

2016 Report on The University at Albany Faculty and Professional Staff SURVEY ON SHARED GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

As written in the charter of the University Senate (section X.1.3.3), the Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation, a standing committee of the Senate Governance Council (GOV) is charged to “develop and regularly administer assessment instruments, conduct data analysis and report findings to the Council.” To this end, the Committee developed a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of governance in representing its constituencies, transparency of institutional communication, and quality of joint decision-making in the fall of 2015. The survey was sent to the university community – teaching and professional faculty, librarians, and in an amended form to graduate and undergraduate students in March of 2016. The survey was sent to all teaching faculty and staff, and a sample of 5,000 contingent faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.

The survey instruments were developed based on the 2014 survey conducted at the University as well as the guidelines developed by the American Association of University Professor’s (AAUP) *Evaluation of Shared Governance Survey*. In addition, the Committee solicited feedback from the Governance Council as a whole as well as from the Office of the President. The current survey is the result of a collaborative effort to determine how best to strengthen shared governance at the University at Albany.

The committee revised the 2016 survey design in order to address challenges and weaknesses in the format of the 2014 survey, as described in the final report of that earlier survey. The changes were made in order to improve the response rate and quality. To this end, the 2016 survey included fewer questions than the 2014 survey; with a total of 12 questions, it

is roughly on third of the length of the earlier survey. A second change was that the 2016 survey has branching questions, allowing for more concise and accurate responses (for instance, if a survey taker responded “no” to a questions about his/her involvement in the Senate, s/he the survey would skip those sub-questions related to involvement in specific councils and committees). The third change in the 2016 survey was the introduction of comments sections for most questions, and the addition of a question eliciting the “top three University or Higher Education-related issues that [the survey taker] would like the Senate and/or Administration to engage.”

Quantitative Analysis of Questions 1 to 7

Summary of overall faculty and staff descriptors:

A total of 559 faculty, professional staff and management confidential responded, representing a response rate of 22.36% for the 2016 survey (N = 2,500). Of those responding, 463 were full-time and 96 were part-time employees at the University.

Table 1: Faculty Staff Responses by Classification & Status

CLASSIFICATION			
TEACHING	PROFESSIONAL	LIBRARIAN	MGMT/CONFIDENTIAL
286 (51.66%)	229 (40.97%)	21 (3.76%)	23 (4.11%)
FT-PT			
463 (83.12%)		96 (17.23%)	

Members of the university community who took the survey have been at UAlbany for differing periods of time: 155 (28%) have been at the university for 1-4 years; 200 (36%) for 5-14 years, 204 (38%) for 15 or more years.

Table 2: How long have you been at UAlbany?

	Number of years	Percent
Less than one year	20	4%
1-2 years	62	11%
3-4 years	73	13%
5-9 years	118	21%
10-14 years	82	15%
15-20 years	81	14%
20-29 years	79	14%

30 or more years	44	8%
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Familiarity and Experience with the Senate and Senate Councils and Committees

366 respondents indicated that they are ‘somewhat’ (49%) or ‘very familiar’ (17%) with the University at Albany’s Senate and its Councils, while 192 (34%) indicated that they are “not at all familiar” with the Senate and its Councils.

Table 3: How familiar are you with the University at Albany's Senate and its Councils?

Not at all Familiar	192 (34%)
Somewhat Familiar	271 (49%)
Very Familiar	95 (17%)

When asked to describe the degree to which the survey taker feels the Senate addresses his or her concerns, 272 responded “somewhat well” (69%) and “very well” (9%), while 75 (22%) responded “not at all well”

Table 4: Generally speaking, how well do you feel the Senate addresses your concerns?

Not at all well	75 (22%)
Somewhat well	234 (69%)
Very well	29 (9%)

272 or 50% of the faculty and staff who took the survey have been involved in leadership positions in their college or academic/administrative unit.

Table 5: Have you been involved in leadership positions in your own college or academic/administrative unit?

Yes	272 (50%)
No	270 (50%)

When asked a related question about experience with the Senate or its Councils, similar proportions were reported: 195 (55%) had served on a Senate committee or council, or as a Senator, and 66 (44%) had not.

Table 6: In what ways, if any, have you been involved in the University Senate?

I have not served in the Senate or any of its committees or councils, and have not voted in Senate elections	66 (19%)
I have not served in the Senate or any of its committees or councils, but have voted in Senate elections.	89 (25%)
I have served as Senator.	89 (25%)

Of those who had served in the Senate, two thirds (68%) had served on one or two Senate Councils or Committees:

Table 7: How many Senate Councils or Committees have you served on?

None	2 (1%)
1	73 (37%)
2	57 (29%)
3	25 (13%)
4	18 (9%)
5 or more	20 (10%)

Among those respondents who had served as Senators, nearly two thirds (58%) had served 1-3 years, with an uptick for those long-term members, eighteen whom had served 5-9 years (20%).

Table 8: How many years have you served as Senator (total number of years)?

1 (or in first year)	13 (15%)
2	32 (36%)
3	13 (15%)
4	8 (9%)
5-9	18 (20%)
10 or more	5 (6%)

When asked about the familiarity or interaction with Senate councils or committees, by the largest number of faculty and staff (out of a total of 463) mentioned that they have interacted with UPPC (191), followed by CPCA (78). CERS has been identified to be the committee of the lowest degree of interaction (14).

