions: 1) to remove the titles of "Vice President for Arts, Sciences and Engineering" and "Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Sciences and Engineering" (positions now defunct) and replace them with the "Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences" and "Dean of the School of Engineering" where appropriate in several committees' description; 2) to insert underlined changes in the description of the **Committee on the Summer School** "faculty members, one of which should be the Chair of the Subcommittee on the European Center at Talloires"; 3) to make other adjustments to administrative titles and the additions of two undergraduates and two graduate students to the **Advisory Committee on Faculty Research Support and Facilities**, as well as adjustments in titles pertinent to the bylaw on the **Committee on Faculty Research Awards**.
 - On March 28, Hasselblatt presented the revised bylaws introduced at the preceding meeting, which were approved with no objection.
 - On April 18, Portney introduced major changes to the bylaw of the AS&E **Computer Facilities and Usage Committee**. These included: 1) substituting a new name for the committee, **Committee on Information Technology**, which represents its expanded role; 2) addition of two undergraduate students and one graduate student; 3) addition of "the Deans of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering, or their designates, and the Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer"; 4) while remaining an AS&E bylaw committee, an expanded charge enables it to act as a clearing house for technology issues on the Medford-Somerville campus as well as University administrative departments; 5) the broad charge of the committee is to bring together various constituencies (AS&E faculty, administrators, staff and students) to evaluate the overall needs of information technology in a far-flung environment and bring together targeted goals that respond to pressing needs of the university in a collegial context.
 - At the final AS&E meeting of the year, May 16, Portney brought a motion that was seconded from the floor, and the faculty voted unanimous approval for the new bylaw of the **Committee on Information Technology**.

Much of the Committee's work was behind the scenes. Please note information contained in the "Information for the Faculty," which is available at the AS&E website.

The site provides **minutes of our meetings** online over the past year. Among the issues which may have escaped attention, but were discussed by the Committee were:

- The committee requested that a database be created over the summer of 2006 in order to facilitate information about on-line voting for elective committees, records of service to the university as per the department chairs' reports to the Deans. Unfortunately, this issue needs to be revisited. (Oct. 2) There is a general impression that FT faculty are not always available for service options, despite the fact that service is important (Oct. 16)
- In 2005-06 the Committee on Budget and University Priorities had difficulty getting pertinent data in time to make recommendations to the administration on budgetary issues. This year the situation has improved, thanks to the EADs from A&S and Engineering. The Budget Committee (in its report to the Faculty for 06-07) also referred the matter of the tuition remission (or portable) benefit to the all-University Benefits Committee. (Oct. 2)
- Information technology is currently split up into separate venues. ITS and TCCS have merged under University Information Technology (UIT)(Oct. 23).
- Currently there are two committees (Advisory Committee on Faculty Research Support and Facilities, and Committee on Faculty Research Awards), which have conflicting missions. (Oct. 23, Mar. 5).
- The AAUP has an important role in helping to restore the culture of service at the University, and the faculty appreciates its efforts to restore a community of shared effort. (Oct. 23).
- There was a meeting with Sheldon Krinsky to discuss the tuition remission benefit, later referred to the Budget Committee (Nov. 13); also see the minutes from Nov. 20, Jan. 22.
- At our meeting with EEOC, Susan Ostrander asked about retention of minority students and faculty hires. She suggested that EEOC meet jointly with the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid to review current policy. (Nov. 27)
- Ostrander suggested the Executive Committee solicit direct input from department chairs, committee chairs and ordinary faculty about what topics are pressing. (Dec. 4)
- Meeting with Don Weingust, Chair of the Computer Facilities and Usage, discussed with the committee the difficulty of creating a consensus among the advocates of information management. (Feb. 5). There was a follow up meeting with Weingust with Mely Tynan and Jim Roberts, which helped moved things toward a consensual approach to computer technology. (Feb. 12)
- Meeting with Dawn Terkla, Executor Director of Institutional Research. Tufts participated in a survey sponsored by the Graduate School of Education at

Harvard University. There were disappointing responses from untenured faculty who feel they are not getting adequate information about the tenure process. Only 11 out of 19 untenured faculty of color participated in the survey. Tufts fared well in some comparisons, but did poorly on a number of issues. (Mar 5)

- Meeting with chairs of FRAC Committee and the Advisory Committee on Faculty Research Support and Facilities. Much needs to be done to in particular for the latter committee which has little financial backing. (Apr. 2)
- Members suggested new topics for next year, mainly technology issues and issues of color and retention of minorities; Dawn Terkla plans a 5th report on standards for accreditation both for Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering in which the Executive Committee will play a role (May 7).

We encourage all members of the AS&E faculty as well as administrators to make suggestions about items of importance. This will help the committee focus on meaningful issues as they arise.