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Any comments concerning the contents in *The University of Akron Chronicle*
may be directed to the Secretary, Mrs. Rose Marie Konet (x6510).

facultysenate@uakron.edu

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of October 7, 2004

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was held Thursday, October 7, 2004 in Room 201 of the Buckingham Center for Continuing Education (BCCE). Senate Chair Rudy Fenwick called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Forty-four of the sixty-four* Faculty Senators were in attendance. Senators Cheung, Schantz, and Shanklin were absent with notice; Senators Boal, Braun, Hanna, Hansen, Hixson, Huff, Johanyak, Kelley, Krovi, Lee, Linc, Lowther, Luoma, Slowiak, Soucek, Svehla, and J. Yoder were absent without notice.

(*There were sixty-four listed as senators at the time of the meeting; actually there are now only sixty-two.)

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – Chair Fenwick welcomed everyone to the University of Akron Senate and requested to make some minor changes to the Agenda. He first questioned how many people had received the Agenda through campus mail. Several persons indicated that they had; he then asked how many had not received the Agenda through campus mail. Several indicated that they had not received it. Chair Fenwick went on to explain that there had been some sort of problem with the campus mail distribution of the Agenda. He promised that we would check on this [with Printing Services].

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – The Chair explained that, with the large changeover in the Senate staff, the Minutes of September 2 meeting were not yet available for voting upon but that the *Chronicle* would be out soon.

III. SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS – Chair Fenwick asked for unanimous consent to switch his remarks with the special announcements and make the announcements first. No objections were indicated.

The Chair welcomed our distinguished guests that afternoon: Dr. Donald Demkee, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Akron. Mr. Demkee stood and was recognized. Secondly, he welcomed Sandy Coyner's class from Higher Education Administration. He then introduced two new Senators from the Associated Student Government: Senator Kushner and Senator Pirock.

Chair Fenwick reminded the Senators that, until Senator Konet and Linda Bussey were familiar with the Senate members, to please stand, identify themselves, and hold up their sign when addressing the Senate. He also asked the Senators sign one of the attendance sheets being circulated.

On May 20, Dr. Hui Tan, a retired professor from what was then the Department of Mathematics and Computer Sciences, passed away due to an accident. Dr. Tan, born in China, was one of the first group of Chinese students to come to the United States when China opened its doors 24 years

ago; Dr. Tan was also the first Ph.D. in Computer Science at Kent State University in 1986. From 1986 until his retirement in 1996, he served in the Department of Computer Science. He is survived by his wife, three children, a sister and his mother.

More recently, we heard about the death of Douglas Shaw, Associate Professor in Urban Studies. Dr. Shaw had taught at the University of Akron for 32 years. He received his degree from Brown University and University of Rochester in History. Dr. Shaw chaired many dissertation committees in PAUS and had much administrative experience at the University of Akron, including as Acting Chair in PAUS, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Interim Director of Environmental Studies Program in Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. He had also served in many capacities for Kent, the city in which he lived, in urban planning, environmental issues, and so on.

Chair Fenwick requested that those present rise to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of these two individuals. He then extended our condolences to the family and colleagues of Drs. Shaw and Tan, on behalf of the Senate and the University of Akron community.

On a brighter note, one of our colleagues, Mark Soucek, from Polymer Engineering, recently won a RadTech Award for Emerging Applications for his work in UV Curable Coatings here at the University of Akron. Dr. Soucek received a round of applause from those assembled.

IV. REMARKS OF THE CHAIR – This was the first Senate Address of Chair Fenwick. He related that while it was his fourth year on the Senate, he was still fairly new at this, especially when compared to some of the distinguished Senators who had been here since the start of the Senate. He thanked the Senate for this opportunity and honor and remarked how it was a very humbling experience to serve the University and community in the capacity as Chair.

In preparing for his address that day, he looked at the old *Chronicles* to see what comments Senators and Chairs had made at the beginning of the year for their colleagues, especially incoming Chairs. He was rather surprised to find that comments were the exception and not the rule. He humorously commented that the only common comments that Senate Chairs made in the past, was to make sure that Senators stand, hold up their signs and introduce themselves when speaking, as he had been reminded to announce.

He had read literature over the past few weeks on governance in higher education and on the role of Senates, mentioning specifically the Decision-Making Task Force Report and suggested that every member of the Senate should read it. He also commented on the exchanges from the Senate List Serve last week. Many of those items—on the Senate List Serve and the broader literature on the Senates and university governance—raised questions of the effectiveness of Senates in today’s climate in higher education. Some of the comments last week raised the question of whether or not we might be wasting our time, not just in the Senate but in the way it’s structured now. The Decision-Making Task Force Report did not say that this Senate is ineffective, but rather put it under the category of “needs work.” Chair Fenwick remarked that such an assessment was fairly vague and he knew no other organization that did not also fall under that category.

He posed the question: how could the Senate be made more effective? He said that it was clear that there was doubt, in our minds, in our constituents' minds, and the community's mind as to how effective the Senate could be. In response to this question, Chair Fenwick proposed several things to immediately address some minor issues, such as changing the rules governing the election of EC [Executive Committee] to make them less cumbersome and less "Pythonesque," after Monty Python. He saw this action as something that could be accomplished fairly quickly and easily.

In terms of more fundamental issues, especially concerning the committee structure of the Senate and its relationship to other decision-making entities on campus, they would need more time and more study and more discussion. To that end, he stated that the EC would plan to meet with Char Reed and the other authors of the Decision-Making Task Force Report, along with President Proenza and Provost Stroble, for discussion of ways to make the Senate more efficient.

Chair Fenwick related that, as he thought about this, he realized that the Senate was not always ineffective, but that there were instances where we have been very effective and have done very good work. He gave one example as the inclusiveness of this body, citing Senator Cheung's statements in the recent exchange on the Senate List Serve: "the one thing the Senate does is provide the clear single voice for faculty on most matters and almost the only voice for other constituencies on the University of Akron campus." The Chair went on to remark about the wide representation—democratic representation—of multiple constituents and that "this is really the place where everybody comes together. We're broadly democratic; we represent a multiplicity of interests. Because of that, we're able to address a wide range of issues that might not otherwise be addressed."

The second point he made as to our effectiveness, was "we are an open, public forum." He declared that the issues here were debated openly, the questions asked and answered openly. He continued that our deliberations and decisions were part of the public record and that our process in coming to those decisions was also part of the public record. "We can use that openness to keep issues alive. So, I think on those two points, this Senate is very effective."

