

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

The Speaker, Professor S. Kay Obendorf, Textiles and Apparel, called the meeting to order. She then called on Dean Stein for remarks.

### 1. REMARKS BY THE DEAN

Peter C. Stein, Dean of Faculty: "Well, this is the election season, and you've all seen democracy in action. Since this is the day after Super Tuesday, I'll report on the vote&endash;taken on the day of the New Hampshire primary&endash;on the burning issue of whether to have this meeting in this room (Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium) or in the room in Statler Hall. I watched the returns come in: I had them in an Excel file and watched the numbers vary. But, in the end, it turned out that roughly 60% of you preferred to have the meeting here. Most of you voted in this election, so we will, in the future, have our meetings in this room. I tell you, I think it is a bad mistake, but the people have decided, so here we are."

"I had a couple of things I wanted to talk about today. When I requested fifteen minutes, I had something else in mind, but I've decided not to talk about it. So I'll have to try to stretch out the rest of my remarks. The first is that a couple of people have written to me about the degree of consultation that there has been between Senate members and departments on this issue now facing us&endash;the transcript issue. I don't mean to nag, and I don't mean to complain, but I will say that this thing only works&endash;the governance system only works&endash;to the extent that you are willing and able to consult your departments about such issues. We have to figure out the right way to do that; we have to figure out the right way to do that in this month period between meetings. That month-long period quickly disappears unless one thinks about how to do it efficiently. The last time, we decided to make a heroic effort in my office to put the minutes on the Web as soon as we got them. The effort was heroic, but I only discovered&endash;I was a little bit chastened to discover&endash;that one of you told me they couldn't be read, because the background was the same color as the text. The fact that only one of you reported this may, in fact, demonstrate how worthwhile this heroic effort was&endash;or wasn't. Anyway, we will try to do that again&endash;but correctly this time."

"Now, about the transcript resolution. One of you suggested that we send the grading policy to the department chairs and ask them to try to organize something, and we duly did that, although there wasn't much time. This issue is deceptively controversial, and I think that I have learned a lot in thinking about it and talking to people about it. I'm sure you have also. I don't know if we'll come to a conclusion on this this hour, but if we don't, I think we need to keep at least one thing in mind with respect to this issue and the other issue&endash;program review, which is also controversial in another way. The thing to keep in mind is: If we're going to make a success of this&endash;that is, the whole Senate governance&endash;I think that it's necessary that you speak not only what you think about the issue but also for your colleagues in an authoritative way."

"I want to report to you about the activities of the University Faculty Committee which has been elected since our last meeting. I sent around to you a notice of its membership: John Abowd, Fred Ahl, Joan Brumberg, S. Gordon Campbell, Elizabeth Earle, N. David Mermin, Mary Beth Norton, Benjamin Widom, and David Wilson. We have met once, and the first thing we did was to talk about what we thought were the most important issues to discuss amongst ourselves and to discuss with the administration. We came up with a list, which I'll just read off to you."

"The first thing on our list was the procedure by which we make appointments to tenure, which is, as I'm sure you all know, something that has been talked about a great deal recently. Second, we want to talk about program review. Third, we believe that the issues of sexual harassment and its first-cousin, romantic relationships, will come back to occupy us in due course. Fourth, we're interested in the large process to reengineer the administrative systems of the University, which has the potential to make our lives much simpler&endash;but also the potential to bankrupt us. Fifth, we are interested in the question of mentoring of younger faculty and particularly the problem of mentoring women and minorities. Sixth is another issue which a number of us wants to discuss&endash;though we don't know how to bite into it&endash;the question of faculty salaries. Faculty salaries is an old issue that's been talked about as long as there has been faculty governance. Mostly, it's talked about in terms of averages and comparing our averages to other institutions. That's a venerable discussion that we will no doubt continue. But there's another issue that's not revealed by the averages, namely the distribution. How are these numbers determined throughout the faculty? That's nothing that the faculty governance has looked into as of yet. It's not clear how we can look into that issue, but there are those on the University Faculty Committee who feel very strongly that the policy whereby we actually determine faculty salaries is something we should actually look into. Those are the issues that we have

thought about. There surely are items on that list that we should be thinking about but haven't thought of yet. So I invite you to tell me about them. Either e-mail me or call me up or write me a letter about it, and it will certainly go on the list and be talked about with my colleagues.

"What I was intending to spend fifteen minutes talking about today was the Campaign. At the last meeting, I told you that I was engaged in a personal project of trying to answer the question as to where the \$1.5 billion actually is. But I myself have not been able to formulate a satisfactory enough understanding so I could answer related questions about that. I would point out to you that in the last issue of the *Cornell Chronicle*, there was a lengthy article by Fred Rogers and Inge Reichenbach about that question. I have attempted to make an independent analysis to try to answer the 'Where is the \$1.5 billion?' question, and I thought I had some understanding of it which made sense to bring before you, and I came to believe&endash;after I presented it to the Financial Policies Committee&endash;that I probably should rethink it. And I didn't have time to rethink it prior to this meeting. But I expect to pursue the issue, and I hope at the next meeting I'll be able to give you a very brief report on one person's conclusions made by looking at the numbers that have come through with regard to the Cornell Campaign."

Speaker Obendorf: "Thank you, Dean Stein."

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14 FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

Speaker Obendorf: "The next item on our agenda is to consider approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 14. Do I have a motion for approval? [So moved] A second? [Seconded] All those in favor of the minutes as presented, please say 'aye'; opposed? Thank you. The minutes are approved."

## **3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH THE PROVOST**

Speaker Obendorf: "I'd now like to call on Provost Randel for a question-and-answer period. We'll entertain the first question now."

Professor David B. Wilson, Biochemistry, Molecular and Cell Biology: "I was wondering if we could get an estimate for the Cornell 2000 Project in terms of cut-backs and goals."

Don M. Randel, Provost: "There is a goal of reducing our administrative costs around the institution by \$20 million."

Professor Wilson: "From what base?"

Provost Randel: "Well, I can't tell you that right off; it's more easily asked than answered. We're talking about the general purpose budget&endash;that's \$300 million&endash;but that's mostly faculty and staff salaries. So it's probably on a base of \$150 million, but don't hold me to that. This is on the basis of Fred Roger's analysis with respect to what he thinks we can achieve. The difficulty with that is first, whether that number proves to be real. It's important that it does prove to be real; otherwise, we ought not to be getting into this. I have been trying to insist that we must understand where that's going to come from before we embark on spending very much more money."

