

# BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

## DIRECTORY OF POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy Number: III:01:01

Date: October 1983

Subject: By-laws: **Schools**, Departments, and Other Units

The faculty of Buffalo State College as a whole, as well as the faculty members of the principal sub-units such as instruction **schools** (e.g., Natural and Social Sciences), departments (e.g., Technology), interdisciplinary units (e.g., **Urban Studies??**) and other organizational forms (e.g., the Library) have, according to the *Policies of the Board of Trustees* (X.4), "...the obligation to participate significantly in the initiation, development, and implementation of the educational program." ALL SUNY colleges by mandate of the *Policies*, and such sub-units as may choose to do so, form bylaws to guide the way in which the faculty meet, deliberate, and advise either the chancellor of the university or the president of the college or their designees.

Questions arise from time to time regarding the role of bylaws in the total scheme of college governance, how bylaws are formed, what authority, if any, must approve them and if so by what process, and so forth. This memorandum is an attempt to answer some of these questions. (Because the BSC College Bylaws have been accepted by the college president and the College Council, they have become in effect official BSC policy. Except in the event of a change in the College Bylaws, the comments that follow do not apply to them. This memorandum is directed mainly at departmental and faculty bylaws).

1. Bylaws exist to facilitate and to guide the deliberative and advisory responsibilities of the faculty. They should cover such matters as: (a) membership and voting privileges, (b) officers and the delegation of authority to speak for the entire membership, (c) procedures for the calling and conduct of faculty meetings and elections, (d) standing and other committees, and (e) how the bylaws may be amended.
2. Bylaws cannot in themselves establish college or University policies. In keeping with this principle, bylaws should not enter into matters that are a part of, or even appropriate to, the collective bargaining agreement, nor should developmental or faculty bylaws conflict with, or infringe upon the jurisdiction of the University Trustees, the College Council, the College Senate, or the college administration as outlined in the *Policies of the Trustees*.
3. Faculty opinion and recommendations on College or University policies and procedures is, of course, vital to academic governance. Such opinion or recommendation—for example, on course scheduling, summer session assignments, reporting lines, formal evaluation of management confidential staff, \* grading policies, student disciplinary policies or procedures, and the like—should take the form of resolutions forwarded to the proper individual or deliberative body (e.g., dean, president, College senate, University Trustees) and followed up upon. College policy matters on which faculty wishes to go on record formally and until such time as the faculty positions is reversed or

rescinded might be conveyed most appropriately in standing resolutions. Such matters should not be incorporated in bylaws.

4. Bylaws that conform to the above principles do not need administrative concurrence, as such (except where bylaws call for a certain mode of administrative consultation with the faculty, in which case such provisions, by *Trustees Policies* (X.5.b), must have presidential approval). At the same time bylaws should be sent to, and “accepted by,” the appropriate dean and the vice president and president. “Acceptance” as used here means only the concurrence that the bylaws are, indeed, properly drawn with respect to the principles above and that they do not contain provisions in conflict with the *Agreement*, the *Trustees Policies*, or established college policies or procedures.
  5. Each dean, with the chairs, should review the total set of departmental bylaws to seek, over time, some reasonable conformity in style and content as well as avoidance of ambiguity or policy conflicts. The vice president, with the deans and established **school** representatives, should similarly review **school** bylaws to seek, overtime, some reasonable conformity in style and content and to eliminate any provisions in conflict with Trustees or college policy.
- \* Management confidential staff is evaluated according to policies and procedures established by SUNY Central and the Division of Budget. In addition, it is the policy of BSC for deans to be evaluated, generally on a three-year cycle, with input from the appropriate Schools and, on occasion, from outside consultant. It would be appropriate for faculty by-laws to include provision for the way in which the faculty input shall be gathered and transmitted to the vice president and president. **See *College Bulletin* October 21, 1982. ?**
- \*\* Bylaws for **Schools**, departments and other units will be available in the primary office of that unit.

Source of Information: **President’s memorandum, October 21, 1983**