

LOVE ♥

S.E.P.C.

Minutes for December 9, 1993

♥ LOVE

PRESENT: Rosie Schaap (chair), Jennifer Rodham Zeuli-Schaap (accomplice), Giles Lewey, Matt Connors, Andromache Chalfant, Tina Gross, Mikel Watercress, Catherine Wenglowski, Amy Huff, Sandra Mendes, Jay Metz, Jonas Omberg, Krista Cook, Ian Jelineck, Melissa Feldman

ABSENT: Mary Springer, Brian Dunn

SEPC QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "So we're a bunch of wacky kids--what's the big deal?" -Moussie

Meeting called to order at 6:20



## RATIFICATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes were ratified, with the following **amendments**:

1. The vote taken at the faculty meeting last week regarding **Phebe Chao's proposal** was not inconclusive at all. Marc Lendler dropped Rosie a note to tell her that the vote was 23-6 in favor of having two elected faculty representatives on the Board of Trustees.
2. I screwed up--I said that there had been a meeting for Science students, when actually it hadn't happened yet. My apologies to the Science Division. By the way, Jay and Amy are **writing something up for the "Symposium"**, so if anyone has comments about their experiences in the Division that they'd like The Trustees to hear about, talk to Amy or Jay, or put a note in their boxes.

## SOCIAL SCIENCE:

Andy Pienkos and Mansour Farhang brought a proposal to Academic Council for the **restructuring of the Social Science curriculum**. Instead of listing their classes by discipline, like psychology, economics, ect., they want to divide their offerings into seven thematic groupings, among them, "American Studies" and "Critique of Modernity". This represents an effort to portray the Division's offerings in the best possible light; it is felt that one cannot major in a discipline which consists of only one or two teachers. Rosie thinks she might be sold on the idea. There was a great deal of discussion at Academic Council, but no formal vote.... **Questions? Comments? Opinions?** See Krista or Brian, or talk to any Social Science faculty member. I'll try to get more details into next week's minutes.

The Division is also continuing the process of **hiring two psychologists** for next term. There are two applicants here this week. These positions are, by the way, separate from the search conducted earlier this term for a developmental psychologist.

## OTHER DIVISIONAL NEWS:

The **Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences** is conducting a search for an adjunct math professor for next term. **Visual Arts** is looking for (we think) two part-time people to teach painting and printmaking. This division also participated in a "Symposium" round table-type forum on the teaching of the arts. The rotating acting teachers in **Drama** have been given another one-year contract. Right now, Marion McCorry teaches in the fall, and Paul Zimmet is here in the spring. The Division had been asked, last term to make this a single full-time position, and thus conduct a search, but decided to put it off until all the confusion surrounding the "Symposium" subsided.

## ELECTIONS FOR NEW DIVISION REPS:

Will it happen in *your* division??? Who will be brave enough to assume the mantle of leadership??? Watch for posters, galleys, ect., and if you think you're interested in this intensely rewarding position, speak to your division rep.

## SENIOR STAFF:

Bill Morgan said, "If you want to sit in a silly little circle and masturbate, that's fine." It's true. He really did say that. What happened was that after a few brief remarks about trivial and peripheral issues, this week's Senior Staff meeting turned into a **90-minute tirade against the SEPC minutes**. It seems that several Senior Administrators have been offended by the "flippant and cynical" tone of our minutes; Rosie was told that we should be ashamed, that between the obvious "slant", the *Weekly World News* clippings, and the capitalization of pronouns relating to The Trustees, it was impossible for people to take us seriously. It was at about this point that Bill Morgan, Vice President in charge of Administration and Finance, said, "If you want to sit in a silly little circle and masturbate, that's fine."

The Committee was in agreement on several points. **First**, the minutes were acknowledged to be an accurate representation of both the tone and the content of our meetings. SEPC meetings are open, and we will not censor our reports of them. **Second**, we never claim to be strictly reporting "the news". This document is not a chronicle of Bennington's academic affairs, but merely of our discussions of them. We are as accurate as we can be, and when we err, we do what we can to correct our mistakes (as we did this week). **Third**, Rosie was entirely justified in feeling attacked, and unduly vilified. A roomful of administrators ganging up on a student is just wrong, particularly since Rosie had heard no criticism of the minutes prior to this meeting. In fact, we have gotten a great deal of positive feedback from students and faculty alike--Susan Sgorbati herself told Rosie at one point this term that she thought the minutes were great, and we've never had a complaint from a student. This attack was both unwarranted and inappropriate, and Bill Morgan should never, ever have said, "If you want to sit in a silly little circle and masturbate, that's fine." **Third**, their complaints about "tone" are ridiculous, particularly in light of what goes on at this place. What, it was asked, is wrong with cynicism? And are the minutes particularly cynical? Why is there this assumption that we have to be cheerful and positive and supportive all the time? How can they expect our meetings, or our minutes, to be so sterile, when things persist in going so wrong? It was strongly asserted that we are a student committee; we do not work for The Administration. Our primary responsibility is to the student body. There was deep regret that Rosie had to go through what she did, and I, for one, am sick of an administration that thinks it can walk all over us. I could point to a few examples of circle jerks evident in *their* minutes, but I won't lower myself.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10, and by the way, if you're a class rep and have not received your end-of-term packet, see your division rep immediately.

