

Remarks to the Senate: Chair J. Paul Robinson, Nov 19, 2012

I had a great deal of difficulty in preparing for today's senate meeting. At the outset, let me say that what I am going to say today caused me some anguish and a lot of internal conflict. You have given me the privilege of serving as the senate chair for one year. It is not much time and I have tried my best to follow the footsteps of my colleague Professor Levy and focus on issues that I believe have a direct impact on how well we as faculty are able to achieve our goals of high quality education and discovery.

Having said that, it is true that we are fundamentally much better when focused on our specialty than we are poking our noses in other people's business. I don't think any one of the faculty in this room would argue that we are more comfortable doing our jobs of teaching and research than we were hired to do as professors – we like what we do, we are generally good at what we do and that resonates in the quality students we graduate and the outstanding discoveries that make Purdue well represented around the world.

But what if it could be better? Do you ever ask that question? What happens if we hire faculty that we think don't make the effort or don't have what it takes to be a successful tenured professor at Purdue? We self-select as faculty by cutting those faculty from our ranks. This is not a top down issue. The leadership rarely, if ever changes a faculty decision to not tenure someone. By doing this after 4 or 5 years, we try to establish a decent length of time to see if someone is doing what we expect and is successful in all the things we evaluate. The fact that we always have faculty openings is indicative of the continuous flux that the tenure process operates under. In fact, almost every tenured faculty member on this campus participates in tenure evaluations every single year. This keeps the process fresh in their minds, it reminds us of the standards we establish and it also reminds us of our obligations to strive for excellence ourselves, particularly when we make a decision to vote down a colleague for tenure.

I remind you of this for two reasons. At the last senate meeting I threw out a challenge to the administration that administrators who do not perform should not be kept. I also suggested that the excessive growth in administration was not a good thing for Purdue. This perspective was highlighted in an article this past **week in Bloomberg news that I hope** some of you saw [<http://tinyurl.com/akewywx>] – I can say that the overwhelming response I received from around the nation was one of “keep it”. I received emails from parents who want their children to come to Purdue, from venture capital managers in New York, to billionaires who run large foundations and all want to know how can they help. That conversation will continue and I predict will at some point become such a hot issue that even Purdue administration will simply have to do something. But don't count on it. (See in the Appendix some additional insights into administrative blight as well as current investigations at Penn State and other universities in Appendix 2). You would be amazed at how much arrogance is embedded within many of our administrative units – they don't see it as arrogance I might add – they see it as “*just doing their job*”. **Even the Journal & Courier weighed in with today's editorial** [<http://tinyurl.com/bvyu686>].

I really don't know how to approach the issue. But hidden under the weight of administrative might are layers upon layers of people who consider themselves the arbitrators of faculty governance. When I use

the term faculty governance, I think many people actually think that faculty have a say in much of the policy of the university. Actually, it's the opposite. Faculty may pass the rules that are in fact heavily used against them, but those rules are almost never used against administrators. Let me give you some examples. I start by going back to an earlier senate meeting - one from 1989 in fact, - and in a report to the senate by the Vice president for Academic Affairs (now Provost), it was clear that the predominant impact **of harassment was faculty harassing graduate students.** I think faculty are now the ones under attack.

We need to have your help in eliminating harassment. The charges and the allegations of harassment always involve a faculty member harassing a graduate student. It is the faculty that must be attentive to this. Please be willing to come forward and join us in doing something about this grave matter. Assistance in encouraging minorities to participate in Purdue graduate programs is also a matter which involves each of us. Again, you are the people who make the decisions; you sit on the admissions committees. If we continue to set the standards at such levels so as to preclude minority students from coming to campus it will do no good for any of us to engage in recruitment activities. In the past years, we have brought literally dozens and dozens of students to this campus as part of our program to work with minority universities, but it does no good to bring them to campus and then have a very large proportion of them rejected for admission. If we wish to recruit minority students something is going to have to give with respect to our heavy reliance on the graduate record exam as the sole or major criteria. These students often have high grade point averages and very fine letters of recommendation but they can't get past the screening and the admissions committees within your own departments because of the GRE emphasis. Finally, the issues I have brought before you today must be addressed rather rigorously and vigorously by the academic faculty, by department heads, and by deans. I shall request of the academic vice president that at a forthcoming retreat of the academic officers of the University that we seek ways in which we can get programs underway to improve the situation for the graduate students at Purdue University.

