

2008-2009 University Senate Executive Committee

January 26, 2009

John Delano, Chair

MINUTES

Present: Henryk Baran, Richard Collier, John Delano, Vincent Delio, Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Reed Hoyt, Laurence Kranich, William Lanford, Eric Lifshin, Carolyn MacDonald, Susan Phillips, Lawrence Raffalovich, Michael Range, Joan Savitt, Lawrence Schell, Daniel Smith, Daniel Truchan

Guests: John Murphy, Eric Smith, Kevin Wilcox, Bruce Szelest

The meeting convened at 3:34 pm.

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 9, 2008 meeting were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S AND PROVOST'S REPORTS BY PROVOST SUSAN PHILLIPS

Provost Phillips opened her remarks by mentioning how well the challenges were met during the energy reduction period.

The Provost provided a memo signed by President Philip showing approval of Senate bills from the fall semester.

Budget:

The proposed 2009-2010 budget released by the Governor in mid-December translates into a \$5-6 Million reduction for UAlbany. Legislators are being visited frequently and the NYS Assembly supports SUNY keeping the money that will come from the tuition increase. The sequence of cuts from April through summer, although small individually, are significant in their cumulative form. Total cuts add up to an approximate 13% cut in UAlbany's budget. If the Governor's proposed 2009-2010 budget is approved, there could be an additional 9% cut. Approval of a federal stimulus package may offer some relief.

In responding to a question about drastic changes that could occur due to the budget, the Provost indicated that the current year budget does not incorporate the full impact of the 2008-09 reductions. By July 30, the campus will be operating on a permanent 7% reduction.

The Provost was asked what percentage of the University's budget goes toward salaries. She responded that the amount is 82-85%. She indicated that this information could be found in the All Funds Reporting System under Year in Review. The Provost was also asked how many turnover lines there are on campus. She indicated that the College of Arts and Sciences expects about thirty this year. Across campus, approximately 200 vacant lines will be lost and there could be another 100 if the Governor's proposal is approved. This would be a substantial resizing of the campus work force.

Noteworthy Items:

The UAlbany Day Rally will be held on February 10, beginning with a breakfast with Legislators, including alumni who are Legislators. There will be a rally and reception from 5:00-7:00 pm.

The Provost discussed a new on-line activity report available to faculty. The service allows faculty to keep and update their vitae and will showcase faculty achievements.

This spring, Facilities Management will have a campus forum regarding possible campus projects, and will have conversations with the campus community. This will be set up to do an impact statement with the larger community.

UNIVERSITY SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT – John Delano, Chair

At the request of a SEC member, the Chair sought more information pertaining to an upcoming Writing Initiative that is soon to begin in the Department of History. As noted on the agenda of this SEC meeting, the information that was gathered about this initiative indicated that there seemed to be no basis for Senate action on this matter. An e-mail was sent by the Chair to all SEC members on January 16 reporting this perspective. Although the e-mail offered to include this topic on the SEC agenda if members were not persuaded by the available information, no subsequent requests were received.

On January 6, the Chair received an item for Senate consideration from the School of Education. Following additional correspondence with representatives from the School of Education requesting additional materials to complete that proposal, the proposal was forwarded to the Chairs of GAC and UPC on January 12 for consideration by their councils.

The Chair served on the First Year Experience Task Force that met frequently during the summer and fall of 2008. Its interim report was sent to Provost Phillips in mid-December 2008.

The Chair has been appointed to the Budget Advisory Group. The membership of that group has been officially announced to the campus by Interim President Philip. As of January 26, the Budget Advisory Group has held two meetings (~4 hours), and is scheduled to meet weekly for 2-3 hours each.

SA (Student Association) -- Dan Truchan

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report from the GSO since the December Senate meeting.

SUNY Senators' Report (Bill Lanford; Michael Range)

Nothing to report.

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

CAA hasn't done anything new since its December 3 meeting.

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

CAFFECOR has not yet met this semester. I expect our next meeting will be devoted to planning a faculty forum on campus freedom of expression policies.

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

Nothing to report.

COR (Council on Research) – Lawrence Schell, Chair

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

GAC (Graduate Academic Council) – Laurence Kranich, Chair

GAC has nothing to report. We will meet on January 27.

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

GOV has not met since the last senate meeting. The next meeting will be on February 2, 2009.

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

Nothing to report.

UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council) – Joan Savitt, Chair

UAC has nothing new that is ready for action on Monday, but we're closing in on two bills. We are meeting on Jan. 28 and have several items in progress but I'm not sure if we will be voting them out or not. One will be joint with GAC since it involves tuition for students in joint BA/MA degrees. Both councils have to pass that bill before we can finish the 2nd Bach. Degree legislation, since some 2nd BAs are actually joint BA/MA programs, and we are trying for consistency

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

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS**Discussion with John Murphy, Eric Smith, and Kevin Wilcox on UAS Issues**

John Murphy introduced himself as being there in the capacity of the UAS Board of Directors. He introduced Eric Smith, Executive Director of UAS and Kevin Wilcox, UAS Finance and Audit Committee, University Controller.