The Chair posed the question: can we be more effective? He answered: "Sure." But how best to do this? He gave his opinion that an effective Senate must be strong, an idea that might hearken back to a return to the structure—or some of the structures—in place prior to August 2003. He mentioned Senator Erickson's Senate address from last May, where she stated that "what we need are elected, rather than appointed, members of committees" and that, "election brings an important independence and perspective; furthermore, it brings greater confidence to the constituencies that are represented by the members of the committees." Chair Fenwick stated that lack of a strong Senate would lead to a narrowing of voices that get heard, whether it only be a monologue among the most satisfied or complaints among the most dissatisfied, or a dialogue between the most and least satisfied; he continued that, without a strong Senate, many other voices could get squeezed out without being heard. He promotes a strong, democratically represented Senate, with democratic representation, and the other important decision-making entities at the University.

Additionally, the Chair cited that an effective Senate must be a *responsive* Senate and it must likewise be a *responsible* Senate. He encouraged the Senate to be ready to respond quickly to crises

faced by the University and so to just as easily or quickly respond to the issues or needs of our constituents. He claimed that our deliberations mattered because they were open and public, and, as such, we must take these deliberations seriously. Chair Fenwick remarked that, like most legislative bodies, the most important work was done in committees—“the grunt work”—though this was the work that we like least, but yet it would lay the groundwork for all that is later deliberated. He encouraged us all to take our committee work seriously, even if was boring. He continued that there was no guarantee that it wouldn’t waste time, but that if the effort was not made, “it’s really not worth it.”

Chair Fenwick went on to relate that we must facilitate the University of Akron programs and plans, but yet be deliberative about it. “We must deliberate and, when need be, be critical of programs and initiatives, but not be obstructionist about it.”

He mentioned Provost Stroble’s comments from the recent Convocation, where she ended with a call for partnership with the faculty, staff and students in order to achieve what she referred to as “our collective futures” in regard to the Academic Plan and Academic Primacy.

He paraphrased the quote, “most important, we need ‘buy-in involvement’ and support from faculty and other constituents in whatever initiatives the institution chooses in the future” and responded by saying that the Senate also sought partnership—“buy-in involvement” and support—something that could best be assured with early and continual *input* from all constituencies, early and continual *oversight* from all constituencies, and input and oversight through democratically-elected representatives. “There is partnership and there are structures that allow constituents and their representatives to initiate plans and ideas and not just react to them.”

The Chair shared that he had taken the opportunity to look at several dictionaries for the definition of ‘partnership.’ He related how the one common term of partnership was “sharing,” as in shared futures, as in shared governance.

V. REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

Secretary Konet reported that the Executive Committee met twice since the September Senate meeting, and once with the President and Provost. On September 21, the Committee discussed the problems that arose during the election process and, as a result, it was determined that some work was needed on that issue. She went on to state that the process for making changes to the By-Laws would be determined during the upcoming EC meeting. She invited input from the Senators on this issue.

Secretary Konet reported discussion of the October Senate meeting Agenda and reminded the Committee Chairs that each committee should submit their written reports to Linda by the Monday prior to the Senate meeting. This would then allow ample time for distribution via email as well as making copies for the meeting itself. Likewise, if a committee or individual had a motion to be

considered, they should also send those to Linda for circulation to the entire Senate at least seven days prior to the actual meeting. This, again, would allow ample time for review and preparation for discussion at the meeting.

The Committee discussed issues and concerns that members wanted to raise during the October 4 meeting with the President and the Provost, and following are the highlights of those topics and some of the ensuing discussion:

In discussion of the need for a new *Fact Book* (there have been no updates since 2002), Dr. Stroble reiterated that Sabrina Andrews had recently been hired as the new Director of Institutional Research and that she was making significant progress in pulling together the necessary data for publishing the new edition of the *Fact Book*. That project will focus around the question of: “how do we create a better understanding of what we’re doing to those outside of the University?” Secretary Konet related that the updated information to be published in the new *Fact Book* could help to express “who we are as a University.”

In discussion of the newly published Decision-Making Task Force Report, questions were raised about how we, the University, would use the information in that report and why some reports, such as the PBC and CFPC, were not included as appendices in the final report.

She reported that the Committee would meet with Char Reed and several other members of that committee to ask for further clarification on these questions. Since the report also referenced studying the Best Practices in other schools, the Committee would also be checking on that as well. Related to this, Dr. Stroble had stated that some of the recommendations made in the report were already underway and strongly urged that everyone review the report in more depth.

The Committee raised the question of when a representative from the AAUP would come to campus for a meeting and discuss issues raised by the August 2003 Board Actions changing governance structure and to discuss the broader issues of University governance. The President indicated at that time that he would not be scheduling a meeting with the AAUP representative and conveyed a sense that the meeting would be in conflict with the process of collective bargaining; as such, the issue was tabled for the time being.

The Information Technology Report was also recently released and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Provost announced that the search for a new VP of Information Technology would begin shortly and that the document itself would be used as a guideline for future planning of goals. This led to a brief discussion about the preparation of an Academic Plan; she indicated that an outline had been developed for the Academic Plan, but she would look for input from a broad base, from all constituents of the campus community.

A question was raised about the Faculty/Staff Dining Area. We were assured that a sign would be installed.

Concern was raised about a statement that was included in an article of the October 4 issue of *The Beacon Journal*. There was a brief paragraph about funding for campus facilities and the recent construction. Related to this, we have told students that their tuition monies were not being

used for that purpose but just that one brief little statement may have confused people. The President clarified it by explaining that the phrase “tuition revenue” included other fees and that actual tuition monies were not used for construction. We need to get the word out to the students on this.

Finally, Secretary Konet reminded the body that the Executive Committee meets regularly with the President and the Provost and if there were questions or issues to take forward, to please notify any member of the Committee (**Appendix A**).

Senator Lillie, a member of the Executive Committee, wanted to clarify a couple of points mentioned in the written EC report that was distributed at the beginning of the Senate meeting. The first clarification related to submission of motions under consideration. He stated, that was only “if you want somebody to think about it and to come prepared. If somebody needs to make a motion on the floor, that doesn’t mean that you can’t.” He wanted everyone to know that if a motion needed to be made, it was certainly acceptable without advance notice.

