

## **General Faculty Meeting Speech, Thursday, January 6, 2000** **by Stella Anderson, Faculty Senate Chairperson**

Welcome. I want to cover several current Senate issues in some detail and also provide a brief update on a couple of the issues addressed in our Fall meeting. Andy Koch, Vice-Chair of the Senate will follow with information on upcoming faculty elections. Please note that we will then open the meeting for questions and comments.

I want to begin by covering some key changes in the *Faculty Handbook*. Last semester a question arose concerning the legal status of our *Faculty Handbook*. I think most of us have always assumed that the *Handbook* was a legally binding document. However, the Board of Trustees asked that our contract letters explicitly reference the *Faculty Handbook*, in its entirety, as part of our employment contract. It is important that faculty recognize that this change means that the *Handbook* is a legally binding document for all involved parties, establishing the rights and responsibilities of all involved parties.

As such, the Senate has the responsibility of ensuring that the policies and procedures contained in the *Handbook* truly reflect the values of an academic community, as well as mutually agreed upon minimum standards and procedures. The Senate has, for some time, been working, along with the Office of Academic Affairs, on a comprehensive set of revisions to the existing *Handbook*. It is our goal that these revisions will receive approval from the BOT in March and the BOG by the end of the term. At that point, these changes would go into effect -- the *Handbook* would then be accessed from the webpage until printed copies are available. Until that time, please note that the 1989 printed copy of the *Handbook*, by and large, remains in effect. There have been some changes made that are in effect -- you should have notices of these changes from the Office of Academic Affairs. In the interim, if you have any questions about current policy or procedure, please contact us.

Along these lines, the Senate has recently asked for an important addition to the *Handbook*, that is, a statement on Parental Leave benefits. We believe that the *Handbook* should make explicit past practice and what has been informal policy. Dr. Durham supports such leave, and faculty who have requested such leave have been given a semester of leave, with pay. He has then provided the funds for the department to hire someone to teach in that person's absence. While this has been past practice, our goal is to have a formal, written policy that establishes a minimum standard leave that faculty do not have to negotiate. I want to turn now to the issue of faculty workload. Last semester the Senate asked for a reduction in mandatory office hours and a standard, maximum 9-hour teaching load. Both of these proposals involved changes in the existing policy statements in the *Handbook*. Dr. Durham has indicated that he does not support the Senate's proposal on office hours and that he will recommend that the Chancellor not support the proposal. The standard 9-hour teaching load remains an open question.

As a result of raising these issues, discussions quickly became focused on the larger issue of total faculty workload. We approached the Council of Chairs and they have agreed to work on a joint committee on faculty workload. This committee is charged with examining any and all policies that affect workload. This is not a study of workload - we already know that overall workload is a problem. Indeed, the recently completed Faculty Quality of Life study attests to the overload issue. Any number of recommendations may emerge - we sincerely hope that, in the end, faculty will have a more realistic, manageable workload. In addition to the workload issue, we are concerned about the existing grievance procedures. As I mentioned in my remarks at the Fall meeting, the General Administration, in response to faculty concerns, established a Task Force on Internal Dispute Resolution. Dick Robinson, in appointing this task force, said:

"At some locations the programs apparently work well, to the mutual satisfaction of faculty and administration, as evidenced by the fact that usually the faculty hearing committees and administrators agree on the proper disposition of charges or complaints and there are few appeals from final administrative decisions to the boards of trustees and the Board of Governors. But at other locations it appears that there is a high level of dissatisfaction, as attested by frequent disagreements between faculty hearing committees and administrators and numerous appeals to governing boards."

Unfortunately, our experience has been such that we are in the latter group. As an update, at the November 19 Faculty Assembly meeting, the Assembly asked that the Task Force adopt the following principle:

"In accordance with the 1966 joint statement on university governance of the American Council on Education, the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities, and the American Association of University Professors, 'The governing board [board of trustees] and president [Chancellor] should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibilities,

concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be communicated in detail."

This statement operationalizes an important principle of shared governance. The aforementioned principle gives deference to the findings, conclusions and recommendations of faculty grievance committees. This should be a guiding principle for our grievance system. Unfortunately, in our case, rather than embracing this principle, the competence of the members of the Grievance Hearing committee has been questioned. This, however, is extremely difficult to defend since committee competence is only questioned when the committee finds for the faculty member.

This is, in many ways, a sad commentary. Nevertheless, that is where we are at this point in time. This is not a small matter - these procedures are there to protect all of us. We must have a system that is seen as fair, just and effective. As a community of scholars we are supposed to have this kind of self-regulating system. In the absence of deference for the faculty committee's findings and recommendations, we need to seriously consider the value of outside binding arbitration as an alternative means of resolving any case in which the Chancellor fails to concur with the Faculty Hearing committee.

Finally, last but not least, I want faculty to be aware of some issues related to the academic salary budget. We are concerned that a significant portion of money allocated by the State for salaries for Regular Term Instruction is being used to pay salaries associated with a number of different, non-teaching positions. Faculty should note that the university receives State appropriated funds for each teaching position, with the number of positions determined on the basis of Student Credit Hours generated. In fact, the State expects that only personnel directly involved in classroom instruction are paid from these particular funds. More importantly, our ability to provide needed classes and manage teaching loads is restricted when these funds are required to cover non-teaching positions.

The Senate has asked for a long-range plan to move all salaries of persons not teaching at least 1/2 time to more appropriate categories. Further, we have asked that salary money that is recovered in this process should then be applied to reducing course loads for faculty such that we achieve a maximum, 9-hour load (or equivalent).

Dr. Durham has already indicated his willingness to work on this issue. Let me give you one example of the impact of this issue. It has been the case that approximately \$800,000 from the academic salary budget has covered several coaching and development officer positions. This is down from over \$1 Million in coaching positions alone. An additional \$300,000 reduction is expected in the next year as a result of a small portion (that is \$25) of the recent student fee increase.

It is important to recognize that \$800,000 from the instructional salary budget equates to 14, if not 15, full-time faculty positions. And, unfortunately, this example only reflects a part of the problem - too many other non-teaching positions are currently being funded from the instructional salary budget.

These positions have, for some time, been funded with instructional salary money - without doubt it will take some time to acquire back the appropriate money to support classroom instruction. That is why the Senate believes that we must develop a long-range plan to accomplish this goal. We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Durham and others in addressing this issue. We must make progress in this area a priority if we want to maintain the integrity of the academic salary funds.