

University at Albany  
State University of New York

University Council  
Minutes February 27, 2014

A regular meeting of the University Council was held on February 27, 2014 at the SUNY Global Center, 116 East 55<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY. Members present were: Michael Castellana, Chair; Pierre Alric; Robert Balachandran; Klara Botvinnik (Elected Student Member); Patricia Caldwell; James Clancy (by phone); John Fallon; Abner JeanPierre; Michael Stein; Joette Stefl-Mabry (Faculty Representative); Timothy Murphy (Alumni Representative, by phone); and Gary Roth (Graduate Student Representative, by phone). Also present were President Robert Jones; Vice Presidents Fardin Sanai and Stephen Beditz; John Reilly, Counsel's Office; Leanne Wirkkula, Chief of Staff; and Peter Wohl.

Mr. Beditz confirmed that the members present and participating by phone constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order. He asked for a motion to amend the agenda (Botvinnik/JeanPierre) which was approved, as were the minutes of the December 6, 2013 meeting with one correction (Alric/Caldwell). Chairman Castellana then gave the floor to President Jones for his remarks.

The President introduced Dr. Leanne Wirkkula, the University's new Chief of staff. She comes to us with significant and extensive higher education experience at the University of Minnesota, and as a higher education consultant in the private sector. Dr. Wirkkula was warmly welcomed by the Council.

The President then gave an overview of current activities. Of particular note is the systematic enrollment strategy the University is now pursuing. Insofar as the other University Centers are deliberately growing their enrollments, in order to remain competitive we must think about our long term strategy as well. (The President and the Chair agreed that at a future meeting we will take a detailed look at the enrollment management process and discuss its elements at a finer level, for example out-of-state recruitment efforts).

The President noted that to grow enrollment we must also establish new degree programs, as we are losing potential students simply because we do not offer programs of interest, for example in Computer Engineering. To this end the Campus has worked its way through various State Education Department academic program establishment requirements and also consulted with some of the best computer engineering schools in the nation on their programs. We now expect new transfer students to begin enrolling in Computer Engineering in Fall 2015, and in Fall 2016 freshmen will be will be admitted. Concurrently, we are convening an advisory committee comprised of, among

others, the leading employers in the area, e.g. General Electric and Global Foundries, to guide us on curriculum and provide potential placement opportunities. Patricia Caldwell suggested including Accenture in the discussion given their engagement with our School of Business.

President Jones also mentioned the University's expansion of allied health programs, including the creation of a BS in Health Sciences. In addition we have explored a potential engagement with Downstate Medical Center to provide shared services as well as partner in establishing allied health programs.

The President then mentioned our MESONET initiative, a public/private partnership to build a statewide early warning weather detection system. The initiative was specifically mentioned in the Governor's State of the State address and is funded at \$18 million in the Executive Budget.

The President went on to note that we are in the final stages of executing a memorandum of understanding between University and the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering covering the services desired by CNSE as well as a draft implementation plan, as CNSE prepares to separate from the University at Albany. The President noted that the greatest concern for the University at Albany will be to assure that instruction taking place at CSNE does not directly compete with our existing or future program offerings - for example Computer Engineering. In other words the separation cannot cause harm to University Albany.

President Jones then gave an overview of the Executive Budget. Of great concern is that fact that the various negotiated salary increases have not been included in the budget, yet the Campus is required by contract to pay them. If this liability remains unfunded in the adopted budget, the impact on the Campus is in excess of three million dollars and could result in fifty fewer faculty hires, seriously impacting our ability to meet our SUNY20-20 hiring targets.

With respect to capital funding, President Jones noted that the Executive Budget proposes \$500 million for capital construction for the University of which the Campus would receive \$28 million. SUNY is asking the legislature to add an additional \$500 million. Accordingly our share would double to approximately \$56 million if the SUNY request is included in the adopted budget. March 3 and March 4 are scheduled for legislative office visits, in which the President will stress the importance of these issues.

The president gave a brief update on the Chief Financial Officer search and noted that Leanne Wirkkula has assumed responsibility for Media and Marketing. We hope to have a recommendation from Leanne on a permanent appointment in Media and Marketing. In addition she is interviewing potential candidates for the position of Governmental Relations Director.

The Council then moved to executive session to discuss an impending personnel matter as well as a potential relationship with a non-university entity.

Returning from executive session the Chairman turned to updates. Student Member Botvinnik noted our student suicide prevention initiative, which will be supported by a charity walk in May to raise money in support this effort. She seeks Council support and assistance at the appropriate time. Ms. Botvinnik questioned the purpose of a proposed student activity fee to which President Jones responded. Chairman Castellana offered that student activities are important if we are to be competitive in recruiting new students. A discussion of fees and student activities followed [JeanPierre, Jones and Clancy].

Faculty Representative Stefl-Mabry reported the Faculty Senate has reapportioned three Senate seats formerly occupied by CNSE members. The Senate is revising the Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Community Responsibility's [CAFFECOR] mission to focus on the core issues addressed when CAFFECOR was first formed. The Senate Governance Committee is preparing a self-assessment survey to be sent faculty staff and students, focused on improving Faculty Senate operations.

Graduate Student Representative Roth spoke to the organization the Graduate Student Association and the role of its Multicultural and Affirmative Action Committee which has become more involved with the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The GSO has experienced officer turnover due to academic workloads and he expects new representatives to be appointed. The GSO is also finishing a bylaws revision.

Alumni Representative Murphy spoke to new programs designed to connect with targeted audiences in New York City and the Capital District, home to great concentrations of alumni. As always the Association is working hard to engage current students and alumni and will do another Homecoming event, which in 2013 was very successful. He hopes that Homecoming will become a signature event for the University.

Moving to new business Mr. Beditz provided an update on the Schuyler School acquisition. He noted that the building was constructed in 1912 and has 127,000 gross square feet, sitting on a 2.69 acre parcel. Its acquisition increases the downtown square footage by 30%. The purchase price was \$2 million but it is estimated that in the long-term the building will need an additional \$47 million to completely renovate it and bring it up to University standards. A lengthy discussion ensued [Castellana, Fallon, Caldwell, Beditz] as to the cost of the renovation versus new construction and/or private sector construction versus the State process.

Moving to a new item the Chairman requested permission to waive the seven-day notification requirement in order to accept for action a new item that arrived too late to

place on the agenda. A motion was made and accepted [Balachandran/Botvinnik]. The Chairman then recommended that the Council adopt a resolution approving the naming of the University at Albany Emeritus Center for William L. Reese, PhD in recognition of his generous gift and pledge of \$500,000 in support of the Center. Vice President Sanai noted that the resolution comports with SUNY guidelines governing naming opportunities. The resolution was approved with an amendment that the approval is subject to the conditions set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding supporting the gift and pledge.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made and seconded [Botvinnik/Balachandran].

Respectfully,

Stephen J. Beditz  
University Liaison to the Council