Secondly, he referred to the last sentence of the next to last paragraph (the last full paragraph on the first page of the written report) the “sense of the meeting” had nothing to do with the AAUP union, but rather it instead referred to the American Association of University Professors’ National Organization, the one founded by John Dewey in 1915. Senator Lillie felt strongly that this needed to be clear, especially since we [the faculty] have tried to maintain that distinction and clarity on such issues. In addition, he pointed out that, “the sense that the meeting would be in conflict with the process of collective bargaining is—correct me if I’m wrong—not the Senate Executive Committee sense; that was University Administration sense.” No additional questions or comments were raised.

B. Remarks of the President

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, colleagues and students. Dr. Demkee, thank you for joining us this afternoon; it is a pleasure to see you. Let me begin, Chairman Fenwick, by congratulating you on taking some time to reflect with all of us on the matters at hand and, in particular, the process of governance and shared governance/shared leadership. In that regard, I had some thoughts as I was listening to you. One is that it seems that our entire nation is occupied with worrying about some of these issues. Certainly I can assure you that every time I visit Washington, as I’m sure you observe by just reading the newspaper or watching the television, aspects of the U.S. Congress and other government agencies are in question. I can also share with you that the Inter-University Council and the funding commission struggles with these issues repeatedly and, quite frankly, often ask whether some of these entities are worthwhile and how we can revive them, how can we reinvent them. So, it’s well worth pondering.

As many of you know, I’ve been doing some reading and so I would commend to your attention in this domain, Mr. Chairman, two books that I’ve found particularly interesting and helpful in broad thinking. Many of you will recognize them; one of them is Fariq Zachariah’s *The Future of Freedom*, which was published a couple of years ago and has had a wide discussion/circulation and has a lot of interesting and provocative ideas. The other is a book you are probably not aware of; it’s

written by a British political scientist named John Dunn. The basic title in and of itself is intriguing; the title is *The Cunning of Unreason*. It certainly seems sometimes that much of what we're engaged in seems unreasonable and hardly cunning, but sometimes there is wisdom in these highly unreasonable things that we seem to do. So perhaps that will help for various things.

And if that doesn't help, go back to ancient Greece, and realize that when they talked about the Agora and the Polity. They were about trying to forge the many issues that we are about to forge; they refer to it under the concept of polity. Let's be candid, they didn't succeed and if we had all the answers, we wouldn't be arguing about these things. So, it's partly the human condition, I suppose.

Let me be somewhat more serious and in deference to my good colleague, I took my hat off. But thank you, Dr. Demkee, for providing this exceptional hat which I've enjoyed so, I'll put it back on!

I just have a couple of themes to talk with you about this afternoon. First of all, I invite you to again—because many of you were there today—join us tomorrow as we continue the celebration of the completion of this Landscape for Learning first phase. Today we dedicated the Student Recreation Center/Wellness Center and Field House and the Student Union. Tomorrow morning we will dedicate first the Student Services building, the Hezzleton E. Simmons Hall—appropriately named and approved—at 10:30, and the Honors' Complex shortly after 1:00. Two of these dedications will take place in front of their respective buildings. They are being tied together by a street fair at which time we are inviting not only the campus community, but the broader, greater northeast Ohio, particularly Akron, community. There were a good many folks in attendance today and we are expecting more tomorrow and more on Saturday. And so, again, please join in that absolutely glorious day. They have assured us that the weather will continue somewhat in the same fashion tomorrow, so get out if you can and join. If you haven't been in these buildings, please take a moment to do that. Tours of the new buildings are being provided as well as campus tours. The student University ambassadors are serving as guides in the process and you can see the landscape, the walkways, the terraces, the plazas, the gardens, and, of course, the buildings.

Let me also thank you for your attendance, many of you, at last Monday's Convocation. Chairman Fenwick reflected on the Provost's comments. I have already posted my remarks on the web and, I think, yours [indicating Provost Stroble] are also, so I won't belabor that. But let me just reiterate a point or two about the remarks that I made and the things that we are looking for in this year.

This has been a year that we can celebrate the physical transformation of our campus. And we've done so under this theme of "Coming Together," coming together in many quite different and literal senses. We are continuing the process of "coming together" in the academic year by focusing on two specific themes, which we've titled "Academic Primacy" and "Operational Excellence," themes that build on a great bit of work that we've done over the past six years. In particular, I want to remind you that we've, quite frankly, succeeded in many respects beyond our wildest dreams. The Trustees had asked us to do three things by 2006; we did many of them two years ahead of schedule—2004—the garnering of the Carnegie Classification, the designation for Excellence in

Teaching, we actually achieved last year and are continuing to participate in it. But there's so much more that we also achieved that it's well to reflect on that and the greatest, if you wish, external validation of that probably came, in my judgment, from the North Central Association affording us a full 10-year accreditation.

In case you weren't there, I just want to be sure to that you're aware of a couple of things. Academic Primacy has a number of elements to it; the Provost will discuss those perhaps today. If not, then later. But it is intended, quite simply, as a very bold assertion, that it is about the work that this University does as a faculty, together with our students and supported by our staff, that we are about. It was intended also to be boldly backed up by a five-year, \$10 million investment plan. We will be working with you as the Academic Plan comes together and, again, to make it specific that the Academic Plan will have budgetary consequences specifically in mind.

The second theme is one of Operational Excellence. Quite simply what we mean here is that we must begin to institutionalize the concept of total quality management and continuous quality improvement in our campus, along with the commitment to transparency of process and effectiveness and efficiency in all that we do. Very much, Rudy, a point of sharing that I think is implicit in your remarks. Continuous quality improvement, as most of you are aware, requires that we continuously ask three questions: 1) What is it that we do? 2) Who do we do it for? 3) How can we do it better? And you will recognize that the judgment of what it is that we do isn't one for us to make, but, frankly, for those that we make that service *for*, to provide us feedback. Implicit in that is, we are in service, first and foremost, to our students, but secondly very much in service to one another. We need continual feedback on that.

One of the fundamental aspects of Operational Excellence is that we strive to achieve a culture of service, not only to our students but to one another. Quality of service must increasingly be one of the elements in which we enable the University of Akron to differentiate itself from the competition, because many other student campuses have built fine facilities as well. I believe we have vastly exceeded what they were able to do, but now if we are going to be able to get ahead of the competition we have to do it, quite simply, on service.

And as I reflected, I think it bears on your remarks again, Rudy, Operational Excellence is also about improving communication and our systems of collegial shared governance or shared leadership as I have referred to the concept. Again, I think I've been very consistent and forthright in that regard. It is *all* of us that are part of this University that we call the University of Akron, and our decision-making processes must include appropriate consultation and effective communication in finding all of the vehicles that would help insure our success.

