

University at Albany
State University of New York
University Council
Minutes
May 15, 2015

A regular meeting of the University Council was held on May 15, 2015 in University Hall, Room 306. Members present were: Michael Castellana, Chair; Nick Butler (Elected Student Member); Patricia Caldwell; James Clancy; Mark Eagan; John Fallon; James Jackson; Abner JeanPierre; Cynthia Fox (Faculty Representative); and Joseph Garba (Alumni Representative). Also present were President Robert Jones; Vice Presidents James Stellar, James Dias, James VanVoorst and Fardin Sanai; John Reilly, Counsel's Office; Mark Benson, Director of Athletics; John Giarrusso, Associate Vice President; and J.D. Hyde, President's Office.

Mr. Beditz confirmed that the members present constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM. After a round of introductions, Chairman Castellana requested a motion to approve the consent agenda items (Clancy/JeanPierre), which passed unanimously. He then gave the floor to President Jones for his report.

The President began with a brief update on the status of searches for several executive level positions, including the deans of the Schools of Criminal Justice, Social Welfare, and the Libraries; Vice Provost for International Education; Chair, Computer Engineering; Vice President for Communications and Marketing; and Chief Information Officer. He noted that Dr. Michael Christakis has been named Vice President for Student Success.

The President went on to note that Dr. Christakis and Provost Stellar have been working closely to develop new strategies to address declining enrollment and enhance the student experience. Provost Stellar remarked that the immediate goal is to improve our freshman to sophomore conversion rate from 80.2% to 90%. Along with an internal working group dedicated to addressing the issue, he and Dr. Christakis have held numerous meetings with student focus groups to gain their perspective on specific likes, dislikes and impediments to their academic progress. He mentioned several initiatives currently underway including a new summer orientation program, enhancement of the Writing and Critical Inquiry Program, acquisition of data analytics software to help pinpoint students who might require assistance, and improvements to experiential education programs. Dr. Stellar noted exemplar programs such as the Educational Opportunity Program, which enjoys a 92% conversion rate, and the Middle Earth Peer Counseling Program with a 98% conversion rate. Those successes are being studied and emulated. Discussion followed (Caldwell, Fallon, Castellana) regarding the initiative.

Returning to President Jones, the Council was given a brief update on the University's efforts to expand the scope of academic programs, develop an affiliation agreement

with the Albany Law School, and establish the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cyber Security. The University has received approval to locate the new ETEC facility on the Harriman Campus, exact site to be determined. Strategic discussions regarding the aggressive development of the East Campus around the theme of health and biomedical sciences have commenced. The University is moving ahead with discussions on the creation of a Center for Advanced Data Analytics utilizing the capacity of our new Data Center. A discussion on these points (Jackson, JeanPierre, Castellana, Jones) followed.

The Compact Planning process has begun in earnest, with 230 proposals submitted to date. The process is intended to inform funding decisions, and presents a wonderful opportunity to move the Campus forward. The President was particularly pleased to note that many of the proposals were interdisciplinary, with faculty and staff working collaboratively across traditional organizational borders.

Turning to new business, the Chair introduced Mark Benson, Director of Athletics, for an update on the successes of our athletic programs. Mr. Benson noted several impressive statistics, including:

- 12 of 19 teams UAlbany carry a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher
- 10 of those 19 teams are women sports
- 280 of 450 total athletes are New York State residents
- 46 athletes are international students
- Our teams have won 83 conference championships since moving to Division 1, including 9 this semester along with one at-large bid to participate in post-season play
- We have two national players of the year this semester.

A discussion regarding the athletics program followed (Fallon, Castellana, Caldwell, JeanPierre).

Moving on, the Chair introduced John Giarrusso, Associate Vice President for Facilities, for a presentation on capital funding and an update on the capital building and improvement projects currently underway or in the planning process. Following the presentation, a discussion followed regarding the need for a dedicated student athletic activities building as well as additional, non-surface parking resources (Fallon, Jones, Eagan, Caldwell, Jackson).

Moving on, the Chair read a resolution recognizing the contributions of outgoing Alumni Representative Timothy Murphy into the record. He moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by James Clancy, which was unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully,

Stephen J. Beditz
University Liaison to the Council

Minutes Approved 8/7/2015