

University at Albany
State University of New York
University Council
Minutes*
August 7, 2015

A regular meeting of the University Council was held on May 15, 2015 in University Hall, Room 306. Council members present were: Michael Castellana, Chair; Nick Butler (Elected Student Member); Patricia Caldwell; James Clancy; John Fallon; James Jackson; Abner JeanPierre; Cynthia Fox (Faculty Representative); Joseph Garba (Alumni Representative, by telephone); and Caitlin Janiszewski, Graduate Student Representative. Also present were President Robert Jones; Vice Presidents James Stellar and Joseph Brennan; John Reilly and Janet Thayer, Counsel's Office; Mark Benson, Director of Athletics; Chantelle Cleary, Title IX Coordinator; Nancy Lauricella, Executive Director of Community Standards; Carole Sweeton, Interim CIO; David Rousseau, Dean; Alice Oldfather; J.D. Hyde and Leanne Wirkkula, President's Office.

Mr. Beditz confirmed that the members present constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. After a round of introductions, the Chair requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (Fallon/Clancy), which passed unanimously. He then gave the floor to President Jones for his report.

The President thanked the Council Members for their service and noted the importance of the Council to the long-term success of the University. He then moved on to highlight Campus leadership changes that occurred during the past two and one-half years. There have been fourteen new appointments to senior-level positions, and an additional three senior positions now have searches underway. The President noted that many of these new appointments are a result of staff retirements or other voluntary separations. Others have occurred as the President believed a change in leadership was called for. With few exceptions, e.g. internal promotions, all positions have been filled via a rigorous external search process. In most cases the University succeeded in hiring its number one prospect, a testament to the reputation and trajectory of the Campus.

The President went on to update the Council on several initiatives. An internal Compact Planning process will link unit level strategic plans with annual budget allocations. In subsequent cycles, the operating units will report back on the outcomes of prior year investments, which will then inform subsequent investment decisions. Discussion followed (Caldwell, Stellar, and Jones).

The existing Strategic Plan, now five years old, will be reframed and reoriented to reflect current issues and initiatives. For example improving and enhancing the undergraduate experience has emerged as a prime strategic imperative, and the Campus will seek to improve its freshman to sophomore retention rate to 90% or higher. New systems and data analysis will identify students

who are likely to leave and intervene when appropriate. Academic success as well as participation in extracurricular activities will be monitored as important indicators. The Campus Center food court and dining areas are now being enhanced, and a major capital project to enlarge the Campus Center is well underway. Moving beyond the traditional Candle Lighting ceremony to inaugurate the new academic year, an Opening Convocation for all new students will be held on August 22. Council members are warmly invited to attend.

Moving on, the President noted the Campus is making progress in establishing a Memorandum of Affiliation with the Albany Law School. Beyond providing our students opportunities to explore the traditional study of the law, an affiliation will also provide opportunities to link many of our current academic programs, e.g. Business, Public Policy, Public Health, etc., with legal studies. The Memorandum is expected to be completed by October.

The President went on to provide an update on the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cyber Security; the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; and developments on the East Campus. The University at Albany has recently been designated a Center for Excellence thanks in large part to the support of Assemblywoman Patricia Fahey and Senator George Amadore. This designation recognizes our work in atmospheric science and comes with legislative support of \$250,000 per year, which we hope will rise to \$1 million per year.

Moving on to new business the President introduced Joseph Brennan, Vice President for Communication and Marketing. Dr. Brennan provided a brief overview of his background and experience, and spoke to his immediate goals as he assumes his new duties. Dr. Brennan addressed media challenges as well as a perceived lag between the excellence of UAlbany's academic programs and its reputation, which he will work to close. Discussion followed (Castellana, Caldwell, Balachandran, and Jones). Moving on, Professor David Rousseau was introduced as the Dean of the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cyber Security. Dean Rousseau described the origin of the College which began with a mention in Governor Cuomo's 2015 State of the State message. The Campus has been allocated an initial \$15 million in capital funding support and will seek operational funding as the program matures. The Dean expects that the College will eventually be home to 15 to 20 faculty and 200 majors. We are now recruiting four new faculty and will begin admitting majors in the fall of 2016. The program will be interdisciplinary and will connect with other institutions of higher education and collaborate with state agencies and the private sector, especially in the area of cyber security. Discussion followed (Castellana, Jones, and Balachandran).

Moving on Chairman Castellana updated the Council on New York State's Upstate Revitalization Initiative. He noted the Capital Region is competing for one of three \$500 million State development grants. In the grant planning and application process, education and cyber security have been identified as key areas of concentration. The Region's final proposal, to

be submitted on October 5, will present a compelling vision and hopefully garner one of the three \$500 million awards. The University at Albany plays a key role in the proposal, as with the execution of the grants should it be awarded.

Moving onto new business Chantel Cleary, the Campus Title IX Coordinator, presented a resolution to amend the Student Code of Conduct in order to conform to recently passed NYS sexual harassment on college campuses legislation, commonly referred to as the “Enough is Enough” law. The amendments to our existing code of conduct are relatively minor, as the law was crafted from SUNY policy, which was modeled after the University at Albany’s policy. Mr. Fallon noted that the Council action on the resolution is not a deliberative decision, as our Code must comport with the statute. Upon motion (Jackson/Clancy) the resolution passed unanimously. However, the Council expressed its concern that the Campus adequately notify all students of their responsibilities under the law, and the consequences for violations should they occur. Considerable discussion was devoted to this issue (Caldwell, Jackson, Castellana, Lauricella, Cleary, and Janiszewski). It was noted that the matter is addressed at all orientation meetings and the Title IX Coordinator has personally interacted with 3,000 students this summer to advise them on the law. Other mandatory training with student groups is in place as well. The Code is well publicized, and students must attest that they have read and understand it before they can register for classes. Additional training and dissemination on the law will occur as quickly as it can be developed. It is the consensus of the Council that this is a vitally important issue, and it urges that all appropriate resources and channels of communication be directed to communicating and educating our students as to their obligations under the statute. The Council asks that it be updated on the progress of student training at its next meeting.

Moving on to other business, the Chair introduced a resolution recognizing Bryant Barksdale, outgoing Graduate Student Representative, for his service. It was approved upon unanimous motion. Next, he introduced a resolution recognizing Cynthia Fox, outgoing Faculty Representative, for her service on the Council. It was approved upon unanimous motion. Next, he introduced a resolution recognizing Nick Butler for his service as the Elected Student Member of the Council. It was approved upon unanimous motion. Finally, Chairman Castellana read a recognition resolution recognizing Stephen Beditz for his service and contributions as Secretary to the Council for the past three years. It was approved upon unanimous motion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully,

Stephen J. Beditz
University Liaison to the Council

*Subject to approval at its next meeting