

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

**2005-2006 Senate Executive Committee
Monday December 5, 2005 UAB 437 3:30 – 5:35**

Present: J.P. Abraham, R. Collier, K. Hall, S. Herbst, V. Idone, A. Lyons, C. MacDonald, S. Messner, E. Redkey, M. Rodriguez, J. Savitt, M. Sherman, D. Shub, L. Snyder, R. Zitomer

Minutes: The Minutes of November 7, 2005 were approved with one correction to the attendance.

President's and Provost's Report:

- **Gift:** As indicated at the press conference for the Honors College, the University will accept a gift of one half million dollars on December 6th. The gift will put the Inaugural Student Scholarship Campaign above the one million dollar goal. An official announcement will probably be made at the next University Senate meeting.
- **Religious Holiday Bill:** Provost Herbst and the University Counsel are working on the Religious Holiday bill. They are not quite finished, but the result will probably not be in accord with the Senate action. President Hall will address the issue at the December 19th Senate meeting. The student newspaper is doing a story on this bill as well.
- **Alumni Visit in California:** President Hall announced that he had a productive visit with alumni in Los Angeles over the Thanksgiving holiday. He was heartened by the response.
- **Compact planning:** Provost Herbst handed out the updated list of members for the Board of Visitors as of December 2, 2005. She and the President are very pleased with the people who have signed on so far. The first meeting will be in March. The Board of Visitors will advise on priorities after the Selective Investment Committee has completed its work.
- **Mission Review II Site Visit:** Provost Herbst thanked Chair Messner for his assistance in preparing for the site visit of Provost Salins pertaining to Mission Review II. The Provost explained that President Hall would lead the discussion, with presentations from various members of the senior administration. President Hall noted that there are a series of talking points drafted in response to questions from SUNY. A Committee member asked if the document could be circulated. President Hall noted that the document is currently only a draft, but it will be shared with the Executive Committee members as a confidential communication (via hard copy, not email). This is to be treated as background briefing and not as an official University statement. It is basically an elaboration of the dashboard and enrollment projections. The Executive Committee members were asked to contact any one of the governance representatives (R. Collier, D. Dewar, W. Lanford, S. Messner) with any comments or suggestions relevant to the site visit.
- **Office of International Education:** President Hall reported that he hoped to expand international programs and enhance their visibility in the future. This will entail the eventual appointment of a Vice Provost for International Education. Until an appropriate candidate can be recruited for this position, it will be filled on an interim basis. President Hall asked the members of the Executive Committee to please send any nominations to Provost Herbst.

- Retention Committee: President Hall talked about the undergraduate education discussions spurred by the student satisfaction survey. There are capable people working on the general topic across the country, and reviewing the documents available can make the job here less daunting. The University does not need to reinvent the wheel; it is a matter of deciding on the priorities for this institution and implementing them.
- In response to questions, President Hall explained that efforts at fundraising for the new Honors College have been dedicated to scholarships and not to course development or administrative costs. The President also indicated that the Honors College could facilitate efforts to develop international education.

Chair's Report:

- Council Summaries: Chair Messner thanked the members for submitting the council summaries on time. This makes the meeting more efficient. He also asked that the summaries be updated as needed and sent to A. Lyons for circulation at the Senate Meeting on the 19th of December. They should be submitted by noon on Friday the 16th of December.
- Mission Review II: The Chair reported that the selection of the representatives of governance for the SUNY site visit was governed by two considerations: the desire to have reasonably broad representation and the need for a group of a manageable size. The group consists of the two SUNY-wide Senators (R. Collier and W. Lanford), the Vice Chair (D. Dewar), and the Chair (S. Messner). The group will meet with Provost Herbst and B. Szelest to go over the draft "talking points" distributed to all Executive Committee members and to discuss the format of the session.
- Undergraduate Elections: The Chair reported that the names of undergraduate students elected to the University Senate were finally given to the Senate office last Thursday. There were problems with the first elections, and they had to be redone. D. Dewar will propose council assignments for the undergraduate senators and will inform council chairs upon Senate approval.
- Charter Change: The Governance Council has been asked to consider any changes in the Senate Charter required by the newly created position of Vice President for Student Success.
- Brown Bag Lunch: The Chair reminded everyone of the brown bag lunch to be held at 12:00 noon in the President's Conference Room this coming Friday.

Items for Senate Agenda for 12/19/2005:

- (a) CAFFECOR: Proposal to Establish an Undergraduate Ombudsoffice:

CAFFECOR recommends the establishment of an undergraduate Ombudsoffice, like the one that has been recently created for graduate students. The office would serve as a "clearing house" for advising students who have grievances or concerns but do not know how to have them addressed. After discussion, the Committee members agreed that CAFFECOR has raised a number of legitimate concerns but felt that more details are required about the nature and functioning of an undergraduate Ombudsoffice. The Committee referred the matter to UAC for the development of a specific bill.