"We have set aside some funds from the general purpose budget to get this project going. We are not yet close to having spent what will be available over the next few years. But before we go very much farther in the next year, we must understand precisely where the savings are going to come from, and we must plan now for how to recapture them. The difficulty here is that the expenditures have to be made centrally; much of the saving will occur in the units, colleges, departments, and so forth. It's a little bit like the question of how we pay for fundraising. We can demonstrate that we can raise money for 10¢ on the dollar; but if the dollar goes into one pocket and the 10¢ comes out of another pocket, you can go broke by that method. So I do propose that we have a very disciplined approach on defending this. Part of what has to be said means that we will undertake these activities in the future with fewer people. But if we're going to save money in this realm&endash;as in any other at the University&endash;it means doing it with fewer people, and I'm bound and determined that we will do that responsibly, planning ahead to the maximum extent possible so we don't walk up to a cliff and, say, all of a sudden, tens of people have lost their jobs. The example of corporate America is not one that an institute like this ought to want to follow."

Assistant Professor Anna Marie Smith, Government: "Could you please clarify the procedures by which you will be engaging in consultation with the Senate on the issue of the sexual harassment policy review. Could you also clarify what the timetable is for that consultation process. And finally, could you tell us now what the status is of the Shue Committee report which is coming from the Arts College."

Provost Randel: "We have been receiving opinion from all and sundry, and it was only about a week ago that we received both the Shue Committee report and the response of the University Assembly. In that context, it should be understood that the flyer we were given at the door was, at least in that respect, inaccurate. The University Assembly&endash;including the Student Assembly and the Graduate Student Assembly&endash;has been working on a response and has now given it to us. We've had that for just about a week now. Mr. Mingle and I will do our level best to produce a new draft that will incorporate, to the best of our abilities, the wide-spread set of suggestions, sometime over the course of the next week. We've already met about it once, but we hope, by the Monday after spring recess, to have a draft that we will circulate to anyone who has sent us any advice, to all the deans, to the Shue Committee itself, to the Assemblies, to the faculties, and to the individuals who have sent us specific comments. It is our expectation now that we will allow probably four more weeks for a further round of responses, with the hope of reaching a final version of this before classes are over. We'll have, essentially, from March 26 to April 24, leaving us two weeks of class."

Associate Professor Hayden N. Pelliccia, Classics: "What do you think of the grading resolution?"

Provost Randel: "I favor a scheme that puts the median grade on the transcripts or, at least, provides some context for reading the transcripts. Some of the first discussions in recent history of this issue on this campus happened when the Arts College hosted a meeting of Deans of Ivy League schools. On that occasion, perhaps a year ago, we compared notes on this issue. Dartmouth was about to institute such a thing; Penn was working on such a project. So we actually compared our experiences. Lynne Abel did quite a bit of research trying to determine what the truth of grade inflation was between the various institutions, in terms of who grades harder and who doesn't&endash;because we're all told by our students that we grade harder than everybody else. We then tried to find out whether this was true, but it's not so easy. Some institutions are not so eager to let it be known what their standards are in that. My conclusion, from all those discussions, is that it's a good idea. If this body were to recommend such a thing, you could count me among your supporters or allies."

Associate Professor Michael O. Thompson, Materials Science and Engineering: "I'm wondering what the University is planning to do with regard to capital expansion&endash;in particular, the engineering research facility."

Provost Randel: "It's my view that we have not had much of a history of systematic planning for capital expenditures. We've spent a lot of time worrying about the annual operating budget, and we're now trying to think about that on a five-year horizon so we understand where we're going. But we've never really had, in any systematic way, a capital budget; and we've certainly never done much to plan the relationship between those two. One of the things we don't think about systematically is how to finance capital projects&endash;whether they are to be done only from gifts, for example. And what fraction of the capital budget can be supported with debt, for example? Any company of this size would have a good understanding of how much debt they could afford to carry, what it costs to carry that much debt, whether the revenue streams would off-set it, and so forth. We're trying now to think about those things in a coherent way. It will require, in the end, our ability to queue up capital projects and to try to assign priorities to capital projects and know which ones we're working on. Part of what's at work now in rethinking the structure of the development organization is to enable us to have a development organization that's flexible enough to work on the capital project that is the top priority but then move those people to work on the next one, when the first one nears completion. So we should understand the order in which we have to tackle these plans. It's not easy to control that, but we are going to make the attempt.

"One of the things we need to try to understand with respect to the facility you described&endash;the proposed Materials Science Center, which is potentially a \$40 million project that would support certain kinds of research in the sciences of engineering, chemistry, physics, and so forth&endash;is how much money should we be prepared to risk just to find out what this project would look like. How much money do we have to spend to get the project far enough along so that we then have something to sell? And what fraction of the total budget&endash;less than 100%&endash;do we have to have in hand before we launch the project and go for it? Obviously, if we sit around and wait for every last nickel, we waste time, and the cost of the project goes up. These are things we've not really thought about very systematically before, and we're trying to do it now. We have determined, with respect to that project, to spend about \$100,000 to do a planning study; and you know that there's been fairly broad consultation across the campus regarding the need for such a center in the scientific community. It is 'in the queue,' in that sense, but it has not been assigned a specific number; and it will take some more study to figure out what to do next."

Professor John E. H. Sherry, Hotel Administration: "Last fall, one of the things that President Rawlings alluded to was the consideration of an undergraduate business school. Speaking for the Hotel School, for my colleagues in Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics, and for others who are affected by this, could you please give us some idea of the direction of that."

Have you formulated any plans yet, for example? I know that a committee has been appointed to look at it; but could you give us an idea of where you are along the scale."

Provost Randel: "It has to be said that we're not very far along. That is a discussion that will take place among the relevant deans. It is hardly a matter about which the Central Administration will retire to a closet and make a plan. The discussion, as I've said, has not proceeded very far; but I remain persuaded that it's a discussion that needs to take place. We have lots of undergraduates going off to get business education at Pennsylvania because there's a named undergraduate business school there; and yet we probably produce as many undergraduate business degrees at Cornell as they do. But mostly, people don't know that. If we're going to be in that business, we ought to be in it on purpose; and we ought to be in it in such a way that we compete effectively with other institutions that are also in that business. What shape that should take at Cornell&endash;especially given that some of it's being done on the statutory side, with less than half the tuition with which it's done in the Hotel School&endash;adds a certain level of complexity to that discussion. We will carry on the discussion; but, as I've said, it's still quite tentative. Whether it would ever result in something called an 'Undergraduate Business School' is quite another matter. I somehow doubt it; but that remains to be seen."

Speaker Obendorf: "Thank you, Provost Randel.

"Now I'd like to call on Professor Roger Loring, the Chair of the Committee on Academic Programs and Policies, to introduce the resolution on grade reporting."

#### **4. RESOLUTION ON GRADE REPORTING**

Associate Professor Roger Loring, Chemistry: "The proposal that you discussed at your last meeting was a draft of a work-in-progress. The resolution that you should have gotten by campus mail has been slightly revised. So just to make sure that we're all discussing the same document, I'd like to begin by reviewing the proposal as it currently stands. In doing so, I'd like to point out some of the revisions we've made since your last meeting. These revisions, I'll say, are not substantive, philosophical changes; they're technical changes, many of which came from comments you made at your last meeting. And as far as the Committee on Academic Programs and Policies is concerned, the document is in its final form.

