



# UNIVERSITY FACULTY



## SENATE REPORT SUNY Cobleskill, Cobleskill January 28-30, 2010

### SENATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**Ken O'Brien** (SUNY Brockport).

- SUNY's Strategic Planning Process is hurtling along. There have been four "conversations" held so far with the "Traveling 200" and the Steering Committee. Check the Strategic Planning website [www.suny.edu/strategicPlan/](http://www.suny.edu/strategicPlan/) for the details of the meetings. Two additional subjects have been added: "SUNY and the World" and "Research and Innovation." The main theme of the Strategic Planning process is still economic revitalization and enhanced quality of life for citizens of the State of New York.
- Shared governance and effective communication between faculty and administration are important to the Chancellor. Ken O'Brien and Tina Good (President of the SUNY Community College Faculty Senate – FCCC) are co-chairing a work-group proposed by the Chancellor to address issues related to shared governance. In this vein, Ken has been assured that we will not be asked to comment on important issues such as changing SUNY Gen Ed policy with such short notice in the future.
- The Board of Trustees (BoT) is working hard and dedicated to SUNY. There is evidence for optimism based on recent Board meetings and committee meetings. President O'Brien believes that the BoT is trying to make SUNY the best public higher education system possible. There still remains some concern however that the Board and the public don't have a good idea about what we do in higher education.
- The state of the NYS budget is a continuing concern for SUNY. More proposed cuts to the base funding are being debated. The Governor's "Public Higher Education Empowerment Act" will be discussed by Monica Rimai (Senior Vice Chancellor and COO of SUNY) in her presentation to the Plenary in Cobleskill.
- Responsibility for assessment seems to be moving back to individual campuses with oversight from System. The Chancellor is expected to propose a new policy to the BoT in March.
- A proposal to give SUNY a more flexible General Education policy was accepted by the BoT in January. Information from the UAlbany Senate was provided on short notice to President O'Brien to support the plan.
- The BoT has approved the resolution that was passed by the SUNY Faculty Senate in October relating to Student Mobility (Transfer). The Joint Committee on Transfer and Articulation developed a restatement of policy that will improve the ability of students to transfer between SUNY campuses. The SUNY Provost's office is developing a web site that will allow students, advisors, and faculty to identify direct course equivalencies. There is also a structure in place to deal with appeals that arise from students and transfer institutions.

Question and answer session:

President O'Brien urges faculty to participate in the Strategic Planning Process by providing feedback to the web site. We are assured that this input is taken seriously and informs the process. The Steering committees is working on a winnowed down version of the Strategic "bullet points" that will lead us into the future.

*Is it really prudent to have 200 people traveling around the state to develop this plan?*

The diversity of voices from around the state seemed to call for a large group. The large group provides a level of authenticity to the results that

could not be achieved by "nine men and one woman in room" type planning.

The Faculty Senate and FCCC will also continue to work closely together.

*Will there be a resolution on the Governor's empowerment for SUNY legislation?*

The Executive Committee of the SUNY Faculty Senate does not believe that we have enough information about the legislation to take a stand for or against it yet.

There was discussion on the floor about the perceived pros and cons of our current understanding and a suggestion that we wait for Monica Rimai's presentation for greater details from System Administration

*Written report available.*

### PEDRO CABAN, VICE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Dr. Cabán heads the Office of Diversity and Educational equity (<http://www.suny.edu/provost/odee/index.cfm>)
- Diversity is defined broadly by ODEE. The Office seeks to support institution specific and flexible definitions of diversity.
- Diversity has been shown to improve learning outcomes and academic excellence. Diversity is also integrally linked to the mission of social justice and equity.
- SUNY is one of the few systems with an office dedicated to diversity and educational equity.
- There are six main areas of work in ODEE. Academic excellence, social justice, representation, the educational pipeline, globalization, and workforce development. ODEE provides funding to promote these areas.
- Dr. Cabán's PowerPoint presentation is available through Senator White.

Question and answer session

*What can we do to support ODEE and how do we show what we are already doing around the system?*

It was proposed to develop a list of faculty-initiated efforts that can be collected and perhaps added to the ODEE site.

### DAVID LAVALLEE, (INTERIM) SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST

- Dr. Lavallee spoke at length about the process of choosing a permanent Provost for SUNY. He will not be a candidate but other candidates internal to SUNY will be considered. There will be a large representative group to choose his successor. A professional search firm has been hired to begin the process. They will be visiting campuses in the next few months. The hope is to have a new Provost in place by August. Dr. Lavallee has agreed to stay on until a new Provost is hired.
- The Chancellor's executive staff has developed close relationships with their counterparts in CUNY so that we can, where possible, support each other in this challenging budget environment.
- The BoT will consider a resolution to transfer assessment responsibilities back to individual campuses in light of the Middle States focus on assessment activities. UAlbany Provost Susan Phillips has had a leadership role in the effort to modify the current

policies. SUNY Central Administration would take on a support role instead of a policing role.