This brings us to one final concept that we discussed it with your Executive Committee. There is a great bit of work that we've done; it's time that we begin to bring all of that together and collectively decide how we're going to implement it. I don't believe that a single structure, a single committee, a single individual can have the magic answer. I think it is determining what it is that we want as our shared leadership/governance structures, making very effective use of it, but never

being afraid individually to float some other ideas because, quite frankly, often those ideas simply appear out of other people's work. We ought to be very open to that process and, quite simply, move to effectively work toward our future success collectively.

Let me close by, again, recognizing Dr. Soucek for his award but also sharing with you that another one of our colleagues, Carolyn Dessin, Associate Professor in the School of Law, has been elected Chair of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus Operating Committee, a position that will allow her to serve as a Trustee Ex-officio of the Musical Arts Association, which is the parent organization of the Cleveland Orchestra, Severance Hall and the Blossom Musical Festival. I hope you will join me in congratulating her when you see her.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to entertain one or two before I have to join somebody at four o'clock.

A question was raised by Senator Gerlach. He stated that we could all be gratified that the Senate's request "through the President to the Trustees" about restoring the Simmons name to campus has come to a nice fruition with the dedication of the new Simmons Hall. Senator Gerlach went on to inquire of the President, about the status of a similar appeal—one made at the same time as the Simmons request—about not allowing the Donfred Gardner name to disappear with demolition of the old Gardner Student Center. He commented that it seemed an easy enough matter that Gardner's name could be attached to the new Student Union, as he had been Dean of Student Services for so many years. President Proenza replied that this, as well as many other proposals, continues under consideration. He assured Senator Gerlach that the administration had every intention of honoring the Gardner name in some fashion on campus, but that it had not yet been determined how it would be done.

Senator Gerlach replied that, though happy to hear that, he believed that if a building had a name, it should be a building that perpetuated that name and "not anything else." He continued that there had been a number of other campus buildings that bore nondescript names indicating a direction or street, and suggested that perhaps one of those buildings (i.e. West Hall or Carroll Hall) could be renamed for Dr. Gardner. He went on to remark that his concern was for the ancient things and quoted an English prayerbook passage: "Remove not the ancient landmarks!...Cursed be he who removes his neighbor's landmarks!" Given the presence of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the gathering, Senator Gerlach said, "I abjure him that if he—he and the Trustees—tamper with these ancient landmarks, they are running the risk of Divine Curses!" So noted.

C. Remarks of the Provost

Good afternoon. I hope you picked up a copy of my outline; I always provide an outline for my comments (**Appendix B**). It helps me stay organized and within a do-able time frame and, I hope, gives the minute-takers some help in keeping track of what I discussed that day. It's a good archive for me, I know.

I also want to thank Chairman Fenwick for thoughtful remarks and I truly do mean what I say in those kinds of remarks and want to work in partnership. I have found the current leadership and past leadership wonderful partners in great collegial conversations about how we move forward on Academic Primacy and Operational Excellence. While we may not always agree on the best vehicles to enact a partnership, certainly my commitment doesn't waver. So if you see times that I'm wavering from that course and need to be brought back, I'm glad to have a partner do that for me and hope that you would respond the same. It's part of what partners do for each other.

As is our habit, I always bring to you employees who are in academic leadership who are new to our campus so that you can welcome them and they can be formally introduced to you. And so I welcome, today and bring for introduction, Dr. Patricia Nelson, Dean of the College of Education.

Dr. Nelson briefly addressed the group at this point, stating, "It's a pleasure to join the group, a group augmented by Academic Excellence and Divine Curses. I'm looking forward to joining you."

Provost Stroble continued: When Dr. Nelson was Associate Dean at Penn State, she was in charge of Outreach Technology, International Education. She's worked in many states and many institutions as a teacher/educator, also as a teacher and an administrator. She has had extremely positive success in receiving funding for research and service in the tune of several million dollars. In the College of Education, she certainly does understand what that college has been about and is willing to work very strongly in partnership with the college to take it to the next place. I was, of course, glad to be down to one job rather than two, so it's a good thing to have a new Dean of the College. Thanks for joining us today.

You can find on my website my comments from Monday's Convocation address. I think I mentioned in my remarks at the last meeting that we were in the process of updating my website and making it much more accurate and also more useful. We have accomplished that; I thank Nancy Stokes and the IT folks who have been very helpful in that regard. You will find on my website the entire organizational structure of all of the colleges that report to the Provost. You will also find an entire listing of the academic and research centers and institutes, so if you are curious what those centers and institutes are about, you will find the language there that is the approved university language for what centers and institutes do. You will also find archived the minutes of groups that I chair or that I co-convene, such as Council of Deans, Operations Advisory Committee, other groups, so that if you are curious about the nature of discussions, topics, action items out of those bodies, they are all archived there now for your use and reference. I hope that we will all find that useful. You will also find the Decision-Making Task Force Report, when we are able to make it more widely available. My perception right now is that we don't have an electronic copy; all we have is paper copy. As was mentioned in the Executive Committee Report, we plan to follow up with Char Reed and the members of that task force before we figure out what to do to roll that out more broadly. One of the things that I know the report recommended was that the kinds of conversations that happen in those bodies need to be much more communicative and transparent to the University community. In advance of us moving forwarding on what to do with those recommendations, I have retooled my website to try to make that happen, so I invite you to look there.

You will also find my comments, which included the flushing out of what I know now about how we'll move forward on Academic Primacy and Operational Excellence. I won't say much about Operational Excellence today except to note that the President and I will be appointing a task force from campus representation as well as community representation to help us use the information we have about where we truly *not* excellent in terms of operations. Operational Excellence buttresses Academic Mission. Academic Mission is weakened when we don't have operations in place that sustain the kinds of decisions that are made. The real test of that for us this Fall will be the planning and budgeting cycle. It's absolutely critical that the planning and budgeting cycle and those hearings are done in a truly operationally excellent way and that there are monies available to be allocated through that process. That's why you heard the President and I talk Monday about the Academic Investment Fund of \$10 million over five years where we will begin to infuse money into new faculty hires and additional operational support for units on campus that are aligned with components of the Academic Plan. Our overall mission is to provide access for students in the Akron area and Northern Ohio, many of whom are first generation college students, to high-quality post-secondary education and to develop research partnerships that further economic development and the knowledge economy in Northern Ohio. I am thankful to Vice President Roy Ray for saying that we would "work out how to make this happen." It will be challenging this year and in coming years because we know that the State economic outlook is bleak and we know that this is going to require some reallocation; we can't count on this all coming in the form of new dollars. So really it will be a challenge this year to make this work.

