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# SALVE REGINA FACULTY ASSEMBLY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the March 19, 2001 Meeting

*Present:* Ronald Atkins, Thomas Day, Terrence Gavan (Chair), Sandor Kadar,  
Michael Malone CSSp

1. **Call to Order and Minutes:** The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM. The minutes of the February 20 meeting were approved.
  
2. **Dean Stephen Trainor and the Pell Scholars Honors Program.**

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Stephen Trainor, visited the committee in order to discuss the Pell Scholars Honors Program. He began his remarks with a review of how this proposal developed.

Last fall he proposed to the Undergraduate Council that the University start an honors program. The Council nominated members of a committee that would work on the program's design. This committee met and then showed its draft design to the Undergraduate Council and the Faculty Assembly. Faculty suggestions for changes were then incorporated into the draft.

In a parallel development, the University received a substantial grant from the federal government for the Pell Center. At the last minute the University was informed that the grant could only be used for academic programs, not buildings. The administration had two choices: either accept this arrangement promptly or lose the funding. The administration then proposed that the funding could be directed towards the Pell Center, including an undergraduate honors program named in honor of Senator Pell. The government then agreed to award the grant.

The press releases for the Pell Scholars were supposed to indicate that the program was in the process of being developed and would be submitted to the faculty for its endorsement. Unfortunately, this information was abbreviated and news reports gave the impression that the administration had put the program in place before the general faculty knew about it.

The Dean saw an urgent need for this honors program. The University, he said, is poised at a crucial time in its history. It is now important for the University to (a) recruit the better students, (b) provide academic incentives for them to stay until graduation, and (c) give them reasons to tell their friends about the advantages of attending Salve Regina. A worrisome development is the number of good freshmen students (3.4 average grade) who transferred at the end of their first semester here. The hope is that the Pell Scholars Program will be an incentive for this type of student to stay and contribute to the academic vitality of the whole institution.

Members of the Executive Committee spoke in favor of the program. There was agreement that it is a good idea and that the time was right for it. Individual members of the committee made the following points:

- The Faculty Assembly's Protocol recognizes that the administration has the obligation to make curriculum changes to meet an "unexpected situation." The administration made the decision to go ahead with the honors program because the conditions of the federal grant had been unexpectedly modified.
- Faculty support for the program seems to be widespread and positive.
- The Pell Scholars Honors Program really should not be described as an experimental or pilot program. It would be more accurate to say this is a "program in development" or "in process" – initiated by the administration and a faculty committee working together.
- The Faculty Assembly does not decide to approve or disapprove of new programs. Instead, it *endorses* a program or declines to do so, according to its Protocol. This honors program does not need the "approval" of the Assembly to function as a legitimate program.
- The purpose of the Faculty Assembly and its Executive Committee is to help, to contribute to the good of the University.

There was a consensus that the honors program will eventually need the endorsement of the Faculty Assembly for its credibility and continuing funding. One suggestion was that the vote of endorsement should come as soon as the program has passed the development stage and "the content is there."

3. The committee approved the agenda for the April meeting. It will include the election of the new Speaker and the vote on "questions" concerning the proposals for a revised core curriculum.
4. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.