Table 9: Please indicate your highest level of familiarity or interaction with each of the following Senate councils or committees

	I have not heard of this Council	I have heard of this Council	I have interacted with this Council	I have served on this Council	Total
CAA	69	187	41	31	328
CAFFECor	64	223	21	20	328
CERS	90	215	14	9	328
COR	64	197	33	35	329
CPCA	33	183	78	36	330
GAC	46	181	67	35	329
GOV	50	216	24	31	321
LISC	89	178	21	40	328
UAC	43	171	56	56	326
ULC	91	181	28	27	327
UPPC	66	191	191	34	482

Which Senate Councils or Committees Function Effectively?

Asked about which of the Senate councils or committees were functioning effectively, faculty and staff rank CPCA (71 or 63% of responses among persons that had some knowledge about that committee), UAC (70 or 63%) and GAC (70 or 69%) the highest. These councils also have the highest overall response on this question. There were, however, differences of opinion: CPCA is also leads the list of councils that are not functioning effectively (19).

Table 10: In your opinion, which of the following Senate councils or committees are functioning effectively?

	This council is functioning effectively	This council is not functioning effectively	Don't Know	Total
CAA	41 (58%)	7	23	71
CAFFECor	18 (45%)	7	15	40
CERS	12 (54%)	5	5	22
COR	32 (48%)	12	22	66
CPCA	71 (63%)	19	22	112
GAC	70 (69%)	3	28	101
GOV	31 (57%)	7	16	54
LISC	30 (50%)	7	23	60
UAC	70 (63%)	7	34	111
ULC	22 (41%)	5	26	53

How Well Does the Senate Represent and Consult with Its Constituencies?

Asked about how well the full range of University Senate constituencies are represented in the Senate, the councils and committees, faculty and staff responded that contingent faculty and contingent part time faculty are the least adequately represented. 56 out of 178 indicated that full time contingent faculty are “not at all well” represented, followed by 48 responses out of 179 saying the same about contingent part time faculty. Undergraduate students are seen as the next least well represented. The constituencies that are judged to be the best represented are faculty (101 out of 181) and professional staff (87 out of 180).

Table 11: How well are the following constituencies represented in the Senate, its councils and committees?

	Not at all well	Somewhat Well	Very Well	Don't Know	Total
Undergraduate Students	30	43	28	79	180
Graduate	22	51	40	67	180
Contingent FT	56	36	12	74	178
Contingent PT	48	43	17	71	179
Faculty	3	51	101	26	181
Professional,Staff	8	48	87	37	180
Librarians	3	42	76	59	180
Emeritus Faculty	30	18	2	103	153

Asked how effectively the Senate consulted with its constituencies, respondents indicated that faculty, professional staff, and librarians are most effectively consulted, contingent faculty least effectively consulted, with undergraduate and graduate students in the middle. Out of a total of 180 respondents, 118 judged the Senate as ‘very effective’ or ‘somewhat effective’ in consulting faculty, 66 viewed the Senate as similarly effective in consulting with graduate students, and only 43 saw the Senate effective in consulting with contingent part-time faculty.

Table 12: How effective is the Senate in consulting each constituency?

	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective	Don't Know	Total
Undergraduate	27	34	14	104	179
Graduate	21	44	22	93	180
Contingent FT	45	27	7	101	180
Contingent PT	39	34	9	98	180

Faculty	14	73	45	47	179
Professional,Staff	14	56	43	66	179
Librarians	6	46	37	91	180
Emeritus	23	18	3	135	179

Asked about the effectiveness of the participation in the Senate, its councils and committees of these constituencies, respondents reported a rough equivalence between effectiveness and participation. The results of the faculty and staff survey indicate undergraduate students' participation is seen as the least effective one (39 out of 177 responses), followed by contingent faculty (37 out of 176) and contingent part time faculty (31 out of 174). The most effective participation in the Senate, its constituencies and committees is by faculty (61 out of 179), followed by professional staff (63 out of 175) and librarians (57 out of 177).

Table 13: How effective is the participation in the Senate, its councils and committees of the following groups?

	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective	Don't Know	Total
Undergraduate	39	34	13	91	177
Graduate	24	44	28	81	177
Contingent FT	37	30	6	103	176
Contingent PT	31	35	12	96	174
Faculty	6	70	61	42	179
Professional,Staff	8	49	63	55	175
Librarians	2	45	57	73	177
Emeritus	24	24	3	125	176

How Transparent is the Senate?

When asked how transparent the Senate is, two-thirds (266 or 66%) gave a qualified 'somewhat transparent,' and another one fifth (61 or 20%) said 'very transparent.' However, when comments provided on this question are considered, a more complex picture emerges, as is discussed in the qualitative analysis section of this report.

Table 14: How transparent do you feel UAlbany's Senate is?

Not at all transparent	44 (14%)
Somewhat transparent	205 (66%)
Very transparent	61 (20%)

How Well Does the Senate Communicate?

A follow-up question on transparency asked how well the Senate communicates with its constituencies, half of faculty and professional staff respondents indicated that it was difficult to find information (155 or 50%), and only 10% indicated that it was always easy to find out about Senate issues and activities.

Table 15: How well does the Senate communicate the issues it engages to its constituencies and community?

It is not easy to find information about the issues the Senate is currently considering	155 (50%)
It is easy to find information about some issues the Senate is currently considering but not all.	121 (39%)
It is easy to find information about all issues the Senate is currently considering.	31 (10%)

How Often Does the University Administration Consult with the Senate?

When asked whether the university administration (the President, Vice Presidents, and Deans) took consideration of faculty and senate recommendations regarding the core faculty issues of curriculum and tenure and promotion, 76 or 23% of those responding chose 'often' or 'always'. When asked whether the administration sought meaningful input on other areas, such as budget, long-term planning, and facilities, a different pattern of responses occurred. Of long-term planning, for example, 85 or 27% chose 'rarely' or 'never', and on the question of budget, 117 or 37% chose 'rarely' or 'never'.