What I've already done is to meet with Council of Deans on Tuesday morning, after the Monday afternoon Convocation, to talk with them about the way in which they can begin to respond to my request that they think well how those additional dollars would be used, limited though they may be. The bulk of that money I will make available through the budget hearing process, because that's what the budget hearing process is about. I am willing to look at a small investment of money that can be made immediately available to enable some searches to happen this year. So right now I've asked the Deans to respond to me by October 19 with a very short list of: "if you had a few dollars right now attached to one of those two pillars of the historic legacy and mission of this institution, how would you request that they be spent?" So we'll see how that exercise works; I've cautioned the Deans to not give me their total 'wish list' for the next ten years because that only encourages disappointment, but to be rather realistic in their 'wish list' for me. I hope that you're engaged in your colleges in those kinds of conversations. And I know in many places that is what's happening, but I go public with it today that that's the process we're up to.

I will not talk a great deal about the next ongoing campus initiatives. I am using the *Prospectives from the Provost*—a weekly email newsletter that is going out—to give detail about these items and the email exchanges back to me as a result of those postings are very energetic and healthy and we're having great conversations, so that seems to be working. The one that comes out next week is about the budget planning process, so in that posting next week you'll get more detail behind how the budget hearings will work.

We do have a number of searches underway or soon to be underway in the University. One is in the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. Many of you know that Dean Creel has announced his

decision to retire at the end of this academic year. He has had a long and dedicated career. We have begun the search for a new Dean and Dean Nelson, in a reciprocal effort—because Dean Creel chaired the search to bring her here—will chair that. We have a search committee that was selected through negotiation and interaction with the chairs and faculty of the College; they have begun their work.

In University Libraries we are similarly doing a national search. David Baker, who's the interim dean, does not elect to be a candidate for that position. I have asked him to chair that search because he has the best network available of people nationally that we can attract to a pool of candidates. And, again, I negotiated and interacted with faculty and staff at the libraries to construct that committee.

You will also find on my website the IT Strategic Planning Report, which I presented to the last Board of Trustees meeting. They accepted that report. In that report there are guidelines for how we should compose the search committee to hire and recruit a Vice President for Information Technology, whose reporting line will be to Senior Vice President/Provost and Chief Operating Officer. I have not yet begun to appoint that search committee, but hope to soon with the expectation that this person would be in place by next spring or early summer.

There was one more question that came from the Executive Committee that I was asked to respond to today and that was the question about the delay in Spring [2005] registration and why there was not broader communication about the delay. I looked into it and we even looked back and did an archiving of the Email Digest from early last summer because the decision to delay was really made, I think, back in June or so based on when the schedule was made for PeopleSoft to go live. There was broad conversation with Deans, with people in my office, with people in IT, with some associate deans and I think what truly happened, as I've been able to sort it out, was that, while a lot of people knew about this, nobody thought to put out an email note. And so, I'm not sure that my office is responsible for not having gotten the word out, but I'm willing to apologize for it and say that this is clearly an instance where we were not operationally excellent.

Senator Lillie interjected here: "Will you accept a Divine Curse for that?"

Provost Stroble replied, "Yes, if the prayerbook covers that, I'll be glad to take it on. I've never had a problem apologizing for things when they don't go right, even if I didn't feel like I was personally responsible, but I can say that this one wasn't handled well. I have had conversation with Vice President Johnson and taken her recommendation that was made by the Executive Committee, which is: if you have a place on your website where these kinds of updates could be present as opposed to having to wade your way down through Registrar to find out what the deadlines are and what the registration dates are, and if these things are put out in email, which they should be, don't bury them in Email Digest. Make them sort of special alerts and also archive them on your website so that people can easily find anything that maybe appeared in the summer, but that you didn't really have to remember until October. Again, I think this was an occasion to have a good conversation about how we do something more systemic as a solution as opposed to solving this one particular problem. I'll be glad to take your questions.

Following the Provost's comments, Senator Erickson remarked that it was a pleasure to have Operational Excellence as one of the major issues; she added that over the past few years she had been concerned about the lack of that issue in various parts of the University. She stated that she first became aware of the issue as a result of reading material on the Balanced Scorecard and how well that process worked in bringing about Operational Excellence. She then asked whether or not the Balanced Scorecard for non-academic units was being taken into account and whether or not it would, in fact, involve the ability to interact with our clients.

Provost Stroble replied that in *Prospectives from the Provost* we would soon see those questions on the Balanced Scorecard addressed and fleshed out, even in that limited space.

Regarding the ability to interact with clients, the Provost replied, "...absolutely, because program review in an academic unit looks different than program review in an administrative unit." She continued that they had drafted a 'customer service survey' and would look at how other institutions had approached that as well.

Senator Erickson then asked to confirm that, as the Provost had mentioned in her remarks, information about the budget cycle would be disbursed in the coming week. The Provost confirmed this and stated that it would look very similar to what she shared with the Executive Committee earlier in the summer.

Senator Erickson said that she was glad that we would see that information, but echoed the Chair's comments that she would be much happier if we [the Senate] "were part of that process rather than only very indirectly" being involved.

Provost Stroble responded that it was created by the Operations Advisory Committee, the approved vehicle of the Board of Trustees that she was required to use. She continued that she intended to make that vehicle as robust as possible and yet remain consistent with the Board of Trustees' intent. She further stated, "All of us negotiate the conditions that we're in and I think that Operations Advisory Committee is proud of that product and I'm glad to share it with everybody next week."

Senator Qammar raised the subject of the proposed \$10 million initiative to be spread out over 5 years. She remarked that it seemed as though the initiative was primarily directed towards new faculty hires and she wondered whether, since this was to be emphasized within the budget, if there had also been discussion of the philosophy of creative means for continued faculty development as part of Academic Excellence.

Provost Stroble replied that she had not yet come up with the breakdown of how the funds will be used, but suggested that we review her remarks [from the Convocation] where she spoke about operational dollars that could be used to strengthen units that are consistent with the Academic Plan. She reaffirmed that she plans to continue investment in the Institute of Teaching and Learning and in Inclusive Excellence efforts, stating that these were the kinds of things that could be used to develop the talents of the current faculty to be successful in their own work. She again confirmed her commitment to that. She did, however, add, "I don't know whether this fund alone will be my source for doing that or other funds that I have available to me."