From Purdue University Senate Minutes Report 89-10, 23 April, 1990 by Robert I. Ringel

I quote from an article in yesterday's Columbia Daily Tribune ¹. *"In the 1990s, the MU Faculty Council challenged the grievance process, noting that of 32 faculty-filed grievances, the faculty lost all of them. The process always allows the administration to have the final decision. Subsequently, only minimal improvements have been made in the process, and only a rare judgment supports the faculty."* This is a quote from the Chair of the MU senate Professor Adelstein.

Let me give you a quote from the Chair of the Purdue Senate. *"The grievance system at Purdue University is just as bad as MU. It is totally controlled by administrators, and I suspect that the ratio of faculty success is similar to MU. If there were one process at this institution that is broken, it's the inability of faculty to protect themselves against administrative might"*

The very process is so cloaked in secrecy that it is impossible to know how things operate and who is following the rules. I can say this about Purdue's grievance process. There is a tendency to follow certain rules to an absolute when it is administratively desirable to do so. However, I have multiple examples of what I will say is "administrative abuse". Insistence for example, on faculty submitting, and responding

¹ <http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/2012/nov/18/mus-administrative-culture-is-toxic/>

to the deadline within the policy requirements – but administrators frequently not abiding by those same rules – in fact just giving themselves the right to ignore them. That sort of power is abuse.

I have a number of documented examples. My colleagues in the AAUP do an outstanding job in trying to work with faculty who have problems with the administration. But despite this, Purdue administration is like a brick wall. In the last year, I carefully monitored several cases and I was shocked at the actions of members of this administration. At a time when this university was going through serious financial difficulty, where in every department we were down to the last penny or less... this Purdue administration freely spent money on outside law firms at an astounding rate. In a single case, the costs alone exceeded \$500,000 –including additional associated direct expenditures of over \$300,000 and untold hours of administrator’s time.....This was only one case of several this past year. I have requested using FOI (freedom of information), all the legal costs of cases involving faculty. While I have only received a partial response to my request made 8 weeks ago, it is pretty clear that there is an embedded philosophy within the Purdue administration that they have an open checkbook if they want legal advice. Faculty have no such option. In one case, the university hired three law firms simultaneously. Clearly there is a problem at some level in this administration, I am not sure where it is, but there is a serious problem and it is one of administrative judgment.

There seems to be a philosophy that you don’t have to take responsibility if you are an administrator. From where did this concept come? It certainly was not there 20 years ago when as a faculty member, as just an ordinary professor, I had access to all of the senior administrators on the campus. Today, with the huge increase in administrative positions, there is a gap between faculty and leadership. We maintain relationships at the college level, but it seems to have dissolved at the university level.

It gets worse when this interferes with the academic process. We have even resorted to having outside consultants come in to create strategic plans for one of our centers.....can you imagine that Purdue paid \$12,000 for a total outsider to come in, interview faculty, and then write a strategic plan for a Discovery Park center – and then the leadership had the gumption to submit that plan as the centers strategic plan with minor modifications?

Visibility and Accessibility

Goal: The BBC is recognized campus-wide as a catalyst in fostering crosscutting research collaborations and state-of-the-art technologies to improve the human condition.

Objective (1): Establish faculty advisory groups for core operations and the facilities' strategic direction. (H)
Who: Richard

Potential Strategies: (See previous strategies for core operations)

Objective (2): Enhance partnerships with academic units. (H)
Who: Richard and Bindley Strategic Planning Task Force (consider new name)

Potential Strategies:

- Conduct discussions of strategic plan to academic units.
- Identify Bindley point person for each academic unit.

Objective (3): Increase accessibility to faculty and promote their participation. (H)
Who: Bindley and Center for Cancer Research Reps

Potential Strategies:

- Create and implement a campus-wide communication strategy to promote the Bindley's capabilities in partnership with the Center for Cancer Research.