Table 16: How often the university administration (a) takes into consideration in faculty or Senate recommendations in areas of primary faculty responsibility (e.g. curriculum, tenure and promotion) and (b) seeks input from faculty for issues in which faculty has an appropriate but not primary responsibility (e.g. budgeting, long-term planning)?

Admin consideration of Senate	Rarely	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	DK	Total
Faculty primary responsibility	6(2%)	42(13%)	80(25%)	56(18%)	18(6%)	116(36%)	318
Long-term Planning	21(7%)	64(20%)	78(25%)	34(11%)	16(5%)	104(33%)	317
Physical Resources	32(10%)	71(23%)	63(20%)	23(7%)	11(4%)	113(36%)	313
Budget	37(12%)	80(26%)	57(18%)	25(8%)	9(3%)	105(34%)	313

Selections							
Management Conf	29(9%)	58(19%)	68(22%)	30(10%)	10(3%)	118(38%)	313

Comparison of Quantitative Data in the 2014 and 2016 Surveys

There are significant differences and similarities between the 2016 and earlier survey. One notable difference is in response rates. In 2014, 311 faculty, professional staff, and management confidential responded, representing 12.4% of the estimated constituency (N = 2,500). In 2016, by contrast, 559 faculty, professional staff and management confidential responded, representing a response rate of 22.36% for the 2016 survey. Among undergraduate and graduate student responses, the increases were as dramatic, nearly doubling from 323 students in 2014 to 625 in 2016 (N = 5,000).

While the final report of the survey from 2014 states that the “university community is generally uninformed about governance” (3), a more careful examination of the numbers reveals a more positive picture. In 2014, about 76% of the survey takers responded to the question about their familiarity with the University at Albany’s Senate and its councils with “somewhat familiar” and “very familiar”, with 60% never having served on a Senate committee or council. In 2016, with almost double number of respondents, 66% reported not having served in the Senate or one of the Senate’s councils or committees. But an equivalent combined percentage (66%) of respondents stated that they were “somewhat” or “very familiar”, with 49% respondents indicating they were “somewhat familiar” and 17% indicating they were “very familiar”.

Comparing the 2016 with the 2014 survey, some characteristics of respondents and issues of concern for faculty, staff and students remain unchanged, while others are new or newly prominent.

In both 2014 and 2016, respondents report skepticism about shared governance. In 2014, responding to the statement that “Administration/Senate communications “reflected ...transparency and understanding”, 54% of respondents indicated “never”, “rarely” or (only) “sometimes”, with 22% choosing “don’t know”. The relationship between the administration and the Senate seems to have deteriorated. In 2016, responding to the statement that the “University Administration “takes into consideration faculty or senate recommendations” regarding budgeting, long-term planning, physical resources or selection of administrative personnel, 50+% responded “never”, “rarely”, or (only) “sometimes”, with 35+% choosing “don’t know”. In 2014, the response rate for similar questions in the categories “never”, “rarely”, or (only) “sometimes”, was around 36%.

There are similar data regarding familiarity with Senate bodies, judgments of the efficacy of councils, and perceptions of how well Senate constituencies are served by the larger body: In 2014, for example, CPCA was known by 80% of respondents, while LISC was known by only 60%; in 2016, CPCA remained the best recognized Council, while LISC remained least well

known. When asked in 2014 “Which Senate Councils or Committees Function Effectively”, CAFFECOR (9%), CPCA (9%), and UPPC (7%) were those chosen as “not functioning effectively”, but with a whopping 79-85% reporting “don’t know”. When asked the same question in 2016, CAFFECOR joined CPCA, and UPPC in the list of those “not functioning effectively”, but each also had higher proportions of favorable to unfavorable ratings. Because of the new survey design that incorporated branching questions, there was a notable decline in the “don’t know” responses (from 79-85% to a range of 20 -37%).

The perception of transparency seems to have slightly improved. In 2014, 22% of responders checked “never” or “rarely” to the question of negotiation and communication reflecting an ongoing process of transparency and understanding, 57% “sometimes”, 22% “often”, but in 2016, responses to the question of how transparent is the Senate were 14% “not very” transparent, 66% “somewhat” transparent and 20% “very” transparent.

The Senate is not communicating well about its business. 50% reported that “it is not easy to find information” about the Senate’s business, with only 10% saying that it is easy to find information about “all issues the Senate is considering”. This question was not asked in 2014.

Lastly, when asked in 2014 how effective the University Senate is in representing graduate student issues, 62% of the faculty and professional staff responded “don’t know”, as they did when asked how effective the Senate is in representing undergraduate student issues, with about 20% “not at all well”. When asked the same question in 2016, a lesser 44% responded “don’t know” and about 18% “not well”. In 2014 there was no consideration of representation and consultation for contingent faculty. In 2016 contingent faculty were judged the least well represented by the Senate (30%), followed by graduate (12%) and undergraduate (16%) students. About 44% responded “don’t know”. Similar ratings were obtained for effectiveness of consultation with these constituencies and their participation in the Senate.

Qualitative Analysis of Questions 8b, 9b, 10, 11, and 12

The last five questions on the survey provided opportunities for additional comments on fixed-format questions and elicited further written comments about University issues and Governance. Table 17 lists response rates and prompts for each question:

Table 17: Number of responses to questions 8-12

Question	Number of Respondents (% of total)	Prompt
8b	16 (3% of total)	“Please use the space below for comments”
9B	75 (13% of total)	“Please use the space below for comments”
10	60 (11% of total)	“Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts on the items above”
11	277 (50% of total)	“What are the top three University or Higher

		Education-related issues that you would like the Senate and/or Administration to engage?
12	73 (13% of total)	“Please use the space below to share any additional thoughts you might have about governance at UAlbany.”

