

Summary Report on 2009 – 2010 Senate Activities

Submitted by R. Michael Range, Immediate Past Chair of the Senate

The Senate met regularly during each semester. An additional meeting had to be scheduled on May 14, 2010 in order to deal with pending business which could not be completed at the May 10, 2010 meeting. The minutes of all Senate meetings are available at http://www.albany.edu/senate/senate_agendas_minutes.htm. Aside from numerous items of a more routine nature, the Senate discussed and acted on several items with potentially broader implications for the University at large, as follows.

General Education Requirements. In January 2010 the SUNY Board of Trustees approved changes to the Gen Ed Requirements, with the goal to facilitate the mobility of students within SUNY. The Senate passed a resolution to form an ad hoc Task Force on General Education to review the UAlbany requirements in light of the new SUNY requirements. This TF, chaired by Distinguished Teaching Professor Stephen North, continues its work and is expected to report back to the Senate this fall.

Revisions of the Policy on Misconduct in Research and Scholarship. This process has been ongoing for well over two years. A proposed revised policy, which to a large extent had already been vetted by the University Legal Counsel, was scheduled to be voted on at the May 10 meeting. Last minute concerns raised by the University Counsel led to a postponement. The Senate voted to request that revisions be submitted for discussion and vote at the October 2010 Senate meeting.

Review and Evaluation of Administrators and Administrative Services. The SUNY Faculty Senate encourages campuses to regularly review and evaluate administrators. After extensive discussions at the March 8 and April 12 Senate meetings, the UAlbany Senate approved a resolution to establish such an evaluation process for administrators and administrative services and functions at the University at Albany. The Governance Council has been charged to make recommendations about the structure of an ad hoc committee that will develop and propose a detailed process to the Senate.

Graduation Requirements with Alternatives to a Minor. In spring 2010 the Undergraduate Academic Council introduced a proposal that detailed a path to graduation which provides alternatives to meeting the requirements of a Minor. After extensive discussions at the May 10, 2010 meeting, the Senate voted against this proposal.

Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA). This Act was introduced jointly by Governor Paterson and SUNY Chancellor Zimpher in January 2010. Following intensive debate, the UAlbany Senate voted on May 10, 2010 to endorse the resolution passed by the SUNY Faculty Senate, which expressed support for the principles of PHEEIA contingent on the resolution of a number of items of major concern. PHEEIA has not been approved by the NYS Legislature.

Further activities are described in the following summary reports submitted by the chairs of several councils and committees.

CAA (Council on Academic Assessment; Heidi Andrade, Chair) The routine tasks undertaken by the CAA included overseeing the reviews of continuing academic programs and reviewing the assessment reports of the Academic Program Review and General Education Assessment committees. In addition, the Council approved a motion to permit departments with extraordinarily good assessment plans to move to an alternate year reporting schedule, approved a new General Education Assessment Plan as well a pilot of the plan, and approved revisions to the Program Review report template. The Council also made recommendations for revisions to the CAA Charter that must be reviewed by the Governance Council, the Executive Committee, and the Senate this year.

CAFFECoR (Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility; Susanna Fessler, Chair)

- Examination of the “Community Rights and Responsibilities” and suggested changes to the University Council. These suggested changes were made by Student Success (for the most part)
- Elimination of the “Principles of a Just Community” statement from the “Community Rights and Responsibilities.” This was not signed by the President, but will likely return to the Senate floor this year with modifications.
- Re-consideration of 0304-25 bill on Freedom of Speech on campus. This was not signed by the President.
- Workshop for Res Life staff on Freedom of Speech in the dorms
- Hearing of two student grievances, one involving freedom of speech in the dormitories and one involving responsibilities and freedoms of a Middle Earth board member

GOV (Governance Council, Eric Lifshin, Chair) The Governance Council was part of a joint Ad Hoc Committee with CERS to revise the policy and procedures on misconduct. The Council responded to a request from the Provost’s Office for recommendations from both Teaching and Professional Faculty for the Strategic Planning Committee. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Council provided the Provost with a list of 85 names as suggestions. In response to the SUNY Board of Trustees’ revisions of the SUNY-wide General Education requirements, GOV approved the creation of an ad hoc subcommittee of UAC’s Committee on General Education and designated appropriate membership. At the end of the year, GOV developed a matrix for the incoming chair which would serve as a guideline to requests for recommendations from the Council.

