

2014-2015 University Senate

**Monday, February 9, 2015
2:45 pm, Assembly Hall**

Joette Stefl-Mabry, Chair

MINUTES

Present: Cohen, Marc; Cruz, Jose; Earle, Keith; Fessler, Susanna; Ford, Michael; Fox, Cynthia; Goldfarb, Boris; Gulatee, Yenisel; Hogan, Steve; Janiszewski, Caitlin; Jaromin, Michael; Jerison, Michael; Jones, Robert J; Kearney, Ann; Kressner, Ilka; Markisello, Daniel; McCaffrey, David; Moore, Chris; Neori, Klil; Petry, Greta; Rorissa, Abebe; Rosenswig, Robert; Schmidt, John; Sherman, Keith; Slade, Leonard; Stellar, James; Tucker, Ian; Vuille, Mathias; Webb, Raymond; Yuan, Xiaojun; Zemel, Alan

Guests: Chaiken, Seth; Murray, Ann Marie; Cortesi, Guy; Winchester, Kathie; Forsythe, Celine; Malatesta, JoAnne; Casserly, Mary; O'Neil, Natalie; Jewell, Carol; Faerman, Sue; Hedberg, Bill; Tchernev, Alex

The meeting convened at 2:49 pm.

Due to inclement weather Vice Chair Cynthia Fox stood in for Joette Stefl-Mabry to chair the meeting. As quorum was not met at the start of the meeting it was agreed that the President and Provost would report, and afterward a second count would be taken. A second count was taken, Vice Chair Fox announced the absence of quorum, and the meeting was adjourned.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – ROBERT J. JONES

President Jones and the Senate took a moment to applaud the excellent work of former Interim Provost Mulcahy in his six months of service to this university. The President welcomed James Stellar as the new Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. President Jones expressed his confidence that Provost Stellar would assist the university in reaching a higher level of excellence.

The President provided an update on several ongoing initiatives. Several leadership searches are currently underway: Dean for Criminal Justice, Social Welfare and the Library, Vice Provost of International Education, and, most recently, Vice President of Marketing and Communication. Especially this last search is essential for positioning the University as it seeks to advance its reputation.

In the area of expanding the academic profile of our institution, the Computer Engineering Program is making progress but students cannot be admitted until the State Education Department has approved our recent application. Under the leadership of Anne Marie Murray in the Provost's Office, we are moving forward plans to create a College of Engineering and Applied Science. If you followed the State of the State address, you know that Governor Cuomo announced UAlbany as the site for the nation's first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. Provost Stellar has already taken the lead on this new academic unit. The designation comes with a \$15 million capitol appropriation. Discussions with Albany Law are proceeding. Vice President for Strategic Partnerships Susan Phillips has been working with several small faculty groups to identify potential synergies, expanding legal education beyond just the J.D. degree. A forum on Albany Law affiliation conversations will be held in March, and another in April to make sure there is ample faculty engagement. President Jones anticipates giving a presentation to the Board of Trustees at their March meeting. Our conversations with Downstate continue, with Vice President Phillips spending the majority of her time there helping them create the infrastructure for a Provost's Office within the Medical School, as well as facilitating the academic alignment needed to move that partnership along. President Jones and Downstate Medical President Williams have agreed to identify areas of mutual strength in several areas including Schools of Public Health, Cancer Research, RNA Institute, and Centers for Minority Health Disparities.

The President reminded that since last summer he has been in the process of meeting with all 39 departments and the 2

schools that do not have departments, having 1-hour conversations with faculty. This has been a part of the continued effort the President initiated when he started, to better understand the needs and opportunities of this university and get to know the faculty better. Those conversations have been very enlightening, offering a chance to discuss opportunities and challenges in departments.

Our strategic planning process for budget allocations is critical in advancing the efforts to be more strategic, engaged and transparent. You will hear more in the next couple of months about the plan for rolling that process out for funding decisions starting the 2016-2017 academic year.

President Jones welcomed any comments or questions.

