

**University Senate  
Fall Faculty Meeting  
November 5, 2014  
2:30 – 4:45 p.m.  
Campus Center Ballroom**

**Minutes**

---

Format: Armchair Discussion  
Moderator: Joette Stefl-Mabry, Chair, University Senate

Panel Participants:

- President Robert J. Jones
  - Tim Mulcahy, Interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
  - Jim Dias, Vice President for Research
- 

Senate Chair Joette Stefl-Mabry welcomed the audience and participants and explained that President Jones and the administration were desirous of facilitating a more open exchange and dialogue between the faculty and administrative leaders. This format was proposed by the President's office, and the Senate welcomed the President's willingness to be open to a new style of engagement. It was emphasized that it is important for faculty to see and hear how our President, Interim Provost and VPR work together to shape, manage and improve our academic agenda.

Chair Stefl-Mabry addressed the President, stating that he had outlined his vision in the Four Stakes, but asked to take this opportunity to delve deeper. Over the fall he had been emphasizing the importance of expanding the academic profile of the University. The Chair inquired as to what that meant and why it is important for the future of the University at Albany.

President Jones responded that it is essential to expand the academic profile and academic footprint of this University. The President stated we must do so for multiple reasons such as 1) to fulfill our mission as a robust and competitive public research university, and 2) to diversify and maximize revenue streams, such as tuition and research funding.

Moderator Stefl-Mabry asked how the President envisioned expanding the University's academic profile.

President Jones replied that we are doing so by developing new programs and building institutional affiliations that will facilitate program growth in high needs areas. In that regard, the President provided brief status updates on each of the following: Engineering, Albany Law School and Downstate Medical.

Chair Stefl-Mabry noted that in many ways the past 5 years have been years of increasingly scarce resources on this campus. Many wondered how UAlbany would be able to fund this growth and asked that the President address such concerns.

President Jones considered that, to a certain degree, we need to grow our way out of our current financial pressures. He pointed out that state support accounts for only 12% of the revenues to this campus. No one foresees dramatic improvements on that front any time soon. UA must become more competitive in the recruitment of the best and brightest students *and* faculty. Specifically, we must become more attentive to cultivating degree programs that interest today's students, and we must all focus on recruitment and retention.

The Panel, upon request, shared the following overview of the current enrollment challenges: UA has experienced declining enrollments for past 5-6 years, while other University centers have been growing their enrollments. Because tuition revenues account for a greater proportion of our revenues than they did 20 years ago, UA's declining enrollments have significant financial implications at a time when we should be maximizing our tuition revenues in the remaining years of Rational Tuition. UA currently lacks a well-articulated institutional enrollment strategy

The President, Interim Provost and VPR were each asked to share how the Administration is addressing enrollment issues, to which they communicated the following: The Provost is working to develop an institutional enrollment strategy. The administration has engaged the Deans to diagnose and address barriers, and to clarify targets and expectations. UAlbany must build opportunities for increasing enrollments through Master's programs. We must continue our recruitment efforts to increase enrollments of domestic, out-of-state and international students. We recognize that institutional marketing plays a role, and have been working with teams on further fostering institutional identity, branding, and advertising strategies which will be pressing items for our new VP.

Regarding the role of the Humanities in the University's future, the Panel stressed that the Humanities are an integral component of a comprehensive university. We cannot be a truly world-class university without a strong liberal arts core, including healthy and productive departments and programs in the humanities and the arts.

Moderator Stefl-Mabry noted that the President's remarks to the campus community often include references to "taking UAlbany to the next level of excellence."

The President rearticulated what that meant to him. He further shared some specific implications for the faculty: First and foremost, it means academic excellence. Faculty productivity plus recognition are the building blocks of institutional reputation. As a community of scholars, we must become better at anticipating the future of our disciplines; we must start to "skate to where the puck is going to be." To these ends, we are investing in new faculty hires in accordance with our campus 2020 plan, and investing in faculty research in areas of strength such as the President's Research Grant Initiative. President Jones added that we are making improvements to the research infrastructure. We are cultivating our considerable strengths in Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences and RNA, as well as new interdisciplinary efforts in Big Data Analytics, Data Forensics, and Allied Health. UAlbany is also mounting a serious bid for the Governor's new College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cyber Security. All of these initiatives require—frankly, demand—the active engagement of our faculty. This is not something the administration can achieve independent of the faculty.

To his way of thinking, the President stated, in order to take UAlbany to the next level of excellence, we must also be attentive to three aspects of our organizational culture. First strategic management – Academic and administrative leaders must employ more strategy and strategic thinking at all levels of operation; Secondly transparency – We need to communicate more often and more effectively across this institution, and we must achieve a healthy culture of consultation with stakeholders. We may not always agree on the obvious path forward, but that process of mutual exploration is valuable and we must embrace it as an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities, as well as the decisions and the resulting outcomes. Finally, accountability – We all share in the responsibility of stewarding this University to its best and brightest future for the generations of faculty and students who will benefit after all of us are long gone from this campus. To aid our efforts, the President intends to institute a

compact budget process that, in his experience, when implemented effectively is a transparent vehicle for planning, resource allocation and accountability.

Senate Chair Stefl-Mabry pointed out that the administration had initiated a considerable amount of leadership transition this year representing a majority of the members of the Executive Committee.

President Jones addressed the question whether or not he was concerned about the effects of so much change in such a short amount of time: While he had initiated a few of these leadership changes, as you know several were resulting from long-awaited retirements. While he acknowledged the valuable contributions of those who have served this campus so well for so long, he also looks forward to the energy and opportunities that new leaders will bring to bear on our issues. Our campus will benefit from a diversity of thought, experiences and approaches to academic innovation among the new colleagues who will join us in re-imagining UAlbany. On Interim Provost Mulcahy, many have asked whether or not Tim is a candidate for the permanent position. He is not, but his open and collaborative style is illustrative of the kind of leadership hires the President is trying to make across the board.

The discussion was then opened up for Q&A with faculty.

President Jones noted that he had been slowly making his way across campus, meeting with faculty department by department. As a result he hoped everyone was starting to understand how important faculty engagement is to him and how seriously he and the University's leadership team take it.

In closing, Moderator Stefl-Mabry thanked the Panel for sharing their thoughts and expressed appreciation to all who attended.