

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

Senate Executive Committee, March 9, 2009

As submitted to Dick Collier, Secretary, University Senate

UNIVERSITY SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT – John Delano, Chair

Budget Advisory Group (BAG): This group, which was formed in close consultation among the UAlbany Senate, Interim President Philip, and Provost Phillips, held its first meeting on January 13th where it received its charge from Interim President Philip. Budget information was presented and discussed at the weekly 2-hour meetings. Consistent with its charge, a 7-page final report was completed on February 27 describing a set of principles and priorities that it believed should be considered when dealing with the upcoming financial challenges.

ITLAL Survey: On Tuesday, February 17, five members of the Senate Executive Committee met with the ITLAL Director, Bill Roberson, to learn about midterm course survey that was announced to the faculty on February 12. During that meeting, information was provided about the goals and intent of the ITLAL survey, which was reported to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) at its regular monthly meeting on February 23. The SEC concluded that the ITLAL survey was designed to be helpful to faculty who had volunteered for this interim survey of student perceptions of their courses. The information acquired from the survey would be shared only with the faculty member responsible for the course. By conducting this survey midway through the semester, faculty could promptly receive information about student perceptions of their courses that could assist those instructors in making improvements to their courses during the latter half of the semester.

UFS Ethics Survey: On Thursday, February 19, the Senate Chair was notified of an Ethics Survey that had been developed by the University Faculty Senate (UFS) *ad hoc* Committee on Professional Behavior, Ethical Conduct and Institutional Integrity. That *ad hoc* committee requested that the Ethics Survey be administered throughout the SUNY campuses. The UAlbany Senate Chair promptly brought this matter to the attention of the SEC. Following a review of the survey's questions at the SEC meeting on February 23, the SEC concluded that the questions were ambiguous and could lead to misinterpretations. The SEC concluded that the Senate Chair should not distribute the UFS Ethics Survey to all members of the UAlbany faculty and administration. On March 5, an e-mail was received from a UFS member at another SUNY campus arguing that UAlbany's SEC should reconsider its decision. That e-mail was forwarded to SEC members by the Senate Chair with the invitation that the matter could be reconsidered at the next SEC meeting on March 23, if desired. Thus far, the latest arguments have not proven to be persuasive for our reconsidering the original decision not to participate in a flawed survey bearing on important matters.

Electronic SIRE: The Office of Institutional Research is piloting an electronic version of the SIRE assessment among four departments during the current Spring semester. This initiative was described by Bruce Szelest and Bill Roberson to three SEC members (Henryk Baran; Eric Lifshin; John Delano) on Wednesday, March 4. Based on the results of this ongoing pilot, a task force of faculty, staff, and students will likely be constituted to examine ways that the electronic SIRE can become a more effective instrument for course assessment. This matter will be discussed further at the next SEC meeting on March 23.

Present and Past Chairs of the UAlbany Senate met with a MSCHE Committee on Friday, February 20, to reply to questions prepared by members of that committee bearing on the effectiveness of governance at UAlbany.

Freshman Year Experience (FYE) Task Force: A report from the FYE Task Force, which has been meeting regularly since early summer 2008, is near completion (albeit later than December 2008, which was the original goal). Its findings and recommendations will soon be widely distributed to the UAlbany community for comment. Meetings have been scheduled during the next two weeks for representatives from the FYE Task Force to meet with the Council on Academic Assessment, Undergraduate Academic Council, and the Senate Executive Committee to discuss the FYE recommendations.

Revised format for Senate meetings: Senate meetings have been too staid and quiet during the current academic year. This silence contributes to the notion that the monthly Senate meeting are serving merely to 'rubber stamp' bills, resolutions, and amendments that have been worked out by others at preceding levels of the governance process. While a great deal of effort does occur prior to agenda items reaching the Senate, SEC members agreed with a suggestion offered by the Senate Chair at the February 23rd SEC meeting that more background information should be provided for agenda items during their introduction to the full Senate, especially contentious issues that were raised during earlier governance review and how those issues were argued. This background is intended to encourage the needed thoroughness and vigilance during all steps in the governance process.

UFS (University Faculty Senator's Report) – William Lanford, R. Michael Range SUNY Senators

Senator Lanford's report on the Morrisville University Faculty Senate Plenary Session meeting, edited by Senator Range, is attached.

