

2018-2019 Senate Executive Committee
September 12, 2018 - 2:45 pm, UNH 306

MINUTES

Present: Sammy Axley, Christy Smith, Zina Lawrence, Billie Franchini, Diane Hamilton, Kaylynn Enright, Robert Rosenwig, Youqin Huang, Latonya Spencer, Jim Mower, Karin Reinhold, Deborah LaFond

Guests: Christy Doyle, Todd Foreman, Havidán Rodríguez

Meeting convened at 2:48

In light of the news of Jim Stellar stepping down as Provost, Jim Mower made an announcement to acknowledge Provost Stellar for his service, recognizing his collaborative nature and openness.

Jim Mower provided an explanation of the leadership structure and asked the members to play an active role in recruiting individuals for leadership positions, and to submit nominations for future chairs to Zina Lawrence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of April 30, 2018 were approved with no discussion, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 6 abstentions.

REPORTS:

Immediate past chair, Karin Reinhold:

- Still working on council memberships; the most current version was in the Senate drive but not everyone had access, and so most updated lists for the councils will be finalized and shared as soon as possible.
- Salary inequity study: SUNY system is collaborating with UUP and University-wide Senate to develop a report on salary inequities. A committee was started last year to study the salaries, but that committee is on hold. The data is there, but not demographic information. The University has not provided the information, but UUP has asked to wait rather than pursue a FOIL request. SUNY is organizing itself; Bruce Szelest will be on the committee, but it is still in the early stages. We need to be sure that this is not dropped; talk about it at the next CGL meeting. More updates will come, but we have to first see what will happen at the state level, but we would still like to do something at UAlbany because we are often different from SUNY trends. At the last Senate meeting there was discussion of a President's meeting on women's concerns. There is also discussion of a forum with Kristin Hessler who is on the women's concerns committee at UUP.

Chair, Jim Mower:

- New staffing: Elizabeth Gray will be replacing Elisa Lopes as Senate Staff Support.
- Strategic plan implementation meetings: working groups have been developed but not yet met; not much has come out of the process yet.
- Collaboration between University Senate and senior administration: Senate leadership meets with Jim Stellar, Bruce Szelest and Ann Marie Murray regularly to share information about what might come up at the Senate or with the administration. University Faculty Senate is sponsoring a conference in November on shared governance – SUNY at 70. Jim Stellar and Jim Mower have put out an abstract for that conference.
- Proposed changes in undergraduate admissions: Ann Marie Murray has indicated that the University is considering changes that allow for direct admit, allowing students to apply directly to a program.

University Faculty Senate (SUNY-wide), Latonya Spencer and Sammy Axley:

- In October will be the first UFS (University Faculty Senate) plenary session; SUNY Senators will attend. UFS has developed a website to house all of our materials for the plenary session, with all of the agendas, materials, etc. which participants can access.

GSA, Kaylynn Enright:

- GSA has a strategic plan to increase the funding to support students doing conference travel and research.
- First assembly meeting was held last week to cover UPPC meeting updates. There were lots of questions about academic calendar proposed changes, members wanted more details, and wanted to have some say. Stellar's report on increasing tuition for out-of-state students was shared; it was not clear whether this also applied to graduate students, and if so this is a concern because many are international students.
- Kaylynn Enright has class during Senate meetings and Amanda Akylin will be taking her place.
- Discussion: differential tuition for online versus in class teaching is another issue on the table, and dealing with price differentials for out of state students online because we have priced ourselves out of the market. Online tuition question came up in discussion of the budget. If a student has all of their classes online then they get a reduction in their tuition and fees. There was a request at that time to make this explicit and promote it through all departments, especially those who have or are developing online programs. Changes in the calendar will result in a 5-year plan (rather than year by year), and this is a welcome improvement.

Student Association, (Langie Cadesca):

- Langie Cadesca has class during SEC meetings and they are looking for a replacement.