Eric Smith opened the discussion regarding book prices, and related that his recent experience as a student has provided him with an understanding of the concerns being raised regarding pricing and availability of textbooks in the Campus Bookstore. The contract for the bookstore is currently in process of renewal and UAS will propose to the Board of Directors a plan to put forth competitive practices. The problems experienced on this campus are not specific to UAlbany but also a publishing issue. Most contracts are based on models to put investments up front. UAS will be looking at different models as this process unfolds over the next year. He stated that our vendor, Barnes and Noble (B&N), offers good scholarship support but he also understands the concerns of it being a corporate entity and recognizes the desire to be competitive. He noted that on-line sales are changing the process of ordering books but does not always provide the convenience that our bookstore can offer.

SUNY Senator William Lanford asked what we should say to our Legislators when asked about book pricing. Mr. Smith said that we need to demonstrate that we are actively addressing the issue. Kevin Wilcox added that there are many factors that both B&N and UAlbany have no control over. It's important to let the Legislators know that their help could make a difference.

Mr. Smith was asked what the contract allows for faculty to have notes sold through the bookstore and if this service can be made easily available to students. He indicated he would find out how the contract addresses that issue and assured those present there is room to negotiate on such issues in the new contract.

Mr. Smith was also asked if there was anything in the contract that prohibits the bookstore from forwarding booklists to another store, such as Mary Jane Books, or if there was anything that prohibits from posting booklists on the internet. He did not believe there was and added that posting booklists keeps bookstores more honest.

COR Chair Lawrence Schell opened the discussion regarding pricing at the Outtakes Store (formerly CeeCees). He expressed concerns of price gouging, with store items costing almost twice what they are in a grocery store. He also expressed that this contributes to students feeling they are being taken advantage of. Eric responded that he understands students are sensitive to this and UAS is hearing these concerns. Part of the problem is that the store does not buy in bulk. Dan Truchan, SA President and Chair of the Dining Services Committee, added that

lack of storage is a problem that prevents the store from buying in bulk. Eric addressed the issue with further remarks that UAS is committed to looking into these concerns with an end result of fair pricing.

John Murphy opened the discussion concerning governance issues. ULC oversees some of the UAS activities but he expressed a need for better communication. The UAS Board is composed of four faculty positions, four administration, one Alumni Association appointee and six students. There is no representation for graduate students. John informed the SEC members that an election process needs to happen in the near future.

Discussion With Bruce Szelest on Interpreting SAT Scores:

Bruce Szelest opened his discussion by talking about Common Data Set, a source for reporting information that is published in US News and World Report. He identified some common ways of reporting scores: mean scores are not reported, conversions of ACT scores are not included, and data are reported in an ethical manner. In 1996, the scores were re-centered.

In 2006 a writing component was introduced as part of the SATs and scores began to decline as a result. Fewer students choose to re-take the exam to try for a higher score.

Institutional Research reports scores to SUNY using the number of First-Time, Full-time traditional Students in Freshman Cohorts. UAlbany is typically above 200 in this group. UAlbany is losing competition compared to the other four-year university centers. Possible reasons for that were mentioned: (a) Students interested in engineering programs have higher SAT scores than the general student population. Since UAlbany did not until recently have an engineering program, we were not attracting that high-achieving cohort. (b) UAlbany specializes in programs in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences where students with those interests score lower on the SAT exam.

Discussion with Susan Phillips about the ‘Going Forward Plan’ (GFP)

Provost Phillips provided an overview of the conferences. Over 20% of the teaching faculty participated in the conference with a total configuration of about 60-65% of the participants being teaching faculty. Initial conversations formed questions and answers in a rough draft and in the end a writing team was formed. The resulting document that has been distributed is not a strategic plan, but rather a way to think about putting priorities into motion. She suggested that SEC members identify a couple of action areas to put into motion. She would be interested in feedback.

CPCA Chair Eric Lifshin stated that the ideas from GFP have been covered in discussions of the Middle States subcommittee he chairs. He would like to see a convergence of ideas from Middle States and GFP. ULC Chair Daniel Smith remarked that to do this, there must be an aggressive attempt to obtain student input.

Provost Phillip closed by informing SEC that a clear message came through in this process for the need to initiate better communication.

Presidential Search:

CERS Chair Carolyn MacDonald distributed a set of questions that the Executive Committee had presented during the search in 2004. SEC Members who will attend the interviews will present these questions at that time. There was a discussion surrounding the secrecy of the search process but it's believed there is a risk of losing candidates if the process becomes open. GOV Chair Michael Range remarked that the market for university presidents has changed considerably since the last search four years ago. Compared to last year's search, this past fall the committee aggressively recruited top candidates, who, because of their present position, would not agree to consider UAlbany unless confidentiality would be assured. The question was asked when

and why the decision was made to keep the search secret. Provost Philip responded that this was outlined in an e-mail sent out by Dan Tomson, Chair of the Search Committee.

SEC members will meet on February 5 to review the responses from the candidates and turn in the SEC's consensus report via e-mail not later than 12 noon on Friday, February 6.

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Gail Cameron, Recorder