GSO (Graduate Student Organization) – Nicholas Fahrenkop, Lead Senator

President Glenn Pichardo has stepped down as President of the Graduate Student Organization due to an increased academic workload. Vice President Amy Jones will step up as President and still carry out the duties of VP. Appointing a VP for the remainder of the semester is being considered. On Thursday March 26th the African-American Scholar Society & Friends (AASS&F) will be presenting a speaker, Channel 6 News Reporter/Anchor, Ken Screven. He was the first African-American News Reporter in the Capital Region. The event will be in University Hall at 7PM. At April 17th GSO will be hosting a networking event in the NanoFab North Rotunda featuring local alumni for each school and college. April 18th has been the date set for the Richard Bailey memorial walk in Washington Park. Questions, comments or suggestions can be sent to gso@albany.edu. More information on GSO:

<http://www.albany.edu/~gso>

MSCHE Steering Committee Report – Reed Hoyt, University Senate Representative

At the March 3rd meeting, C. Anderson, M. Earlywine, S. Faerman (co-chair), T. Gage, R. Hoyt, E. Lifshin, K. Loscocco, D. McCaffrey, S. Messner (co-chair), Lana Neveu, M. Sutherland, B. Szelest, L. Trubitt attended.

The process for selecting a chair for the visiting team continues. GOV has provided names for committee members unable to continue. The current process differs from the process ten years ago in that the report is meant to be more analytical than a compilation of data. Are we benchmarking appropriately rather than dwelling on comparisons with other institutions? Is the appropriate officer looking at the practices of peers and aspirational peers?

Document management was discussed at length, including issues of formatting, cross-referencing, grouping, and overlapping of data among committees, but with the concern that the libraries and information technology are covered in the report.

Thorough committee reports were made. The committees are at various levels of finishing their initial drafts, which are due 6 April according to the timeline. The surveys were found to be very useful. Committees and their subsets continue to gather data and hold interviews.

The question of redundancy between the Going Forward plan and the MSCHE process was raised. Going Forward involved far more people than MSCHE. They are parallel processes; some of the material collected from the Going Forward plan can be a resource for MSCHE.

CAA (Council on Academic Assessment) – Henryk Baran, Chair

The Council met on February 25th and first reviewed and adopted the minutes from its February 4th meeting. The Chair reported to the Council on the response of the Senate Executive Committee to proposed changes to the Charter dealing with CAA and Program Review Committee functions; he also shared with Council members broader SEC concerns regarding the relationship between governance and university administration. There was an extensive discussion of these matters, with members looking for ways to balance due concern for the letter and spirit of the Charter with efficiency in the program review and assessment process. It was agreed that members of Governance Council be invited to the next CAA meeting in order to discuss these various matters, and that a draft justification of the proposed amendment be prepared. The Council then discussed the relationship between the General Education Assessment Committee of CAA and the Committee on General Education of UAC. Finally, the Council turned to a discussion of a draft assessment Action Plan document: several suggestions were made regarding some of it, and further discussion of this text is envisioned.

CAFFeCoR (Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility) – Malcolm Sherman, Chair

The committee met February 25 to discuss further planning for the Faculty Forum on freedom of speech issues.

CERS (Committee on Ethics in Research and Scholarship) – Carolyn MacDonald, Chair

CERS has received input from university counsel and other parties and met this week to begin discussion of additional changes to the misconduct policy.

COR (Council on Research) – Lawrence Schell, Chair

The Council on Research met on Wednesday, March 4th. Several guests were present including Kathryn Lowery, Vice President for Finance and Business who was invited to speak on the indirect cost return budget. VP Lowery presented detailed figures describing the use of indirect cost return funds for 2008-09 and discussed questions from the Council.

VP Videka reported on several initiatives that are being considered; leadership change at the Center for Functional Genomics and the Gen*NY*Sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics; implementation of research activity for College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering; and notification of indirect cost return allocations to units (distribution will be according to the University's policy this year).

The FRAP-A review committee reported that letters of award and refusal had been distributed to applicants along with comments on the proposals.

The subcommittee on centers and institutes will be meeting to consider two applications for new centers.

CPCA (Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments) – Eric Lifshin, Chair

CPCA continues to process cases now on a weekly basis to meet the increased Spring Term demand.

GAC (Graduate Academic Council) – Laurence Kranich, Chair

GAC met on March 2 and approved three items: (1) a proposal by Rockefeller College to suspend admission to the Master of Arts in Public Affairs and Policy Program, (2) a proposal to revise the Bachelor's/Master's (BAMA) combined program billing policy, and (3) a proposal to amend the criterion for determining student status (undergraduate vs. graduate) within a combined Second Bachelor's/Master's program. The Council also approved a new member of its Committee on Admissions & Academic Standing.

