



UNIVERSITY FACULTY
SENATE REPORT
SUNY at Buffalo
April 30 – May 2, 2009



UBuffalo Senator William Baumer greeted the senators and guests, gave a brief overview of the Buffalo campus, and introduced **UB President John Simpson**. In his welcoming remarks President Simpson praised the role of the UFS and faculty, stating in particular that “Faculty are the University”.

REPORT BY CARL WIEZALIS, SENATE PRESIDENT

Carl Wiezalis is finishing his second and last 2 year term as president. He had submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Among the items he expanded on at the meeting:

- He expressed great satisfaction with the selection of the new Chancellor Nancy Zimpher. His participation on the search committee lifted the visibility of the faculty in the process.
- Officer in Charge John O’Connor has been working very hard towards a smooth transition. Chancellor elect Zimpher has made several visits to the state, and has sent individuals and advance teams to evaluate many of the aspects and operations of SUNY.
- He has been the first UFS President serving on the SUNY Board of Trustees following legislation passed in 2007. His service there has been of great value, as it allows for a faculty voice to be directly heard by the BOT. Lack of a vote has not been a problem.
- He thanked the Senate for allowing him to serve as President for four years. This office has been the high point of his life and career.

(The president’s written report is available upon request.)

ELECTION OF NEW SENATE PRESIDENT.

The election was preceded by a discussion on whether the actual numbers of the vote would be communicated to the Senate. The precedent over many years had been to only announce the winner and to withhold any further details. At the meeting of the Senate Executive Committee on the previous day the issue had been raised that since the UFS bylaws do not address this point, by default Robert’s Rules of Order would apply, which, in particular, require the actual vote to be communicated to the assembly and recorded in the minutes. A motion was made to suspend the Rules of Order and continue the past practice for this election only. The Governance Committee would consider the matter and make recommendations to the Senate before the next election. The motion to suspend the Rules of Order passed 26 to 13, the exact 2/3 minimum required.

Distinguished Service Professor Sandra D. Michael, Biology, SUNY Binghamton, and Associate Professor Kenneth P. O’Brien, History, SUNY Brockport, had been nominated and agreed to stand for election. The Senate elected **Ken O’Brien** to a two-year term as UFS President beginning on July 1, 2009.

JOE HILDRETH, JOINT COMMITTEE ON ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER

The work of the committee is close to completion, with acceptance of the plan expected by the BOT. Joe Hildreth will send out a summary of the plan to be shared with campuses. Key features include:

- All courses in the major will transfer.
- Other courses not accepted for transfer can be submitted for appeal at the local level; and there is

discussion of an additional appellate route above campus level.

- All course appeals are to be handled at campus level quickly, the chair indicated within a week.
- A Transfer website will be available.

CAREY HATCH, ASST. PROV. LIBRARY & INFORM.

Hatch discussed the process of **Open Access Publication** and a recent document agreed upon by four leading associations serving research universities: the Association of Research Libraries, the Association of American Universities, the Coalition of Networked Information, and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Recommendations are made for Universities to take the lead in modifying current dissemination practices and intellectual property rights policies. *(The document will be submitted to the UA Provost’s Office and to LISC; it is available upon request.)*

PANEL DISCUSSION: DOES “SHARED GOVERNANCE” EXIST IN SUNY? YES!

Four SUNY Presidents (DeFleur, Binghamton, Dahl, Geneseo, Yeigh, IT, Heath, Optometry) known for successfully practicing “Shared Governance” on their campuses were moderated by former Interim Chancellor John Clark in a discussion of questions that had been prepared by the UFS Governance Committee. Significant themes that may be helpful to other presidents and to faculty, in particular during times of difficult budgets:

- Know the “culture” of the campus.
- A strong Senate and mechanisms for consultation lead to better morale and ability to address challenges.
- Information needs to be shared with faculty leaders.
- Transparency, communication, and trust are essential.
- It’s not “us versus them”, but all of us.
- President and Provost are full members of the Senate Executive Committee.
- Shared governance is a continuing process.
- Use a campus wide budget advisory committee.
- Establish a process of annual budget presentations.

Clark added that budget transparency is absolutely critical and formulated three key rules: 1) President attends Senate meetings, 2) Chair of the Senate and the SEC have access to the President, and 3) Transparency.

JOHN O’CONNOR, OFFICER IN CHARGE

He apologized for missing the last plenary meeting because of his being tied up in the final negotiations with Chancellor Elect Zimpher. In responding to the U Center concerns he stated that officials in the Division of Budget are very good at identifying items to target for cuts. He will provide details to officials about grants and projects affected by the RF title. The legislature does not understand graduate tuition and SUNY needs to work on explaining better. We need to rethink how we fund libraries. He invited senators to visit the **RF website**. It has been updated and contains detailed funding information campus by campus showing all relevant numbers.