"The current proposal consists of two parts. The first part is a revision of the format and content of undergraduate transcripts at Cornell. According to this proposal, if a student takes a course with a letter grade, that student would have printed on his or her transcript three things: (1) the letter grade received, (2) the number of students in that course taking that course for a letter grade, and (3) the median grade achieved by those students. Independent studies, independent research courses, and such would be exempted from this rule, as would any course that has fewer than 10 students taking the course for a letter grade.

"The second part of this proposal calls for the Office of the Registrar to publish, perhaps electronically, a list of Cornell courses and the median grades that go along with those courses at the end of each semester. So that is the proposal.

"Let me just point out some of the revisions that have been made since the last version you saw. At the last meeting, there was some concern with students taking courses for 'S/U' marks rather than for letter grades. Under this proposal, those students simply would not enter into the bookkeeping. 'Class size,' as far as the transcript will be concerned, will equal the number of students taking the course for a letter grade.

"Another concern was raised for cross-listed courses. If we take a hypothetical example: there's a course, Chemistry 501, which is cross-listed with, let's say, Biochemistry 602&endash;they're the same course, but students may sign up for either number. In this scheme, the courses will be treated as a unit, so students signing up for either Chemistry 501 or Biochemistry 602 get the same median printed on their transcripts.

"As you know, also, the calculation of a median is not totally without ambiguity. For example, we might imagine a course in which half the students got a grade of 'B+' or higher, and the other half got a grade of 'B' or lower; in that case, you could legitimately choose either 'B' or 'B+' as the median; we suggested picking the lower grade arbitrarily. So in this example, 'B' would be reported as the median grade.

"Lastly, there was a change with regard to a recommendation as to how this procedure would be implemented if, indeed, it is adopted. We proposed that it be implemented with a given freshman class. Otherwise, we would run into the obviously unsatisfactory situation with upperclassmen graduating with transcripts that were hybrid between two different bookkeeping

systems; and that, really, wouldn't do.

"So those were the changes that were made. Let me also mention a couple of facts that might assist you in your deliberations. You may have heard that the Student Assembly had a referendum on the topic of this proposal; it was done in conjunction with the Student Assembly elections held last week. The results, if you haven't heard, were 1,593 students against the proposal and 1,343 students in favor of it. So, the nays had it in that particular vote; but I would say, given that the Student Assembly, at least as I could tell, was dead against it, and that the *Sun* was against it, and that nobody went out and campaigned for it, I would say that that small margin indicates that there is certainly a substantial base of support among the students.

"Also, there's been discussion of Dartmouth's proposal; obviously, we don't want to be dictated by who does what&endash;but people are asking whether this crazy idea was conceived at Cornell or whether this is an idea that's blowing in the wind. So I would suggest to you that this is an idea that's blowing in the wind. Columbia University recently adopted a proposal that was clearly conceived in a very similar spirit but, I think, is nowhere near as good as this proposal. Starting in the fall of 1996 for Columbia College&endash;the undergraduate unit at Columbia University&endash;the transcripts, in addition to the course grade, will give the percentage of 'A's given in that course, subject to various restrictions. I think that's a lot less informative than the median grade. This idea's out there. Also, the University of Toronto has had this plan in place since 1978, and a number of other Canadian institutions use it as well.

"So much for the facts. I'd like to take a minute just to give you my opinion, since I didn't speak at your last meeting. In particular, I would like to address one main issue that came up at your last meeting and has run through the debate on this subject that I've seen in the student newspaper and elsewhere&endash;and that is the question of grade inflation. Much of the debate is centered on the questions: Is there grade inflation at Cornell? If so, is it a problem? And if it's a problem, will this fix it? I would like to suggest to you that this is not a remedy for grade inflation, if, indeed, there be a problem called 'grade inflation'. So I would say to those of you who are worried about grade inflation that that is a topic for another day. This is not going to fix it, if, in fact, it is a problem. I do not believe that this proposal, if it is adopted, will cause instructors to lower their grades. I don't think the mere fact of students knowing what the mean is will cause us to change our long-standing grading policies. In many of our courses, students have that information anyway, through informal channels. I do not believe that this proposal is going to change anybody's behavior&endash;either the students or the instructors. So this is not, I think, a proposal about grade inflation; and I suggest to you that debate about grade inflation is somewhat beside the point here.

"What do I think this will accomplish? What this will do is provide some more information as to what the significance of a grade is. It will calibrate grades. The problem that this addresses is not grade inflation&endash;it's not whether grades overall at Cornell are relatively high or relatively low. The problem is rather one of grade inconsistency&endash;the fact that we instructors who hand out these grades are not computers programmed by a single hand. We all have our own ideas about grades, and we all act accordingly; that's as it should be. My 'B+' is not your 'B+'; that's the bottom line here. This proposal would go some way toward rectifying that ambiguity. Clearly it doesn't lift the ambiguity, though; as any time you try to summarize the performance of a human being over 14 weeks by a symbol, there is going to be some ambiguity. The proposal would provide more information and would therefore give grades more meaning.

"Let me also just take a minute to say something about another issue that was raised at your last meeting, and that is whether this resolution, if adopted, would increase student competitiveness to some destructive degree. I think that's a very legitimate concern, but I don't think it should be an overriding concern here. What this proposal does, which is new, is that it puts some information on the transcript on how students stand relative to each other. That was clearly unpalatable to many of you, judging from your last discussion. But I would like to point out that that information is sought after by the people who read transcripts: prospective employers, fellowship committees, admissions committees of graduate and professional schools, and so forth. We know that, because all of you, as I do, write lots and lots of recommendation letters for Cornell students. And, in addition to writing these letters, we usually fill out a form. The form has a row of boxes on it, and we get to decide whether the student is in the top 5% of his or her class, or the top 10%, and so on. That information is wanted both by the students and by the outside world. And the extent to which that information is not provided on the transcript raises the significance of letters of recommendation. It makes letters of recommendation a kind of 'shadow transcript,' in which the information of how students relate to each other is actually conveyed from the faculty to the people who want that information. The students, of course, have checked the little box that waives their right to see that piece of paper. And so I would put it to you that, since the need is there for the people who judge these students to have some idea of how these students stand relative to each other, we can either sneak it to them in sealed envelopes, or we could put a little bit about it on the transcript. I would suggest to you that putting it on the transcript&endash;where the student can see it as well&endash;is not a bad idea."

Speaker Obendorf: "Thank you, Professor Loring. This is coming to us from a committee, so the resolution is now open for discussion."