CAA: not present

CAFFECOR: not present

CERS: nothing to report

CoR: nothing to report

CPCA: not present (conflict)

GAC: not present (conflict)

GOV:

- Met last week to discuss priorities
- The faculty/student survey in collaboration with IR is on the last piece of the survey instrument and figuring out how to test it. First will be the faculty survey in the end of October, beginning of November for students. The committee is set. We are doing a sample of students, but all faculty will be surveyed; this has been cleared up with Jack Mahoney. Note: this is mandated in the Charter that we conduct these surveys, and GOV is responsible.
- GOV will look at communications amongst faculty and better use online and electronic means of communication with the survey and other kinds of communication. Want to enhance faculty involvement in Senate business which hopefully will occur through communication tools; GOV will be researching methods of communication.
- The Faculty Handbook is about 3 years out of date and this year's plan is to update that and share with all faculty, hopefully prior to the nomination process for governance to improve and grow participation.
- Another critically important role of GOV is handling the nomination of new members. Please pass any potential names on to Zina.

LISC:

- Met on September 4th; lengthy report included with reports. Big action item is appointing a working group to develop an open access policy for the University as required by SUNY. Council is in the process of appointing the working group, and this will be drafted and then go through governance. This would be a University-wide policy, so this would need to be presented to Kevin Wilcox.

UAC:

- There is a large number of items in the pipeline for UAC to review.

ULC:

- Written report included with reports; will be meeting next Wednesday.

UPPC:

- Discussed changes to the academic calendar: wanted to see how the holidays fall, but there is also a talk about getting rid of the holidays because it is hard to meet the minimum days. There is a proposal to remove all holidays, with a note to faculty not to have assignments on holidays.
- Establishment of task force: follow the legislation created by the Senate on how to build task forces for nominating distinguished faculty etc.
 - UAlbany hasn't been very active promoting our faculty -- other centers have way more in distinguished faculty in their ranks -- and there is a call to put more forward.
 - There is one nomination this year.
 - Each unit should be working to promote people to distinguished faculty -- it is a lengthy process and so you have to plan in advance.
 - There are distinguished faculty awards for research, teaching and service, and criteria is different for each one.

- There was a presentation on the budget; will come also to the SEC today.
- The issue that we are having lately is senate representation in the executive budget and executive facilities committees – apparently there are no groups with those names, but the senate wants representation in those conversations. UPPC has two committees and each is supposed to be participating in executive conversations. Currently it is just a report from administration, without a role for voicing opinions and making recommendations; there is no reason for committees if there is not meaningful consultation. Cannot really do consultation if we are not a part of the process; will keep pushing for involvement in meetings.

Role of the Senate: Presentation attached

It is important to understand that the rights that are given to the faculty senate come from the Chancellor and the State of New York; we do not answer to the University at Albany, but rather to the Chancellor and the Trustees. This is the model of shared governance.

See UAlbany shared governance website for more information:

<https://www.albany.edu/sharedgovernance/>

SEC Role: Work with the Senate to build an agenda for the following Senate meeting. Each meet once a month. There are reports from the administration, speakers to talk about campus decisions, program approval process, etc.

If proposals are not approved by SEC they go back to the committee/council from which it came for revisions. There is a path to get straight to the Senate but requires signatures. Since the SEC is made up of council chairs there is a discussion brought by the chair, and the chair can return to committee with comments, etc.

Question: How do faculty bring a concern to CERS? Is there already guidelines for getting the information?

Answer: This is in the Charter; all chairs should look to their description in the charter.

Quorum:

Jim Mower shared that the Senate has the unusual ability to track using clickers; this helps to determine easily whether there is quorum. He indicated that there are problems at the beginning and ends of meetings because there is no quorum. The suggestion is to bring action items to the part of the meeting where the most people are present.

Proposal: Move old and new business before council reports on the Senate agenda

Discussion: It has been an annoyance for years and it is disrespectful to those who need to leave and also problematic for those proposing. Note: old business should be before new business to catch up on anything missed at previous meeting.

Vote: 11 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions

Presentation by Christy Doyle, Director of University Events, Division for Advancement:

Powerpoint presentation attached. Note: this presentation was not shared at SEC but was made available by University Events to share with members.

University Events Staff are the producers of academic ceremonies, including commencement, convocation, speakers series, one-time events, etc. Team has both a personal and professional commitment to commencement.

History:

Before 2000 commencement was off campus
2001 it was brought to our campus and included:
-graduate, undergraduate, and many individual ceremonies
-December ceremony, with degree conferral

2015 first year of convocation, bookending with the commencement

2013, 2014 conversations were coming up to look at how we might evolve commencement along with our evolving institution. Equity for our students and their families, strains on the physical campus, emergency management, growing enrollment, increasing participation, and a desire for student affairs and the alumni association to have more of a presence were considerations.

