

# Washington University

Faculty Senate

May 1, 2007

4:05 Call to order

1. The minutes of the December 6th meeting were approved.

2. Chancellor's report

A very good year is drawing to a close.

The undergraduate admissions process is going well. The target for next year's incoming class is 1330. The admissions office has been more conservative in offers of admission, choosing to rely on the waitlist as needed. The overall plan is to decrease the undergraduate body by approximately 500 gradually in a controlled manner, due to infrastructural limitations and the university's commitment to a high quality undergraduate experience.

The redevelopment of student housing continues. A new residence hall, East Village, will be built north of Anheuser-Busch Hall, to open Fall 2008, eventually replacing Millbrook apartments.

The new university center is expected to be ready Summer 2008, with space for dining facilities, graduate and professional students, the undergraduate student union, and the career center. The last demonstrates the university's commitment to strengthening opportunities for students after graduation. The lowest two (of three) levels of the underground parking structure will become available this summer; green space will be reclaimed where there is currently temporary parking.

Construction of the new social sciences and law building is proceeding quickly and is also scheduled to be ready Summer 2008.

On the medical campus the largest building in the city – over 600,000 square feet - will be constructed on the site of the now demolished Waco garage (the northeast corner of Children's Place and Euclid). Working with the university's partner BJC Healthcare, occupancy is expected by the end of 2009. BJC will use the lower floors for clinical purposes; WU the upper floors for research. The building will be the site for new initiatives, including those outlined in Biomed 21.

All schools and national advisory councils are currently working on a new strategic plan, to be presented to the Board of Trustees by the end of 2008, and discussed at their March 2009 meeting. The Plan for Excellence is expected to be as important as Project 21.

This year's Arthur Holly Compton Faculty Achievement Award will be presented to Carl Bender; the Carl and Gerti Cory Faculty Achievement Award to Helen Piwnica-Worms.

3. The necrology was read by the secretary.

4. Chair's Report:

Since the last Senate meeting, the Senate Council has met three times. As in the Fall, much of the Council's work in the spring has been of two types. The first type involved hearing and discussing the aims and plans of various offices, other faculty governance bodies, and standing committees. These have included the Office of Diversity Initiatives, the Faculty Council of Arts and Sciences, and committees such as library services and safety and security. In a related effort, led by Nancy Berg, the Senate Council has undertaken to review the work and structure of all its standing committees. In general, many of these committees perform very important functions and meet only on an as-needed basis. In those cases, faculty participation is essential and represents time well-spent. Other committees also do critical work, but the nature of the work is ongoing, so that they meet much more frequently. For those, it may turn out that faculty can be most helpful in a consulting role. In some cases, committees might be fruitfully combined.

Under the heading of getting input about various offices, each year the Secretary of Senate Council invites comments from all faculty as part of its annual administrative review. This year we received only a small number of responses. The executive committee reviewed each of them carefully, and we were glad to have the opportunity to discuss their contents with the Chancellor, acting in our advisory role. The executive committee felt that some of the comments raised general issues that might be addressed in the future in discussions with representatives from particular offices or committees. For example, it would be natural to discuss questions about how legal advice might be provided for faculty charged with violating university policies with the Office of General Counsel. The Senate Council may want to pursue these matters further next year.

The second type of work that has occupied Senate Council this term has involved discussing with various administrative leaders a number of policies. In particular this term, we have heard from Chief Strom on the use of closed circuit TV (cctv) for security purposes; from Vice Chancellor Baker on the computer use policy; and from Executive Vice Chancellor Klein on the new travel policy. Earlier in the semester, we invited John Klein to meet with us to discuss plans to implement this policy. At the meeting there was a lot of concern expressed about the plan, which originally had two parts: one involving efforts to improve accounting, the other which would have required all faculty to book travel through a single agent. The bulk of our discussion had to do with the second part, and several members of the council argued against it. There were questions about whether there is evidence to support the belief that using a single agent would produce enough savings to the university to be worth the inconvenience. Partly as a consequence of that discussion, the plan was revised, so that the single agent part was dropped for faculty. The Council's view was that this was a step in the right direction, reflecting responsiveness to faculty input; and we acknowledged the virtues of improved accounting and oversight. At the same time, members of Senate Council had questions about whether the new approval procedure was really necessary, about how appropriate it would be for travel paid for by a faculty member's research grant, and about its impact on the university culture overall. The focus was on the elimination of the procurement card and the pre-approval process. However, there was