Regarding the Vice President of Marketing and Communication search, concern was voiced that efforts be made to improve academic presence in events and on webpages. President Jones assured that the goal of improving our web presence and resources would include highlighting the excellence of academic areas. We are at a critical juncture when we have to think about re-branding our university to represent where we are today and will be in the future. The President added the administration has been talking to our Albany delegation and will be talking with the broader legislative body to join us in reimagining the University at Albany. It is time for us to remind that this university has changed substantially over the last decades and is on an ambitious path to a higher level of excellence.

Clarification was requested regarding the expectation for the College of Emergency Preparedness and the corresponding new facility within the next 9 months. The President replied that the Governor's expectation is to establish the College of Emergency Preparedness within the next 9 months, and a building will follow. We are fortunate to be able to draw on our many programs to initiate the new College. Provost Stellar, along with a panel to be formed consisting of group of folks representing different entities, including faculty, will be shaping the overarching curriculum and academic content, strategic partnerships and facilities plans.

The university is seeking designations as a Center of Excellence in Atmospheric Science. We are asking for \$250,000 to help us seed that initiative. This will be leveraged with the well-established research portfolio that exists across 70+ scientists and scholars in our Department of Atmospheric Science and our Center for Atmospheric Science Research, as well as with our relationship with the regional National Weather Service.

Lastly, one of our biggest challenges is that 85% of our buildings are 40 years or older. The other piece therefore is advocating, with the support of the Chancellor, for our share of the capital budget over a five-year plan to address the \$1.2 billion of deferred critical maintenance on our campus.

A question was raised regarding the decision to increase graduate student support funding. The President answered that the Blue Ribbon panels had yet to be convened, though Provost Stellar will do so this semester.

PROVOST'S REPORT – JAMES R. STELLAR

Provost Stellar emphasized that he had made the right decision in joining the University at Albany as Provost and hopes the UAlbany community feels the same. A couple of things, the Provost shared, drove him to make this decision. The first is that from the outside view this is a great institution. This rests squarely on the shoulders of the faculty, who *are* the institution over time, responsible for the daily work in the classrooms, labs and creative scholarship. Provost Stellar knew this by reputation, and now that he is here thinks even more highly of the institution as he starts to learn some of the details. The Provost stated the other thing he liked about the University at Albany when he first came here was that we have great students, full of spirit.

The mission of bringing the students together with the faculty at the price the public charges is critical. Provost Stellar shared he had spent most of his life in private institutions. In 2009 the Provost joined the other public university system in New York – CUNY – and felt it was a great relief to not have that burden in helping America educate its citizens. So, 'hats off' to the University community because the Provost stressed he knows the difference and how hard it is to live within the tuition parameters that make it possible for students to attend here and not create debt.

Provost Stellar emphasized he places a value on facing out – first to the students through programs that get them into

the communities, as with the President's stake in community engagement, into field specific internships, study abroad, undergraduate research, etc. All these are things that complement the strong academic programs we have here and at other places. They produce a heightened retention. It is not good enough to graduate 65% of the students, and in the future that will not be viewed as acceptable. We are not behind anybody, but we can do better, and the industries tell us it is very important that our students be employable when they graduate. All of this needs to be discussed, and the Provost stated he would like to do this with you as a team.

The big part of the Provost's orientation to the deans and staff would finish the end of this week 2. Provost Stellar invited the community to come find him the week afterward to talk, because he thinks the interaction can lead to an increase in our creativity. The newness to this position can be used as an advantage to create a dynamic, get the word out and recruit so that more people know how great this place is. Let us do on the academic fields what we seem to be doing on the basketball court. We have serious, exciting challenges that the President laid out. Few provosts get to participate in the start of 2 new colleges, and that is just the beginning. This is going to be a challenging and great time, and Provost Stellar stated he is looking forward to working with you to make UAlbany become better because we all made it so as a team.

A re-count was taken, and it was determined quorum still had not been reached. As a result, no action could be taken, and the meeting was adjourned. Thanks were extended to those in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Elisa Lopez, Recorder