- The Provost's Office is concentrating on the Student Mobility changes that were passed by the BoT. They are developing a transfer equivalency online database and organizing work groups of faculty in areas such as Business and Communication to determine equivalencies for lower level major course work.
- The Provost is encouraging campuses to opt for flexibility in General Education now that the policy has been relaxed. He used the example that if a student comes in with two semesters of foreign language he or she may be waived out of one of the other ten categories. There is an appeal process if transfer campuses find that students are not being well prepared or if courses are not transferring that should.
- The Provost spoke about the potential benefits of the Governor's Higher Ed Empowerment Act. There was concern from the Senators about differential tuition and what it means. The Provost indicated that the SUNY Community Colleges already possess the ability to change tuition rates by approval of their local county legislature. The history has shown a reasonable measured increase in tuition and their budgets seem to be in better shape than the other 34 campuses.

#### **MONICA RIMAI, SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

- The COO provided a thorough analysis of the current facts about the Empowerment Act and its benefits.
- National data indicate that current state support of higher ed is around 20% which is down considerably from 30 years ago.
- The Governor's proposed NYS budget cuts SUNY's base by 210 million spread across the units.
- State budget cuts over the last several years - 2008-09 cut \$215M, 2009-2010 cut \$210M, 2010-11, proposed budget would have an addition cut of \$210M, For a total cut in state support of \$635M over 3 years.
- The Empowerment Act will provide three "buckets" of flexibility: Tuition (Rational and Differential), deregulation of procurement, and entrepreneurial opportunity.
- Tuition has four components: differential, rational, TAP, and Enrollment management.
- Differential tuition should be applied to opportunities for unique investment. There would be some cap on tuition related to the Higher Education Price Index.
- The COO expressed her concern that the State increases tuition and then lowers State support to offset it. This practice is unusual and not sustainable.
- Senators expressed concern about the lack of detail in the planning and the inability to prevent the legislature from reducing state aid even if we control tuition dollars. The COO expressed the opinion that the Empowerment act is not the whole solution but is a step in the right direction.

#### **NANCY ZIMPER, CHANCELLOR**

- The Chancellor took questions from each of the sectors and responded to each.
- The main theme of the questions concerned the Empowerment act.
- Senators are concerned to avoid the unintended consequences that may come with buying/leasing State land and differential tuition that may create competition within the system.
- The Chancellor is working to create a more cohesive, transparent, and "calibrated" system. She used the example of New Paltz closing its Nursing program at a time when we need nurses more than ever. It turns out the SUNYIT was at the same time developing a program that would offset this loss.

#### **TINA GOOD, PRESIDENT OF FACULTY COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

- Explained the organization and representation of FCCC. One delegate from each campus and a very small budget for travel and plenary sessions. The CC presidents provide funding to FCCC as

they see fit which can be a source of conflict when difficult resolutions are considered.

- There has been a positive working relationship between FCCC and SUNY Faculty Senate that will hopefully continue.

#### **UNIVERSITY CENTER SECTOR CONCERNS/QUESTIONS**

- We supported, in principle, the ideas proposed by the Empowerment Act however there are details that need to be worked out before we can fully support the act.
- We reiterated the concerns from the last plenary about Graduate Assistantship support and asked for a return to the previous practice of tuition waivers. "Last year's tuition-increase/budget-cut resulted in a disproportionate cut in support for graduate student TAs and RAs. Because university centers pay tuition for many graduate students from an already declining budget, the increase in tuition claims a larger fraction of this budget, leaving less for student stipends. This at a time when SUNY already pays its TAs and RAs less than its peer institutions."

#### **Reports for the Following Committees are available:**

- **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
- **AWARDS COMMITTEE.**
- **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**
- **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** (faculty lines over time)
- **GRADUATE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE**
- **STUDENT LIFE.**
- **UNDERGRADUATE COMMITTEE.**
- **ETHICS COMMITTEE**
- **MOBILITY (PREVIOUS ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER)**

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

- **Budget resolution to refund SUNY base, passed**
- **Resolution to create a Diversity standing committee, passed**
- **Resolution to amend Bylaws (vote count for Chair not revealed), defeated**
- **Resolution to establish a Research and Equipment database for the system, passed**

#### **REMINDER OF THE FACULTY SENATE PAGE**

Although material is slow to appear on the site, eventually the full text of motions passed should appear:

<http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/>.

Respectfully submitted,

William Lanford, and  
Daniel D. White  
SUNY Faculty Senators