

**University at Albany
State University of New York**

University Council

Minutes
December 7, 2012

A regular meeting of the University Council was held on December 7, 2012 in University Hall, Room 306. Members present were: Daniel Tomson (Vice Chair/Presiding Officer), Pierre Alric, Robert Balachandran, Patricia Caldwell, James Clancy, John Fallon (by teleconference), James Jackson, Abner JeanPierre, Michael Stein and Kevin Fox (Student Member); also Christine Wagner (Faculty Representative), Gary Roth (Graduate Student Representative) and Canon Kay Hotaling (Alumni Representative).

Also present were: President George Philip, Vice President/Provost Susan Phillips, Vice Presidents Christine Bouchard, Lee McElroy and Fardin Sanai; and Vincent Delio (Chief of Staff).

Mr. Tomson called the meeting to order at 2:05pm and welcomed Kevin Fox, the new Student Member, Professor Wagner and Gary Roth. He then called for review of the October 5 minutes. Upon motion duly made a seconded (Stein/Alric), the minutes were approved.

Moving to the President's Report, President Philip noted that Provost Phillips was leading the transition team for Dr. Jones, who was due to take the helm in January. He said that Dr. Jones will be at the February 4 UAlbany Day activities with participation by Council members. He reported that our campus financial proposal was awaiting formal action by the Governor and noted that the SUNY Trustees had adopted the SUNY 2013-14 budget plan. He also elaborated on the campus capital budget plan and highlighted several components.

Continuing with his report, he pointed to several major campus initiatives, such as the RNA Institute, which have attracted national publicity. He described the 2012 Foundation sponsored Citizen Laureate event as the most successful since its inception in the 1970s. Vice President Sanai added that some 600 people participated and over \$250,000 was raised. He said that the success of the event was boosted because of the people being honored – Norman and Micki Massry, the Community Laureates and Dean Katharine Briar-Lawson (Social Welfare) as the Academic Laureate.

Mr. Philip concluded his report by summarizing the several events that were part of the 2012 Homecoming Weekend including a successful home football game, distinguished speaker program, donor-related reception, and luncheon program featuring well known alumni speakers. Noting that this was his final meeting with the University Council, he expressed his appreciation to the Council for its support over the years that he has served as President and extended his wishes that they continue to play an active role in leading the institution with Dr. Jones, as he assumes institutional leadership.

In response, Mr. Tomson expressed the Council's gratitude for Mr. Philip's extraordinary leadership during these years of fiscal instability. Mr. Alric, Mr. Roth, and Dr. Jackson read portions of the formal Resolution which outlined Mr. Philip's successful career, noting his status as an alumnus and as a former Chair of the Council. Upon motion duly made and seconded (Jackson/Stein), the Resolution was adopted and presented to President Philip.

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Moving to the Student Report, Mr. Fox highlighted several activities undertaken by the Student Association (SA), pointing the annual Speaker Series, the Fall Festival and other programs actively engaging the student body. He said that our representatives participated in the SUNY Student Association meeting in Liverpool and also pointed to a large number of students who participated in clean-up activities following the hurricane.

Moving to the Graduate Student Update, Mr. Roth said that the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) was now financially solvent and that new policies were put forth to assure fiscal stability in the years ahead. He noted that this issue had come up at the prior Council meeting and he wanted to brief the Council on action the GSO had taken. Additionally, in response to an issue which Dr. Jackson had put forth at the previous Council meeting, he said that a student committee had been formed to address the serious matter of student debt, emanating primarily from borrowing for college expenses.

Moving to the Faculty Update, Professor Wagner briefly commented on the campus Senate's activities and observed that there were numerous faculty searches underway on campus across departments. She also reported on a freshman writing program being considered part of the campus GenEd Initiative.

Canon Hotaling summarized a host of activities sponsored by the Alumni Association (AA), many noted on a handout as she spoke. She said that the AA had developed a Three-Year Plan which included several programs specifically designed to benefit students such as the Career Advisory Network. She also said that AA "advertising" will soon be noticeable on several of the campus busses. In concluding her update, she distributed an AA Resolution also honoring President Philip for his leadership and his two degrees from UAlbany.