Senator Witt then addressed the Provost, and first reminded her of his ongoing difficulty in understanding the concepts of Balanced Scorecard and Academic Primacy. He continued on that these new ideas sounded as though they were something the faculty would like to support, but asked the Provost if she could, in the next few weeks or months, show him how he could help the faculty to understand how "...they should get behind these ideas in fairly concrete ways." He remarked that he had been at the University of Akron a long time and, in the period "we've had lots of new stylized ideas and sometimes they never go much farther than that." He wanted to make sure that these ideas [Balanced Scorecard and Academic Primacy] were not just another new fashionable idea. He hoped to find "some real concrete ways" for the faculty to feel good about the job that they do. He expressed his belief that this was part of what the Provost was asking them to do, but also added that he hoped she could explain to the faculty the extent to which they should be directly involved in these initiatives.

In response, the Provost again suggested that first everyone read her comments from the recent Convocation, available on the website. She explained that this was the preview of the outline of an Academic Plan. She added that this was the one document we haven't had here since 1998. She explained how this outline was developed, after she went back to the 1998 Master Strategic Academic Plan, and combined this with new data gathered from the Deans and Colleges, along with Balanced Scorecard documents and many other available documents. Related to this, she has asked the Deans to provide her with their own College documents of where they are headed within the next five years. She went on to explain that the outline presented at the Convocation was just "the bare bones" of topics to be fleshed out and presented in the final form of the Academic Plan. "The next piece, for me, is to go back now and flesh that out and to have something a bit easier for people to react to and respond to, because right now you just get the topics—you don't get much meat behind it." She further stated that she planned to create processes by which faculty should respond, to say: "good idea," "change this," "think about this," "we've left this out." She thought this is where our real involvement could help, especially since the Academic Plan would be the guiding principle for everything we do within the next three to five years: how those budget dollars would be reallocated in the planning and budgeting cycle, what we would do in terms of governmental relations work, how we would think in terms of facilities. She emphasized, "This document and everybody's feedback and ownership of it will be critical to faculty feeling that they are part of where we go in the future." She further stated that this document, as it is developed through feedback this Fall, would then go to Board of Trustees for their reaction and their approval. "It's critical that we all be in the same place and heading in the same direction." She again stated that the first tangible step in this direction is to read the [Convocation] comments; the second would be to participate in the forums that she will create "especially through already elected and appointed committees." Her plan will include open forums in which to participate in those vehicles "to help us get a plan that we can all support."

Senator Witt again stated his concern that the faculty know that they will have an opportunity to do just that. Provost Stroble responded, "...I think it just comes down to each one of us and whether you believe that, when I say I will create that forum, I will. And I guess you just have to wait and see if I'm true to my word, but I plan to be."

Senator Steiner expressed his pleasure about the Provost's plan for Academic Excellence and the funds that are planned for it. He inquired about the challenge of coming up with budget dollars to fund this initiative, especially in light of the current economic climate, and asked for her comments on that aspect of the project. Provost Stroble declined to comment on this at that gathering, stating, "That's something that I think that is going to bear quite a bit of study for us. What we did confirm with Vice President Ray on Monday morning was that he felt that this was a conservative enough figure to go with. So I think we've just got to work out the details."

Senator Qammar recalled that two years ago, on the old PBC [Planning and Budget Committee] there were sheets given out with details about the projected ERIP payoff. She stated that we were coming up on that time when ERIP should be paid off and asked if the Provost and Vice President Ray had talked about that and if any of those ERIP funds might be included in this \$10 million.

Vice President Ray was given permission by the body to address this inquiry, stating, "I can't give you the exact details about when it is paid off, but the way we structured the ERIP program, there's a chance that some of those dollars could be used for what we're talking about. We have to go in and analyze where all the potential resources are. Obviously, you are building this into the budget on a permanent basis; we have to somehow find permanent dollars. We worked on this on Monday and we will hopefully start the budget process and have a plan in place for generating those dollars. It may include some ERIP resources."

Senator Lillie also remarked that he was glad to hear that the Provost wanted the faculty to be involved in this kind of activity for Academic Primacy. He added that one of the truisms among faculty is that "service doesn't count for much in the large scale." He expressed his belief that while the Provost didn't necessarily believe that, he thought it was the kind of message that, if the input of the faculty was going to be valued, "...it might be helpful if Deans, and Chairs and others were given the clear unambiguous message that this is an important task for some faculty who may be involved and it's not just something that they do on top of everything else. It must be clear that this is a valued part of what we do as faculty besides teaching and research, but the service and involvement in the Academic Plan is also valued. I think that simply due to the typical academic environment, that's not always clear." He expressed his view that the Provost was trying to make that clear, but just wanted to clarify that point. Provost Stroble responded to Senator Lillie's comments by stating, "...helping to craft the Academic Plan is a teaching and a research endeavor as well as a service in my book."

Senator Covrig addressed the Provost by stating that he had been a Senator for a couple of years and that, though we have spoken about empowerment, he felt that perhaps there might be a structural problem in the way we transformed ideas into policy. He went on to suggest that perhaps more focus groups could be used to generate ideas and suggestions, but that these groups should take place in a more loose environment, outside the bargaining unit—"just a place to generate, because you can generate ideas from the oddest places. Janitors are known to see things that others don't and that is separate from the idea of actually taking ideas generated and eventually making them into policy." He then encouraged his fellow senators and the administration to separate those some-

times, though we sometimes wanted to group them. He continued, “We don’t have to brainstorm and decide the same day; you don’t even have to be a legally recognized group to generate ideas that might be useful long-term to actually inform policy.”

Provost Stroble responded by stating that she agreed and that this is part of what she learned last year. When she had been called upon to meet with groups, to make remarks, she would sit at a table with people for lunch or dinner and would get some great ideas. She stated that such ideas perk along and something happens to them later on, although this wasn’t “a forum that’s called particularly for the purpose of getting you to a document.” She further explained that she thought we would find that lot of what was in the Academic Plan had that as its roots. She expressed that those kinds of interactions happened around the Student Union and other kinds of places, and she thought they were good things.

The Provost reaffirmed her desire to be partners in this process and “casting as wide a net as possible. Because I think that the structures are enormously helpful, but they are not all that is helpful.”