Associate Professor Robert L. Harris, Jr., Africana Studies and Research Center: "Our faculty has discussed this resolution, and we strongly oppose it. I also understand that we're disfranchised at this meeting and are not able to vote on the resolution because our representative, elected by our faculty to serve on the Senate, is in Jamaica, where he has a son who is seriously ill. Since there's no provision for a proxy, we will not be able to vote on the resolution. We oppose the resolution, because we do not understand what the problem is. I'm glad the issue of grade inflation is being brought up, even though this resolution does not address it. Is there a problem with our students being admitted to graduate schools? Are they losing out to students from other institutions because of their transcripts? Are our students losing jobs? Have employers complained about the quality of our transcripts, saying our students are coming to them with inflated profiles? Are too many students graduating with honors? Isn't that one of the distinctions that individuals can note when they look at students who graduate from Cornell? And, finally, aren't we really putting the cart before the horse? We have this proposal for program review: shouldn't there be first some program review, some understanding, some data? We have no information on which to base this particular judgment. Shouldn't that come first? Then we can have a discussion about changing the grading procedure."

Associate Professor Joseph Laquatra, Design and Environmental Analysis: "My department was also very much opposed to this. The wide-spread feeling was that this is a 'band-aid' issue, in that it gets at what's perceived to be addressing grade inflation or what's believed to be grade inflation or grade ambiguity. It seems to presume that we cannot do anything about our grading system. Maybe a better approach would be to start at the beginning&endash;the very beginning&endash;and ask the question of whether Cornell should have grades, and then take it from there. Also, the median was not thought to be the best indicator. If another indicator were to be placed on the transcript, maybe rank in class would be more meaningful."

Dean Stein: "I was not terribly enthusiastic about this resolution when I first heard it. But the more I thought about it, the more I became convinced that it's the right idea and that in a certain sense it doesn't even require an excuse. The more I thought about the grading system, the more I realized how totally arbitrary it was. We have measures that we use, which have no consistency whatsoever, which we then add up, average, and give to five significant figures, with no real meaning to it whatsoever. The problem I see is not any of these hypothetical problems that Professor Harris raised. The problem is that the way we're doing it just isn't the right way to report grades. The more I've thought about the issues today that confront us&endash;what the public is saying, what appears in the *Wall Street Journal*&endash;I believe that once we accept the notion that giving grades is a legitimate function, it seems to me that grades ought to have some consistent meaning. At the present time, though, they don't. I also believe that one could argue the other side of that and say we aren't a licensing bureau and that we shouldn't be giving grades&endash;we should just be educating those who wish to receive our education. But that is another discussion.

"I think that, in a certain sense, these public demands for accountability are justified. The public has the right to ask us, 'What do you mean when you give grades? What does an 'A' mean? What does a 'B' mean?' And so on. Well, it doesn't mean anything. At the last meeting, Professor Ascher quoted the words that were in the Faculty Handbook, and it's a joke, if you read them. If you believe that in all parts of the campus an 'A' or a 'B' or a 'C' grade corresponds to the paragraphs in the Faculty Handbook, you're wrong. They do not correspond. So then the question comes up, 'Well, what does a given grade mean?' I believe that those who read our transcripts, whoever they are, have the right to ask that question; and likewise have the right to an answer to that question. In particular, the students, their parents, their employers, and the public at large should be able to find out what these grades mean.

"After the last meeting, Roger Loring and I went to the Student Assembly, and we testified before them. And we were flamed. Sitting around the room were 15 members of the Student Assembly; and, to a person, they were opposed to this proposal, sometimes in very strong terms. They raised legitimate issues, and after leaving the room, I thought these issues needed addressing. So I thought I should tell you what the four main questions were that were raised regarding this proposal.

"One, this proposal hurts students. Two, there are problems caused by honors sections of courses: If you give the average grade in an honors section of a course, doesn't that degrade the meaning of having an honors section? Three, there's the senior course with good students: A professor has a group of 17 students who are just all wonderful&endash;they all have insight, they all understand everything, and they write the most brilliant papers you've ever read. So you want to give them all an 'A,' and you do so; but then the appearance of the median grade on the transcript degrades the performance of the students. And four, I heard questions raised about increased competition. So I'd like to talk a little bit about all of these.

"Let me show you some data that indicates, if you didn't believe it beforehand, that, in fact, we use disparate yardsticks. I got a

copy of the grades that we give from the registrar, and I computed the average GPA that's given in the various colleges and in some selected departments. (See [Figure 1](#).) They obviously are quite different. It's hard to believe, looking at those numbers, that you could say Human Ecology uses the same yardstick when giving grades that the Hotel School does. Well, what does this mean? Why is it that there should be different average grades in Human Ecology than in Hotel? And is it fair to students, in fact, to assign those grades when they mean different things in different colleges? As a matter of fact, there are those who say, 'Yes, but everybody knows that'; but I did not find this list exactly intuitive. And neither will you. Also shown on [Figure 1](#), are the average GPAs given in various departments. For instance, Landscape Architecture gives an average GPA of 3.54, and the old conservative group in Physics gives an average GPA of 2.86. Now that is a remarkable spread. I challenge you to look at this chart and tell me why it is that Landscape Architecture, Chinese, Rural Sociology, and Classics, for some reason, give considerably higher grades than do Economics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. The question is, 'Is that fair to the students who are taking those particular courses?' What we're doing is using disparate yardsticks and then, somehow, adding up the results, averaging them, and saying we have measured the performance of a student with great accuracy. You've got junk if you do something like that."

Professor Thompson: "Are these grades for majors in the field?"

Dean Stein: "No, these are grades for all courses given in the particular department."

Professor Thompson: "Well, it seems that there is a bias toward departments with large courses where many of the students are outside their major fields."

Dean Stein: "There are large courses in all of these departments, though, except, perhaps, Chinese. The Assembly feared that if we do this, if we attempt to somehow make a first-order calibration of what students do in various courses by giving a median grade, we will disadvantage our students. That's a very serious accusation, so I tried to find out whether that was, in fact, right. Let me tell you what I did.

"I called up the admissions officers at the Cornell Law School and the Cornell Medical School and the Johnson School and the Duke business school, and I spoke to the Director of the Career Center, to try to understand whether this would, in fact, disadvantage students. Well, the first message I got was that it's hard to get a comparison of GPAs with other institutions, but I actually got one. In the course of making these telephone calls, I learned that law schools deal with transcripts in an interesting way. If you're an undergraduate who wants to apply to a law school, you don't send your transcript directly to the law school. Instead, you send your transcript to some central place, which then takes that transcript and puts it into a standard format and then sends it out to the schools. So that central place knows what the average GPAs are for all students from a particular institution who apply to law schools. I got that information, and I'll present it to you. (See [Figure 2](#).) It varies from 3.41 at Stanford to 3.15 at Virginia&endash;and there's Cornell at 3.16. The problem isn't grade *inflation* at Cornell, it's grade *deflation*. If we wanted to help our Cornell undergraduates, we could do two things. We could all raise our grades, or we could tell the world that, in fact, what is commonly believed by Cornell students, is, in fact true&endash;namely, we grade harder. One way of showing that is to demonstrate that a 'B+', which at Stanford is practically a failing grade, is a decent grade at Cornell. I think this will, in fact, help our students.

