

# COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

University Senate Meeting, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010

As submitted to Dick Collier, Secretary, University Senate

## UNIVERSITY SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT – R. Michael Range, Chair

**Definition of Diversity.** At its 1/25/2010 meeting, the SEC met with Tamra Minor, Assistant VP and Director of Diversity and Affirmative Action, for a discussion of the draft document on a new definition and vision for diversity that was distributed to the university community in December with an invitation to submit comments. As part of her opening remarks, Director Minor submitted a revised draft to the SEC which reflected comments received from individuals across campus in response to the first draft. She received much feedback during the intensive discussion. In particular, it was suggested to either substantially revise the latest version of the definition of diversity, or to delete it altogether. Questions regarding the purpose and final use of the document received no clear answer. It was emphasized that before any statement on diversity could be interpreted as a university statement, it would have to be approved by the University Senate.

**Amendments to the SUNY Gen Ed Requirements.** A few days after the December senate meeting, SUNY Senator Lanford forwarded to the SEC a draft of a resolution he had received from Ken O'Brien, President of the SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS). The proposed amendment to the Gen Ed requirements was going to be presented by SUNY officials to the BOT at their January 19 meeting. President O'Brien was soliciting comments to inform the response of the UFS Executive Committee, scheduled to meet in early January. The SEC discussed the matter via e-mail and met on Dec. 22, 2009 to finalize a response for the UFS. The SEC agreed on a resolution that expressed support for the original draft, which required courses in 7 out of 10 areas, versus the final draft, which explicitly requires courses in mathematics, communication, and in 5 out of the remaining 8 areas. The Chair forwarded the SEC's resolution to UFS President O'Brien in late December. The expanded UFS executive committee met in early January, discussed the input received from many campuses, and decided to endorse the *final* version of the amendment as proposed by SUNY Interim Provost Lavalley. The SUNY BOT approved the amendment at the 1/19/2010 meeting, and consequently the new Gen Ed regulations are effective beginning in Fall 2010. Relevant documents have been distributed to senators together with the agenda of the 2/8 senate meeting. At its 1/25 meeting the SEC agreed to form a General Education Task Force and charged GOV to propose specific charges for the Gen Ed TF and make recommendations about its membership. SEC members and UAC provided further input to GOV. GOV met on Friday, 2/5/10 and forwarded a summary of its deliberations to the Senate Chair late that day. SEC members have been in communication over the weekend, and it is expected that a resolution regarding the Gen Ed TF will be presented to the Senate for discussion and vote at the 2/8 meeting. The Chair hopes to distribute the text of the resolution to senators by midday 2/8. The Chair apologizes for the short notice in such an important matter, but the timing of the BOT resolution and the need to provide specific guidance for incoming students by the end of this semester leave little time.

**Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act.** At a special meeting on Monday, 2/1, SEC members received a detailed briefing by UA Chief of Staff Vince Delio about this legislation recently introduced by Governor Paterson with the support of SUNY and CUNY officials. The legislation is an outgrowth of UBuffalo 2020 (a proposal which was introduced about a year ago without receiving any final action in the NYS Assembly), basically extending its key provisions to all of SUNY and CUNY. While the legislation, if approved, is expected to bring substantial benefits to SUNY and CUNY (and hopefully to UAlbany as well), colleagues across SUNY have many questions about the complex details. This legislation was intensively discussed by the UFS at its January 28 – 30, 2010 winter plenary at SUNY Cobleskill (partly attended by the Chair in his capacity as Campus Governance Leader), and the UFS decided not to introduce – at this time - any resolution expressing a UFS position on the matter.

**Third UFS Senator for UAlbany.** Information distributed by the UFS Governance Committee at the Cobleskill meeting prompted the chair to investigate whether UAlbany is eligible to be represented by **three** senators in the UFS. The Interim Vice President for Finance and Business confirmed that UAlbany has over 1,400 “professional staff” as defined by BOT policies, that number being well above the 1,100 threshold specified in said policies to make a campus eligible for a third senator. The chair will shortly write to UFS President O’Brien notifying him that UAlbany should have 3 senators beginning July 1, 2010. It is therefore expected that at the university-wide election UAlbany will hold in April 2010, two new UFS senators will be elected: one to replace Bill Lanford, whose *second* 3-year term ends June 30, 2010 (and thus he is not eligible to run again at this time), and the other one to fill the new slot. Dan White will continue with the second year of his first 3-year term. The Chair encourages senators to consider standing for election and to encourage colleagues across the university to consider representing UAlbany on the SUNY senate. An invitation will be sent out in due time to all faculty and staff.

**UFS (University Faculty Senator’s Report) – William Lanford & Daniel D. White, SUNY Senators**

Attached at the end of this document..

**GSO (Graduate Student Organization) – Melanie Breganza, GSO President**

Nothing to report.

**SA (Student Association) – Josh Sussman, SA President**

Nothing to report.

**MSCHE Steering Committee Report – Reed Hoyt, University Senate Representative**

Nothing to report.

**CAA (Council on Academic Assessment) – Heidi Andrade, Chair**

The Council on Academic Assessment met on February 3. The chairs of the Program Review and the General Education Assessment Committee updated us on their work. We discussed the pending changes to Gen Ed assessment and its implications for our work on the Council and for the GEAC. We reviewed the recent Graduate Student Support report, compiled our comments on it, and determined that the PRC should consider implications of the GSS metrics for program review.