Senator Hebert addressed the Provost, recalling that several times at the Convocation she had mentioned forging a partnership. He affirmed that there was nothing more that the faculty would like than to be partners, particularly with the University administration. However, he also mentioned that, on the other hand, he didn’t feel that she could expect to forge a partnership with the way the faculty was being treated at the bargaining table. He expressed his uncertainty as to whether this was an appropriate place to say this to her, but clarified that these remarks were not directed to her personally, just at how the faculty had been treated at the bargaining table.

Senator Hebert went on to say, “...I think it’s going to diminish the chances of success unless the faculty are treated a more respectful way at the bargaining table, and, quite frankly, I don’t see this happening at the present time. I would wish that an initiative like this would turn around so that the faculty could get involved, could become a true partner, but I think it’s going to take movement, quite frankly, on administration’s part at the bargaining table to help that happen. And I’m hoping that you could see fit to influence what’s going on there since you sit at the table.”

Provost Stroble expressed her reluctance to comment on that in this forum, except to state that she would not characterize treatment of the faculty [at the bargaining table] in exactly the same way that he had, though she was actually present at the table. She remarked that everyone certainly had a right to his/her own perspective, yet believed that it was still possible to have honest disagreements and positions about topics that are being discussed at the table, to advocate strongly for a difference in perspective, both on the part of AAUP and on the part of the administration team, while remaining “great, respectful partners.” She explained that this was the way she approached the issue, yet understood that it might not be the way everyone viewed the dynamics of the situation.

Senator Stachowiak raised the topic of trying to get the Student Wellness and Recreation Center fees lowered, reduced or totally dropped for faculty and staff usage. He referred to the fact that our

healthcare benefits—paid by the University—would be lowered substantially more than what faculty/staff would be charged for using those facilities. He asked if there was any possibility that the Provost could review what was currently being paid by the number of people using the facility (i.e. faculty and staff) and what he felt were exorbitant rates they were charged. He expressed his belief that if the rates would be reduced to the point where people were encouraged to go, the University would then benefit from lowered healthcare costs, which the faculty and staff are required to pay more of each year. He suggested that perhaps a rebate of some choice dollars might be offered for use of the facility.

Provost Stroble restated what she believed his question to be: “Now that we have some data about patterns of usage...could we reexamine the cost?” She responded that she would certainly ask Vice Presidents Ray and Johnson to do that.

Senator Erickson commented that she understood the Provost to say that in the process of setting this Academic Plan, she would go through but not be constrained by the elected committees that were involved in this kind of plan. The Senator then pointed out that because we no longer have a proper planning committee, the Ad hoc Planning Committee was the only remaining elected planning body appointed by the Senate, so it would be the one to look at some of those issues. The Provost replied that this would come to the Executive Committee and she would then expect the EC to assist in determining which places within the Faculty Senate structure they wished to share it.

D. Well-Being Committee – Senator Erickson reminded the body that a copy of the Well-Being report was available as a handout (**Appendix C**). She commented that the issues raised by Senator Stachowiak (related to faculty/staff fees for using the Wellness Center) were under discussion by the Well-Being Committee. She went on to report that the Well-Being Committee met once in October and was attended by both Vice President Ray and Mr. Foster to discuss information on continuation of the 2005 coverage of Summa Hospitals by Medical Mutual PPO. She stated that Desnay Lohrum, Director of Benefits Administration, would try to work out the details by the end of October, since the deadline for enrolling in next year’s coverage was coming upon us rather quickly. Senator Erickson also added that the University was in negotiation with parties to reinstate our Medical Mutual PPO for the coming year and for Summa Hospitals to be back in the plan. She continued, “It’s not a problem for the physicians’ part, because 95 percent of the physicians are listed for both, so the PPO is not going to be affected in this respect.” She also remarked that we were not alone in this objective that the City of Akron, the Akron Public Schools, and others were all in the same situation. She was hopeful that this would help our negotiations and was told that these issues were under negotiation but it would be at least the middle of the month [October] before anything would be finalized.

Senator Erickson shared that the Committee would look at/review some continuing issues, including that of the Wellness and Recreation Center. The Director of the Wellness/Recreation Center was to attend the next meeting. Plans were also underway to discuss the issue of the Natatorium, which is currently free.

Additionally, she reported that the Committee was working on the issue of childcare and had received some real support from Vice President Johnson on this. On the issue of drop-in childcare, Senator Erickson stated that the committee will distribute a survey to the right students, the ones who “need this kind of thing.” She announced that the next meeting would be October 20 and invited anyone—faculty, staff or students—who might want to attend.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – (none indicated)

VI. NEW BUSINESS – Senator Witt made a suggestion that while the “new and improved Faculty Senate” took root, it should consider close review of the website. He was concerned that much of the information there is out of date. He was hopeful that having a really nice website—“a presence on the web”—would be infectious and that it would result in the University’s website becoming more user-friendly. Chair Fenwick responded that the EC would take this under advisement.

Senator Kushner raised the issue of restructuring that has begun in the Associated Student Government. He reported that the method of representing the undergraduate student body is under review and that they have planned many changes in order to do this more effectively. Related to this, the Senator mentioned that the ASG is interested in expanding the number of seats—from two to four—that is held on the Senate in order to more effectively represent the over 20,000 undergraduate students that currently attend UA. Senator Kushner suggested that this could enable the ASG to serve on more committees and thereby provide more effective feedback for the faculty.

He shared plans for distribution of the proposed ASG Constitution via the Faculty Senate List-Serve in order to get feedback as they write their By-laws. He added that they hope to represent the Colleges to assist the faculty and benefit the students. Finally, he invited the Senators to share their ideas in this process.

Senator Stachowiak brought up the issue of the campus bowling league that had “been in remission for two years since we didn’t have a bowling alley on campus.” The league has been revived and is growing. He invited anyone interested to join them on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. in the Student Union bowling alley. The cost would be \$10, since it would not be a sanctioned league. He said it would be a good experience and added (humorously) that, “...we’ve fixed every single problem that this University has at least three times in that bowling league!” The league plans included a membership drive in October, the first half of the season in November/December; in January/February/March the league would have the second half of the season with a bowl-off and donated prizes at the end of the season. The league would be open to all faculty and staff; the team members would be allowed to rotate since many people lead such a busy life.

VII. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER – Senator Gerlach raised the topic of the amount of time it took to get through the agenda and that, if we had more committee reports to hear, we would be hard-pressed to finish on time. He suggested that, in the future, we must watch for time limits on oral presentations. Chair Fenwick commented that the point was well taken.