In addition, the Dean of Graduate Studies notified the Council that due to the current budget crisis roughly half of the PhD programs will not be permitted to offer assistantships to new students for '09-'10, a large group will have their number of new-to-program assistantships reduced, and a third group will be permitted to maintain their current level. Subsequent to the meeting, programs were informed individually of their category. No comprehensive listing has been made available. These decisions were made without consultation with either UPPC or GAC, in violation of University Senate Charter Sections X.2.4, X.4.3, and X.4.5. In addition, the set of instruments used to assess and rank programs within these three categories was not approved by GAC, in violation of Charter Section X.4.5.1, and does not include placement records or any measure of the success of program graduates.

GOV (Governance Council) – R. Michael Range, Chair

GOV met on March 2nd and discussed the draft of a Senate Handbook that Past Chair Hoyt had submitted to the SEC on 2/23/09. Since the completion of such a handbook is one of the responsibilities of GOV, the Council agreed to work on finalizing the document by the end of the semester. A subcommittee has been appointed to review the draft and suggest revisions as needed. GOV also completed discussion and revisions of last year's proposed IRCAP amendment (Initial Review Committee for Academic Programs) to address concerns that had been raised on the senate floor in May 2008. Also, in light of the amendment on graduate courses approved by the senate at the 2/09/09 meeting, the proposed amendment has been refocused on undergraduate programs and courses. The proposed amendment will be submitted to the SEC at its next meeting.

As already reported at the 2/9/09 Senate meeting, at its February 2nd meeting GOV finalized and approved a proposed Charter Amendment intended to ensure better consultation between the administration and the elected faculty governance bodies. This amendment is introduced to the senate today under New Business. The Governance Council also approved to include in its reports to the SEC and the senate the following background information regarding this amendment. *The last few years have seen successive turnovers in the senior management of the university. This situation has led, on occasion, to unsatisfactory implementation of the principles of consultation with the Faculty through its elected governance bodies as embodied in the Faculty Bylaws and the Senate Charter. Some examples:*

- *In 2005, just a few months after his arrival, the President formed the Selective Investment Committee without involvement of the University at Albany elected governance bodies. While it certainly is the prerogative of the president to form advisory bodies as she or he chooses, such advisory groups cannot qualify as "consultation" with the University at Albany elected governance bodies under the Bylaws, unless certain principles have been followed in the formation of such groups. Furthermore, recommendations still needed to be reviewed and approved by UPC, thereby leading to redundancy and duplication of effort.*
- *The 2005 Periodic Review Report to MSCHE was drafted and sent to MSCHE without any University at Albany elected governance bodies' involvement whatsoever. In fact, the document was unavailable until this past spring, when repeated requests by Senate Officers finally forced its release.*
- *Since the URPAC committee (a budget advisory group created by former President Hitchcock) was effectively dissolved in 2005, there has been no University at Albany elected governance bodies' input in any budgetary deliberations, contrary to what is stated in Bylaws I.2.2.3. That same article also calls for the administration to provide "detailed annual reportson actual budget expenditures." No such reports have been provided. The Governance Council welcomes the Interim President's recent formation of a Budget Advisory Group. This is a step in the right direction.*
- *Senate Charter X.2.8. calls for formal representation of UPPC on budget advisory bodies established by the President and Provost. The nonexistence of such budget advisory groups since Spring 2005 is contrary to the intent of this article. This situation has been corrected with the recently created Budget Advisory Group.*
- *Over the past few years, a number of senior "Interim" administrators have been appointed to positions without the "Interim" qualification. For several of these positions, it has been traditional and an accepted "best practice" to form an appropriately representative search committee that makes recommendations to the president. If such search committees were formed in these situations, the University at Albany elected governance bodies were not involved at all.*
- *The selection and appointment of the current chair of the MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee was done by the then Officer in Charge without any consultation with University at Albany elected governance bodies. The appointment was later confirmed by the Interim President. A co-chair was added only after Senate Officers had raised the issue, referring to the MSCHE guidelines.*

LISC (Council on Libraries, Information Systems, and Computing) – Lawrence Raffalovich, Chair

LISC has invited Trudi Jacobson, from the Library User Education Programs, to discuss student use of on-line information, and how they are taught to evaluate the quality of information that they find.

The Information Technology Committee has been constituted for the Spring semester. Members are Larry Raffalovich (Sociology, LISC) and Chris Haile (CIO, LISC) as co-chair, Bruce Dudek (Psychology, LISC), Randy Craig (English), Robert Summers (CAS Dean's Office), Hui-Shien Tsao (CSDA), and Carolyn Malloch (Disability Resources Center, LISC). Efforts to recruit members from other Schools and Colleges were not successful. The IT Committee met on March 2.

