

# Faculty Issues: 2002–2003 Year in Review

## A Report to the Trustees

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### University Faculty Senate (2002-2003)

The Faculty Senate has been less reactive and more pro-active this year, concentrating mainly upon issues we've elected to consider. By the end of May, the University Faculty Senate will have met seven times this academic year.

In September, the Senate examined and embraced the creation of a non-tenure-bearing professorial title (Clinical Professor). So far this year no college faculty has triggered the process that enables usage of that title. On the other hand, the Engineering faculty is actively preparing a proposal for the creation of one or more additional non-tenure-bearing titles.

The Senate also received a report on the administration's bias response protocol and received a report on bias-related campus incidents. The Senate updated the name and role of a standing committee to become the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

In October the Senate directed that a committee be formed to investigate and report on the status of non-tenure-track faculty (such as Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, etc.) Their recommendations may be considered at the May 14 Senate meeting.

Throughout the year the Committee on Academic Programs and Policies assisted the Senate in facilitating the dialog between the departmental faculties in AAP and the Provost's office concerning organizational issues raised by the Provost and President. The university-level issues have been resolved and the Senate has completed its role, although many issues that are college specific remain under active consideration by those faculties.

In November the Financial Policies Committee and the Senate received reports on Workforce Planning, an issue that has produced widespread anxiety and uncertainty for staff, especially with respect to job security. Although presented as serving a laudable and worthy purpose, this effort instead was perceived widely as being motivated by a predisposition for centralization and for workforce reduction in order to achieve an arbitrary financial goal, rather than from the broader problem definition of improving operational effectiveness and financial efficiency of the university – that may well have included workforce reduction as a corollary, rather than as its principal purpose.

The Faculty's Library Committee reported on the crisis in journal subscriptions in the sciences. For years subscription costs for many journals have been increasing rapidly and appear destined to continue escalating at a rate much in

excess of inflation, creating an unsustainable situation. I'll return to the topic of scholarly publishing later in this report.

In February the Committee on Academic Programs recommended and the Senate endorsed the plans of the Johnson School to participate in a joint Executive MBA program with Queens in Canada. The teaching will be shared by the two faculties and will depend significantly upon a synchronous, technology-mediated approach.

A special task force has reviewed and will recommend changes in the intellectual property policy at the May meeting. Their preliminary report was made public in February and is accessible online with the minutes for that meeting <http://web.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty>.

At the March meeting, the election of Charles Walcott by ballot of the University Faculty to serve a three-year term as the next Dean of the Faculty, beginning July 1, was announced. The Committee on the Status of Non-tenure-track Faculty also provided a status report in March – in preparation for formal consideration of their recommendations in May.

In April, the Senate endorsed the recommendation of an ad hoc committee concerning the desirability of the rejuvenation of the present Faculty Club as a more inclusive University Club. Another special task force (an expanded version of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty) presented a progress report on their review of suspension policies and procedures for tenure-track faculty. Astonishingly, existing policies provide only minimal due process protections for academic freedom.

Another committee reported that they had prepared a survey of 'Academic Advising Best Practices Survey for First Year Students.' We anticipate using this book as a resource for a University Faculty Forum on Academic Advising next semester. Finally, as part of its sweeping, multi-year review of academic scheduling policies, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), conducted an online survey of all undergraduates concerning attitudes and preferences concerning academic scheduling. A surprisingly large fraction of the undergraduates (43%) responded. The committee summarized the findings concerning the scheduling of 1) out-of regular class time, late afternoon prelims, 2) final exams too closely timed, 3) lower class attendance just before and after Thanksgiving and spring break, 4) attitudes about appropriate uses of distributed learning, e.g., supplementary vs. replacement of classes, 5) their sleepiness/alertness patterns, and 6) issues of needs and time demands pertinent to team members of the intercollegiate varsity sports. The EPC's recommendations will emerge next semester, but perhaps some issues pertaining to student absences and class cancellations just before or after the breaks may be ready for Senate action in May in order to influence the patterns for the fall semester. An executive summary of the survey results and documents pertaining to several of the topics mentioned above are available at <http://web.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty> under 'Forums/Discussions' -> 'Faculty Online Forum'

### **Other governance activities:**

Numerous standing committees provided invaluable governance support. For example, FACTA provided thoughtful and timely advice to the Provost on all tenure promotions. Among its many chores, the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) reviewed the New Life Sciences Corporate Strategic Alliance proposal and supported the plan, but recommended that a completely independent faculty group should review each corporate alliance agreement before it is finalized. The Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education (FACAPE) now occasionally meets jointly with the Faculty Team Advisors, but functions most of the time as a separate group. This year they devoted particular attention to the intramural and other non-varsity activities.

