

**Graduate Academic Council
2010 – 2011**

Minutes of the Council meeting for January 24, 2011
Approved by the Council on February 11, 2011.

In attendance: J. Aini, J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff),
S. Commuri, N. Fahrenkopf, C. Fox, L. Kranich, F. Leiva, H. Miller,
T. Timmons, K. Williams

Unable to attend: R. Beach, S. Chittur, L. Fuller, T. Groves, W. Lanford, S. Kazanas

1. Minutes

The Council unanimously approved minutes of 11/9/2010 and 11/19/2010, as amended. Minutes of 12/3/2010 and 12/10/2010 were approved with one abstention each.

2. Dean's report – K. Williams

The Dean discussed the continuation of program assessments from last fall. One goal is to develop a set of metrics for evaluating programs that are valid and reliable and appropriate within each discipline. This past fall the Dean requested the program directors review a set of outcome indicators and discuss them with their faculty. A follow-up meeting will take place to finalize a core set of measures. The goal is to identify indicators of quality that can be used by departments, schools/colleges, the Dean of Graduate Studies to assess and strengthen programs. The Dean will share an upcoming draft of indicators with the Council but expects it will take another month.

There have been questions raised about the use of the Academic Analytics database for assessment of doctoral programs. Concerns about the database have been noted and no decision has been made about renewing the contract with AA. In December, AA held a conference call meeting that was attended by 10-12 program directors. Improvements in the database were discussed, but some limitations remain.

The Graduate student support allocations were sent to the Deans early January and soon should be forwarded to departments. The budget cut this year will average 15% with cuts to programs ranging from 7-30%. There will be flexibility to move monies around, and departments will retain funds they receive from moving students to grants, etc.

We were able to preserve extended year funding for this year. A determination will be made in the future of what should be done with this program.

The Dean mentioned the lag of student enrollment at the Graduate level which is below last year's enrollment rate. Today's report showed we are behind 10%. Undergraduate enrollments are on target. Although some colleges are missing enrollments goals, it is consistent with national trends. Most missed enrollments are non-degree students. The Dean and Vice-Provost for Enrollment Management Wayne Locust will meet with deans of schools and colleges.

3. Chair's report –L. Kranich

Since the Chair was unable to attend the 12/13/2010 Senate meeting, Council member T. Groves represented GAC. He submitted the following report:

At the UAlbany Senate meeting on December 13, 2010, Prof. Kenneth O'Brien spoke by invitation. Prof. O'Brien is the SUNY-wide University Faculty Senate President. The following is a summary of his remarks, which mainly focused on the budget cuts over the last three years, and the resulting program and staff reductions.

An important role of the SUNY Senate is to articulate governance throughout the SUNY system. This consists in part of providing a common voice for faculty, professional staff, and students. Of special current relevance are curriculum, General Education, and student mobility through the system. The SUNY budget has suffered a total \$640M reduction over the last three years. The lack of tuition support has caused students and their families to take on increasing fiscal responsibility, which previously rested with the New York State taxpayers. In effect this trend represents a gradual privatization of the University. The current financial situation is dire, and is about to go critical.

A second important role of the SUNY Senate is to articulate finances throughout the SUNY system. SUNY is currently in the budget submission process. It is extremely difficult to forecast the budget in the current political environment, including a new Governor. Each campus must have its own budgetary process, which addresses local needs and priorities. It is up to the President of each campus to articulate the consultation process. Deactivation of programs is basically a personnel decision, whereas retrenchment is basically an academic decision. Deactivation and retrenchment have separate, unique implications. For example, the union charter has a Retrenchment Article, but does not have a Program Deactivation Article. A significant group of faculty members believe that the process is flawed. This must be dealt with by each campus, since the responsibility for locally managing the budget cuts rests with each campus. Communication is key to this process, and certainty of process must be a high priority. Each campus must determine for itself what its core mission consists of.

In the question period, Prof. Lifshin commented that the most pressing current issue is the budget cuts, which are causing divisiveness within the whole community. Prof. O'Brien emphasized that an appropriate dialog and consultation process must take place, but that ultimately, decisions affecting personnel are made by administrators. A SUNY-wide set of guidelines does not presently exist, but could potentially be formulated. Prof. Lahiri commented that the UAlbany budget consists more than 80% of salaries. He added that if the Governor were to freeze salaries, this would help the campuses to weather the budget crisis. Prof. Haldar asked whether there is any discussion of consolidating campuses, to which Prof. O'Brien answered no. However, consolidation of budgets across campuses might be discussed, where economies of scale might exist.

The proposal from the Department of Economics for a combined BS-MA in Economics was passed by the Senate and signed by the President. The proposal has been submitted to NYS Education Department.

4. Committee Reports

CAAS – H. Miller, Chair

Nothing to report.

CC&I – T. Groves, Chair

No Curriculum and Instruction meeting has been held since the last GAC meeting, but a February 7th meeting is scheduled. The main order of business will be discussion of the School of Education Program/Course Action Request for the Certificate of Graduate Studies on Online Learning and Teaching (COLT).

CEPP – S. Commuri, Chair

Nothing to report.

5. CAA Assessment Report.

This morning the Chair emailed Council members a draft summary of the Computer Science review which will be discussed at the next Council meeting. If members have suggestions for modifications, please email them to the Chair.

Council member T. Timmons presented the report on the Philosophy Department, and he will draft a summary report.

Council member F. Leiva presented the report on the Physics Department. Apparently, one item from the list of CAA materials is not available on the IR website. The Chair will contact Bruce Szelest at Institutional Research to obtain the additional information. Discussion will resume at the next meeting.

The next reviews scheduled for discussion are Reading (T. Groves) and Criminal Justice (W. Lanford).

END OF GAC 1/24/2011 MINUTES
