

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

University Senate, October 19, 2009

As submitted to Dick Collier, Secretary, University Senate

UNIVERSITY SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT – R. Michael Range, Chair

Update on 2008-09 charter amendments. In late August 2009 President Philip indicated that he was “not inclined to approve” the four charter amendments that the University Senate had approved last year. (The amendments and rationale are available at <http://www.albany.edu/senate/legislation.htm> , items 0809-08, 0809-09, 0809-13, and 0809-15) He also wanted to ask governance to begin a review of UAlbany's Faculty Bylaws. Because of the broad implications and procedural issues, Chair Range began a collaborative process with the president, including the current senate officers and four past senate chairs (Dewar, Hoyt, MacDonald, and Messner) to find a solution. President Philip is concerned about a possible infringement of the prerogatives vested in the Chief Administrative Officer by the Policies of the BOT. A constructive and productive follow up meeting on Tuesday, 9/29/09 resulted in the following agreements:

Amendment Regarding Eligibility to Chair Senate Councils and Committees, #08. The President will approve this, although he does not agree with this amendment because it limits the freedom of a council/committee to choose its chair, and because of its perceived divisiveness which creates two classes of council members: ex officio versus members chosen by governance.

Amendment to Ensure Better Consultation, #13. This amendment requires the President's approval. President Philip decided not to approve it. The senate leadership reassured President Philip that this amendment was not directed against him, and further agreed that the outcome of the Presidential Search late last spring makes this amendment unnecessary.

Clarifying Amendment on Graduate Courses, #09. There is broad agreement on the principles - already encoded in the charter - and on the intent of this amendment. However, it seems that the language may cause some confusion and could be clarified. Governance would work with Provost Phillips to find clearer language. (At its 10/5 meeting, the SEC charged GOV to work out appropriate language with the Provost.)

Amendment to Create IRCUAP, #15. There is agreement that some form of “first level review” is needed for programs and courses that do not originate from schools or colleges. It is not clear how such a committee would be placed within the faculty governance structure, and the matter remains under review. In the meantime, programs and/or courses that would be subject to such first level review would be placed on hold.

Review of Bylaws. The President will provide governance with specific instances of provisions in the current bylaws and charter that he views as inconsistent with the Policies of the Board of Trustees and with the principles of best practice of shared governance. Governance will promptly review and address these provisions as needed.

Retention Committee. Chair Range invited Vice Provost Wayne Locust, Chair of the Retention Committee, to join in a discussion at the 10/5 SEC meeting concerning the Retention Committee. Questions had been raised about the membership and the current activities of this committee created in 2005. Vice Provost Locust reported success in turning around trends in retention into a desirable direction. He clarified that the Retention Committee has completed its task, that no further meeting would be held beyond a final meeting in late October 2009, and that some of its recommendations will be incorporated in the Freshmen Year Experience (FYE). Consequently there is no need to update membership. A Final Report will be forthcoming. The Chair thanked Vice Provost Locust for the successful work of the Retention Committee.

Freshmen Year Experience (FYE). The Task Force submitted its Final Report to Provost Phillips in May 2009. On September 11, 2009, the Provost sent the Final Report of the FYE Task Force to all faculty and staff, with an invitation for comments and suggestions. Chair Range suggested that the chairs of the Task Force edit the report to include routine items such as membership of the Task Force, date of the Final Report, and some missing information. He also asked that statements in the report's Implementation Plan involving “the current senate chair” (i.e., the 2008-09 senate chair) should be clarified to indicate that the 2009-10 Senate Chair was not a member of the Task Force, and consequently, whatever role may have been agreed upon by the former chair cannot be transferred to the (now) current chair. On October 7, Provost Phillips followed up with a message to the chairs of CAA, GOV, UAC, ULC, and UPPC, asking them to review and discuss the Final Report with their respective councils, with the goal to provide her with feedback and perspectives on the FYE. The discussion about the FYE Final Report at today's meeting provides the senate with an opportunity to give further input and perspectives about the FYE to the Provost. There is no action item regarding FYE on today's agenda. Chair Range has invited the co-chairs of the Task Force, Diane Dewar and Wayne Locust, to join in today's meeting. Upon invitation by Provost Phillips, the Senate Chair and Senate Officers have recently met with her to begin a discussion about the approval process for different aspects of future specific proposals regarding the FYE. For example, changing existing Gen Ed courses by “infusing” them with FYE

components would require that those courses and changes be returned to the originating departments and/or schools/colleges for their approval before transmittal to UAC. New FYE components that do not reside within a school or college would require a first level review along the lines of IRCUAP, approved by the Senate on May 4, 2009. While some details of IRCUAP are still under review (see the relevant update on charter amendments above), it would appear that there is agreement about these aspects of the approval process.