REPORT BY AWARDS COMMITTEE

- Clarification that Chancellor’s Excellence Awards continue to be limited to full time tenured and tenure

track instructional faculty. Campuses are encouraged to create local awards open to other groups.

- Discussions about creating Advisory Councils for review of Distinguished Teaching and Service Professor nominations that will vote on cases, as it now occurs for nominations for Distinguished Professor rank.
- There continues to be much misunderstanding about the eligibility criteria for promotions to Distinguished Service Professor. The Committee will review the guidelines to include more details to make it absolutely clear that individuals receiving compensation for administrative work are not eligible.

REPORT BY AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

- Completed the qualitative survey on existing ethics concerns and policies. Received 2.1% responses from faculty. Discussed results and problems with survey.
- Plans to identify existing ethics policies and work on establishing a SUNY Ethics Institute.
- Proposed a resolution to be granted standing committee status.

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH STANDING COMMITTEE

The Senate approved a resolution to establish a new **Standing Committee on Ethics and Institutional Integrity**. The committee will not serve as a disciplinary body nor will it take part in judicial proceedings.

RISA PALM, PROVOST

Provost Palm reported that Chancellor Elect Zimpher sent teams to learn about operations at SUNY. Among the questions investigated by the teams:

- What does the Provost's Office do?
- What mechanisms are in place for strategic planning?
- What indicators are used for performance evaluation?
- How is the impact of closing programs measured?
- How are enrollments managed?
- Teacher mobility throughout K-20
- International issues

More teams are expected to come. The Provost will form a faculty committee to recommend changes in assessment. SUNY also needs to plan ahead for

- Rapid growth of knowledge
- International competition
- Changed demographics and economy
- Do we want to compete with the "greatest" universities, not just the largest?.

JIM VAN VOORST, INTERIM VICE CHANCELLOR AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.

CFO Van Voorst presented a summary of the latest SUNY Financial Plans. In 2008-09 total state support and campus revenue, after including tuition increases, budgeted mandatory cost increases and negotiated salary increases, decreased by \$142m, representing a 5.9% decrease over 2007-08. Based on the latest enacted budget the corresponding change (including negotiated salary increases) amounts to an increase of \$59m, representing 2.5% over 2008-09. Without mandated increases there is a net 1.3% decrease over 08-09. SUNY will try to avoid midyear reductions and present a very strong case to state officials that funds in IFR accounts are one time only funds that campuses use as seed money to improve and expand programs and cannot be used to fill other budget holes.

He shared information on the broad range of potential reductions and actions contemplated by campuses to respond to the budget cuts.

SECTOR CONCERNS- University Centers

- Concern about shifting funds from their designated purposes (e.g. tuition, IDC, IFR) to fill budget gaps created by other cuts.
- Increase in graduate tuition not matched by increased funding for tuition scholarships. This places additional burdens on U Centers and decreases competitiveness.
- Restated recommendation for line item for libraries in campus budgets. There needs to be better balance between expenditures for electronic resources and traditional media critical for many disciplines.
- Concern about possible elimination of student fees designated for special purposes without replacing the resources lost.
- Support for recommendations of the 2008 CHE report concerning increased flexibility for SUNY.

REPORT BY DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

- Committee continues to address issues of cultural competence in the curriculum, and trying to advocate for the SUNY mandate of access in the budget climate.

(Information on other Committee Reports will become available on the UFS web page at <http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/>.)

Respectfully submitted,

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REPORT BY THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

- Committee continues to work on a rational fiscal policy plan, which includes rational tuition increases
- Continues to work on addressing the inadequate funding for libraries.

REPORT BY THE GRADUATE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEES

- Following on the concern about the inadequate funding of graduate teaching and research assistantships, particularly the tuition waiver which has not changed in 15 years even though tuition has gone up.
- Looking at best practices for training new graduate teaching assistants.

REPORT BY THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

- Health Services, wanted to narrow the focus to veterans health needs
- SUNY CAMPUS TRADITIONS—will be surveying campuses on traditions (such as Roth Regatta (Stony Brook), Fountain Day (Albany)).
- Student Leadership Development: committee intends to develop a compendium of structured student leadership programs in SUNY and; survey campuses and college unions as to whether they have developed a co-curricular document process.

REPORT BY COLLEGES

- Re-surveying responses on budget reduction
- Budget situation noted as severe by many schools, up to 7 digit figures, signaling difficult times ahead.

REPORT BY STATUTORY AND TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES

- Search for new unit head, SUNY-funded
- Allocation agreement with Alfred
- Maritime: enrollment up
- Cornell: budget cuts and layoffs
- Less money for faculty activities
- Hiring freezes across the sector
- SUNY IT—new field house, dorms, campus ctr