Responses were analyzed using a modified version of conventional consensual qualitative research (CQR) methodology (Hill et al. 2005). The analysis drew information from the gathered data and sought to identify major themes to finally extract leading sentiments. The steps involved in the analysis were as follows: (1) develop central themes or topic areas, (2) coding responses for each of these areas, (3) extracting main themes and subthemes across responses while examining the data for positive or negative contributions, (4) displaying sample responses that best illustrate each of the main ideas and subthemes, (5) summarize the analysis by identifying and displaying the emergent leading sentiments/areas which are most appropriate for the focus of the study. Responses were initially read once for development of central topic areas. Then they were read twice for coding and classification into the appropriate topic areas (Dawson, 2006) and for frequency calculations. At this point, main themes and subthemes were identified and responses were read for a fourth time to identify the responses that best illustrate a particular theme or subtheme. Once the full classification was done, a review of the main themes and subthemes and their illustrative comments revealed the emergent sentiments and areas of focus for the Senate. At this final stage, illustrative responses were selected to summarize and illustrate sentiments and main areas of focus.

Results

Analysis of all responses yielded a wealth of information about respondent views of the issues raised by the five probes/questions. Question 9b, in particular, provided commentary on the issues of Senate transparency and communication. Question 12 provided the most extended responses, which often developed issues raised in earlier questions, such as 9b. Question 11 generated the greatest number of comments, 702 in total, as most but not all of the 277 respondents named three issues they felt were important for the University. Initial analysis of questions 8-12 revealed a number of themes, some overlapping, and most involving two or more subthemes. Question 11, for example, generated eight themes with a total of 46 subthemes. The five questions and their themes, but not the subthemes, are presented in table 18:

Table 18: Themes in written responses to questions 8-12

Question	Themes
Eight (8)	Representation, the Work of the Senate
Nine (9)	Transparency, Senate Communication, Criticism of Administration, Criticism of Senate
Ten (10)	Criticism of Administrative Consultation, Satisfaction with Administrative Consultation, Don't know
Eleven (11)	Governance and Planning, Resource Allocation, Professional Issues, Student Issues, Contingent Issues, Academic Climate & Morale, Teaching and Curriculum, Life on Campus
Twelve (12)	Governance, Contingent Issues, Academic Excellence, Review of Administrative Performance, Senate Communication, Criticism of Administration

In addition to the number of responses by question, the length of written responses also varied. Question 8, the first survey item to invite written comments, received a total of sixteen responses, ten consisted of one or two sentences only. Question 12, the last survey item, received 73 responses. Most of these were full paragraphs, and some integrated material from previous written responses, or explicitly referred to previous responses, in summarizing statements about governance and other aspects of the University.

Major Themes

In order to present a manageable, coherent account of survey results, we have decided to focus on the major themes identified in questions 9, 11, and 12, discussing each theme with data illustrations drawn from question 11, which are often no more than a phrase or sentence, and questions 9 or 12, which tend to be longer and more developed responses. For those readers desiring a more in depth discussion of qualitative data, two appendices are provided as separate draft reports: Report on Question 9b, which examines written comments on transparency and communication in the Senate, and Report on Question 11, which discusses themes and subthemes and provides numerous responses about University and Higher-education concerns of respondents. Appendices are available on the University Senate webpage.

Theme 1: University Faculty and Staff Perceive the Senate as Flawed

A majority of respondents see the Senate as in need of reform and improvement, especially in transparency and communication and its ability to engage the administration in effective consultation.

Subtheme: The Senate is weak

faculty governance/greater faculty governing of our U-faculty must have more say about what their U does, how it does this, which direction it's going, what resources should be used, what areas promoted, etc. [Q11]

Faculty governance. The faculty senate appears to be a paper tiger. It must press for a greater role in the life of the university. [Q11]

I have never been involved beyond the Council on Research because faculty governance is a waste of time here. They are simply ineffective. Why didn't the faculty senate issue a statement about the way President Jones mishandled the CDTA bus incident?? They basically bow down to the senior administrators and have no independent voice [Q12]

I do not see how the senate has ever had much influence over administrative decisions that affect all of us, like the addition of the college of engineering without additional resources and the fact that we have a major workload problem with a shrinking staff and growing senior administration. I would love the senate to have say in that. [Q12]

I have been pleased to see Senate increasingly taking up important issues in the past few years. I support their initiatives on Administration review. I am pleased to hear that they continue to press for a more substantive role for faculty consultation. It is also good to see some UUP/Senate joint forums this year; that collaboration is important. Senate, however, seems to move very slowly. It seems like it may need some major bylaws overhauls to its structure (including, importantly, more representation for contingent faculty) that would allow for more faculty participation. I would like to see a direct election of Senate Chairs, and possibly a longer tenure in that role. I would also like to see more open forums and regular communication with faculty about important issues. I have concerns about some of the University's expansion projects and reorganizations with CEAS, and would like to see Senate playing a more active policing role with these changes. Most important is clawing back a central role for faculty governance and the academic mission on campus. .[Q9]

Subtheme: More transparency is needed from the Administration and the Senate

More transparency on the Compact Plan process and which proposals are selected, rationale, etc. [Q11]

Transparency with respect to administrative priorities and investments. [Q11]

The lack of transparency about college wide, university-wide, and SUNY wide decisions on funding programs and departments. [Q11]

Transparency by administration on hiring practices/decisions, especially when hiring faculty and administrators[Q11]