Objective (4): Increase the translation of research. (L)

A strategic Plan for a research institute developed by a consultant? Purdue standards slipping.

Doc. Type : ER (Vendor Invoice) Parked Document
 Doc. Number : 1900624057 Company Code PUR Fiscal Year 2012
 Doc. Date : 06/24/2011 Posting Date 07/12/2011 Period 01
 Calculate Tax
 Ref.Doc. : STRATEGIC PLAN
 Doc. Currency : USD

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Item	PK	Account	Acct short text	Amount	BusA	Fund	Cost Ctr	Funds Ctr	Order	CoCd	FA	WBS elem.	Text
1	31	2002588	Tecker Intern...	12,165.19-		51010201	4027003000	4027003000		PUR			*Paul Meyer-BBC Strategic Planning 6/14/2011
2	40	533005	Consulting & F...	11,500.00	40	51010201	4027003000	4027003000		PUR	1000		
3	40	535030	Consult/Honor ...	665.19	40	51010201	4027003000	4027003000		PUR	1000		

Identified using FOI, this document shows how funds were used to create the above strategic plan that should have been developed by faculty and not consultants.

If I hired someone to write my next scientific review article, and then published it in my name, it would be considered plagiarism and I would be fired. If we have administrators who can't write a strategic plan, why do we have them at all? This might be Ok on Wall Street but it is not acceptable on State Street. It does not stop there. We have administrators that have to call "legal Counsel" every time they review a policy document. We have gone from an institution that hires excellent administrators who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions, to a large number of administrators who simply won't take that responsibility.

A very recent case of a *persona non grata* order was placed on a faculty member and I bring this up for two reasons. One, I believe that this is another case of “administrative railroading” and two, faculty have very few rights on this campus. Last month the faculty member filed a grievance and harassment charges against a department head. The office of institutional equity acknowledged this request but a couple of days later, that same professor was notified that he had to attend a mandatory meeting “*at the request of the dean*”. At that meeting, the professor was issued a *persona non grata* order and removed from campus. First, let me point out the Purdue policy of retaliation.

SLIDE “IX. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against any person for reporting or complaining of discrimination and/or harassment, assisting or participating in the investigation of a complaint of discrimination and/or harassment, or enforcing University policies with respect to discrimination and/or harassment is strictly prohibited. Overt or covert acts of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, intimidation or harassment against an individual or group for exercising rights or performing duties under these Procedures will be subject to appropriate and prompt disciplinary or remedial action.”²

Now, University Policy if anyone cares to follow it, states that an appeal must be lodged within 10 days of a PNG order. Despite many requests for any documents or reasons for issuance of a PNG order, the professor received nothing. After 21 days – not 10 as in the policy – 21 the individual received a document that is interesting in itself. It is an official letter from Purdue Police department detailing the reasons for the order. The letter is undated – but states “*Purdue University’s legal counsel and its Human Resources Department have been consulted where necessary to insure compliance with the law and with University Policy.*” Oh – so legal counsel reviewed a PNG letter which could end up in court but they didn’t see it was undated? And the Human Resources reviewed it and it was OK for them to ignore the 10 day rule? Further, one of the reasons that is listed is “*You referred to a biology department employee as “the anti-Christ”!*” This PNG order was issued just after harassment charges were filed. Was that by chance? No I do not think so – I think this is a case of blatant administrative retaliation if ever I have seen it action.

What I have learned in the past couple of years is that within the huge administrative structure of this great institution, is embedded an army of bureaucrats who appear to operate blindly when a complaint is originated by administrators. Unfortunately they operate equally blindly when a complaint comes from a faculty member. It is almost as if nothing else counts but administrators winning. There are clearly two operational modalities here and neither are acceptable. On several of these issues, faculty have gone to the leadership and said “enough is enough”. We have received motions of agreement but no action.

I would like to share **two more interesting pieces of historical information**. First a bylaw change in 1989 indicating how this senate was run. You will note that the President was in charge of the senate – I will show you how that changed at the next meeting as it fundamentally changed Purdue senate into one that had at least baby teeth – and that was a start.