UFS (University Faculty Senator's Report) – William Lanford & Daniel D. White, SUNY Senators

The UAlbany Senate will be represented at the SUNY Faculty Senate Fall Plenary Session on October 22-24 at SUNY IT in Utica. Faculty, staff and Senators should feel free to contact me if they have issues that they think are pertinent to SUNY-wide governance.

In addition, Ken O'Brien (Chair of the SUNY Faculty Senate) has asked that all SUNY Senators be prepared to bring whatever specifics they have available about the effect of the budget cuts on individual programs, such as program elimination, non-renewal of Teaching Faculty (both tenure track and adjunct), Professional Faculty, and other staff reductions, etc. "These specifics, if available by our meeting, will provide the evidence of the harm the cuts will be causing, making student success much more difficult."

The Provost and President have provided the figure of 109 non-renewals over the past year. I would be glad to know any specifics from departments who were badly hit by these non-renewals.

GSO (Graduate Student Organization) – Melanie Breganza, GSO President

Nothing to report.

SA (Student Association) – Josh Sussman, SA President

Nothing to report.

MSCHE Steering Committee Report – Reed Hoyt, University Senate Representative

Nothing to report because the MSCHE Steering Committee has not met.

CAA (Council on Academic Assessment) – Heidi Andrade, Chair

The CAA met on October 5. The meeting schedule for the remainder of the fall semester is Wednesday, October 21 at 10:15 a.m. in UNH 306, Wednesday, November 4 at 10:15 a.m. in UNH 107, Monday, November 16 at 10 a.m. in UNH 306, and on a date in December TBD.

The Council discussed the process of review of annual Student Learning Outcome (SLO) reports, determined a method for identifying best practices in SLO reports from 20008-2009 to share at the Provost's assessment meeting in November, and approved a memo to the SEC regarding the General Education Assessment Committee's plans for the 2009-2010 academic year.

CAFFECOR (Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility) – Susanna Fessler, Chair

The committee continues to collect data and materials to resolve the problem of conflicting freedom-of-speech policies on campus. It appears that Senate Bill 0304-25, which was passed by the Senate, was not reviewed at the Presidential level, and we propose that this happen this year.

CAFFECOR met on Monday, October 12th to discuss the following issues: 1) A recent report in the ASP about students' freedom of speech being restricted in the residence halls, 2) Our efforts to unite the policies on campus between the offices of Affirmative Action, Student Success, and the Senate, and 3) the drafting of formal procedures should a university community member ask for CAFFECOR's assistance in a case of speech code. Nothing formal has been drafted apropos of these issues, but each has been delegated to committee members.

CERS (Committee on Ethics in Research and Scholarship) – John Monfasani, Chair

The ad hoc joint committee with GOV to revise the present CERS policy statement has been formed as per the directive of the Senate last May and will move forward expeditiously. The committee consists of Carolyn MacDonald, Edward Cupoli, and John Monfasani. The committee will report back to CERS and GOV when it has a draft text to recommend.

COR (Council on Research) – James Castracane, Chair

COR has been busy populating sub-committees and we still have a few slots to fill.

CPCA (Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments) – Carlos Rodriguez, Chair

Nothing to report.

GAC (Graduate Academic Council) – Laurence Kranich, Chair

At its meeting on September 23, GAC approved the current membership lists and chairs for each of its standing committees. There are still several vacancies, and the Council authorized the Chair to provisionally appoint additional volunteers as needed.

The Council was briefed by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the status of the Graduate Student Support (GSS) review. In addition, a draft of a revised proposal by the Departments of Biological Sciences and Computer Science for an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Professional Science Management was circulated and discussed. The final proposal will be reviewed by the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction and brought before the Council at its next meeting.

Other items were remanded to committees, including consideration of a graduate syllabus requirement, study of the different types of graduate certificates, and possible introduction of graduate DARS audits.

GOV (Governance Council) – Eric Lifshin, Chair

The Governance Council has established its meeting schedule for the fall 2009 semester. Meetings will be on Fridays at 4 pm in UNH 105 on the following dates: 10/2, 10/16/ 10/30, 11/20, and 12/11.

At its 10/2 meeting GOV nominated two of its members for membership on the CERS Ad Hoc Committee mandated by the Senate at its May 2009 meeting. It also recommended that, in addition to University Counsel, CERS include Professor James Dias, newly appointed Interim VPR, on the CERS Ad Hoc Committee. These recommendations are being forwarded to CERS Chair John Monfasani. GOV also voted on replacements for the two members of the DSP/DTP Committee. Their names will be forwarded to the President, along with the council's recommendation that the names of the members of the committee along with nomination deadlines and regulations be posted on the University web pages, both in the interest of transparency and in the hope of attracting more nominations.

