Annual Meeting, 1995:
The Report of the Chair to the Faculty Senate

The Senate Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Faculty Senate has had an extremely busy year. Together with the three chairs, they have assisted with the welcoming and orientation of our new President and Provost. While there have been some notable glitches in the general relationships between the faculty and administration, by and large, I believe that the faculty has provided a fairly smooth first year for President Rodin and Provost Chodorow. Furthermore, I believe that the faculty seriously have attended to the ideas that these new administrators bring from their past experiences many of which we have applauded. We look forward to a continuing dialogue with the administration that has the goals of the University as central features.

The by-laws of the faculty senate require that the chair report on all actions taken by the Senate Executive committee in the past year. In the interest of time, I will refer to major actions here and refer you to the report of SEC actions in Almanac for all other actions. In the Fall of 1994, the Senate Executive Committee approved the creation of one practice professor in the Graduate School of Education, four practice professors in the Graduate School of Fine Arts, and the renewal of five Wharton Visiting Executive Professorships and forwarded these actions to the provost.

In the spring, The Senate Executive Committee approved the recommendation of the Committee on Publication Policy for Almanac for the implementation of a proposal from the administration for the creation of a daily electronic Almanac news service and the merger of The Compass and several smaller publications into an expanded Almanac for a trial period. Please note that the several conditions stipulated in that approval appear in Almanac January 24, 1995. The Senate Executive Committee also approved a revision of the Procedure Governing Sanctions Taken Against Members of the Faculty and agreed that the revision would be discussed at the annual meeting on April 19 followed by a mail ballot to all members of the standing faculty with a simple majority required for approval. The proposed policies on consensual sexual relations between faculty and students and the closing of departments recommended by the Senate Committee on the Faculty were approved; the policy on removal of a dean put forth by the Senate Committee on the Administration was approved; and the policy on inter suspension of a faculty member put forth by the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility was approved. Finally, the Senate Executive Committee received three petitions, one requesting an item be placed on the agenda for today and two objecting to SEC actions. The Senate Executive Committee approved discussion and action on whether a simple majority should prevail in the mail ballot on Sanctions Taken Against Members of the Faculty; approved the addition to the agenda for discussion and action of an alternate procedure governing sanctions taken against faculty members; and approved the re-publication in Almanac of the report and policy on consensual sexual relations along with comments from the petitioners to be followed by a mail ballot to all members of the Faculty Senate.

The actions which were taken by the Senate Executive Committee involved extensive preliminary work and proposals from Senate committees and they clearly are deserving of our thanks. Special thanks go to Professor Peter Hand, Chair of the Senate Committee on the Faculty, Professor Ann Matter, Chair of the Senate Committee on the Administration, Professor James Laing, Chair of the senate Committee on students and Educational Policy, Professor Jack Nagel, Chair of the Senate committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, Professor Peter Kuriloff, chair of the Grievance commission, Professor Martin Pring, chair of the Committee on Publication Policy for Almanac, and Professor Gerald Porter who has served as acting chair of the committee on the economic status of the faculty. I wish I had the time to talk about each committee member, but the listing of their names at the end of each of the reports and the quality of the work they produced speak to their superb dedication to completion of the tasks at hand. Finally, the future of the senate is dependent in no small way upon the thoughtful deliberations of the Senate Nominating Committee and my thanks also go to that committee chaired this year by Professor Gerard Adams.

I have special thanks for Past Chair, Jerry Porter and Chair-elect, Bill Kissick. Their thoughtful advice and support throughout the year have been invaluable. I wish Jerry well as he begins a sabbatical year and I expect to lend my full support to Bill Kissick as he begins his term as chair. I welcome Peter Kuriloff as chair-elect and I look forward to his advice and leadership in the years to come. A special thanks from me on behalf of the faculty goes to Carolyn Burdon, the Senate Executive Assistant, for her constant dedication to the work of the Faculty Senate.

Finally, I thank the Senate Executive committee for its wonderful work on behalf of the Senate. SEC meetings were always full of lively and thoughtful debate, and there was a sense of collegiality that held the group together and helped it to accomplish an extraordinary amount of work this year. As long as such individuals are willing to work on behalf of the faculty the Senate will have a strong voice in the governance of this our great University.