"When I spoke to the admissions officers I called, none of them felt that Cornell students would be disadvantaged by our transcript resolution. As a matter of fact, several of them felt that Cornell students would be advantaged by having that information on the transcript. Another cut I got of the relative grades at various institutions comes from COFHE&endash;a consortium of universities that does studies of various aspects of universities. Now, this is not exactly what you want, as these are self-reported grades, but they did a study of graduating seniors and asked them what their GPAs were. If you look at all these institutions (the list is shown in [Figure 3](#)), Cornell is the third from the bottom in the reported GPAs. While these are self-reported scores, there's no reason why Cornell students are more or less honest than other students. (By the way, they're all about 0.2 higher than the actual GPAs.) In fact, assuming a uniformity of honesty among these institutions, it becomes clear that we do grade very much harder. Out here in the sticks, we haven't kept up with the modern trend of inflating grades, so we do grade harder and, in some sense, disadvantage our students.

"Now I want to comment on the problem with honors sections. This is a real problem; I don't believe the right way to solve it is to have one instructor handle honors sections in one way and another instructor handle them in another way. We ought to have some uniform way of identifying, with our course numbering, what is an honors section and what isn't, so that the person who reads the transcript can take that into account by him- or herself.

"As regards the senior course with the 17 Einsteins, I think there is no answer for that problem; that obviously is a defect. My

guess is that it happens less often than you might think. The disparity among the GPAs across the University is a more serious problem than the problem of the senior course with a lot of good students in it. I've been on the other side of the table, reading transcripts for admissions to graduate school&endash;and you know what you're looking at. If you have, for example, a transcript of a student from Berkeley who was median or just a little bit better than median in a senior-level physics course, you know you have a good student. We're not fools when we read these transcripts. If a Cornell student with a 4.0 sends a transcript somewhere, people on the outside don't know what that means. They don't in fact know that that's a really good student and not that we just grade that way, unless they have something to compare the 4.0 to. So we advantage a student by giving the median information.

"Let me make a last comment about competition. To my mind, competition is not a bad thing. Competition is the engine that drives progress. Competition is what drives all of us. I didn't really learn about competition until I became a graduate student in physics, where we spent all our leisure time worrying about who was better than whom. We compete with each other, and we believe that that is, in fact, one of the things that motivates and drives us. But we do not compete with each other by pulling the plugs on each others' equipment and ripping pages out of library books. Somehow, we have taught ourselves character, whereby we compete according to a set of rules; and we have to teach our students that also. But the notion that a student is somehow driven to do better because someone is telling the meaning behind the grade is not necessarily a bad thing. One of the beauties of the median grade, by the way, is that you cannot raise yourself with respect to the median grade by hurting somebody else&endash;except that one person who's in the middle. If you manage to lower someone with a 'C+', to a 'C,' the median grade will not change unless that is the middle person in the class. Once you realize that, you will realize that the way to change your position with respect to the median grade is to, in fact, increase your own score and not decrease others'.

"It being a political day, I'll tell you about some of the support we have for this. The Provost has indicated his support, and the Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has indicated qualified support. I think the 46%-to-54% loss, representing student opinion, was, in the words of Pat Buchanan, a 'victory, given the circumstances of the election.'"

Speaker Obendorf: "We'll take some more comments or questions at this time."

Frank C. Keil, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Psychology: "Peter, I want to suggest that the problem with the senior classes is perhaps more severe than you purport. It is especially prevalent in my department, where the following problem comes up. We have a lot of 400-level courses wherein there might be 100 students trying to sign up for only 20 or 30 spots. So we look at the grades to decide who gets into the class. Among those 20 or 30, they're going to get mostly 'A's, because they're all good students. And now they're going to be penalized, even after we've selectively filtered them out. So one possible revision is to restrict this to courses that are much larger&endash;not just ten but, say, 100 students. Or maybe it could be restricted to just 100- or 200-level courses. But the 400-level courses in departments where we can't service all the students will have much higher median grades. So the students who take these classes are going to be hurt. We're already selecting based on grades, and we expect them all to do well."

Professor Trevor J. Pinch, Science and Technology Studies: "Our department was generally in favor of the resolution, but we wondered about the competition aspect. Our suggestion was that we change the words 'shall publish' in number 2 and make the list available to faculty only. This would be in order to reduce the competition aspect."

Speaker Obendorf: "Are you making that as a suggestion only or moving an amendment?"

Professor Pinch: "I suppose it's an amendment. I would propose that we change the wording of number 2 in the resolution from 'shall publish' to 'shall make available to the faculty.'"

Speaker Obendorf: "Is there a second to the amendment? [Seconded] Now the amendment is open for discussion."

Professor Barry K. Carpenter, Chemistry: "I oppose the amendment, because I think one topic that hasn't been discussed so far&endash;at least in my hearing&endash;is that part of our role as educators is to provide the students with feedback. I don't believe that students are universally smart or universally stupid; rather, they are good at some things and not so good at other things. So part of our role as educators is to let them know which is which. I think it's actually valuable to let the students have this information, and I don't think it should be restricted just to faculty."

Professor Thompson: "The students will have access to this information in any event, since they do have access to their transcripts. What is the advantage to be gained by not publishing the list? I see no effective impact on competition among the students."

Professor Harris: "I think that students usually have this information available to them in courses. After prelims are returned, for example, they always want to know the mean and median. But I'm concerned about this information going out to parents, in those instances where students do share their grades with parents. I think they're going to be less likely to share their grades with parents if this median is published. That's why I would support this particular amendment. I had a very sad case occur a number of years ago where a family pulled its child from Cornell University because she did not make the Dean's List. They felt that since they were paying Cadillac prices, their child should do well. If these things go out and parents see that their children aren't always making the median in every class, I think this is going to create serious problems for us."

Professor Peter Schwartz, Textiles and Apparel: "I support Trevor's amendment because, while I agree with Dean Stein's sentiments, I am less confident as to what will happen when institutional number-crunchers, both at Cornell and elsewhere, and other administrative figures get ahold of these numbers. While I think it is important that students know their relative standings, I agree with Professor Thompson in that they will see these on their transcripts. I don't see the necessity for publishing them world-wide though, because I think there is a danger for them being used improperly."