² <http://www.purdue.edu/ethics/resolvingcomplaints.html>

The second thing from the same era was the cost of health care coverage in 1990. Please note that under the coverage we had at this time, there were no co-pays, and virtually no additional expenses....everything was pretty much covered. It is interesting to note that at about \$150 million expenditure of Purdue funds, that translates into the amount of the General Fund allocations for the Colleges of Engineering, Science as well as Liberal Arts and Vet Medicine. It seems to me we have a whole lot of experts managing those various colleges....but I don't exactly see expertize in the management of that huge pot of \$150 million of resources dedicated to healthcare. I think that is something that we should carefully think about.

I have tried to work with the administration over the past year or so identifying areas that appear to be bloated. Frankly, the only progress I made was to get the attention of Bloomberg and a few other national media. I am today issuing a challenge to the Purdue administration. Deal with it, or over the next 6 months, I will on a monthly basis expose a clear case of administrative blight and I will expose it nationally. I just don't see any other way. If the administration is not prepared to lead on this issue, then the faculty will lead.

<u>ANNUAL EMPLOYEE PREMIUMS HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS*</u>		Employee & Family - \$1284
<u>Arnett HMO</u>		
	<u>1990 Rate</u>	
<u>Category</u>		
Employee only	\$ 156	
Employee & children	600	
Employee & spouse	852	
Employee & family	1,284	
 <u>Maxicare HMO</u>		
	<u>1990 Rate</u>	
<u>Category</u>		
Employee only	\$ 210	
Employee & children	967	
Employee & spouse	945	
Employee & family	1,970	
 Key Health Plan elected not to bid for 1990.		
		From Senate Minutes – 18 August, 1989 Group Insurance Task Force

I hope to be able to announce soon a national focus meeting of some top public institutions in the USA that will be held here at Purdue and will have as its focus the issue "administrative bloat". I have had discussions with Professor Ben Ginsberg who has agreed to assist me in organizing this conference if we can raise the necessary funds and we hope to have it right here at Purdue. I think that this will be a watershed moment for Purdue and other institutions that need to take a careful look at how they are operating.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix:

The screenshot shows the SSRN website interface. At the top, the SSRN logo and the text 'SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH NETWORK' are visible, along with the tagline 'Tomorrow's Research Today'. Below this is a navigation menu with links for Home, Search, Browse, Submit, Subscribe, Shopping Cart, My Briefcase, Top Papers, Top Authors, Top Institutions, and SSRN Blog. The main content area displays the title 'Measuring Baumol and Bowen Effects in Public Research Universities' by Robert E. Martin (affiliation not provided to SSRN) and R. Carter Hill (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge - Department of Economics). The date is listed as October 2012. An abstract follows, detailing the study's methodology and findings. At the bottom of the page, a URL is provided: <http://ideas.repec.org/p/lsu/lswpp/2012-05.html>.

We estimate three models of cost per student using data from Carnegie I and II public research universities. There are 841 usable observations covering the period from 1987 to 2008. We find that staffing ratios are individually and collectively significant in each model. Further, we find evidence that shared governance lowers cost and that the optimal staffing ratio is approximately three tenure track faculty members for every one full time administrator. Costs are higher if the ratio is higher or lower than three to one. As of 2008 the number of full time administrators is almost double the number of tenure track faculty. Using the differential method and the coefficients estimated in the three models, we deconstruct the real cost changes per student between 1987 and 2008 into Baumol and Bowen effects. This analysis reveals that for every \$1 in Baumol cost effects there are over \$2 in Bowen cost effects. Taken together, these results suggest two thirds of the real cost changes between 1987 and 2008 are due to weak shared governance and serious agency problems among administrators and boards.

An important paper recently published that identifies the ideal ratio of administrators to faculty.

Appendix 2

Interesting links on administrative blight are also being evaluated by other institutions. The following link is from our colleagues at Penn State:

<http://lcbpsusenate.blogspot.com/2012/12/faculty-senate-to-consider-issues-of.html>