Barbara Lowery

[Ed. Note: Following the Chair’s Report to the Faculty Senate at its meeting April 19, the Senate heard from President Judith Rodin and Provost Stanley Chodorow, both of whose remarks will appear in a future issue.]}

[During extended debate, Dr. James F. Ross’s alternative proposal on the “just cause” issue failed on a show of hands, but the Chair noted that in preparation for a mail ballot, SEC will consider at its May meeting whether to require a simple majority or a larger percentage for passage of the proposed policy change.

[In the question period following the Chair’s Report, Dr. Lowery was asked about the proposed policy on consensual sex between faculty and students, and she responded with a reminder that a mail ballot is to be held before the year is out, and that the April 25 issue of Almanac would re-publish the Committee on the Faculty’s subcommittee report and proposed policy along with any comment received by April 20. This section contains the promised reports on that topic.]

[As the Chair prepared for adjournment, the Past Chair asked for the floor and made the motion that follows:]

A Tribute to Dr. Barbara Lowery

Barbara Lowery has, for the past year, provided the Faculty Senate with strong leadership. Through hard work and with an unerring sense of fairness she has steered the Senate through sometimes contentious issues. In her own quiet way she has been a vigorous advocate for the faculty in consultations with the administration. Seeking no personal fame she is firmly committed to the precept that the strength of the University is its faculty. I ask that the Senate recognize Barbara Lowery’s leadership as Chair of the Faculty Senate with the traditional round of applause. [Interrupted by ovation.] Thank you Barbara.

— Gerald J. Porter
The Report of the Working Group on Implementation of the Sexual Harassment Policy recommends clarification of the University’s policy on sexual relationships between teachers and students. The subcommittee concurs that clarification is in order and in this report sets forth its views concerning the causes of current ambiguity and recommendations to deal with it.

Current University policy regarding sexual relations between members of the faculty and students is stated as part of the Sexual Harassment Policy (Handbook at pp. 94-101). However, although “sexual harassment” is a defined term in that policy, requiring in particular that the sexual attention be “unwanted,” section II (“Purposes and Definitions”) goes on to state that “the standard of expected conduct in [the relationship between teacher and student] goes beyond the proscription against sexual harassment as defined in the University’s policy.” Indeed, that section provides that “any sexual relations between any teacher and a student of that teacher are inappropriate” and “unethical,” and calls on administrators “to respond to reports brought to them of inappropriate and unethical behavior.” Yet, disclosing “the means to enforce an absolute prohibition against such relations,” the policy establishes a presumption of sexual harassment upon the complaint of a student against an individual “if sexual relations have occurred between them while the individual was teaching or otherwise had supervisory responsibility for the student.”

In our view, this manner of treating the subject is studiously ambiguous, leaving it unclear whether sexual relations found to be consensual are subject to punishment. Such ambiguity is not only unfair to the individuals, teachers and students, who may be contemplating sexual relations. It is also an invitation to arbitrary or inconsistent enforcement of the policy by the University administration. In addition, we think it particularly undesirable to engraft such ambiguity on a policy that in other respects may be controversial, if only because dilution of the concept of sexual harassment may make the University’s policy proscribing it a less effective deterrent of behavior that is “unwanted.”

There are additional reasons why the University’s policy on consensual sexual relations should be separately stated. The possibility of coercion, or at least the absence of true consent, does not exhaust the grounds for disapproving sexual relations when a teacher-student or other supervisory academic relationship exists. Whether or not there is true consent (which may not be clear to others), knowledge of an intimate relationship may have a seriously deleterious effect on the attitudes and morale of others engaged in the academic enterprise. Other students, in particular, may doubt whether evaluations can be fair when a teacher is sexually involved with his or her student. Some may regard the possibility of sexual relations as a reason either to seek or to avoid contact with faculty. The enterprise would suffer in either event. The matter is one of academic professional responsibility and bears no necessary relationship to sexual harassment, although institutional norms may overlap. The broader concern is that non-academic or personal ties not be allowed to interfere with the integrity of the teacher-student relationship.

