

Meeting of the ESF Faculty
March 3, 2005
Moon Conference Room

Attending: Larry Abrahamson, Eddie Bevilacqua, Greg Boyer, Craig Davis, Ted Dibble, Allan Drew, Jo Anne Ellis, Ted Endreny, Maureen Fellows, Mark Fennessey, Leah Flynn, Lynda Hanrahan, John Hassett, Richard Hawks, James Heffernan, Lee Herrington, Ross Jacobs, Steve Keller, Chuck Maynard, Robert Meyer, Dudley Raynal, Dayton Reuter, Neil Ringler, Susan Sanford, Rudy Schuster, Scott Shannon, Tom Slocum, Larry Smart, Arthur Stipanovic, Deb Storrings, Ken Tiss, William Tully, John Turbeville, Scott Turner, John View, John Waisel, Connie Webb, Ed White, Julie White, Ruth Yanai

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 by Scott Shannon.

Minutes of the February 3 meeting, 2005, were approved as posted.

Announcements and Report of the Executive Committee (Scott Shannon)

We are progressing, albeit slowly, towards filling the slate for elections for faculty governance. The slate should be finalized by the middle of next week and delivered to you by spring break. Faculty chairs have promised to help make nominations; anyone can make a nomination by contacting me.

Candidates to date: Bill Winter and Bill Powell for Chair of Committee on Research, Deb Storrings and John View for SUNY Senators, Ruth Yanai and Yong-woo Kim for SU Senators, and Ken Tiss, Ted Endreny, Andrea Baird, Danny Fernando, and Pat Lawler for at large representatives. We need candidates for Chair of Committee on Instruction. We would like to have more than one candidate for each of the positions.

Scott put in a plug for SUNY Senator; you get to visit other campuses and learn what's great about ESF and get ideas for change. Your Secretary regularly finds she has knowledge of important topics that she gained by typing the minutes (much better than just reading the minutes, honest). Getting involved in faculty governance is a great way to learn about how things work around here and how to work here more effectively.

Scott Turner suggested that candidates should issue statements describing their intentions, even if the elections are uncontested.

President's Report (Neil Murphy)

Thank you for coming; this is a great turnout.

1. Recent Visibility Initiatives.

News and Pubs now subscribes to Newswise, which gives us access to 4-6000 science and technical writers all over the world. When we issue a press release, it goes to a much broader audience than it used to. We are focusing on "meaty" science stories that highlight our research and public service activities.

You may have heard our "ClearChannel" initiative on the radio. The messages are instructive and appreciated. We've had 300 paid advertisements in the Syracuse area, but also 40 in Rochester and 100 in Binghamton, which is a change from last year. ClearChannel provides an equal number of ads at no additional cost on AM stations. You can hear the ads at <http://www.esf.edu/world/> if you haven't heard them on the radio.

US News and World Report ranks colleges nationally. It's important for us to be in those rankings, even though we tell students that this should not affect their decisions. To improve the rating of our reputation, we need our colleagues at other institutions to be aware of what we do. We now send postcards to college presidents at PhD-granting institutions and to our donors and friends. The first postcard advertised the web version of our Annual Report. The most recent postcard highlights four research projects and will be mailed shortly.

We've had national media coverage of Cool Water Feasibility, Indoor Air Quality, Engineers without Borders Dominica Project, and Ethanol from Wood. Note that the visual aid for this item included a cockroach and the Governor on a background of wood chips. Fran Webster is our latest star; he's had worldwide coverage in the public media for his pheromone research.

Locally we've had coverage by the Post-Standard, Ithaca Journal, Little Falls Evening Times, Daily Orange, WAER, WFBL, WSYR, WIBX (Utica), WGRZ (Buffalo), News10 Now, WRVO (Oswego), WIXT, WSTM, and WTVH.

We've had more than 2500 column inches in newspapers and magazines, 3 hours of radio time, and 10 minutes of television time. That's a lot.

2. Accessory Instruction

We've spent \$200,000 more this year than we budgeted for in Accessory Instruction, which is the price we pay for ESF students taking courses at SU. We need to reduce it by about 400 hours next year (from 4800 hours this year). We also need to develop a more sustainable and predictable approach to managing Accessory Instruction. Engaged in this process are Provost Bill Tully, Academic Council, Dean Dudley Raynal, Maureen Fellows and Susan Stanford.