“Seems like if the senate wanted to increase transparency, it would send out the agenda and minutes to the whole University prior to the meeting. Maybe people would show up for public comment, or voice their concerns, if they had ready access to information. At the very least, it might serve to remind people that everyone has a voice in governance; it's not just the domain of the terminally disgruntled.” [Q9b]

“Senators in departments report out and this is very effective. Understanding how to really participate as faculty in the Senate who guide and have more voice is questionable. It sometimes seems as if the Senate rubber stamps directives from on high. Not always clear how to raise concerns. The Senate body arrangement is somewhat foreboding, hierarchical, coming before court not as structurally open as it could be... .” [Q9b]

“It's weird I'm getting this survey as contingent faculty. If I am permitted to have any say in anything involving the senate or academic governance, no one told me about it. Someone once asked me to sign a nomination for a senate appointment and didn't even know, upon finding I was contingent, if I was allowed to sign the nomination, so I didn't. So there is confusion and lack of transparency about what the senate has to do with me at all as a contingent faculty member.” [Q9b]

Subtheme: Senate needs to communicate more effectively with constituents

“I hear information from individuals that participate in committees or attend council meetings but not from the Senate directly.” [Q9b, throughout]

“Information is not pushed out from the Senate, other than through its members”

“Our department's Senate representative communicates well to our department, but in years in which this hasn't been the case (before this person's term), conveyance of issues has been obscure.

“In general, the website has information or a representative from my building shares current Senate news. But, the documents are not always clear about the real issue at hand.”

“Reports made from Councils to Senate are frequently minimal or non-existent. It is often hard for anyone not on a Council or Committee to know what it is doing.”

“You have to care about what they are doing to go and look for the information. I don't think people are aware enough about what the Senate is dealing with, to care enough to go looking for the information.”

“Better communication is necessary. I would love to see some sort of regular publication (newsletter?) from Senate about things Senate is dealing with. Likewise, I am always concerned about closed-door meetings with administration. I am particularly concerned about the

representation of contingent faculty. There seems little transparency regarding academic issues relating to contingent faculty which are not communicated to many of those faculty since they are not voting members.”

“Workings within the senate are transparent, to the extent that senators understand the role of each of the councils. It's a challenge to communicate this work to the campus as a whole. This may be due to a general lack of understanding of the senate's structure and ignorance of its by-laws.”

Theme 2: Resources are Crucial for the University and Its Mission

A majority of respondents see the procuring and allocating of resources as vital to the viability of the University.

Subtheme: Advocate for Increased State Support of the University

Public / legislative support for State school. CUNY did well with this recently protesting NYState budget cuts. [Q11]

Restoration of cut funding since 2008: too much of the spending in the past 7 has been devoted to new colleges or projects, while the basic elements of research travel support, etc. remains in diminished amounts since the budget cuts. [Q11]

Advocacy on the part of UAlbany and SUNY to SUNY and state legislature. In my view, speaking with one voice to state government would strengthen our funding situation.

Public funding to control students' costs; responsible use of funds. [Q11]

I believe that shared governance should be transparent and accountable for both the Senate and the Administration, and that this will improve the long-term health of the university by providing rational, reflexive, and participatory planning. The issue of Contingent Faculty needs to be drastically improved, and the # of teaching faculty working without the possibility of secure employment needs to be reduced, for the long-term health of curriculum and instruction at the university. We need a model of funding for the university that demands adequate state support for its public higher education system, not one built on raising student tuition and short-term corporate support.[Q12]

Subtheme: Prioritize resources for central university activities in teaching, research and libraries

Prioritizing administration hires over faculty lines - this is a general move in higher education that is not beneficial to faculty or students. Why do we hire deans and consultants on diversity issues but do not have lines for faculty of color? [Q11]

Use of Adjuncts in place of full-time faculty - In many cases, adjuncts are fine, but when utilized as a financial strategy in place of full-time faculty they weaken the overall education system. [Q11]

Increasing the fraction of tenure-track vs contingent faculty. [Q11]

Most of all, I'd like to see a genuine commitment to genuine educational values. Supporting & funding faculty and students' educational (classroom and course) needs, not tinsel and sports. Expand do not shrink curriculum and academic departments. Support curriculum and learning by reducing class size. Do not farm out and subcontract teaching to cheap labor but hire tenure-track faculty. [Q12]

Need for more dependable source of travel/conference funding for faculty. [Q11]

Enhancing the research character of the university by increasing support resources (e.g. dedicated research/travel accounts, on-campus conference support, junior faculty leaves). [Q11]

Extremely low research funding rates and complete lack of significant internal / bridge funding. [Q11]

The first thing that I thought about, in fact, was "How can we be thinking about governance when we can't even fix the heating and the wifi?" That being said, I think this university needs to decide whether it wants to be a world-class research institution, or a deluxe community college. While faculty is extremely talented, there is so much emphasis put on teaching, so few resources to relieve faculty from basic service duties (advising, etc.), such an emphasis on athletics, ... I am not sure where research fits in the administration's concerns. [Q12]

Library budget allocations. These have not been significantly updated per unit for years, if not decades. Things change over time; the budget should reflect that. [Q11]

Library budget. Due to high inflation in library journal prices, the library materials budget shrinks every year. If it doesn't, it is because library jobs remain unfilled. This in an untenable long-term solution. [Q11]

Improving the library funding and contents. [Q11]

Subtheme: Prioritize resources for students

More support for ESOL students (tutoring is not sufficient; they need intervention and support that is more curriculum-based). [Q11]

Better cross-department resources for students. [Q11]

Support for undergraduate research. [Q11]

Raising stipend levels for graduate students and extending their time availability. [Q11]

Compensation for graduate student assistants (we are paid very poorly and often struggle to make ends meet despite putting in long hours and doing excellent work). [Q11]

