

Faculty Governance: 2005-2006
Annual Report to the Board Of Trustees
Charles Walcott, Dean of the University Faculty
25 April 2006

The resignation of President Jeffrey Lehman plus the controversy surrounding "Red Bud Woods" dominated faculty attention last summer and fall. Faculty were very upset by President Lehman's resignation and especially because they were not told the reasons behind it. There was a widespread feeling on campus that it would be very difficult to recruit a new president given the very short tenure and abrupt resignation of the last. Further, adding to faculty unrest was the proposed parking lot on the site of Red Bud Woods. This was an issue that had stirred up student sentiment in the late spring and led to a student sit-in in the president's office. As this took place a group of faculty began to increasingly support the student cause; at one point they claimed that over 300 faculty had signed a petition to the university administration to "save Red Bud Woods." The university's decision to go ahead with the parking lot sparked further protests and a number of meetings, but was finally resolved and the parking lot built.

The faculty distress these two issues caused became clear in an open meeting of faculty with representatives of the new presidential search committee that took place at the end of August. After what can only be called a "frank and forthright exchange of views" between the faculty and the trustees on the committee, the chair of the search committee Diana Daniels, graciously offered two mechanisms to increase faculty input in the search for a new president: first, two more faculty would be added to the search committee and second, when the committee arrived at the final candidates, three faculty would be invited to interview them.

Partly as a result of these discussions, it seemed useful to improve communication between the Board of Trustees and the Faculty. The University Faculty Committee, an elected sub-set of the University Faculty Senate, has had two meetings with the leadership of the Board of Trustees this academic year. My impression is that both groups found these meetings useful and we plan to continue them about twice a year when the Trustees are in Ithaca.

As part of the settlement of the Red Buds Wood controversy, President Rawlings and I established an ad hoc committee under the leadership of Prof. Kathryn Gleason to examine the balance between "environmental sustainability and transportation and parking needs." A report from this committee is due on 6 May 2006. At the September 2005 Senate meeting the faculty concerned about the Red Bud Woods situation proposed that the Faculty Senate form a committee to examine faculty governance. After the motion was extensively re-drafted by the University Faculty Committee it was

passed by the Faculty Senate and a committee was established with Risa Lieberwitz of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations as chair. This committee has been hard at work all year examining the extent to which the administration agreed with faculty decisions as well as the general role of the faculty in university governance. A preliminary report of the committee is due at the May meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Toward the end of the fall semester the presidential search committee requested three faculty members to interview the presidential finalists. Three member of the University Faculty Committee volunteered for this task. On their return to campus they reported that they had a good opportunity to meet with the candidates and that their opinions had been listened to with care and attention by the whole search committee. They appreciated the attention that the search committee paid to their views. I believe that faculty are generally very pleased with the faculty involvement in the search and look forward to working with President-elect Skorton when he joins us this summer.

Strategic Corporate Alliance: At the November meeting of the University Faculty Senate there was a continuation of the discussion of principles for potential Strategic Corporate Alliances. These principles were put together by a committee under the able leadership of Cynthia Farina, Associate Dean and Secretary of the University Faculty. This group of faculty worked for nearly two years to develop a set of principles that should guide the university's interaction with corporations and would protect the intellectual property rights of faculty. The draft report was circulated to departments for discussion and comments before finally being adopted by the Senate. Even though there are no Strategic Corporate Alliances in sight, the discussion was helpful in educating some faculty who were very upset by the prospect of corporate involvement. Further, the basic principles in the document represent faculty guidelines which should be useful in any kind of corporate sponsored arrangement.

Job Related Faculty Misconduct: At the May 2005 meeting of the University Faculty Senate the body adopted a recommendation to the administration about how to deal with faculty misconduct that might lead to suspension of a tenured faculty member. This was the outcome of at least a year's discussion by the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty and from discussions with a group of three college deans. The recommendations were adopted by the body and the Provost has been discussing them further with the deans. As a result of these discussions, a revised set of procedures was recommended by the Provost at the April 2006 Senate meeting. Further discussions with the faculty are taking place and I hope very much that we can all eventually agree upon a set of procedures that will safeguard faculty rights while allowing deans to take appropriate disciplinary measures.

University Club: A University Club, which was originally proposed and approved by the University Faculty Senate back in 2003, has proved impossible to establish. The basic idea was to find a space where lunch and perhaps dinner could be served to

faculty and staff, where there would be space for special events to bring together faculty and staff from various parts of the university and where distinguished visitors from out of town could be entertained. The current "Statler Club" facilities in the Hotel School are simply too cramped and not really suitable for this role. A sub-committee of the Statler Board working with Peter Stein produced a report outlining the desirable features of such a club and recommending the University establish one. Despite the use of a committee of visitors in the summer of 2004, no location has been found on campus where such an organization could be housed. In addition, the costs of renting the current space for the Statler Club in the Hotel School have increased leaving the future of some form of faculty and staff dining and social facility very much in doubt.

Finally, the University Faculty Senate elected me to an additional two-year term as Dean of the Faculty. I very much look forward to continuing to work with all of you to further the interests of both the faculty and the university. In closing, I would like to pay special tribute to Hunter Rawlings who took over the leadership of the university at a critical juncture. I have very much enjoyed working with him this year and, on behalf of the faculty, I welcome him back to teaching and scholarship as a colleague.