Recent changes:

- December 2016 was the last December ceremony held on campus.
- Past May was the first time we included all 12-month graduates, with 20% increase in participation.
- Grad ceremony moved to Friday, masters and doctoral separated (note: there is a degree conferral component and a stage-crossing recognition), doctoral hooding made a separate ceremony, continued with the outdoor degree conferral for undergraduates.
- Torch lighting ceremony on graduation weekend changed to a Torch reception – doubled attendance already. (This could be hosted by Alumni Association in the future, invite grads into alumni population, celebration.)

With efficiencies and streamlining we were able to livestream every ceremony, bring air conditioning into every ceremony, a prominent speaker was brought in, and tickets were removed from many ceremonies which is important for our population.

Currently:

- Collecting feedback, administration, vendors, survey to students and guests, peers, etc. from May 2018 ceremony
- Engaging in conversation with deans, senate, students, etc. about possible changes:
 - Plan for increase in attendance with the 12 month commencement calendar
 - 2018 schedule cannot be sustained because Page Hall is offline, which held 6 ceremonies and creates a domino effect. Page Hall doesn't work because of the flow of people in the space, is not ADA compliant, etc.

Ideas being explored, with some being viable and some not:

- ceremonies the weekend before
- do something the following Monday
- play with moveout timeframes
- get finals to end on Thursday of final week

Sunday is challenging because the farther you go into the day it is challenging internally for staff. Need to keep in mind the need for staff and faculty volunteers; the more things are spread out the more difficult it is to adequately staff all events.

Marching Order software implemented which was a huge improvement – when you register to attend commencement, you put in a phonetic spelling, say it in your voice, the software reads your name, shows a picture, etc. as you walk across the stage.

Every department wants to bring departmental ceremonies back, but at an institutional level we need greater structure. Some departments have been developing ceremonies for the week leading up to commencement or other creative solutions.

Undergrad options:

- Remove outdoor ceremony?
- Keep outdoor undergrad and keep recognition ceremonies separate?
- For either one, the only space big enough is SEFCU, and we will have to combine schools and colleges.
- For recognition ceremonies, to save time, a suggestion is to combine the procession, the recognition, and the degree conferral – rather than just having a procession for students to enter, as they enter they will cross the stage, have their name read, and (if the outdoor conferral is removed) have their degree conferred – this will save time, and minimize the likelihood of people leaving mid-ceremony.
- Potential benefits to removing outdoor ceremony: speakers more relevant to specific area, everyone still gets their name called, don't have to worry about weather, good for alumni relations.

Questions:

Who will collect input? Feedback can be emailed to commencement@albany.edu until Oct 1

Who is on the committees discussing this? Feedback is being solicited from stakeholders which will be reviewed with senior administration.

Can budget saved go into other ceremonies? It is too early to make a specific determination on this.

Why can't you use large theater in the PAC? It is too small.

Goal: have schedule up by Thanksgiving break.

Presentation by Todd Foreman, VP for Finance:

Presentation attached.

Todd Foreman shared that he is attempting to get to as many venues as possible: student association, deans' meetings, etc. so that everyone understands the financial health of the university. He indicated that they want to be as transparent as is reasonably possible to help to understand decisions made.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Havidán Rodríguez:

President Rodríguez underscored VP Foreman's message that the administration is looking at the budget from multiple perspectives and looking for efficiencies to come from various sources. As an example, he shared that \$1 million dollars of uncommitted funds have been saved as a result of the President's Office's own administrative changes that resulted in budget savings. He suggested that in addition to identifying budget savings there are also paths to revenue growth, including strategic growth in enrollment. He underscored that the administration wants to be as transparent as possible, so that the entire campus community can understand the budget, ask questions, and make recommendations.

President Rodríguez referred to the announcement from earlier that day that Jim Stellar will be stepping down as Provost as of December 31st, 2018. He indicated that a search will be launched immediately, and that the leadership is now in the process of putting a plan together. He stated that a search firm will be engaged for a national search for the Provost, given that it is one of the most consequential decisions at the campus. The President asked that the University Senate be actively involved in the search, and shared that the committee will have 12-15 people, with representation across campus stakeholders. He emphasized that the plan is to move quickly and efficiently, while still doing an excellent job with the search process. He shared that he did not expect that the search will be completed by December 31st, and that a determination will be made as the transition comes closer about how the position will be occupied for the spring semester.