Professor Robert Ascher, Anthropology: "I have to interpret this in terms of how my department would have instructed me. We didn't think of this particular amendment, but they asked me to speak to it in two ways. First, a number of my colleagues are concerned about a situation like the following: In a 200-level course, there are 200 pages to read a week plus five five-page papers. Within a few weeks, a large percentage of the students sign out and find a more accommodating class. So, only the 'best' students are left, and everybody ends up with an 'A' or a 'B.' Well, when students go looking for an easier class, they will go to classes with published medians that are relatively high, and they assume that they won't have much of a problem in those classes. The second point is that members in my department are very concerned with the University turning toward a 'market mentality.' I don't think students should think of the University as a marketplace; even though it should be competitive."

Speaker Obendorf: "Let me remind you that we are speaking to the amendment, which is to make available the list of median grades only to the faculty at the end of each semester."

Assistant Professor Carlo D. Montemagno, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (At-Large): "The biggest problem that I see is that when you apply this additional information to the transcript, we're in essence giving a recommendation on the transcript. It's no longer just abstract numbers; we're providing some additional value to the transcript. It's very much like when a student comes to you and asks you to write a letter of recommendation. It would seem that if the information would be good to have, the students would request it and request to have it released. But we shouldn't have it so that it goes out in blanket form. If we would modify the amendment to allow the student to determine whether this information is released on the transcript, I think that is a reasonable way of doing it. In essence, what we would be doing here is providing a relative ranking of the student among his peers. That's providing a letter of recommendation for that student."

Speaker Obendorf: "We've been allowed until 5:30 to discuss this issue. Would you like to discuss the amendment more, or should I move the question? [Question moved] Those in favor of the amendment&endash;to have the list of median grades made available only to the faculty&endash;please say 'aye'; opposed; the amendment fails. Now we're back to the original resolution. Is there more discussion on the main motion?"

Dean Stein: "I'd like to move to postpone for another month. I think this is a rather important issue, and I'm not sure that there's been enough discussion. I, personally, would like to have some discussion with students and get their opinions. So I would like to move a postponement for a month."

Speaker Obendorf: "Is there a second?" [Seconded]

Professor William H. Lesser, Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics: "Dean Stein, I would suggest, perhaps, that you or one of the committee members, during the coming month, speak to some of the recruiters on campus, as they are probably the second major users of our students' transcripts, and see whether they feel there is any need or value to this. As you've indicated for those of us who have been on admissions committees, we're often quite familiar with the schools from which many of our students apply, and we can probably judge the values of the grades ourselves without the additional information."

Professor Emeritus Donald Holcomb, Physics (At-Large): "Could I urge that in this intervening, people really try to find students to ask about this. Lying behind this, I think, is that the student grapevine has an enormous amount of information and ability for persuasion. But for us to proceed, imagining that the students are ignorant of many of these distributions of grades, really represents a point of view that may not be correct. So is it better to have accurate information available, or is it better to have

students making judgments on the basis of inaccurate information pulled from the grapevine?"

Professor Kraig Adler, Neurobiology and Behavior: "I would agree with the previous sentiment. I've had discussions with my students in introductory biology over the last week&ndash;almost 500 students. Out of that number, only two had actually seen and read the resolution until I put it on the overhead. We had a short discussion, but there were obviously other things to talk about that day besides that proposal. In the meantime, I had a lot of student interest, in terms of e-mail messages and notes in my mailbox. Today I took a show of hands in both of my lecture sections, having given them a week to think about it, and the split was about 50-50."

Professor David Gries, Computer Science: "Dean Stein, I would hope that you would go back to the Student Assembly in the meantime with the figures you showed to us. And I think it would be helpful if they could be made available to us so we can show them to our faculties."

Dean Stein: "Yes, I'll put them on the Web."

Speaker Obendorf: "All in favor of postponing the vote on this resolution until next month's meeting say 'aye'; opposed? All those in favor of the motion please say 'aye'; opposed? The motion to postpone for another month is approved. Thank you."

"The next order of business is to have Dean Stein open our discussion of the Academic Program Review."

## **5. DISCUSSION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

Dean Stein: "The floor's open. You've read it; you've gotten it in the mail twice; and I don't think it's necessary to describe what it is. I'm hoping this can just be an open discussion where you can say what you feel about it."

Mary Beth Norton, Mary Donlon Alger Professor of American History: "I wonder, Dean Stein, whether you could talk about the question of why seven years was the period selected. Or maybe Dean Cohen could speak about this, since he's here. Was seven years intuitive, the way the seven-year balanced budget plan is?"

Dean Stein: "I have to answer that very carefully. When I was earlier asked why we cut off the grading proposal at classes with an enrollment of ten, I said, 'Well, it's an arbitrary number. We have ten fingers on our hands; there are Ten Commandments.' And that was consequently quoted in the *Sun* as the Dean of Faculty's opinion on the issue. I think there wasn't any real reason to it, Mary Beth. Somehow, it's a number that occurs to you in this business, and it's a common number that's used when people talk about program review or post-tenure review. Is that correct, Walter?"

Walter I. Cohen, Dean of the Graduate School: "I guess. Ten years is too long, and five years is too short."

Professor Norton: "Could I follow my question with a comment? The way the program review is described here, it will take an enormous amount of time for the departments to put something together. I have been on visiting committees that have evaluated three different history departments, and I know, from getting the stacks of material that the departments put together for such committees, how much time goes into these things. So, since such things are envisioned in this proposal, it occurred to me to ask whether a seven-year time frame was, in fact, the most efficient use of faculty time, because it does take such an enormous amount of energy to prepare for these things. I'm not against the idea, but unless there is some explicit, strategic reason why seven years is an appropriate time frame, maybe something like ten years would at least keep the department from ending one review and getting to work immediately on the next one."

Dean Stein: "But why ten years?"

Professor Norton: "Yes, it's arbitrary; but I think that would be frequent enough."

Professor Cutberto Garza, Nutritional Sciences (At-Large): "As a member of the committee, we did put thought into why seven years. We did think ten years was too long and five, too short, so we compromised with seven. Most of us thought a seven-year time frame was reasonable. It wasn't all that arbitrary."

N. David Mermin, Horace White Professor of Physics: "Another reason why we decided on seven years was that one-seventh of us are lucky enough to have our sabbaticals lined up so that we'd miss every single program review."

Professor Garza: "Yes, those of us on the committee in that situation planned it that way."

Professor Norton: "Well, that's the best reason I've heard."

Professor Smith: "I know there is some concern that diversity is not included in the reviews of graduate students, and I'm wondering whether I could get a response to that."

Speaker Obendorf: "The question is about diversity. Walter, would you like to speak to that?"

Dean Cohen: "Pure oversight. We've received many comments about that, and we'll address it in future versions of the report."

Associate Professor Kathleen M. Rasmussen, Nutritional Sciences: "It isn't at all clear to me what is to be done with the information that will be collected by this proposal. In one sense, for this to be valuable, the departments should be encouraged to describe their strengths and weaknesses. However, that will not fend off the budget axe. On the other hand, if you want to fend off the budget axe, there is a tendency to report everything in glowing terms. Until we know what is to be done with the information, it is very difficult for us to tell how we should position ourselves. I think we need some guidance not only from the committee but also from the Administration about what will be done with the results of these reviews."