At the March 6 meeting of LISC, Mary Casserly, Acting Dean and Director of Libraries replaced Frank D'Andraia as an ex-officio member and Chair of the Library Committee for this semester. The Council heard a report from the IT Committee. Council also heard a presentation from Trudi Jacobson (University Libraries) on resources for students and instructors on the use of digital media.

UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council) – Joan Savitt, Chair

UAC report for meetings of 2/11, 2/25, and 3/4/09):

1--UAC approved changes in the Women's Studies Major. As a point of interest and a possible model for other departments, we note that these changes revised subcategories within the major that previously consisted of one required class and one chosen from a short list to two chosen from a short list which now includes the previously required class as one of the options. Such a change gives students a better chance to complete the degree on schedule by introducing a bit more flexibility into the requirements and also allows the major to offer previously required courses on a less frequent basis, should it choose to do so.

2--UAC voted to approve the framework of the Criminal Justice Honor's program but some of the courses need to be renumbered to allow them to be taught as shared resource courses. UAC hopes to bring this bill to the floor 3/9.

(UAC continued):

3--UAC discussed the Transfer Credit Appeals process which is being created by UA under a SUNY mandate. This process is only for students transferring from SUNY community colleges. UAC notes that UA already has a number of processes in place to deal with these matters which are available for all students.

4--UAC determined that the intent of the bill allowing appeals for inclusion on the Dean's List after incomplete grades have been resolved was that of permitting retroactive appeals. Therefore, any student whose degree has not yet been awarded and whose appeal is justified will receive retroactive mention.

5--In the spirit of going green, the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education reported that her office is no longer printing certificates for students whose names are placed on the Dean's List. Instead, students are being notified by email and the Dean's List mention is being placed on their official transcripts.

6--Further related to incomplete grades, UAC has noted that students who are engaged in courses where the work of the course is expected to be completed after the end of the semester, such as a research project spanning the entire academic year, often receive I grades at the end of the first semester which block them from automatic consideration for Dean's List. UAC recommends that all such courses appear on transcripts as a set of component courses, each one tied to its proper time frame, rather than as a single course bearing an I grade until all the work is completed. That would mean that 3 credits of research could be reported as 1 credit in the fall and 2 in the spring, etc. in a course that would be repeatable for variable amounts of credit. UAC offers this as a recommendation to all departments and urges such courses be created or that existing research courses be modified to permit such registrations.

7--UAC approved the SEC's and GAC's revisions to UAC's policies for Second Bachelors Degrees originally passed by UAC 2/5/09.

8--UAC discussed some implications of minimum class size regulations on degree completion possibilities in departments with small numbers of majors.

9--UAC discussed why students might take sequential or less advanced courses out of sequence with or without permission of the department, and urged that departments who wished to prevent such actions to design their own restrictions (CF math, Russian).

10--UAC will hear a report from the Task Force on the First Year Experience on March 18.

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

The University Life Council met on March 4, 2009 and discussed the following issues:

Request for teaching faculty members on a new committee concerning Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer issues. The committee will advise the Provost and Vice President of Student Success.

Charter Amendment to the composition of the University Life Council which would renew the formal consultative relationship between UAS and governance. Such an amendment would, in part, address an alteration to ULC membership which eliminated the Chair of ULC as a UAS Board member during the Charter and Bylaws re-write of 2004. SUNY Central in 2004 simultaneously ordered all auxiliary services to reduce the sizes of the boards.

Consulted with the provost's office on formalizing the announcements of classes cancellations due to inclement weather. The provost's office is considering a protocol where an announcement of class cancellations would be made at set times: for example 6am for all classes, 12PM for afternoon and evening classes, and somewhere between 2-4pm for late afternoon and evening classes. Comments on this proposal can be directed to Dr. William Hedberg in the Provost's Office. Dr. Hedberg has been consulting extensively with student groups, and faculty/staff. ULC members felt as a group that altering the protocol to include announcements at set times would be prudent.

Continued discussion of the University Smoking Policy. ULC will be forming an ad hoc committee to include representatives of EAP, Health and Counseling Centers to explore some options.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2-3:30PM in Campus Center 375.

UPPC (University Planning and Policy Council) – Reed Hoyt, Chair

The UPPC met on 27 February 2009. We approved the discontinuation of the Graduate Certificate in Urban Education and discussed further a proposal for professional staff instruction with input from the Provost's Office. The proposed suspension of the MAPAP (Master of Arts in Public Affairs and Policy) raised some questions to be put to the GAC and were considered at their meeting of 2 March. There is now a bill pending for both councils as of 6 March. The next UPPC meeting will take place on 19 March at 10:00.