Accordingly, the revised policy we recommend would stand apart from, although making appropriate cross-reference to, the policy on sexual harassment. In addition, for the reasons stated, we believe that the University should unambiguously prohibit consensual sexual relations between a teacher or academic supervisor and a student who is subject to that individual’s academic evaluation or supervision. The prohibition would cover sexual relations while the direct teacher/supervisor and student relationship exists, and it would include any such relations between a department or graduate group chair and any student in the department or program, as well as between academic advisors, program directors and all others who have evaluative or supervisory academic responsibility for a student and that student.

Even if it is true that the University lacks the means wholly to prevent such relations, that is hardly a good reason not formally and without ambiguity to prohibit that which the institution regards as unethical. As in the past, administrators should respond to reports of prohibited sexual relations between teachers and their students, but under the proposed policy they would have the clear authority to do so as a disciplinary matter, and faculty could not claim unfair surprise.

We recognize that, by limiting the prohibition to sexual relations during the immediate teacher/supervisor and student relationship, the proposed policy does not address all of the costs that permitting any such relations between teachers and students can impose. Thus, for instance, the desire to commence or continue such relations might cause a student not to enroll in a course taught by a professor even though that course was important to the student’s educational program. Moreover, under the proposed policy a teacher who is sexually involved with a student must decline to participate in educational activities (e.g., thesis committees, departmental evaluations of graduate students) that require academic evaluation or supervision of that student.

Any broader prohibition, however, would come with its own substantial costs, including to individual liberty. The proposal, like all compromises, seeks a reasonable adjustment of the interests vying for recognition. We also considered recommending that the prohibition extend to any sexual relations between a faculty member and an undergraduate student, whether or not under that individual’s supervision at the time. Undergraduates may be inexperienced and impressionable. Moreover, although it is often said that in loco parentis is a thing of the past, we are not sure that undergraduates’ parents would, or that they should, agree, when told that their sons or daughters were sleeping with professors.

Most undergraduates are, however, of an age legally to consent to sexual relations. A prohibition on consensual sexual relations would restrict their liberty interests, and we think that price is simply too high when there is no current supervisory relationship involved. In our view, faculty should avoid sexual relations with undergraduates, and the University should strongly discourage them. Unless, however, they involve a current supervisory relationship or constitute sexual harassment, they should not be the basis of disciplinary action.

The policy we recommend applies only to faculty and other academic supervisors. Language in the existing policy (Handbook at pg. 96) refers to individuals not clearly in that category, including coaches (who may not in any event read the Handbook). A similar statement of policy should be developed for and brought clearly to the attention of such individuals.

Stephen B. Burbank (law), Chair
Jean Crockett (emeritus finance)
Janet Rothenberg Paci (public policy & management)
Holly Pittman (history of art)
Comment on the Proposed Policy by David Cass

II. Information about the Group Orientation Sessions for all Faculty and Students Concerning University Policy on Consensual Sexual Relations (a.k.a. Judy and Stan’s Law), University of Pennsylvania, Fall, 1995 PC (draft)

This session is intended to educate you about current university strictures on individual sexual behavior. Before starting the orientation process, your instructress or instructor will ask you to fill out a questionnaire concerning your own personal sexual practices, and instructors answering to this questionnaire will be kept in strictest confidence; they will only be used by qualified administrators in helping to guide your private life while you are associated with the university. Of course, you should feel perfectly free at any time during the session to ask appropriate questions.

Reading materials which provide background for the session are attached. These include the following documents:
- Senate Committee on the Faculty “Report of the Subcommittee on Consensual Sexual Relations”, Almanac February 1, 1995, republished April 25, 1995
- “Policy on Consensual Sexual Relations Between Faculty and Students,” addendum to the “Sexual Harassment Policy,” adopted by [to be completed] narrow, large or overwhelming] majority vote of the Faculty Senate, May (to be completed), 1995
You might find it worthwhile to read and study this material beforehand. To aid in your fully understanding and appreciating its content, you will be asked at the end of the session to complete a short quiz, a quiz designed to test your comprehension of the logic and principles underlying the policy, as well as the concrete implementation of the policy itself.