Professor Frederick M. Ahl, Classics: "I would like to support the point just raised by Professor Rasmussen. The last time our department was subjected to a total evaluation, nobody, except for the dean, perhaps, got any insight as to the results of the review. I think the department chair saw it, perhaps, but the information itself was never made available even to the department, much less to the community as a whole."

Professor Lesser: "I would additionally agree to the statements just made, that there should be some discussion here as to the use of the information generated. In addition, I would like to propose that the Introduction of the report have more of a statement of what the justifications for these reviews are or what the particular problems are that the reviews are supposed to address. It's referred to only indirectly, by stating the purpose as 'to clarify existing and potential linkages among related units on campus' on page 1. Although the committee should be commended for doing a good job stating procedures, I'd like the report to go back to the committee so that a justification statement could be formulated."

Speaker Obendorf: "It's my understanding that this is just discussion today; the committee has not brought the report forward for a vote. But I'm sure they'll hear your comment."

Professor Milton Zaitlin, Plant Pathology: "This kind of thing has been going on for a long time in the Agriculture school, supported by the USDA Cooperative State Research Service. I've been involved in both ends of this&endash;both giving and taking. And one of the features of those reviews is to have an exit interview. This has been very salutatory. Quite often the report may take a year to come out, and the faculty is very apprehensive about what's going to happen. So they sit down with the committee at the end of the process and discuss with them certain issues. I think it's a very beneficial part of this process."

Professor Gary A. Rendsburg, Near Eastern Studies: "I'm from a small humanities department, and we do not go through these types of outside accreditations that I'm familiar with through colleagues in other departments. I believe that there are formal accreditation procedures that probably lots of departments undergo for a variety of reasons, so how would this procedure differ from those? How many departments are already doing something similar on five-, seven-, or ten-year cycles?"

Dean Stein: "Let me try to answer a couple of questions that have been raised. The other accreditation studies, such as the CSRS accreditations and those of various professional programs, were kept in mind by the committee. The committee was trying very hard not just to dump on more work. But it's clear that not all of those studies fit neatly into this seven-year cycle, but it was supposed to be that these reviews would be a part of that; maybe those departments would only do it on a timetable that's externally mandated for that. This was not meant to be another level of review. There was a lot of discussion about the utility of these reviews. So we thought of specifically writing into the Introduction that the use would be made of this review system in the allocation of resources, but we debated over that for many meetings. We're still not united on that issue. There were those of us who felt that that shouldn't be explicitly stated up front and those of us who felt that explicitly stating it up front would give the specter of a kind of machine generated in Day Hall that would make everybody lie as much as they possibly could and avoid facing issues and cutbacks. How successfully you could negotiate that, I don't know. But the feeling was, amongst all of us, was that we could all benefit from a deep introspection about the futures of our disciplines and our departments every so often. Sometimes, just being forced to do it makes you better at what you do than if you don't do it. That's really what's behind it."

"The other part is that these reviews are supposed to be owned by the deans. The dean is supposed to own these so that the

deans will use them. If they end up on a shelf somewhere, they're just wasted action. Then there's a higher level, area review, which is, in some ways, owned by the Provost. Through this, we thought that institutional priorities would be set or opportunities for distribution of institutional funds would be seen. But we shied away from a mechanical statement of how these reports would be used."

Seymour Smidt, Nicholas H. Noyes Professor of Economics and Finance, JGSM: "There are two issues to address. First is 'How often?' and the second is 'What are we to do with it?' Possibly the committee could consider a more flexible arrangement in which the people who owned the reports could be given some opportunity to plan the reviews every five to ten years to address issues on the agenda. The Provost might then group departments with common problems, instead of just routinely having reports come along every seven years."

Dean Stein: "If you read the report carefully, it's supposed to say that."

Associate Professor Marianne E. Krasny, Natural Resources: "I was wondering about how these reviews will affect the extension program, especially relative to the research criteria. For example, I know of faculty who receive sizable grants for extension which departments would want to include if they wanted to show how much money they were raising. On the other hand, looking at the extension criteria, I wondered whether these criteria really address the self-evaluation and introspection issues. Or are they even superior to the research criteria in reaching those goals? I'm not sure how that should be dealt with, but I did notice that there are some things that are mentioned that I don't think would represent all the types of things that extension people do."

Professor Keil: "We did actually get input from extension, and we would appreciate more. We did get some, but we didn't get a lot."

Professor Krasny: "To whom should we direct that information?"

Professor Keil: "Walter Cohen."

Assistant Professor J. Ellen Gainor, Theatre Arts: "I'm concerned about the disparity in the whole process for fields and undergraduate departments. In other words, sometimes you have fields that are essentially synonymous with departments, but other times you have fields that are completely separate from the departments. So, essentially, departments that are homes for fields where most of the faculty reside outside that department would be doing twice the work as compared to fields that are identical with departments that would be doing only one review. The report doesn't seem to be addressing that at all."

Associate Professor Jeffrey G. Scott, Entomology: "I could follow up on a lot of points that were raised, because our department is currently about to have a CSRS-EPS review for USDA in two weeks. We've been planning this for nine months, writing reports, writing summaries; in the midst of all of this, we are currently undergoing a college-wide review. This review has 140 programs that are all supposed to come up with four-page reports that are all going to be evaluated. When Frank Rhodes gave his State of the University addresses&endash;I used to like to hear him speak&endash;but he always gave the same message to us: You're going to have to do more. You're going to have to teach more classes with bigger enrollments, and you're going to have less funding. The message we're getting now is that we're going to have a lot more administrative duties&endash;more committees, more reviews that will lead to reports that, potentially, may do very little for anybody as far as helping the University go forward. So, yes, I'm venting frustration because we have to do those reviews. Somewhere there were job descriptions for all of our faculty in entomology that were 60/40 research/teaching, whatever; but none of them included all of this horrendous amount of self-examination that we're supposed to be undergoing. I doubt that it's going to have the benefit that will justify the cost." [Applause]

Professor Scott C. MacDonald, Philosophy: "I want to second that remark. I was concerned that the report did not address the enormous costs of this enterprise, with one small exception&endash;the generosity of the Provost's Office to offer to pay for the travel expenses and the honoraria of the external members. The one enormous expense is the one that's been mentioned&endash;the service of the research and teaching faculty that would be involved. There's no indication as to whether or not chairs would receive any sort of recompense for what would be a substantial increase in their duties; and there's no mention of whether or not there would be additional administrative staff required&endash;and that would have to be paid for. There's no mention as to how the departments are to pay for photocopying costs, and so forth."

