

**University at Albany
State University of New York**

University Council

Minutes

February 18, 2011

A regular meeting of the University Council of the State University of New York at Albany was held on Friday, February 18, 2011 in University Hall, Room 306. Members present were: Daniel Tomson (Vice Chair), Pierre Alric, Robert Balachandran, Patricia Caldwell, John Fallon, James Jackson, Abner JeanPierre, and Michael Stein; Also, Nicholas Fahrenkopf (Graduate Student Representative), Professor Susanna Fessler (Faculty Representative) and William McCann (Alumni Representative).

Also present were: President George Philip, Vice Presidents Stephen Beditz (Interim), James Dias, Lee McElroy and Fardin Sanai; Vincent Delio (Chief of Staff), Lee Serravillo (Executive Director, Alumni Affairs), Robert Andrea (Director, Undergraduate Admissions), and Mr. Vincent Porfirio, guest.

Mr. Tomson called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. He welcomed Mr. Vincent Porfirio, a Sage College doctoral student, as a guest. Upon motion duly made and seconded (Fallon/Balachandran), the minutes of the meeting of November 5, 2010 were unanimously approved as submitted.

Revising the agenda sequence, Mr. Tomson invited Professor Fessler to provide an update on faculty activities. Noting the continuing focus on campus on the fiscal situation, Dr. Fessler reported on the budgetary reviews that continue to involve faculty and staff and the formation of another task force to address the impact of additional cuts as well as review the actions taken to date.

Moving to the report by the Graduate Student Representative, Mr. Fahrenkopf highlighted some of the activities being undertaken by the Graduate Student Association. Following his presentation, the Alumni Representative, Mr. McCann distributed the Alumni Association Annual Report of programs and activities taken over the past year. He highlighted several initiatives which the Association undertakes including those in collaboration with the Student Association and the Admissions Office. He reported on alumni meetings held across the country in areas with large alumni populations and on major alumni-sponsored events such as the annual Big Purple Growl and emphasized the Association's role in supporting and promoting UAlbany and its mission.

Moving to the President's Report, Mr. Philip focused his remarks on the continuing impact of budget cuts that are affecting the SUNY System and, specifically, our campus. He reported an additional \$10.5 million reduction this year brings the total cuts to some \$45 million over the past two years. He expressed his view that a rational tuition plan, as envisioned by the Chancellor, was critical to the continuing operation of our campus and others within the system. He said that there had been a proposal for a modest tuition increase but it did not materialize. He noted the importance of what is called a "maintenance of effort" which has been put forth by the Chancellor to assure that campuses would be able to make use of the tuition and that there would be no penalty or reduction in funding in response. He emphasized the substantial economic impact that the University has on both the immediate region and the state.

He elaborated on how the budget reductions have been implemented on campus and noted that he sought to have an independent consulting firm analyze our current operational/administrative structure to come up with recommendations on how it could be streamlined and savings could be generated. He noted the financial benefits that accrued when out-of-state students attended our institution and compared our tuition with those at other state universities in our region. Ms. Caldwell added comment and endorsed such an initiative, suggesting a thoughtful strategy.

A lengthy discussion ensued on all aspects of the fiscal situation with Mr. Balachandran, Mr. Fallon, Dr. Jackson, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Stein and Mr. JeanPierre commenting.

As the President concluded his report, he said that applications for admission continued at a high level. He reported that Dr. Dias had been selected as Vice President for Research and that Mr. Beditz had agreed to continue in his role as Interim Vice President for Finance and Business. He noted that the annual UAlbany Day program held on February 7 was successful and involved alumni, faculty, staff and students, many of whom visited with legislators in behalf of the University. Additional comments were offered by Mr. Tomson, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Fallon, Dr. Phillips, and Mr. Beditz.

There being no old business, Mr. Tomson invited Provost Phillips to present the campus Strategic Plan. Using a video presentation and distributing a brochure on the Plan, Dr. Phillips commented on the six key goals which have been developed and which will guide the institution as it moves forward. She emphasized the importance of focusing our attention on these goals in a collaborative way.

Moving to the next agenda item, Mr. Alric introduced Dr. McElroy who distributed the 2010-11 Athletic Report. Dr. McElroy described the scope of the campus athletic program and highlighted several sports and their accomplishments. He said that the graduation rate for student-athletes (and emphasized "student") was higher than the general student body. He commented on the importance of the academic component of the student's undergraduate years at the institution. A discussion ensued with Mr. Tomson, Mr. Fahrenkopf, Mr. Fallon, Mr. Balachandran, and President Philip commenting.

Moving to the next agenda item, President Philip called to the attention of the Council the Resolution adopted by the SUNY Trustees (previously distributed) providing guidance and direction to the Councils on considering major campus plans. Mr. Tomson added comment and suggested that this matter be added to the agenda for the May 6 meeting.

Mr. Tomson called on Mr. Alric for the ACT Update. Mr. Alric noted the communications that were recently sent to Council members regarding the Chancellor's proposal for a Five-Year Tuition Plan for SUNY and a request for campus Councils to endorse a Resolution in support of the Plan. Mr. Tomson, noting the relatively short notice of this request and the need for action well before our next meeting on May 6, authorized consideration and action by the Council in accordance with the appropriate section of Education Law. Upon motion duly made and seconded (Stein/Balachandran) the submitted Resolution of support was unanimously approved.

Moving to the next agenda item, Mr. Andrea described the breadth of admission activities in which alumni and the Alumni Association have been involved. He noted that meetings are held in different locations in the State where there are prospective as well as admitted students. Referring to a (distributed) schedule of forthcoming meetings, he invited members of the Council to attend noting that some were to be held in New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts, as part of the outreach to which President Philip had referred. Dr. Fessler shared her experience as an advocate for her alma mater in Ohio in attracting out of state students.

Moving to the University Development Report, Mr. Sanai showed a video prepared as part of a new UAlbany Unite Project designed to engage student groups in fund-raising activities. The participating groups are able to submit their videos as part of the Project and gifts they receive will be credited for their use, as approved. He reported that the Foundation's Endowment Portfolio had a 13.5% return for the last fiscal year and that the endowment fund had topped \$34 million. Concluding his report, he highlighted several major gift commitments received in recent months.

As the meeting moved toward conclusion, Mr. Fardin and Mr. Serravillo noted several upcoming events in New York City and on campus to which Council members are invited (see agenda). There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (Stein/JeanPierre) at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sorrell E. Chesin, Ph.D.
Secretary to the University Council