III. Personal Sexual Information Questionnaire, University of Pennsylvania (draft)

Note: Some individuals may find some of the following questions personally degrading, embarrassing, humiliating or offensive. For this reason, under the official university “Sexual Harassment Policy,” you have the right to fill out this form in privacy, and then to return it by mail (to: University Vice Provost for Sexual Affairs, 110 College Hall (6303). You should be aware that failure to provide complete and truthful answers may result in the university initiating appropriate disciplinary action or remedial measures.

Name: ____________________________ Department: ____________________________
Campus Address: ____________________________ Campus Phone: ____________________________
Status: ____________________________ undergraduate student [ ] graduate student [ ] faculty [ ]
Part 1. Sexual Preferences
Your sex: female [ ] male [ ] neither [ ] Preferred partner(s): same sex [ ] opposite sex [ ] both sexes [ ] other [ ]

Part 2. Sexual Relations
Since in a world of complicated personal relationships, the notion of sexual relations is itself quite complicated, please indicate what you would consider to be potentially objectionable acts. A few—but only a very few—of many possibilities would be the following: nuzzling [ ] kissing [ ] bussing [ ] licking [ ] deep kissing [ ] (you name it!) [ ] kissing [ ]
Part 2. continued
Please describe in detail any other particular behavior or practices which you would consider to be clearly, even undeniably objectionable acts—hard-core sexual relations which should be absolutely forbidden. Use as much space as required, including additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Part 3. Reasonable Indications
Since rarely, or at least not that often, does an outside party observe hard-core sexual relations directly, please indicate what you would consider plausible circumstantial or indirect evidence that sexual relations have, are, or are about to take place. A few—but only a very few—of many possibilities would be the following:

one-on-one conversation outside of a strictly professional setting
walking together
playing tennis or squash together
dining together
attending a movie, concert or play together
kicking back in a bar together
(you name it!) together

Please describe in detail any other particular situations or behavior which you would consider convincing, even conclusive circumstantial or indirect evidence that sexual relations have, are, or are about to take place. Use as much space as required, including additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Part 4. Potential Transgressions
For use as information about natural inclinations only

For students (not faculty):
Have you ever had sexual relations with a professor (resp. student)?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you have even contemplated having sexual relations with a professor (resp. student)?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are you presently dating, married to, or otherwise possibly having sexual relations with a professor (resp. student)?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

IV. Certification Quiz on Judy and Stan’s Law
University of Pennsylvania (draft)

This quiz is only intended to check that you fully understand and appreciate the logic and principles underlying the official university “Policy on Consensual Sexual Relations,” as well as the concrete implementation of the policy itself. It consists of two parts. In the first part you are asked to complete several critical quotes extracted from the justification for and statement of the policy. (Since this part of the quiz is very subtle and difficult, substantial assistance has been provided by the manner in which the questions themselves are framed.) In the second part you are asked to write a brief paragraphs on topics carefully selected to permit assessing your practical knowledge of the policy. Please think hard before you begin writing, and try your very best to be clear and cogent. In the event that you should fail to display sufficient, proper comprehension, you may be requested to attend additional orientation sessions, and to retake the quiz.