Dean Cohen: "Just two thoughts. First, I have to say that I think that most people on the committee think that it would be

possible to do these reviews in ways that would not eliminate any work, obviously, but would not be reproducing the work of doing CSRSs, for example. I've been through CSRSs for the last several years, and they seem out of control in terms of the work that goes into them. I have to say that my image of this is not that. I'm not saying that there's a way of writing this as to guarantee that it won't produce tons of work; but I would be happy to put in some sort of statement about approximate numbers of pages and things like that to get some sort of sense of a scope for it. But I don't believe we should take nine months for it, or anything like that. There have been reports from the Engineering College over the last couple of years where it's clear that those departments weren't spending anything even remotely like that; but the results were useful.

"The second point is a more general point that Professor Scott raised. Can you imagine performing a program review that would be worth more to you than to someone else? That's really the request. If there is no possible scenario in which that is the case, then we should just trash the whole idea. But if the answer is 'yes,' then we should try to figure out what the parameters of that would be."

Professor Ahl: "I have had the privilege of serving, as I'm sure many of us have had, on reviews at other universities and other departments. The general experience, from my part, is that I've been dutifully wined and dined and entertained by people who have not otherwise spoken to me in years. Furthermore, there's a sort of confidence they come to you with, when they say, 'Ah, we're so glad we managed to get you on the committee and not so-and-so.' There's this sense all the time that you're almost involved in a political manipulation. The complaints I've had are always over the inordinate amount of time that was taken collecting information, very often for defensive purposes. The very strong suspicion in each of the cases involved in&endash;and one of these was at a sister Ivy League institution&endash;was that there were some sinister motives underlying the selection process as to who gets on whose committees. The thing that I really, really urge is that this committee make sure that any kind of review process is, as little as possible, open to being manipulated by groups within departments who clobber other groups within the same departments. This seems to be almost the general paranoia that, I think, comes from those review committees I've served on."

Speaker Obendorf: "I would now like to move on and open the floor up to new business."

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

Professor P. C. T. de Boer, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering: "For the discussion that was postponed, I think we should have made available to us what the grades actually mean. Last time, those rules were partly incorrect and certainly incomplete. The descriptions really are meaningful, and I think that they could be helpful if they were included in the minutes."

Cornell University Grading System (Faculty Handbook, page 68)

A *Excellent to Very Good*: Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; marked perception and/or originality.

B *Good*: Moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; noticeable perception and/or originality.

C *Satisfactory*: Reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; some perception and/or originality.

D *Marginal*: Minimum of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; limited perception and/or originality.

F *Failing*: Unacceptably low knowledge and understanding of subject matter; severely limited perception and/or originality.

Professor Lesser: "I'd like to raise an issue and make a proposal regarding the recent decision by the President's Office not to advance three candidates' names to the Board of Trustees for consideration of promotion and tenure. The point I want to make is purely a procedural one. For example, the Faculty Handbook contains no discussion of the process for reaching a negative decision at the President's level, but the Academic Appointment Manual sets out a detailed consultation procedure. I think we need to have some decision with discussion about what the relationship is between those two documents in that regard&endash;and which one should prevail or how they should be combined. In addition to that, the Dean of Faculty's office released an Ad-Hoc Procedure for Appealing a Negative Tenure Decision of the Provost, following a positive recommendation by a dean. But to my knowledge, that procedure was never voted upon by any faculty body. I think there's a question as to what the stature is of that particular procedure and how other procedures of that possible nature might advance in the future."

There are a number of other procedural matters that we cannot get into at this time. But I would like to propose that a small subcommittee of the Senate be selected and report back in a month or two about the identification of some possible procedural issues that regard this factor that the Senate may discuss and act on."

Speaker Obendorf: "So you are making a motion?"

Professor Lesser: "Yes. It's that the Senate select a small, ad-hoc committee to consider and make recommendations for procedural matters that were raised by a recent decision by the President's office regarding not advancing candidates' names for consideration by the Board of Trustees for promotion and tenure." [Seconded]

Speaker Obendorf: "It has been seconded."

Professor Terrence L. Fine, Electrical Engineering: "This is, in fact, within the purview of the Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee. That committee does plan to come to the Senate with a proposal, so I really think this motion is out of place. A committee with that purview does exist."

Dean Stein: "This is a complicated issue and is much in flux at the moment. The University Faculty Committee, which was just elected to serve as the executive committee of this body, has in fact decided to look at that issue themselves. What they will do with it is not clear, but they want to think about how to proceed with that issue. But they have not ignored it."

Professor Scott: "Do we have any representatives from the departments or colleges that were directly impacted by those negative decisions on your committee?"

Dean Stein: "Yes, the chair is from the college."

Professor Donald J. Barr, Human Service Studies: "I would just like to say, as Dean Stein just said, that this is a complex issue at the moment; but I would like to add that we have three colleagues who are caught like pinballs in this chaos at the moment. I'm sure what's happening to them is unpleasant, so I hope that whatever happens will happen soon."

Speaker Obendorf: "It's my understanding that we have a motion before us regarding setting up a small group to consider and make recommendations on the procedures for a negative Provost decision after a positive dean's recommendation."

Professor Norton: "Now that I have heard Professor Fine explain that a standing committee of this Faculty is already considering the issue, I think I will vote against the motion."

Dean Stein: "I fear I don't understand the motion. If it passes, I wouldn't know what to do. I'm not quite sure what you're asking this body to do. Are you asking the University Faculty Committee to lay aside its own consideration and set aside another group to do that?"

Professor Lesser: "Rather than to attempt to respond to that, given the new information about the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty, I would like to withdraw my motion and hold it in abeyance until such time as this committee reports to the Senate."

Speaker Obendorf: "If I hear no objections, I will allow Professor Lesser to withdraw his motion with the understanding that his issue is already being considered by the Academic Freedom Committee and the new University Faculty Committee. All in favor, say 'aye'; opposed? Thank you. The motion is withdrawn."

Professor Garza: "Could I request that by the next time the Senate meets we could have some kind of presentation about this topic. I am concerned, as is Professor Barr, that we need to deal with this with some expediency."

Associate Professor Alan K. McAdams, JGSM: "I've just heard that there are two different committees that are going to consider the same matter. That doesn't sound to me like an appropriate way to proceed. It seems to me that there has to be some resolution to that."

Speaker Obendorf: "Could we ask the Dean of the Faculty to resolve which committee is taking precedence?"

Dean Stein: "They are really two aspects of a larger problem."

Professor McAdams: "But if you get conflicting reports, that will be a lot of fun at the next meeting."

Professor Ascher: "I would like to make a quick motion that either one or both of these committees give us an oral report on this issue." [Second]

Dean Stein: "May I please assure Professor Ascher that we will, in fact, comply with your issue without bringing this to a vote."

Professor Ascher: "Thank you."

Speaker Obendorf: "Did I hear a motion for adjournment? We are adjourned."

Adjourned: 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert F. Lucey, Associate Dean and Secretary of the University Faculty