- (b) CAFFECOR: Resolution to Endorse the SUNY-wide Faculty Senate Bill

Opposing the “Academic Bill of Rights”

L. Snyder reported on the discussion of the “Academic Bill of Rights” (ABOR) by CAFFECOR. The stated intent of ABOR is to ensure that students are not subject to political indoctrination in the classroom. Critics have charged that the bill might lead to undue influence on the academy by outsiders with a political agenda. To determine whether students at Albany felt the need for the alleged protections of ABOR, CAFFECOR met with S. Faerman and student representatives. At the meeting students were asked to express their major concerns without specifically asking them about faculty political indoctrination. Students enumerated a range of grievances, such as failure to provide syllabi, failure to offer listed courses, and problems in transferring credits. They also expressed concerns about the use of academic steroids. No students identified political indoctrination in the classroom as a concern.

On behalf of CAFFECOR, L. Snyder made a motion recommending that the Executive Committee introduce a resolution endorsing the SUNY-wide Faculty Senate resolution opposing the “Academic Bill of Rights.” The motion was seconded and passed with a voice vote.

(c) LISC: Proposal for Email as an Official Means of Communication with Students

D. Wagner reported that it was often the practice in the past for LISC to make decisions about technical, administrative issues without bringing them before the full Senate. Consistent with the practice, LISC approved a policy pertaining to the use of E-mail as an official means of communication with students last spring with no further Senate action. This fall it was determined that such policies should be voted on by the council and brought to the Senate for consideration. LISC is now considering bringing the email policy to the Senate, possibly with proposed amendments. D. Wagner distributed a list of guidelines that the administration has been using. Several Committee members raised concerns, such as difficulties that might arise when classes are not in session and students may not have access to E-mail. Others questioned whether it is reasonable to expect students to continuously monitor their E-mail.

A motion to send the proposal back to LISC for further review was made and seconded. It was noted that ITS consultants will be here a day and a half, meeting with President Hall and others on the 13th and 14th of December, and they might be helpful. The discussion should include questions about communicating during vacation time, spam filters, redirecting e-mail, and the responsibility for students, faculty and staff to check their accounts. The motion to refer the matter back to LISC passed with 2 negative votes.

(d) GAC: Proposal for a Certificate in Public Health Surveillance

The Proposal for a Certificate in Public Health Surveillance has been approved by GAC and UPC. In response to questions, it was noted that the proposal is intended to meet a demand on the part of working professionals and that the training associated with the certificate would better prepare them to respond to public health emergencies. Some Committee members expressed skepticism about these kinds of certificate programs, but the sense of the Committee was that that proposal had been reviewed properly and that it should be introduced on the Senate floor for action.

(e) GAC: Proposal to Separate CNSE M.S. and Ph.D. Programs into Distinctive

Nanoscale Science and Nanoscale Engineering Programs

M. Rodriguez explained that this proposal is intended to separate what are now combined nanoscale science and nanoscale engineering programs. GAC has regarded this as a program revision, which need only be reported to the Senate. To ensure that proper procedures are followed, M. Rodriguez asked for advice from the Executive Committee as to whether the proposal should be regarded as a program revision, or if it should be reviewed as involving new programs. The consensus of the Committee was that the proposal should be referred back to GAC for review as one that creates new programs (and possibly terminates an existing program). The Committee recommended that the potential impact of the proposed changes on other units and procedures for notifying such units of the proposed changes be considered by GAC.

New Business:

(a) COR: Proposal to Return Authority to Grant Permanent Center Status to COR

V. Idone, Chair of COR, proposed that authority to grant permanent center status be returned to COR. He observed that in the past, these decisions were made by COR without the need for further action by Senate bodies. The rationale for the proposal is to expedite review, which is often important given the fluid nature of external funding. V. Idone argued that the authority being requested is implied by the language in the Senate Charter pertaining to COR's responsibilities (SX.5.4).

C. MacDonald noted that the language in the Charter cited by V. Idone might be inconsistent with the charge for UPC. She also argued that UPC should review proposals for centers if there are significant resource implications, and questioned whether any delay associated with full Senate review would in fact be harmful. In the course of discussion, some members suggested that it would be appropriate for COR to make decisions about center status and simply report to the Senate. Any senator could then raise questions about the decision and/or about the need for further review. Others argued that it would be best to err on the side of caution and report such matters to UPC and the Senate for review and approval. The Committee agreed that notice of all actions of COR would be transmitted to UPC for determination of whether significant resource issues are involved.

(b) Additional Council Activity Requiring Consultation or Coordination.

C. MacDonald reported that UPC has been discussing the survey on student satisfaction conducted by E. Wulfert. A number of concerns have been raised about faculty who may not be fulfilling their teaching responsibilities adequately. Discussion ensued about possible remedies for students with grievances about unsatisfactory teaching, including creating a governance body to deal with ethical lapses pertaining to teaching and placing greater emphasis on teaching in promotion decisions. Some members noted that students presently have the option of going to the Chair with complaints about teaching. It was also noted that any sanctioning procedures for unsatisfactory teaching might raise issues pertaining to contracts and the union. Others suggested that part of the problem was the insufficient size of the faculty. Committee members agreed that the issue of student satisfaction is clearly an important one that warrants further consideration by the administration and the Senate.

Motion to adjourn at 5:35pm approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy R. Davis, Senate Recorder