Faculty Governance: 2006-2007

Annual Report to the Board of Trustees Charles Walcott, Dean of the University Faculty 1 May 2007

The Committee to Review Faculty Governance presented its final report to the University Faculty Senate at its March meeting. This report was the outcome of over a year of work by a group of seven faculty led by Professor Risa Lieberwitz of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations. The formation of this committee and its charge were the result of faculty distress about the resignation of President Lehman coupled with protests about the transformation of Red Bud Woods into a parking lot. The full report available at (http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/report/report_main.html) is a thoughtful analysis of Cornell faculty governance that offers eight specific recommendations. These include: expanding the role of the Dean of the Faculty and of the University Faculty Committee (UFC, an elected group from the faculty); a biannual meeting of the president with the faculty; review of ways of increasing the effectiveness of faculty committees; expanding the role of the faculty in searches for the president, provost, college deans and other senior administrators; and reviews of the office of the president and provost. These recommendations will be considered by the UFC and then forwarded to the Faculty Senate for action.

Faculty Salaries: In September the Senate unanimously passed a resolution of acknowledgement and appreciation thanking the administration for "...pursuing over the past five years an intensive program of faculty salary improvement, whose goal was to place the mean Cornell faculty salary at least at the mean salary of faculty in their peer institutions." Since this goal has been reached, it further went on to recognize the important contributions of:

Peter Stein, (former) Dean of the Faculty Hunter R. Rawlings, University President Carolyn (Biddy) Martin, University Provost Carolyn Ainslie, Vice President for Planning and Budget

Research Sponsorship: Also in September the Senate voted to reaffirm the policy for openness in research and the public disclosure of research sponsorship.

Strategic Corporate Alliance: As I indicated in my report last year, the faculty passed a set of principles for working with corporations that might be willing to fund large-scale research projects at the university. Unfortunately, Cornell has not yet been offered such an opportunity. However, our principles have been playing a major role in the debate between the faculty and the administration at the University of California at Berkeley where British Petroleum proposes to house a \$500 million project on sustainable energy.

Job-Related Faculty Misconduct: This policy, also known as "The Suspension Policy," was originally proposed by my predecessor as Dean, Bob Cooke. While the university has a clear policy for the dismissal of tenured faculty, it has no formal written provision for suspending them either with or without pay. Under Bob's leadership a committee drafted a proposed policy, which was then presented to the deans and modified in a series of negotiations. It was then passed by the Senate and accepted by the Provost only to be found to be in conflict with a variety of other university policies. An attempt was made to reconcile these conflicts until finally Jim Mingle met with Peter Stein, former Dean of the Faculty and former chair of the faculty committee that drafted the original proposal. They have drafted a simple amendment to the dismissal policy that provides protection for the tenured faculty and offers the deans the flexibility that they need to deal with difficult situations. This revised version will go back to the Senate at its May meeting for ratification before it comes to the Board of Trustees for approval. If it passes all these hurdles, it will be the end of a six-year process of discussion and negotiation.

Campus Code of Conduct: Even though the Campus Code mostly applies to students, it also applies to both faculty and staff. Over the years as various transgressions have occurred, the Code has grown by gradual accretion to become both complex and unwieldy. Recognizing this, when Barbara Krause, a former judicial administrator and assistant to President Lehman, had time in the winter and spring of 2006, she set about revising the Code. In addition, she made a number of important recommendations for changes in how the judicial system was supervised and operated. Her most profound changes were to change the supervision of the Code from the Codes and Judicial Committee of the University Assembly to the University Policy Office, and to put the Judicial Administrator in the Dean of Students Office. Further, since transgressions of the Code by faculty and staff represent less that 10% of the cases, they would be handled by the administrative chain of command, rather than by the Judicial Administrator. This was coupled by major changes and simplification in the Code itself. These suggestions were considered by the University Assembly and the Codes and Judicial Committee held many open hearings and forums on the proposals during the late fall and winter. They finally recommended to President Skorton that authority for the Code remain with the University Assembly, a body that represents faculty, students and staff, that the Judicial Administrator remain independent but with greater coordination with Student Services and that faculty and staff continue to be disciplined by the Judicial Administrator. Finally, The Codes and Judicial Committee has asked for more time to consider the details of Barbara Krause's other recommendations.

I have dwelt on the Campus Code because I think it brings up a general problem of university governance. The various governance systems of students, faculty and staff all elect representatives to the University Assembly. Theoretically the Assembly has legislative authority over the Department of Transportation, Religious Affairs, University Health Services and the Cornell Store as well as the Campus Code of Conduct. In reality it doesn't seem to have a substantial role in any of these. As a result, the power of the Assembly and the willingness of faculty to serve on it have both declined. This seems a pity because the Assembly is the one organization that has representatives of all the

various constituencies. I very much hope that we can find a way to give the Assemblies a useful role in university governance.

University Faculty Committee: The committee has had two meetings with members of the Board of Trustees this year. One was in conjunction with the fall meeting and the other a dinner graciously sponsored by Chairman Meinig this spring. The discussion at both meetings covered a variety of topics ranging from the replacement of retiring faculty to the difficulties of transportation in and out of Ithaca. My impression is that both faculty and trustees found this a useful conversation; I hope that we can continue it on a regular basis in the future.

University Club: As I reported last year, The University Club, which was originally proposed and approved by the University Faculty Senate back in 2003, has proved impossible to establish. The basic idea was to find a space where lunch and perhaps dinner could be served to faculty and staff, where there would be space for special events to bring together faculty and staff from various parts of the university and where distinguished visitors from out of town could be entertained. The current "Statler Club" facilities in the Hotel School are simply too cramped and not really suitable for this role. A sub-committee of the Statler Board working with Peter Stein produced a report outlining the desirable features of such a club and recommending the University establish one. Despite the use of a committee of visitors in the summer of 2004, no location has been found on campus where such an organization could be housed. This year the consulting group that is generating the long-range master plan for the university's development has been asked to come up with ideas for where such a club could be located.