At its 10/16 meeting the Chair noted that discussions with the Provost on the Charter Amendment relating to Graduate Courses (0809-09) will be delayed to a future meeting.

In response to a request from Bruce Szelest, GOV approved the structure of the SIRS Advisory Committee that was proposed with an additional member of the Teaching Faculty and two representatives to be chosen by the University's Department Chairs.

Because of one person nominated for the DSP/DTP Committee indicated he was unable to serve, a replacement was selected and the name forwarded to the President.

Provost Phillips met with the council to discuss the Strategic Planning structure and timeline. Because of the sudden resignation of one member of the Honors College Governing Board, the counsel selected alternative names and gave these to the Provost.

The council was informed that one of the GOV members whose names were forwarded to CERS was unable to serve on the CERS Ad Hoc Committee established by the Senate last May and that CERS has approved a group of three which will report its recommendations to CERS (as well as to GOV). John Reilly has informed CERS that on principle University Council should not be a member of a University governance body but agreed to attend CERS Ad Hoc Committee meeting to iron out any conflicts or confusions. CERS did not accept the suggestion from GOV that the Interim VPR be a member of the CERS Ad Hoc Committee.

LISC (Council on Libraries, Information Systems, and Computing) – Gwen Moore, Chair

LISC met on October 12. CIO Christine Haile and Dean of Libraries reported on plans for IT and library services if there is as major outbreak of H1N1 on campus this fall.

Chris Haile also noted that the renovations to Husted Hall are nearly complete, with twenty new tech-equipped classrooms. Some might be used in spring 2010.

Mary Casserly announced that the Special Collections program has made online copies of UAlbany student newspapers from 1916-1985 available, with support from friends of the library. More recent papers will be added later.

Renewals of licensing agreements for journals are being negotiated, including one with Elsevier.

The IT Committee will take up the issue of privacy policies relating to IT.

UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council) – Joan Savitt, Chair

UAC is finishing work on undergraduate credit load bill and wishes to bring it to the Senate at the next meeting. This bill shows the intent of UAC but the wording may be subject to further editing. UAC also voted to add Linda Kryzkowski, a non-voting guest, to its regular email distribution list. At its 10/15 meeting, the UAC approved a revisions of its credit load bill.

ULC (University Life Council) – Daniel R. Smith, Chair

ULC has met twice and discussed the following topics:

Principles for Undergraduate Ombuds Office, which will be communicated to the Provost; also gathered faculty names for possible nominations for the committee

Discussed the FYE Taskforce Report, and will communicate observations and advice to the provost and SEC.

Began discussion of the ULC response to President Philip's letter on the Smoking Policy

UPPC (University Planning and Policy Council) – John Delano, Chair

The University Planning and Policy Council met for nearly two hours on Thursday, October 8th. Three (3) items were on the agenda: (i) The University's strategic planning process; (ii) Role of governance in the University's budgetary process; and (iii) Perspectives on First Year Experience Task Force report.

(i) Strategic Plan: Provost Phillips provided the Council with an overview of the strategic planning process. A new strategic plan for the University, which is scheduled to be completed by September 2010, will be developed at the same time that a SUNY-wide strategic plan (commissioned by Chancellor Zimpher) is being formed. Provost Phillips indicated that the UAlbany strategic planning process is strongly needed since it will be important for identifying areas of strategic investment and other areas of disinvestment. The ongoing Middle States Review has collected information and documents that will be helpful in the strategic planning process. Provost Phillips requested feedback at the Council meeting and in a subsequent e-mail about the proposed methods for developing the strategic plan.

(ii) University's Budget Process: In advance of the UPPC meeting on October 4th, UPPC members were provided with relevant background information (e.g., portions of the Senate Charter and Faculty Bylaws; published article by Fred Volkwein describing strategies used successfully by UAlbany in the past during harsh budgetary times that included retrenchments of faculty and programs). Senate Chair Range, who requested that this matter be placed on the UPPC's agenda, stated that insufficient budgetary information had been provided during the last several years, and that that situation needed to be remedied in order for governance to provide informed advice about the allocation of the University's finances. Provost Phillips stated that she and President Philip both recognize the importance of consultation with governance, and are developing ways to increase consultation. Interim Vice President for Finance and Business, Steve Beditz, stated that macro-scale budgetary information could likely be provided, but that finer-scale data were limited by the absence of appropriate software that resulted in high manual workloads for personnel in his office.

(iii) First Year Experience (FYE) Task Force: Members had not read the (FYE) report in sufficient detail to offer any substantive comments on its content and recommendations. The discussion was thereby deferred to the next UPPC meeting.

The next UPPC meeting will occur on Thursday afternoon, October 22.