Part 1. Multiple Choice
1. It (________) is also an invitation to arbitrary or inconsistent enforcement of the policy by the University Administration.
   a. inadequate means of control over faculty and student
   b. politically correct bigotry
   c. ambiguity in the new policy
   d. ambiguity in the old policy
   e. arrogance of power
2. The possibility of coercion, or at least the absence of true consent does not exhaust the grounds for disapproving sexual relations when ________.
   a. some supervisory relationship exists
   b. the undergraduates so engaged are merely friends or acquaintances
   c. some supervisory academic relationship exists
   d. the parties so engaged are of the same sex but very unequal size and weight
   e. the parties so engaged are more than x (you choose: x = 1, 2, 3, ... years) difference in age
3. ________ can adversely affect the academic enterprise, distorting judgements or appearing to do so in the minds of others, and providing incentives or disincentives for faculty-student contact that are equally inappropriate.
   a. Consensual sexual relations between faculty and students, or faculty and staff, or ....
   b. An unorthodox lifestyle
   c. Being of the gay, lesbian or bisexual persuasion
   d. Holding an extreme ideological position
   e. Consensual sexual relations between teacher and student
4. ________ would, however, come with its own substantial costs, including to individual liberty.
   a. Any prohibition
   b. Complete prohibition
   c. Non-unanimously (faculty and student) approved prohibition
   d. Broader prohibition
   e. Non-majority (faculty only) approved prohibition
5. Moreover, although it is often said that in loco parentis is a thing of the past, we are not sure that ________ would, or that they should agree even told that their (i) ________ were sleeping with professors.
   i. undergraduates’ parents
   b. some students’ parents
   c. middle-aged, frail, estranged, married, female professors
   d. university administrators
   e. middle-aged, lecherous, white, male professors
6. ________ are of an age legally to consent [sic] to sexual relations. A prohibition would restrict their liberty interests [sic], and we think that price is simply too high (ii)
   i. All faculty
   b. Many graduate students
   c. Most, if not all graduate students
   d. Most undergraduates
   e. All but a small handful of undergraduates
   (ii) a. since even young adults are quite capable of making their own, informed decisions
   b. in a rational society dedicated to individual freedom and choice
   c. under all circumstances
   d. provided the administration agrees
   e. when there is no current supervisory relationship involved
7. The prohibition extends to ________.[superfluous material omitted] supervisory academic responsibility for ________.
   a. all faculty who have/all students, and any student
   b. all faculty and personnel who have some/ students, and any of those students
   c. all faculty and personnel who have some/ students, and any student
   d. all others who have/a student, and that student
   e. all others who have/a student, and any student

8. The Provost, Deans, Department Chairs and other administrators should respond to (i) ________ of prohibited sexual relations that are brought to them by inquiring further, and if such (ii) ________ initiating appropriate disciplinary action or (iii) ________ against the teacher or supervisor involved.
   i. a. gossip and rumor
   b. sly innuendo, insinuation or suggestion
   c. reports
   d. vague gossip and rumor
   e. pervasive gossip and rumor
   (ii) a. have some plausibility
   b. are not inconceivable
   c. contain any element of truth
   d. are based on their integrities
   e. appear to be accurate
   (iii) a. arbitrary and capricious retribution
   b. unambiguous and swift punishment
   c. remedial measures
   d. suitable harassing maneuvers
   e. undertaking drastic re-education measures

Part 2. Short Essays
1. Daphne Patai, a Professor of Women’s Studies and Spanish and Portuguese at UMass, Amherst, commented in Lingua Franca (February, 1995) that “...[name omitted] might have asked why so many otherwise reasonable people are rushing to impose bans on friends, with little regard for the corollary loss of freedoms for all. But [name omitted] wastes not a line on the problematic issues raised by the move to control student-professor relationships: the loss of freedom of association; the assumption of vested power, the norm in professorial attitudes towards students; the gross exaggerations in the discussions of professors’ power and students’ powerlessness; and, worse, the debasement of all student-teacher interactions to mere ‘power issues’.

Please write a brief critique of Professor Patai’s position, paying especial attention to the following errors of thought: that banning consensual relationships involves a serious loss of individual freedom; that most professors are in fact neither unethical nor corrupt; and that most, if not almost all students are perfectly capable of making their own, informed decisions about personal relationships.

2. You are in a class being taught by a courtly, but obviously macho middle-aged, European professor. While his lectures are for the most part fascinating, you are somewhat bothered by the fact that he occasionally alludes to the sexual aspects of life. In fact, he once jokingly welcomed an especially attractively made-up female latecomer of life. In fact, he once jokingly welcomed an especially attractively made-up female latecomer—”We can all guess what you’ve been up to!” Now, here’s the problem: the other day you observed him chatting animatedly with the same woman on Locust Walk—once even touching her on the shoulder!—and after checking around a bit more, you also heard that she had come to his regular office hours just last week (maybe the week before too). Somebody else mentioned that they may have seen the two together (they weren’t absolutely sure, but pretty sure) one evening earlier in the semester. After thinking long and hard, you have decided to file a report with the University Vice Provost for Sexual Affairs.

Please briefly outline your report, and the reasoning behind your inferences and accusations.