COR (Council on Research, James Castracane, Chair) The Council continued to be instrumental in reviewing and recommending proposals for seed funding for faculty research projects. In addition, two new institutes were approved. Discussions centered around the Council’s involvement in the transition of Rockefeller Institute in Government to the University at Albany. Dr. Tom Gais, Interim Director presented an overview of the institute to help members

better understand the Institute and its mission and to determine what assistance Council could provide to facilitate the transition.

GAC (Graduate Academic Council, Larry Kranich, Chair) The main items that came before GAC and were discussed at the SEC meetings and/or on the Senate floor were:

- Responsibility of GAC/Governance in the Graduate Student Support Review process
- Recommendations and comments on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study

- Recommendations and comments on the Campus Strategic Plan, Graduate Education Section
- GAC recommendations concerning cross-departmental MA/PhD programs
- Exercise of GAC's role in reviewing CAA assessment reports

In addition, the following bills were approved by the Senate and President:

Bill 0910-08 Proposal to Deactivate (Suspend Admissions) MA Program in Russian and Certificate of Advanced Study in Russian Translation

Bill 0910-12 Proposal to Establish an Advanced (Graduate) Certificate Program in Professional Science Management

Bill 0910-14 Proposal to Reactivate Doctoral Program in Organizational Studies

UAC (Undergraduate Academic Council, Joan Savitt, Chair) UAC was actively involved in curricular matters. Of significance in the bills that passed were movements by many departments away from requiring specific courses to requiring a selection of courses from a larger list. While it is not always clear that such menus define the best path through the major, it is certain that they are enabling students to graduate on schedule in a climate of scarce resources by not making students wait until a specific course is once again scheduled.

Along with its usual tasks, UAC spent most of the year designing a proposal to create an alternate path to a degree which would not require the completion of a minor. In the materials that accompanied this bill, UAC provided substantial documentation for its proposal. Nevertheless, the Senate did not approve this bill.

ULC (University Life Council, Dan Smith, Chair) The following are some of the many issues ULC dealt with during the past year.

I. Smoking Policy

ULC had ongoing discussions and will issue a forthcoming report with recommendations on revision to the University smoking policy. ULC made several decisions on how to change the smoking policy. Two final items that need to be accomplished before a final report is given to President Philip:

- a. Faculty/Staff Survey on smoking behavior
- b. Faculty forum on the issue to gather additional input from faculty and staff for the policy change

- II. Review of University response and protocols to the pending H1N1 influenza virus, reported to Senate Executive Committee
- III. Reviewed current parking violations policies at request of the Chair of the Senate (attached).
- IV. Discussed pending audit of Clery Act compliance. Campus response to be performed through the Office of the Vice President of Student Success. The information on the Compliance Audit and final report should be shared with ULC in Fall 2010 so that ULC can establish whether any additional controls or policies are necessary to ensure ongoing compliance. The audit was conducted in March 2010.
- V. Report by Provost's Office on several years of summary statistics on violations of academic integrity (copy attached). Recommendations: while the Office of Conflict Resolution, Restorative Justice and Civic Responsibility has traditionally provided summary statistics to the senate, those statistics do not include any reported first violations of academic integrity to the Dean of Undergraduate Education. This represents a source of under reporting of academic integrity violations to the senate which should be corrected.

UPPC (University Planning and Policy Council, John Delano, Chair) Minutes of the council's activities for the 2009-2010 academic year can be found on the Senate website at http://www.albany.edu/senate/uppc_agendas_minutes.htm