Funding for graduate students (to support current students, but also attract competitive students). [Q11]

Graduate student stipends: in the non-science areas, Albany trails other institutions by as much as 25 to 30 percent in the stipends it offers. [Q11]

Subtheme: Prioritize resources for contingent faculty

Adjunct Pay - If they're going to be part of the overall education strategy, they should at least be paid as though they were doing something important. [Q11]

Address the state requirements for pay considering experience of adjuncts. [Q11]

Meaningful wage for adjuncts that encourages going the extra mile.[Q11]

The university is operating on the backs of poorly compensated contingent faculty. This is my top priority. [Q12]

Theme 3: Concerns about Teaching, Curriculum, and Academic Quality

(Related to the academic climate there were 13% of responses that talked about the quality of the academic program). There were many comments expressing proposals and concerns about teaching and curricular quality. A main request among comments was the need to support our programs at all levels, support for research & travel and support for teaching.

Subtheme: Academic excellence is in danger

Academic excellence, which is the most important issue for future growth. [Q11]

Budgetary problems hampering academic excellence. [Q11]

Loss of tenure-track positions / Increasing reliance on adjuncts. [Q11]

Strengthening programs to help develop critical thinking skills for all students (not clear if new course is helping). [Q11]

Over the past decade or two, I have heard administrators discuss many topics but very seldom did the words "academic excellence" cross their lips. What I have heard are all sorts of trendy topics (most recently money, retention, diversity, distance learning....), but not academic

excellence. Achieving excellence is not a mystery, but it requires a steady long-term commitment to foster excellence wherever it is found. [Q12]

Focus on improving academic programs and recruiting better students rather than increasing course offerings through hiring more adjunct faculty and loosening application standards to meet enrollment targets. [Q12]

Subtheme: Teaching needs resources, support, and professional autonomy

Academic freedom and quality of education, which is linked to the raising reliance of contingent faculty. [Q11]

In higher ed in general, less paranoia about offending students/ triggers / micro-aggressions. [Q11]

Reallocation of human, financial, time resources to focus on much better quality of teaching, scholarship and essential services (like governance). [Q11]

Consider quality, proven innovations for supporting teaching, scholarship and service activities. [Q11]

Either get rid of SIRF or it replace with a better system such as a written one and mandate student participation so that results are statistically robust. [Q11]

Too much emphasis on technology as a substitute for teaching and learning. [Q11]

Professional development for effective teaching. [Q11]

In general it feels like the administration sets the agenda -- we have to fill out their various strategic planning forms whose design tends to, a priori, limit their ability to address the needs of non-revenue generating units. At the same time, the university has been rushing ahead with various expansions that do not seem to take account of the core teaching mission of the university. Thus it seems to me that faculty feel -- or at least those I speak to feel -- that they are losing their rightful say over the general academic curricula of the university. [Q12]

Most of all, I'd like to see a genuine commitment to genuine educational values. Supporting & funding faculty and students' educational (classroom and course) needs, not tinsel and sports. Expand do not shrink curriculum and academic departments. Support curriculum and learning by reducing class size. Do not farm out and subcontract teaching to cheap labor but hire tenure-track faculty. [Q12]

Subtheme: Curriculum and university mission need discussion

Importance of the arts & humanities to a liberal arts education. [Q11]

Erosion of the humanities and the liberal arts mission; finding ways to value them in their own right. [Q11]

Reevaluating current programs to make them more current, more competitive, and more desirable, rather than just adding on new, narrowly focused programs that only appeal to a small number of students. [Q11]

Importance of becoming a globalized, well-rounded, well-informed engaged citizen for both instructors, administrators and students. [Q11]

Creating strong curriculum and student leaders who will go out prepared with transformative vision to problem solve how to deconstruct embedded institutional "isms" and IMAGINE, transform for diversity and Sustainability - [Q11]

Input from contingents on curriculum. [Q11]

A few years ago, the university shut down or down-graded several departments that, they said, had low enrollment, but had high achievement. We are supposed to be a university, therefore offering a wide variety of opportunities for growth. The criterion for continuation should be quality of the program. The administration seems to have no problems finding money for their pet projects even while they plead austerity. [Q12]

Issue #1: The administration's insistence on adding additional programs with such a narrow focus is counterproductive to the President's goals of increasing enrollment. These programs will only add a handful of students, place undue stress on the staff, and the additional faculty needed are seemingly not worth the cost it would take for the amount of students who would be drawn in by these offerings. Instead, the goal should be to reevaluate our current offerings and renovate them to make the curriculum more relevant. The University needs to perform well at its foundations before adding these "boutique" degrees that only serve a limited population. [Q12]

Theme 4: Faculty & Staff Distrust of the Administration

Comments expressing Faculty and Staff distrust of the Administration we found in questions 9b, 10, 11 and 12. Issues raised included the unequal power of actors in shared governance, problems with consultation, and the need to evaluate administrators:

Subtheme1: The Administration is powerful and the Senate is weak

"I think that administrators are too powerful in the University and that the Faculty Senate should have greater power and independence to be involved in actual decision-making at the

entire University level. The Senate and faculty for that matter are told things after the fact, like this business of a College of Homeland Security, which is a disgrace.” [Q9b]

“Faculty governance at UAlbany is scandalously weak. This was revealed to the rest of the world when the CAS Dean a few years ago eliminated French, Theater, and other departments. The school has been adrift for years and is currently grasping at straws, trying to turn itself into a tech school--a kind of four-year BOCES--to make up for Kaloyeros walking away with \$17 billion in University infrastructure. The problem is structural, with the faculty treated as "employees," rather than active participants in running the institution. The administrators become increasingly arrogant and removed from academic matters. The "employees" become increasingly beleaguered and cowed.” [Q9b]

