

Minutes of the Eighteenth Plenary Session of the
University Faculty Senate of the
City University of New York

December 15, 1970

The Chairman, Professor Robert S. Hirschfield, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in Room 207 at the Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street. All members were present except Professors Ausubel, Aufses, Barry, Behr, Dolciani, Donnelly, Gadol, Hale, R. Heller, Hickok, Hirschhorn, Kinsella, Papalia, Prince, Rosenfield, Sacks, Sealy, Seltzer, Shelley, and Silver. Dr. John Hose and Miss Miriam Firestone also attended.

- I. Minutes: The minutes of the seventeenth plenary session were unanimously approved.
- II. Communications and Announcements: The Chairman welcomed the following new members of the Senate: Professor Beryl Bailey, Hunter College; Professor Blanche Blank, Hunter College; Professor Wilfred Callender, Hostos; Professor Mary Dolciani, Hunter College; Professor Evelyn Handler, Hunter College; and Professor Ralph Ranald, Hostos. The Chairman also introduced Professor Norman Samuels, an Observer from Medgar Evers College.

The Chairman commented on the following developments: 1) BHE acted in principle to support the Senate position re: election of department chairmen; 2) the BHE deferred action on the question of student participation on P & B Committees, and Advisory Councils at the colleges; 3) BHE acted to grant representation to faculty and students on all special and functional committees of the Board; and 4) BHE acted to approve the Senate proposal for an Academic Review Committee at each college as contained in the Senate Statement on Faculty Excellence. The Chairman thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their efforts in preparing the Faculty Excellence Statement for presentation to the Senate.

III. Actions Taken:

1. Election of Vice Chairman of the Senate: In response to the Chairman's call for nominations, Professor Ralph Sleeper of Queens College was nominated and unanimously approved. The Secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for him.
2. University Baccalaureate Degree Proposal (distributed with two proposed resolutions from the Executive Committee): Following lengthy discussion of the matter it was unanimously agreed to allow the Executive Committee to revise the wording of the resolutions. It was further unanimously agreed that: 1) the matter be referred to both Faculty Councils and curriculum Committees at the colleges; 2) the Senate Undergraduate Affairs Committee consider the views of the Faculty Councils and report to the Senate; and 3) the Senate request the BHE to postpone action on the CUNY B.A. degree proposal until February.

The following resolution presented by Professor Sheila Polishook was adopted with one negative vote:

RESOLVED: That, the University Faculty Senate requests each of the Faculty Councils or faculties of the constituent units of the City University to

meet and consider the "Proposal for a City University Bachelor of Arts Degree" and Chancellor Bowker's August 27, 1970 statement, "The University Degree - Individualizing the Educational Process at the City University."

And further, that, the University Faculty Senate regards these proposals as matters of curriculum, the awarding of credit, and the granting of degrees which properly fall within the jurisdiction of the individual colleges, and empowers its Undergraduate Affairs Committee to serve as a clearinghouse and coordinator for the actions taken by Faculty Councils for presentation to the Senate.

Implementation of the above was referred to the Executive Committee.

Professor Nathan Schmukler moved that the Executive Committee be authorized to seek counsel and injunctive action if necessary, and that the Resolution be forwarded to the BHE. Carried with two negative votes.

3. Statement of the Faculty Interests Committee re: Tenure (distributed):
The Statement was introduced by Professor Edgar Roberts, Chairman of the Faculty Interests Committee. Following discussion the Statement was unanimously adopted with revisions as below:

In a university, appointment, reappointment, and the granting of tenure involve judgments of expert competence and teaching skills best made by colleagues of the candidate in question. For this reason, while the Bylaws of the Board of Higher Education reserve to the Board all final decisions, in fact, except in the rarest of cases, the Board has depended on the judgments of departmental and college committees for such professional judgments.

In light of recent "directives" from the Chancellor and indications from the Board itself that administrators and lay-members of the Board have begun to interpose their necessarily non-expert judgment on questions of tenure, it is the conviction of the University Faculty Senate that such non-expert interference in perhaps the most vital issue affecting the scholarly caliber of the University constitutes a totally unacceptable exercise of a function that must remain with the scholars active in the specific disciplines. The Senate rejects the imposition of all numerical quotas and insists that individuals be judged on their own merit and by colleagues in their own disciplines. The Senate points out that at no time was the faculty asked to advise and consent in the establishment of a quota system, nor did the faculty ever grant consent through any existing assembly representing the faculty.

The Senate demands the reappointment with tenure of:

- (1) all faculty so recommended by both their departmental and college-wide P & B Committees; and also
- (2) all faculty so recommended by their departmental P & B Committees, but denied tenure at some other level because of the imposition of a quota system.

And further, the Senate requests the reconsideration of cases in which the above-mentioned quota system entered into decisions, at whatever level, not to award tenure.

NOTE: This statement shall by no means be construed as support for persons who were denied tenure for legitimate reasons. The Senate supports the principle that all tenure decisions must be made on the basis of merit alone. The Senate believes that the unanimous recommendation of a departmental P & B Committee that is above suspicion with regard to its motives, for example, should be accepted as sufficient case of merit for individuals so recommended.

4. Resolution of the Academic Freedom Committee re: John Jay Case (distributed): The following resolution was unanimously adopted with a directive that a copy be sent to J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I.

RESOLVED: That, the University Faculty Senate commends and supports President Donald H. Riddle of John Jay College of Criminal Justice for his firm response to pressure from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the removal of a member of the John Jay faculty for critical remarks about the F.B.I. that he allegedly made in his class.

And further, that, by his actions and statements in defending a member of the faculty from unwarranted interference in the classroom, President Riddle has clearly demonstrated his proper leadership role and commitment to the ideals of academic freedom.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Virginia Staudt Sexton
Secretary