less discussion of these matters than of the single agent issue due to time constraints. We did encourage members of Senate Council to inform their constituents, who were invited by John Klein to contact Alan Kuebler in his office. The concerns of the several faculty members who have written directly to the Senate Council have been conveyed Vice Chancellor Klein.

#### Discussion:

The general tenor of the discussion raised certain concerns and objections to the recently announced new travel policy:

It was suggested that everyone who travels found the institution of the Procard a few years ago to be a great improvement. Forbidding the use of the Procard for travel-related expenses is seen as a step backward, leading to increased paperwork both for the traveler and for the department office staff.

The introduction to the new policy states, "all travel should be authorized, in advance, by the employee's manager or supervisor." That sounds like saying that before a professor uses money from a research grant to travel to a conference or to field work, there must be written approval from the department chair.

The whole tone of policy suggests distrust of our faculty and staff. It suggests that there has been widespread misuse of the Procard, and widespread difficulty getting repayment for inappropriate (perhaps accidental) charges to the Procard. Perhaps there have been some isolated instances of misuse, but is that a reason to place the extra burden on all faculty? In the past WU administrators have taken the view that their role is to facilitate the work of our faculty and staff. This new policy sends instead the message that the administration's primary role is to keep the faculty and staff in line.

At the School of Arts and Sciences Chairs and Directors meeting earlier in the day a resolution was passed that the proposed policy not be put into effect for a year, giving time for further study and faculty input.

The new policy will have a major impact on the lives of those of us who travel frequently and places undue burden on us. A global policy can lead to inefficiencies and taxes both the researcher and the administrative support people. While it may sound trivial in discussion, it is a very serious issue in effect.

Colleagues at the medical school generally feel that the policy is not well thought out, and that one year's worth of data should be collected before designing and instituting such a policy. Without the Procard, individual faculty members will need to use their own personal credit cards to cover travel of graduate students and post docs. Travel is part of our mission; to make faculty conform to a business environment could alienate some, and complicate recruitment and retention of the best faculty.

It was asked what the reason was for advance approval. A scenario was painted in which a chair might deny the approval for spurious reasons. An appeal process would not necessarily rectify the matter due to time constraints. This could infringe on academic freedom.

The chancellor was prevailed upon to delay the implementation of the new policy.

The chancellor agreed that in the case of traveling under a grant there should be no need for any other approval other than obtaining the grant. He has asked John Klein to continue to interact with faculty until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. He explained that the Board of Trustees, in its fiduciary capacity, are concerned that there be more transparency, efficiency and accountability, and that the university maintain its position as a leader in the area of financial integrity. While he agreed that it would be best to have a more accommodating policy, he reminded all that the world is very different today.

The CFU (Central Fiscal Unit) will be involved in a one year pilot program with Gwin's Travel. The unit includes both alumni and development and undergraduate admissions, two departments that are responsible for a great deal of travel. The purposes and thus kinds of travel are not necessarily similar to that of faculty, and we need to be responsive to different cultures. He concurred that if the Procard presents a problem of data capture, that better information systems could rectify the issue. The chancellor is not opposed to delaying the implementation of the policy. He asked Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Gerhild Williams to chair a committee with Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration John Klein, Controller Mike Dunlap, Vice Chancellor for Finance Barb Feiner, and an intellectually diverse assortment of faculty from the medical and Danforth campuses in consultation with Executive Chancellor Ed Macias.

5. There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 5:10.