“There is little sense among faculty that what faculty know about issues under consideration clearly represents what really unfolds behind the scenes.” [Q9b]

“The Senate has made great strides in transparency in recent years. The problem I see is that information from the administration is planning doesn't often get through to the Senators until it's already been decided.” [Q9b]

Subtheme 2: The Administration does not sufficiently consult the Senate

Creating a mechanism for Faculty to be able to raise their concerns with the Provost and the President, with the expectation of effective responses/actions. [Q11]

Faculty input into M/C hiring. [Q11]

Proper consultation before major budgetary plans/decisions. [Q11]

More consultation between the administration and Senate on changes to academic programs. [Q11]

Better and more open dialogue between administration and faculty on the future of the University - without having predetermined agendas coming in [Q11]

Subtheme 3: The Administration needs to consult on decisions affecting faculty workload and curriculum.

Realignment of administrators and faculty, so that the faculty are aided by administrators rather than impeded by them. [Q11]

More information on how new and restructured programs impact the workload of existing faculty and staff. [Q11]

Faculty governance--ensuring that faculty have oversight and input in important long-range planning and budgetary decisions. [Q11]

Soliciting AND HEEDING faculty input into curricular and organizational decision (for ex: changing a college name & what depts & programs are in it). [Q11]

What shared governance might actually mean; to what degree is faculty expertise respected when it comes to educational policy and the larger mission of the University. [Q11]

Governance at U Albany has a very top-down structure. The faculty Senate and the various College Councils are only advisory, and the administration makes the real decisions. But the workings of the administration are quite opaque to faculty at all levels, so it is quite hard for those faculty members who do have some authority (such as department chairs and program directors) to make informed decisions. The increase in administrators over the years has also added to the workload of faculty (who have to implement their programs) without adding to our numbers. Furthermore, our various schools and colleges have very different goals and little understanding of one another's activities, which leads to real misunderstandings across campus. [Q12]

Subtheme 4: The administration needs to be evaluated

Many responses (about 6%) requested a faculty role in systematic review of administrative offices.

Yearly performance reviews of the upper administration, including deans. Reviews with TEETH! [Q11]

Failure on the part of the University administration to assess in an ongoing, meaningful way the performance of deans and chairs, and to act on the information. [Q11]

Lack of leadership abilities or effective/functional administrative instincts among deans of at least two, and possibly more, colleges/schools. [Q11]

Have independent review to evaluate whether all current administrative positions are indispensable. [Q11]

The SUNY-wide Senate promotes faculty assessment of administrators on each campus. A past chancellor approved of it and two other Univ. centers have had it in place for years, and it works well. The last Middle States review commented that we need to institute it here. Why is administration still dragging its feet on implementing it here? [Q12]

Summary

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Continue to strengthen formal consultation as a way of strengthening the Senate in relation to a stronger Administration.

This recommendation responds to two 'themes': That the Senate is weak, and that the Administration often does not consult with the Senate until late in unfolding of new academic and other initiatives. Formal consultation needs to occur in a timely fashion, across a range of initiatives. For example, the Senate leadership has worked hard this past year to insist that it be consulted early in projects such as Strategic Planning, Compact Planning, the Provost's Implementation process for Contingents, and new academic programs. In order to build a better process of 'shared governance,' the Senate needs to insist that it be involved in all initiatives that match the terms of Section 2.2.2 of the faculty by-laws, which define the scope of formal consultation. This past year it has re-established key committees of UPPC, with responsibility for budgetary and facilities. The Governance Council worked over the summer to insure that the rights of the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils would be consulted on all relevant phrases of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and that a roster of Senate nominees was put for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This is the work we need to do to strengthen the Senate and Shared Governance: Educating the relevant administrative offices about Senate Councils and formal consultation; making sure that Senate Councils and Committee are functioning and aware of their rights and responsibilities; insisting that the consultation process begins early. And, last, we must recognize that Governance is a process, full of trial and error, which we can individually and collectively improve.

Recommendation 2: Increase Lobbying for SUNY, Improve Financial Literacy of the Senate & Prioritize Academics.

Recommendation 2a: Work with the administration and UUP to increase lobbying efforts for state support of the SUNY system and its mission in research and education. At the same time, work with the administration to increase the proportion of state and tuition dollars that are portion to UAlbany.

This recommendation responds to two themes. 1) Keeping education affordable, which is one of the core values of this university and one of the main concerns for our students. 2) The perception among faculty that if their work were sufficiently acknowledged and valued, UAlbany would be able to strengthen its position among other SUNY centers and this would be more successful requesting the appropriate level of funding from SUNY.

UUP has a long tradition of lobbying the legislature for support for SUNY and its mission in research and education. They have done wonderful work on behalf the whole SUNY system defending SUNY's budget. Lobbying for more state support is something that we need to

engage as a community. We recommend that the Senate, University leadership and UUP leaders focus efforts to improve state support of higher education. But every effort counts. We encourage members of the university to also contribute to this effort by contacting the representatives in the NY government for increase support for higher education by increasing the state contribution to SUNY. For guidelines see:
<https://www.suny.edu/govtrelations/state/lobbying-tips/>

Recommendation 2b: Financial Literacy of the Senate, and UPPC's Resource Analysis & Planning Committee.

This is "a university on the move", we are growing and growth necessitates increased funding. Part of the funding comes from tuition revenue, but an important portion is provided by state funds. The UAlbany Foundation is achieving important gains towards a better endowment. They have raised a cumulative total of \$55 million on their current campaign that will end in Jan 2019, with a target of 150 million. But additional funding is needed so that the growth of new units does not happen at the expense of other units. In this transitional period more than ever, there is the need to understand the financial picture of UAlbany and how resources are utilized. We recommend working with the administration to understand how UAlbany fares financially within the SUNY system and how the different programs within the university are supported.

