

Faculty Governance: 2004-2005
Annual Report to the Board of Trustees
Charles Walcott, Dean of the University Faculty
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Several major reports from faculty committees were completed this year. These include the report on the status of non-tenure-track faculty and on strategic corporate alliances. These, plus the regular flow of more routine issues, kept the University Faculty Senate busy.

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: In January of 2003, the then Dean of the Faculty, Bob Cooke, established an ad hoc committee to examine the status of non-tenure-track faculty. The charge to the committee was: *"...to investigate and make recommendations concerning the status and conditions of employment of non-tenure-track faculty, paying particular attention to such matters as titles, job security, rights to academic freedom, access to appropriate grievance and appeals procedures, eligibility for sabbatic/study leave, eligibility for emeritus/a status, and voting rights."*

After many discussions, several meetings with non-tenure-track faculty and others, preliminary reports to the Faculty Senate last spring, the committee submitted its final report in August of 2004. This report was discussed with the University Faculty Senate and three of its central recommendations were passed by the body. These were to:

- * Establish the rank of Research Scientist and Principal Research Scientist (Subsequently approved by the Trustees),
- * Recommend the opportunity to apply for professional development leaves,
- * Recommend using the emeritus title for retiring senior, non-tenure-track, faculty.

In addition, there were a number of other issues in the report, including voting rights and grievance procedures that are going to require further action by both the Senate and the university administration. I believe that this report and the action that the Senate has taken represent a significant step forward in giving proper recognition and support to our many non-tenure-track colleagues.

Strategic Corporate Alliance: As I reported last year, The University has proposed to form strategic corporate alliances with firms that might hope to benefit from Cornell faculty's expertise in various disciplines. The ad-hoc committee that arose from the faculty forum in the fall of 2003 delivered its final report to the Faculty Senate early this spring. A draft of its report had been circulated to all department chairs in the fall of 2004 with the hope of eliciting widespread faculty comment. Based on these comments the committee prepared the final version.

It proved difficult to get agreement within the committee or among the faculty it consulted on several critical issues. These revolve around questions like: How much of a role should a corporate sponsor have in directing the research activities of an alliance?

How big does a project have to be before it triggers all the mechanisms that managing a large alliance might require? Some of these issues were discussed at the April Senate meeting but lacking a quorum, no action could be taken to resolve them. The issue is likely to be on the agenda for the May meeting. Whatever the results of the resolution, a number of concerned faculty have spent over a year considering the implications, both the benefits and the possible drawbacks, of working closely with industry. As a result, many of the early faculty objections have been addressed and my impression is that the general feeling among the faculty is that with proper guidelines in place such corporate sponsorship could be very helpful both to the university and the corporation. However, the final recommendations await approval by the Faculty Senate.

Financial Policies Committee: There continues to be progress in increasing faculty salaries to the median of our peer group. The contract colleges have met that goal this year; the endowed colleges are predicted to do so soon. Comparing faculty salaries in various disciplines, i.e., biology, economics, across colleges has proved more difficult than expected but the process is underway. The committee has also spent some time considering the age distribution of the university faculty. There is a substantial number of faculty in their late fifties and early sixties. Replacing them when they retire could pose a problem for the university. The committee is working with Vice President Carolyn Ainslie to develop a useful model of what is likely to happen. Finally, there has been discussion of student fees. As budgets for teaching, especially laboratory or field trips, has declined, faculty have added various course fees for students to help make up the difference. There can be added costs for the laboratory guide or, in the case of field trips, direct charges. Faculty are participating with both students and the administration to consider how to address this problem.

Library Board: The Library Board has continued its discussions of the aggressive pricing policies of some journal publishers. Director of University Libraries, Sarah Thomas, reported that the Senate resolution passed last year was very helpful in her dealings with Elsevier. The committee has proposed a resolution to the Faculty Senate calling on their colleagues to consider the business model of the journals before they publish in them or serve as editors for them. It also suggests that faculty consider publication in one of the various on-line journals that are becoming increasingly available.

Policy for the Suspension of Faculty: There is currently no written policy covering the circumstances in which the dean of a college may suspend a faculty member from his or her duties. The Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committee drafted a policy that was shared with the college deans. Discussions between the deans and the committee continued throughout the year and are still on going. I hope for a final resolution to be brought before the University Faculty Senate early in the fall.

Educational Policy Committee: The new process for scheduling final examination is now underway and is being used in this spring semester. The prediction is that it will reduce back-to-back examinations significantly. Further the Student Assembly suggested that the timing of examinations be changed from the current schedule to one that allows much more time between examination periods. The University Registrar, David Yeh, was polling the students but the faculty thought such a schedule might

work well. The results of the student poll show that 61% of the respondents liked the new system but 39% preferred the current arrangement.

Academic Integrity: Universities exist in a society where many high school students cheat on examinations, plagiarize papers and where the general climate has become so competitive that dishonesty seems to pervade much of society. The situation is summarized in a recent book by David Callahan, "The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead." Cornell University takes a strong stand on such matters, yet the number of cases of academic dishonesty among our students seems to be increasing. A discussion of medical excuses from Gannett led to a general consideration of honesty in the University Assembly. There is a general interest among faculty, students and staff of having an opportunity to discuss this issue and to explore whether adopting some form of an honor code would be helpful. In addition, there are suggestions for more emphasis on what academic honesty means, how to avoid plagiarism and the like.

Faculty governance has had a busy year dealing with a wide variety of issues, only some of which are listed here. Overall, it has enjoyed great support and cooperation from the university administration leading to the feeling that we are working together to make Cornell a better place for both students and faculty.