We've thoughtfully chosen the issues that we addressed, but also those we did not address. In this latter category most notable is the absence of a Senate vote concerning the graduate unionization election held this year. We organized a University Faculty Forum in order to provide a setting in which thoughtful debate could occur, but we thought it inappropriate for the faculty to express a collective view.

### **Five-Year Summary (1998-2003)**

Faculty governance has made a serious effort to identify and to articulate the interests of the faculty. In many ways, faculty governance has found its voice. During the past five years we've tried to thoughtfully address issues that further the best interests of the university – not just the particular interests of the faculty.

Building upon the department-based structure for the Senate, we've created the University Faculty Forum structure for airing the issues of the day (Table 1) with the broader community – intentionally reaching beyond the elected members of the Senate to be inclusive – but also to inform the Senate members. Some of these eighteen 90-minute sessions have explored quite sensitive issues, such as the events of 1969. Others, such as the faculty who teach large courses, have enabled faculty who share common interests to relate to others who share their interests.

We also provided a web-based Faculty Online Forum to provide easy access to documents relevant to the major issues and to provide an opportunity for thoughtful opinion pieces to be shared with the community.

The twenty-eight, 90-minute formal meetings of Faculty Senate have been tightly structured to make thoughtful use of the members' time. Consistently, the issues brought the Senate floor had been sharply focused by a committee before engaging this 100-plus member body. By concentrating upon issues that are important to the faculty and by respecting the members' time, e.g. by limiting the members' time demands to a single monthly meeting, quorum issues disappeared.

Table 1. University Faculty Forums (1998-2003)

a.	Biological Sciences	(Oct 1998)
b.	Campus Climate for Students: Diversity and Inclusion	(Jan 1999)
c.	Athletics and Physical Education	(Feb 1999)
d.	Cornell 1969: Key Issues Then and Now	(May 1999)
e.	Computing and Information Sciences	(Sep 1999)
f.	Corson Symposium on the Research University	(Dec 1999)
g.	Social Sciences	(Feb 2000)
h.	Distance Learning I	(Feb 2002)
i.	Connection with Students: Some Best Practices in Teaching and Learning at Cornell	(Mar 2000)
j.	Distance Learning II	(Apr 2002)
k.	Campus Climate for Teaching and Learning: A Faculty Issue	(Aug 2000)
l.	Beyond eCornell: Technology in the Classroom, Distance Education and New Pedagogy	(Mar 2001)
m.	Faculty Who Teach Large Courses	(Dec 2001)
n.	Non-Tenure Track Clinical Professor Title	(Feb 2002)
o.	Cornell's Land Grant Missions	(Sep 2002)
p.	Graduate Student Unionization	(Sep 2002)
q.	Open Access Scholarly Publishing: Opportunities and Obstacles	(Dec 2002)
r.	Dean of Faculty Election	(Feb 2003)

Faculty governance provides a dispute resolution mechanism too. At the moment, we have no pending grievances, tenure, promotion or non-reappointment appeals or academic misconduct cases. We now have an up-to-date Faculty Handbook – after a decade of using the same edition.

Building the consensus for a community-wide, shared affirmation of ‘Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds’ surely ranks as one of our important accomplishments. Providing photographs of the students in their class to the faculty also ranks as a significant contributor to the humanizing of the classroom exchanges between faculty and students.

Another important piece of good news is the administration’s commitment to sustaining the promised faculty salary program – despite some rather substantial financial pressures. And the Trustees made us proud by making a long term commitment to the continuation of needs blind admissions at Cornell – a truly remarkable and noble move.

Alas, some issues that are important to the faculty remain unaddressed. We have not provided a plan that is appropriately attractive to the older faculty such that they choose to relinquish their claim on the payroll. Also, our geographical location limits opportunities for dual employment careers. Some progress is being made, but more fundamental change is needed or this will become a fundamental limitation to Cornell’s future well being.

A piece of an important work in progress – the creation of an open access, Internet-first approach to scholarly publishing for the humanities – is described in the Appendix. This is part of a much larger project.