We recommend that the Resource Analysis & Planning Committee works together with the Financial Office to have information about the UAlbany Budget, with all sources and expenses accounted for. We will all benefit from understanding the financial picture of the university. Thus we also recommend that this committee makes the information available to all the Senate and that the information be yearly updated and displayed on the Senate's webpage.

Recommendation 2c: Prioritize Academics.

Developing a clear financial picture for UAlbany will allow us to strengthen the academic environment. A strategic allocation of resources that supports the vision of the university we want has a cumulative strengthening effect. We recommended that UPPC and its Resource Analysis & Planning Committee be vigilant that resource allocations and funding requests are aligned with the goals set up by the Compact Planning Committee.

Some areas are critical for a stronger academic environment and have historically been underfunded. For example, attention should be given to the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Graduate Students, which included bringing graduate students stipends to levels that are comparable with our peer institutions so that we can better attract strong doctoral students.

Recommendation 3: Contingent Faculty, Curriculum & Academic Climate

Recommendation 3a: To improve curriculum and academic quality, improve the condition of Contingent Faculty, and move those meriting it to continuing appointment.

Concern with the conditions of Contingent Faculty was frequently voice in survey comments. Some called for better salary and benefits and an end to demeaning treatment; others argued that the growth of contingent employment eroded the University's ability to provide high-quality undergraduate and graduate education. The Senate should direct its appropriate councils to review, discuss and report on the changes proposed by the University by the Implementation Teams of the Provost's Panel on Contingent Concerns. An implementation team on compensation and benefits has already proposed and enacted a change to the minimal per course salary. An implementation team is working on the Panel's recommendation of pathways to permanence for contingent faculty meeting appropriate criteria. The Senate Council on Academic Assessment should regularly communicate with this team, since evaluation of teaching is a significant issue of Professional development for Contingent Faculty. Last year, the Senate sponsored a forum on issues faced by Contingent Faculty, following the release of the Panel Report. The Senate should follow up on this by holding additional forums to publicize and encourage broad discussion of the issues concerning Contingent Faculty and Profession Concerns raised by the proposal for action of all three implementation teams.

Recommendation 3b Defining and defending a strong academic culture.

Strengthening the academic morale of the university is a major concern for survey respondents in several categories. Historically, UAlbany used to be identified with a strong academic culture. Years of changing leadership, combined with years of growth, has weakened the vision of who we are. This year, the university is working with fourteen different groups that are engaged in futuring exercises to develop a vision of the university we want. Developing a strong identity among students and faculty about who we are would support these exercises by improving a sense of identity and increasing morale and performance. Belonging to a community that is proud of itself moves people to higher levels of achievement.

Currently we lose strong students who transfer to other universities because of the perception that UAlbany does not have a strong enough academic environment, while enrollment pressures had led to lessening admission standards. An improved identity would help retention as well as improving requirements for enrollment.

We have a strong faculty and programs that are among the top in the nation. We have been described as a "hidden gem". But for some reason the current perception of UAlbany does not capitalize on our strengths. We recommend that the Senate together with the University leadership sponsor a series of dialogs on how to improve the academic culture at UAlbany while developing a clear vision of who we are. We recommend starting the conversations with the recommendation 3c.

Recommendation 3c Social Sciences and Humanities in a Liberal Arts Education.

There was a strong sentiment in the survey the social sciences and humanities are not adequately supported. There is a danger that, in a rush to support new areas of the university that can immediately increase enrollments, traditional areas that are the backbone of a liberal arts education are neglected. We recommend that the Senate and administration jointly sponsor a dialog on the role of social sciences and humanities in a liberal arts education.

Recommendation 4: Improve Senate communication and transparency.

Many respondents to the survey decried Senate communication practices or attested to their own lack of information about the Senate and its activities. Many also made practical suggestions for improvement. These include:

- re-instating the practice of distributing notice of Senate meetings, the agendas for those meeting, and the minutes of prior Senate meetings to all Senate constituents;
- reminding Senators of their responsibility to report Senate issues activities to their constituents, and constituent concerns to the Senate;
- asking all Senate Councils to provide brief, informative written reports of their activities, which are then part of the meeting minutes, and thus the record of actual shared governance.

Some improvements require additional efforts by the Senate to communicate with constituents. We recommend that the Senate sponsor a Forum in Fall 2016 to explain and discuss the 2016 Survey of Shared Governance, providing time for discussion of the issues raised. Other improvements will require long-term efforts. It is clear from respondents' comments that many people, especially those not involved in Senate Councils or Committees, have a difficult time understanding how the Senate works. Every opportunity to address constituents on Senate activities should be taken, so that shared governance can become a widely shared goal rather than a mystifying process that occurs behind closed doors.

Next Steps

There were many issues and concerns raised by this survey. This report reflected on the most salient features in relationship with shared governance. We invite the whole community to view the appendix for a more expanded view of responses.

We recommend that the Governance Council and its Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation review this report and oversee the implementation of recommendations suggested within during the academic year 2016-17. Improvements to the 2016 Survey on Shared Governance should specifically be noted to prepare the 2018 iteration of the survey. We recommend that to improve the response rate, the Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation administer the next survey as early as the first week of March 2018.

Appendix:

2016 UAlbany Faculty and Professional Staff Survey on Shared Governance: responses to questions 8-12: [TBA]

2016 UAlbany Students Survey on Shared Governance: responses to questions 8-12: [TBA]

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