Moving to Old Business, Mr. Tomson commented on the Presidential Search and specifically the breach in confidentiality that occurred. He reported that discussions had been undertaken with SUNY representatives on possible actions that might be taken in response. Mr. JeanPierre asked whether an investigation might be done and Mr. Tomson said that there was some question of what authority existed to launch a formal investigation but that there was consensus with SUNY that this matter certainly required a review of the process for all such searches with the SUNY campuses.

Moving to New Business, Dr. Jackson commented further on the serious consequences for student borrowing to meet college expenses and the impact on families. He emphasized the importance of providing detailed information to students and their families on the impact of debt in the years following graduation, noting that such financial matters should be given before decisions are made about the college to be attended. Provost Phillips suggested that a presentation be made to the Council by our campus Director of Financial Aid and Mr. Tomson asked the Council Secretary to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting. A discussion ensued with Mr. Roth, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Balachandran, Mr. Stein, Mr. Tomson, and Mr. Fox commenting. Vice President Bouchard noted that there is a financial aid presentation made during the Summer Planning Conferences for incoming students. Dr. Jackson pointed to the need for such information much earlier than upon enrollment.

Moving to the next agenda item, Vice President Sanai reported on several substantial gifts that had been received by the Foundation since the last Council meeting, some directed for Library support and some to the School of Business campaign. He added comment related to the Citizen Laureate event, noted that the faculty/staff annual fund appeal was underway and pointed to the \$1.2 million in scholarships awarded this year. He added that numerous gifts have been made to the scholarship fund established in honor of

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George and Sandra Philip. Mr. Stein asked if the Council members had been solicited for this special appeal and Mr. Sanai said that they had but that he would send out the information again.

Mr. Sanai said that Dr. Jones had participated in several donor-related events in the past two months which provided some of our major donors an opportunity to meet him in a rather social environment.

Moving to the next agenda item, Vice President Sanai referred to the proposal to set a gift range for naming a "Luxury Suite" in the new Multi-Purpose Sports Complex at \$100,000 or more. A discussion ensued with Ms. Caldwell and Mr. Stein commenting. In response to several questions, Mr. Sanai and Vice President McElroy described the facility, noting that there were five such suites available for use.

Upon motion duly made and seconded (Clancy/Stein), the proposal was approved.

Moving to the next agenda item, Mr. Alric briefly summarized the ACT conference and highlighted several events at the meeting.

Moving to the next agenda item, Mr. Tomson, referring to the recently adopted By-Laws, said that per the provisions, election of officers would be considered at the last meeting of the year. A discussion ensued with Mr. Stein, Mr. JeanPierre, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Alric and Mr. Clancy commenting on elements of the By-Laws.

Mr. JeanPierre introduced the next agenda item on the Council's role. Mr. Clancy expressed concern about the Council member's participation in the Presidential Search process noting that he did not feel that some decisions had been made with full participation of each member's views. Emphasizing that he was not referring to any individual but rather to the process, he asked about the selection of the members to be on the search committee and the decision to have co-chairs of the committee, and also the limited involvement of the full Council in the latter part of the search.

Mr. Tomson replied that some of these matters were steered by the SUNY Presidential Search Guidelines and that the breach in confidentiality had, in fact, caused a shortened role of the Council in the latter part of the process. He acknowledged that this decision, unfortunately, had to be made quickly and in consultation with the Chancellor's Office in view of the need to expedite the process. Mr. Balachandran, Mr. Stein, Ms. Caldwell and Mr. JeanPierre added comment.

As the meeting drew to a close, Mr. JeanPierre recommended that the Council hold a Retreat in the spring to engage the Council with Dr. Jones and identify areas where the Council may be further involved.

Mr. Alric asked Provost Phillips to update the Council on the transitional team's objectives. She described a host of activities designed to facilitate Dr. Jones's understanding of the current campus structure and major programs, which will include a series of meetings with various constituencies, tours of the several campuses, sessions with the faculty and staff, etc.

There being no further business and upon motion duly made and seconded (Alric/Stein), the meeting adjourned at 3:55pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

Sorrell E. Chesin, Ph.D.
Secretary to the University Council