We have yet to engage the faculty on a broad scale in making appropriate uses of distributed learning. We could have embarked upon such an effort with an important side effect being the open sharing of components of Cornell courses with the high schools of the nation. Similarly, we have not yet succeeded in building a common database of academic events with a customizable search profile to facilitate timely sharing of seminars and other opportunities.

## Appendix

### Book/Monograph Publishing In Relationship to Achieving Tenure in the Humanities at Cornell

Although scholarly communication (including formal publishing) occupies a decidedly core role in higher education, it has become a disruptive factor due mainly to financial issues. Serials costs for libraries, especially in the sciences, have become a major issue. But in the humanities, where books occupy the niche held by journal articles in other areas, there is also a serious problem. Most university presses are facing severe financial pressures that are causing them to select the manuscripts they publish with an ever-increasing emphasis upon print runs and sales. Increasingly, prospective candidates for tenure must have published one, and sometimes two, monographs (esp., English, History, and Government). Because the academy trusts the branding by university presses, their role has become important to the tenure decisions-making process.

The Modern Language Association has published a recent review of this trend and the state of scholarly publishing<sup>1</sup> That report failed to consider the strategic, complementary role of on-demand printing. Online publishing combined with on-demand printing, if implemented appropriately, may well make online publishing both feasible and even attractive.

Cost pressures for universities extend beyond publishing costs for university presses and acquisition costs for libraries. At Cornell, the library system requires a net expansion of shelf space of two to three miles annually! This space must be climate controlled and maintained for the indefinite future. Said differently, the print book culture is affecting other aspects of the library's budget. In addition to space, there are significant personnel costs for managing a print collection. In short, the paper-based model for publishing entails a serious cost in part because of the need to own and maintain a local copy.

On the other hand, digital-based publishing is the ultimate form of 'compact storage'. And digital publications need not necessarily be bought and stored locally to be accessible (assuming that copyright issues are properly dealt with). Furthermore, with the advent of economically feasible on-demand printing, a user is not limited to on-screen reading. A document may be browsed online, and printed if, and only when, desired. For books that do not have a mass audience, the printing cost for a limited number of copies can be much less than if many copies are mass produced on a scale that exceeds the demand and then left unused in inventory.

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan, Avelar, Fleissner, Lashmet, Miller, Pike, Sitter, and Tatlock. 2002. The Future of Scholarly Publishing: MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Scholarly Publishing. [http://www.mla.org/www\\_mla\\_org/reports/pdf/SchlrlyPblshng.pdf](http://www.mla.org/www_mla_org/reports/pdf/SchlrlyPblshng.pdf)

### Proposal for Collaborative Solution:

1. **Cornell University Press:** The Cornell University Press, in addition to its current approach to scholarly publishing, could contract to publish monographs **online** for the faculty in the humanities. They would utilize the same level of care and rigor and same peer review procedures they now employ for books carrying the Press' imprint, but the expected endpoint would be a PDF file, rather than a printed monograph. The Press would retain first right of refusal (for a limited time) to produce a print version (subject to the usual contractual arrangements with the author) which would be published in addition to the open access digital version. This service would be provided to a college on a fee basis.
2. **Cornell Digital Print Shop:** The Cornell Digital Print Shop could develop an online link to DSpace, the digital repository used to house and distribute these digital book and much other digital material. This not-for-profit enterprise would price the production of print copies on a cost plus basis and provide shipping. Eventually a linkage with a national chain to handle on-demand printing locally at geographically dispersed locations may well emerge.
3. **Cornell Library:** The Cornell Library will manage the DSpace Digital Repository for the university. They will provide backup for security and will refresh the storage media as needed to assure longevity. DSpace will handle both archiving and distribution processes.
4. **Tenure and Promotion Issues:** In addition to providing communication among scholars, peer-reviewed monographs also serve as the coin of the realm for tenure and promotion in many disciplines. Ask the College of Arts and Sciences (administration and faculty) to make an explicit declaration for the benefit of young, tenure track faculty of the value that will be attached to online publication in connection with promotion and tenure. Specifically, the college should consider declaring that the intellectual content of a monograph will be valued the same regardless of whether it is printed or published exclusively online. This will be possible because the Cornell Press will use equivalent levels of care in producing books under the Press' imprint – regardless of whether publication ends with online distribution. The overall goal of this policy and practice will be to assure that tenure decisions can be linked to a monograph's intellectual worth, rather than its commercial value.

We will urge the major university presses to participate in this approach too to broaden the opportunities for publishing. Likewise, we assume that Cornell University Press will provide this service to faculty at other universities.