The first approach is to update Accessory Instruction guidelines to be used in advising, which begins April 4 for the fall semester. We will also look at scheduling, to ensure that we aren't creating conflicts for students who need to take our Gen Ed offerings. We need to add sections in some of these courses, such as Arts and American History. We also hope to encourage "backflow" (SU students who take our classes) by adding sections of popular courses and initiating new offerings. For example, such courses as Environmental Geology, Geography, Wildlife Biology, and AutoCAD may attract both ESF and SU students and may also add new value to the programs at ESF. Finally, we will need to develop an allocation model.

In the area of advising, obviously we want to promote ESF offerings of Gen Ed and elective courses. We will preregister first-year and transfer students. It will require special approvals for students to register for only SU courses or to audit SU courses. Students may not retake SU courses, nor may upper-division students they take lower-division courses, without special approval.

You will be hearing more about this issue before advising begins on April 4.

Greg Boyer: Will we have an opportunity to influence these guidelines? A: Yes, there is plenty of time and these will be much discussed.

Larry Smart: We've looked at this in the COI and the huge fluctuation in Accessory Instruction hours. Is there a way to cost-average over time to protect us from wildly fluctuating costs? A: Not in the current contract, but for future contracts, we're thinking about it.

Scott Turner: All these rules can be waived in extenuating circumstances, I hope. A: Absolutely. We can accommodate special situations.

3. Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions

Applications came in much earlier this year than in the past, because of changes in SUNY in Albany. They are now starting to flatten out, but we expect we will still be up by about 10% over last year. Compared to last year at this time, acceptances and deposits are both up 30%. We're up in the doctoral sector too, reflecting our improved visibility.

To ensure that we get a good yield, we need your help. Last year, we had students calling prospective students, which seems to be very effective, so we continued it this year. We have moved our Accepted Student Receptions up to match the accelerated schedule. We're getting good numbers at these receptions. We have 30 Presidential Scholarships to help bring in Tier 1 students. Faculty should be interacting with Undergraduate Admissions and calling these students to answer questions and encourage enrollment.

4. Graduate Recruitment and Admissions

Graduate applications have not gone up with undergraduate applications (we have had 254 this year, compared to 310 last year and 328 the year before). One reason is that the job market is strong. We also have more obstacles to international student applications because of Homeland Security.

We also have a large number (146 at the moment) of grad applications circulating; we need to make decisions quickly to remain competitive. Please keep these applications moving.

We are inviting accepted graduate students to a reception on April 30; we will also have supplemental advertisements in the Post Standard and campus newspapers of our feeder institutions. Posters will also be distributed to these feeder institutions by faculty and administration.

Personal communications are essential to increasing the yield of accepted graduate students. We have \$50,000 available to improve stipend support.

We will have an Open House and Graduation Fair on campus in October 2005 for prospective students. There will be advertising to promote the event.

Charlie Hall: There was an editorial in Science about the decline in applications for graduate study in the United States; other countries are benefiting from this trend and setting up competing programs.

5. Mission Review II Update

The SUNY team will be visiting our campus on April 25, 2005. The MOU will be drafted this summer and finalized next fall.

6. Provost Search Update

Our three candidates for Provost are very good.

We have an excellent pool and I feel optimistic that we will find a good candidate out of this pool. Please attend the campus Open Forum sessions.

Scott Turner: How many applicants did we have for the Provost position?

Dudley Raynal: About 120. We used a professional search firm and they touched a lot of people.

Israel Cabasso: But the final candidates all look the same. It gives me the feeling that this is just a forestry college.

Neil Murphy: In the pool of eight, we had a lot of diversity: landscape architecture, environment. It just happened that the three finalists came out in similar fields. We have to seriously consider the administrative experience and people skills for this position.

Neil Murphy: The group of eight were very well prepared, they knew us well, knew people who knew us well. The research portfolio was strongly represented. Our strategic plan has this focus and the candidates know it. They are not focused on classical undergraduate education.

Betsy Elkins: If you haven't looked at their applications, which are on file in the library, you should. They are very impressive.

Reports of the Standing Committees

Committee on Instruction (Craig Davis)

No report (!)

Committee on Research (Scott Shannon for Chris Nowak)

McIntire Stennis awards will be coming out shortly.