**CAFFECOR (Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility) – Susanna Fessler, Chair**

We continue to work on changes to the "Community Rights and Responsibilities" document. We are also waiting on whether Senate bill 0304-25, which was passed by the Senate but never signed by the president in 2004, then resuscitated by CAFFECOR this year, will be signed by the president. Some CAFFECOR members will be conducting an "in service" session for Res Life staff in the dorms on Wednesday, February 10 on the subject of Freedom of Speech in the dorms.

**CERS (Committee on Ethics in Research and Scholarship) – John Monfasani, Chair**

The Joint CERS-GOV committee of Carolyn MacDonald, Edward Cupoli, and myself completed a draft of a revised CERS policy text in December. There have since been conversations with John H. Reilly, the University's Counsel. CERS itself has started to meet concerning the text. When it has finished its deliberations, the text will be sent to GOV and COR for their reaction. We hope to be able to bring the revised CERS policy text to the Senate floor in April.

### **COR (Council on Research) – James Castracane, Chair**

The Council on Research met on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and discussed several topics including:

1). Presentation of the FRAP A proposal evaluation review. The Subcommittee Chair, Professor Kirsten Davison, presented the results and rankings. 33 proposals were submitted and 18 funded. Outside of some details concerning borderline situations (which have since been resolved), the Council believes that the rankings are now set and a recommendation will be sent to the IVP for Research for approval and candidate notification.

2). The Excellence in Research Review subcommittee, chaired by Professor Dale Morse, presented the status of the nominee pool. At this point, 13 candidates are under consideration both at the UAlbany level and as a subset to be forwarded to the SUNY-wide Chancellor's Award level. The subcommittee which consists of a broad spectrum of disciplines will gather the required documents, review the applicants and make recommendations at the next COR meeting.

### **CPCA (Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments) – Carlos Rodriguez, Chair**

CPCA has nothing to report.

### **GAC (Graduate Academic Council) – Laurence Kranich, Chair**

At its meeting on February 2, GAC began a discussion of the GSS review. Prior to the meeting, the Chair had distributed the summary report of the GSS Review Panel as well as the recommendation by the Governance Council that in order to fulfill its obligations under the University Senate Charter GAC should review the individual program assessments upon pledging that such materials are to remain confidential. Dean Pryse reviewed the GSS final report and asked for recommendations on how to proceed. Discussion will continue at the next meeting. The Chair also informed the Council that, contrary to the Charter, GAC had not been reviewing CAA program assessments. The Council agreed that in order to comply with the Charter it would be sufficient if CAA were to provide its summary recommendations rather than to provide full access to all supporting documents and data.

### **GOV (Governance Council) – Eric Lifshin, Chair**

As requested by the Senate Executive Committee, GOV met on February 5<sup>th</sup> and approved the creation of an ad hoc subcommittee of the General Education of UAC and designated appropriate membership. The committee is charged with developing a response defining what the University's definitions will be in response to the SUNY Board of Trustees' recent revision of the SUNY-wide General Education requirements for freshmen entering in fall 2010. The council also thought that the UAC itself should begin a longer range consideration of what the University might want its "local" requirements to be. This information has been transmitted to Senate Chair Range.

### **LISC (Council on Libraries, Information Systems, and Computing) – Gwen Moore, Chair**

Nothing to report..

### **UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council) – Joan Savitt, Chair**

UAC discussed the newly passed system-wide Gen Ed changes which take effect with the Fall, 2010 semester. The minimum Gen Eds are now one writing course and one mathematics course and then 5 more courses in the remaining 7 mandated areas, coupled with a minimum of 30 credits earned in Gen Ed coursework. UA is not obligated to modify our own Gen Eds as they already meet those standards. UAC submitted a list of concerns to the SEC for transmission to the Task Force which will further study this matter. UAC members cautioned that too rapid an implementation of changes would deprive UA of the opportunity to think through all the possible changes which could be made to our Gen Ed program under these new rules.

UAC discussed the SUNY system Provost's proposed changes in assessment of majors and gen eds, noting that significant responsibility for assessment would be returned to the campus if these proposals

are passed. UAC endorses this concept. UAC also notes the need for better meshing of the Assessment Council's work with UAC's to ensure that any new proposed curricular changes include workable assessment protocols.

Before the semester break, UAC formed a small working group to further UAC's study of the possibility of making minors optional. That group will be reporting out shortly. As of this writing, there are no changes being proposed.

Since it was agreed at the start of 09-10 that there would not be a standing Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing unless needed, the Chair requested that the council form an ad hoc group of three members of the Council to review a grievance that had come to the committee. The grievance was reviewed and a report was made to UAC on the results.

UAC expects to have a policy for "sick notes" for prolonged absences some time this spring.

UAC brings a bill to the floor for changes to the Honors Program in French.

**ULC (University Life Council) – Daniel R. Smith, Chair**

Nothing to report'

**UPPC (University Planning and Policy Council) – John Delano, Chair**

UPPC meetings during the Spring 2010 semester will occur in UNH 306 at 3:30-5:00 PM on the following Fridays: 12 February; 26 February; 12 March (UNH 105); 26 March; 9 April; 23 April; and possibly 7 May. The upcoming UPPC meeting on 12 February will consider the possible resource implications at UAlbany of the following two initiatives: (i) changes approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees to the SUNY-wide General Education requirements; and (ii) proposed legislation from Governor Patterson that may lead to greater autonomy for SUNY campuses, such as setting tuition-rates and retaining that tuition revenue.