Senator Gerlach reminded the Senate that there were four standing rules of this body, which date back to 1993. The first is:

The Executive Committee may appoint non-senators to Senate committees provided that the majority of each committee be senators.

He further commented that rule three states: *The Chair of the Senate will call upon only the committee representatives who have previously indicated a need to report and oral reports are to be limited to five minutes.*

He continued, "I suggest that some *other* reports that are made to the Senate that are not committees also be limited to some degree."

His next remark dealt with outside visitors, and referred back to the first year of the Senate, when he was Chair. That rule was: "when permission to speak had been granted, all guest speakers and external constituents are limited to five minutes for their remarks." Senator Gerlach concluded by looking to the future, when the Senate could be hard-pressed for time enough to conduct all of the business. He suggested that we enforce this five-minute limit.

With that, Chair Fenwick thanked Senator Gerlach for his remarks and thanked the students for attending today, commented that he hoped it was an educational experience for them.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – A motion to adjourn was made by Senator Wilkinson and seconded by Senator Erickson.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Transcript prepared by Linda Bussey

APPENDICES TO MINUTES
OF
FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF OCTOBER 7, 2004

APPENDIX A**Executive Committee Report
Submitted: October 7, 2004 Faculty Senate Meeting**

The Executive Committee met twice since the September Senate meeting and met once with the President and Provost.

On September 21, the committee discussed the problems that arose during the election process at the September meeting. It was recommended that the by-laws be reviewed and that the rule statement regarding majority votes be amended and clarified. The best procedure for accomplishing this will be determined during the next committee meeting.

The next item of discussion was the agenda for the October Senate meeting. The chairs of each committee are asked to submit their reports if they have one, to Linda, by the Monday prior to the Senate meeting. Any motions being submitted for consideration either by a committee or an individual should be sent to Linda for circulation to the entire Senate at least seven days prior to the next meeting.

And finally, the committee discussed the issues and concerns that members wanted to raise during the October 4 meeting with the President and Provost. Following are the highlights of the topics and the ensuing discussions.

With respect to the need for an Updated Fact Book, (the last one was published in 2002) Dr. Stroble reiterated that Sabrina Andrews had recently been hired as the new Director of Institutional Research and that she is making significant progress in pulling together the data needed for reporting back to the state as well as preparing for the next issue of the fact book. The work is being focused around the question of how do we create a better understanding of what we're doing to those outside of the university?

At the last Senate meeting an announcement was made that the Decision Making Task Force report had been published. Questions were raised about how we, the university, are going to use the information in the report and why were some reports such as PBC and CFPC not included as appendices in the final report. The committee is planning to go back to Char Reed, the chair of the committee, to ask for further clarification on these questions. The report also references studying best practices at other schools. Dr. Stroble stated that some of the recommendations made in the report are already underway and strongly urged that everyone review the report further. As part of this discussion, the committee also questioned when a representative from the AAUP would be coming to campus for a meeting to discuss the issues raised by the August 2003 Board actions changing governance structure and to discuss the broader issues of university governance. The President indicated that he would not be scheduling a meeting with the AAUP representative at this point in time. There was sense that the meeting would be in conflict with the process of collective bargaining.

The Information Technology report was also recently released and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Provost announced that the search for a new VP of Information Technology would begin shortly and that the document itself would be used as a guide for future planning of goals. This led to a brief discussion about the preparation of an Academic plan. Dr. Stroble indicated that an outline has been developed and that she would like see wide input from all constituents of the campus community.

Moving on to other issues, a question was raised about the sign for the Faculty/Staff Dining area. The president indicated that a sign would be posted shortly.

And finally, some concern was raised about a statement that was included in an article in the October 4th issue of the Akron Beacon Journal regarding the new campus construction and how it was being funded. We have all been telling students that the funds for buildings were not coming from their tuition, however, the article stated the “Funding sources for the other buildings are state money, gifts to UA, tuition revenue and parking and dorm fees.” The President explained that the phrase “tuition revenue” includes other fees and that actual tuition monies were not used for construction.

Just a reminder that the Executive Committee does meet regularly with the President and Provost and if there are other issues or question that you would like the committee to take forward, please contact any of the members.

Submitted by Rose Marie Konet, Secretary of the Faculty Senate

APPENDIX B

Report of the Senior Vice President and Provost

Faculty Senate Meeting

October 7, 2004

Introduction: Dr. Patricia Nelson, Dean College of Education

Themes of Convocation Address: Next Steps

Academic Primacy

Operational Excellence

Ongoing Campus Initiatives: A Selection

Institute for Teaching and Learning

Inclusive Excellence: A New Framework for Diversity

Transfer Articulation Guides

Searches

Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences

University Libraries

Vice President for Information Technology

APPENDIX C

**REPORT OF WELL-BEING COMMITTEE TO SENATE
OCTOBER 7TH, 2004**

The Wellbeing Committee met once during September. This meeting was attended by Vice President Ray and Mr. Sidney Foster to give us information on the continuing issue of 2005 coverage of Summa hospitals by the Medical Mutual PPO.

They reported that an internal disagreement between Summa and MMO has led to a situation in which Summa hospitals are not included in the Medical Mutual PPO. However, the University of Akron is at present in negotiation with the parties to put back that coverage for our Medical Mutual PPO for the coming year. The university has hired a lawyer, John Childs, to be in charge of the negotiation, with Sid Foster, Desnay Lohrum of HR and Steve Likovich of Watson Wyatt, our health insurance consultant. They are encouraged by their discussions to date, but the negotiation is still on-going. They are hopeful that it will be complete by mid October, in time for the open enrollment for 2005 due to start at the end of October.

Vice President Ray noted that the University of Akron was not the only large group trying to solve this issue: the City of Akron, Akron Public Schools, First Merit, STRS , PERS were all affected. This constituted a large group also wanting to solve similar problems. They also noted that the problem only related to the Summa hospitals, because 95% of the doctors had joint hospital privileges.

The Committee also reviewed several continuing issues, notably Wellness and Child Care. The Director of the Recreation and Wellness Center will attend our next meeting, at 8:30am, October 20th, to review the continuing use of the Natatorium and Wellness programming issues. All are welcome to attend.

The Chair reported on the Child Care meeting she had attended, initiated by VP Johnson. A group which included Wellbeing, the Chairs, Summit College, Adult Focus, ASG and the Child Development center were again investigating this topic. The major issue seems to be drop-in child care, although other aspects of child care are being reviewed. The group is developing a survey for students, and investigating space and licensing problems.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Erickson
Chair, Wellbeing Committee