The Spotlight on Student Research is Tuesday, April 12th in Moon Conference room. Drop by any time to see the posters, or come between 1:00 and 2:30 to interact with our students.

Committee on Outreach and Public Service (Art Stipanovic)

The Symposium on Teaching and Learning will be next fall, not this spring, in part because of the Provost search. That event will focus on highlighting linkages between public service/ outreach and research/teaching activities with emphasis on successful programs already underway at SUNY-ESF.

Undergraduate Student Association (Liz Reif)

I'm the student member of the Board of Trustees. I have a few announcements of interest to the faculty.

We will have an open forum with Neil Murphy, to be announced.

We will have a seminar on mid-semester evaluations on March 8th. Guest speakers include Dr. Gibbs, Dr. Wagner, and Chuck Spuches.

April 16th is the Spring Awards Banquet; we'd love to have faculty there.

On Feb. 15th, approximately 20 students attended a dinner at President Murphy's residence to discuss the changes that were made and are in progress that were formulated at the President's Leadership Retreat in the fall. These changes included improvements to 110 Bray, academic advising, etc.

Discussion Item: "*Computing and the Curriculum*" (Maureen Fellows)

We are nowhere near where we would like to be in serving the ESF faculty computing needs. Every Technology Officer at every campus in this country would say the same thing.

First, our organizational structure: Faculty Computing Services includes Computing and Network Services, Web-based Services, and Academic Computing (our computer clusters).

Budget: We didn't have a budget for computing infrastructure until 1995. Then it was \$100,000/year until 2001; it has been only \$50,000 for the last four years. Our infrastructure is being used more heavily. Our technology is becoming antiquated, and staffing has not increased.

How we spend this money: Last year, we bought a router for \$58,000; we had difficulties with our system and had some outages. We had to turn in old equipment as a credit to the vendor. This year we will replace infrastructure in Jahn, Illick, Baker, and Moon
Virus protection is \$10K/year for this campus.

We've submitted a proposal for \$350K in an equipment grant for distance learning (Wanakona and the AEC at Huntington).

We are also seeking an appropriation for \$500 for infrastructure of the main campus.

Network security occupies a full-time person at most campuses. We have to provide you with disaster preparedness, virus protection, and a firewall. We also want you to have better awareness of security issues. When was the last time you backed up your computer? We don't lock our doors or think about theft. We've requested that SUNY give us a security audit to help us with our planning.

We have a problem with SPAM. SU has an effective SPAM filter, which would be free, but out of our control. Other alternatives have more cost (\$16K); we're working on the problem.

Our Wireless Pilot Project will be ready this fall: Moon Library will be wireless on the main level. Students and faculty have been asking for it; we had to address security issues. Betsy Elkins has applied for 24 laptops computers from HP (no, she gives credit to Jane Verostek and Academic Computing).

Web-based Initiatives: Visit our Faculty/Staff Portal, and give suggestions to Paul Otteson. Web Publishing: we encourage faculty to post materials as appropriate; there are copyright considerations. Faculty web sites are important and we routinely improve them on a rotation basis.

The Public Computing Labs are on a schedule of replacing equipment every four years. Our computer clusters are open for longer hours than our professional staff can be there and we are trying to do a better job of training our student workers to handle printing and software issues more effectively. We are getting software upgrades. We managed to get AutoCAD by partnering with the Outreach Office. Students and faculty need to be aware of SU and SUNY opportunities for software and hardware savings. We are working on getting the information out in a more effective way.

We are striving to improve our services, and we need your input. You completed a survey on impediments to instructional quality, and I will be working with Eddie Bevilacqua on analyzing the results. We want to be more involved with the Committee on Instruction, and we want to provide training for faculty and support staff. We need to identify what training is needed and find the best ways to provide it.

We rate "average" in student reviews of computing experiences, which is low for us. We can do better. Students are become savvy consumers, they are choosing colleges based on these computing surveys. We need to track our ratings and make sure we do well. We need mechanisms for getting feedback from students on a regular basis. We need our students to know about software and hardware discounts through SU, Dell, and others. We are trying to get Adobe Suite into the clusters.

Future plans for faculty include moving Baker Computing into the new space upstairs in Baker. We have a planned centralized model of assistance to the faculties. Toan Tran works directly with faculty in EFB, and we hope to expand this arrangement to other faculties.

There are tremendous opportunities for computing and the curriculum. We haven't done much with web-based courses, interactive tutorials, distance learning courses, or course management systems. LA is interested in requiring their students to purchase computers. These all require collaboration between faculty and Computing Services.

Implementing improvements in computing technology is like a team sport. We need faculty and students to define the areas for improvement.

Discussion

Charlie Hall: The most important priority is getting rid of SPAM. If it costs \$16K, why aren't we doing it tomorrow? I'm exhausted by having to go through the stuff.

Dave Soderberg: One problem is the timing of it; we didn't want to risk disruption during the semester. Shall we do it tomorrow? It's not entirely risk-free. SU's system has about 3 false positives in a million e-mails.

Neil Ringler: There is a better system available; we could have it in about 3 days.

Larry Smart: In the time that Paul Otteson has been here, he's done great things with our web site (round of applause). We have a gap in graduate applications. We must be the only place in the country that doesn't have on-line applications.

Dave Soderberg: We'll have it next fall.

Dudley Raynal: That's a complex issue; there are many parts.

Art Stipanovich: Students now expect that all the materials will be posted on the web; Paul Otteson has been a tremendous help. We will need more support in this role as more courses require this kind of support.

Paul Otteson: I do the visible part, but I want to point you to the guys downstairs in Bray 22 and across the hall in Baker. Make sure you thank them, too.

Deb Storrings: Graduate students can get IP addresses, which frees up space in the clusters; why does it take 4 to 6 weeks to get an address? Also, when will we see where the student fees go?

Maureen Fellows: Students are paying roughly \$100 per semester. We looked to see how much of our operation could be funded by the students. It turns out to be about 66%. We haven't spent it all out yet; one of the things that we have done is the wireless project.

Ruth Yanai: How does it compare to the \$50K that you lost from your operating budget?

Maureen Fellows: They aren't comparable; the infrastructure isn't paid by student fees.

Neil Murphy: Student fees add up to \$300,000 including service fees, transcripts, activities, computing. The technology fee generates about \$100,000.

Lee Herrington: The classrooms in Baker are really nice, but they need to get some money for spare parts.

Maureen Fellows: Those are Chuck Spuches's responsibility.

Scott Shannon: Why is ITS so separate from Network Systems?

Maureen Fellows: It goes back to how those computers were funded and ITS had responsibility for them.

Neil Murphy: We got a request from ITS for \$50K, including \$5K worth of bulbs; they need maintenance contracts, a whole bunch of those things.

Bill Tully: We are looking at organizational systems.

Charlie Hall: Could we have a straw vote on who would like to implement the SPAM filter tomorrow, at the risk of losing 3 messages per million?

Greg Boyce: The SU system does not improve the situation; upgrading Outlook will make more of a difference. Request your upgrade tomorrow. Mine caught 873 message this month; about 20 came through.

Maureen Fellows: It requires Windows XP and it's free.

Peter Black: You can buy software for \$25 that will take care of it.

(The straw vote resulted in about 3 yay, 3 nay, and lots abstaining.)

Greg Boyer: Videoconferencing falls between the cracks. Moon, Illick and Baker have fantastic facilities, but we can't figure them out so we go to Upstate which has a more user-friendly system.

Ross Jacobs: They have not been maintained in the last 5 years and they have degraded.

Israel Cabasso: We pay for our software individually from our research grants. We are a small campus, but we should be supported by the college for our professional needs.

Maureen Fellows: The model we implemented in Biology would provide you the labor to upgrade your computer for you.

Israel: I'm talking about software, too.

Deb Storrings: We could benefit from better communication among units. One unit is getting rid of something that someone else could use.

Maureen Fellows: We have tried to talk about "standardization" with the faculty, but our suggestions are not taken very well.

Steve Keller: For example, we had 8 purchases of MatLab in PSE; if we had 10, it would have been cheaper. We need a forum to encourage collaboration across faculties and between faculties and administration.

Maureen Fellows: We do collaborate for just this purpose with most faculties. We will look into how we can more easily and effectively communicate better with most faculties. Sometimes it is just a matter of a faculty member calling me.

Scott Shannon: The institutional structure is awkward and doesn't seem to support campus-wide functions as well as it does individual faculty functions.

New business: None

Old business: None

Meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Ruth Yanai