

****Excerpts from e-mails (January 2009)****

- Two fonts have been used to distinguish writers' contributions.
- Paragraphs have been numbered to assist in identifying specific items during discussion at the Senate Executive Committee meeting on January 26, 2009.

Prices of books and other items in the Campus Center

1. I am still concerned about the feeling that prices of books and other costs on campus are too high. I looked at the links that John Murphy sent and saw that last year, UAS gave grants of about \$141,000 to various campus organizations. If we figured that money was collected from approximately 6,000 students living on campus (paying for meal plans, buying books, etc), then it's only about \$24/person over the course of a year. No matter how you chose the size of the audience from which the money comes, on a per capita basis, it isn't a huge sum, although it is still a tax.
2. The amount itself doesn't match the feelings that books are way too high, prices at Cece's are too high, etc. etc. It suggests that although UAS is non-profit (beyond the \$141,000 that it returns to UA), some of the contracts UA has entered into are giving large profits to the merchants (Wendy's, Barnes & Noble, etc etc). How would we ever find that out? It would seem that the only thing UAS could control by contract would be agreed-upon prices to charge for specific items or services, or the profit margin allowed on books, etc.
3. ***The price of goods sold by UAS in the campus center is outrageous. Paying nearly twice as much for a box of crackers as one pays in the local grocery store does not engender warm feelings towards the campus, especially when a student is forced by the absence of alternative suppliers. Although some profits go towards programming, I have yet to see an accounting of how much goes there vs the profit from overcharging (is this something that the UAS board sees?), and how is the amount to be spent on programming decided? Is it decided by those who pay the tax?***
4. Posting texts on department web pages would be very useful. How to get profs to actually do that is a problem. What counts as a "timely fashion"? In one instance, it took a few months for a student to receive the book from an on-line seller. I sometimes have not selected books that far in advance.
5. The UAlbany bookstore might be another problem. Does the contract with B&N prohibit the University (not individual profs) from releasing booklists?
6. I've tried to get the UAlbany bookstore to forward my book orders to MaryJane. The bookstore manager (Dixie Botts) has told me they would, but they never have. So, I place my orders with MaryJane & they forward to the UA bookstore.
7. I believe some faculty place orders with MaryJane only. A while back, we received a request from the UA bookstore that we place orders there so that students on financial aid can use their SUNY-cards to pay. Is this reasonable?
8. While I'm of course in favor of facilitating our students saving money, there are also disadvantages to ordering on the web. It takes time, returns are harder, and confusion about which edition is being used is common. One student last semester got a mail order stat book with the data disc missing, which took several weeks to straighten out. Bargains are often available on superseded editions. I have had students who, for the first several weeks of a semester, have told me they couldn't do homework because the book they ordered on the web had not arrived (a problem that also happens when the book store doesn't order enough copies - which is not necessarily its fault).

9. ... my understanding is that the Financial Aid Office holds on to anticipated aid until a decent time into the semester (when the money "clears" so to speak). So, while a student may get awarded loans in excess of tuition, room, board and fees (to cover books perhaps) they cannot access those funds in a timely manner. If this is the case, UAS will loan the anticipated aid to students on their SUNY Card so that they may buy books at the bookstore. This is a great service to students but it is entirely useless if the bookstore does not have all the books that a student requires. If the bookstore does not get book lists in a timely manner they cannot guarantee they will be able to get the books in time. Even worse, if a professor simply doesn't put in book lists at all, the bookstore has no way of knowing to get certain books. Of course, the worst case (in my opinion) is when a professor REFUSES to submit book orders to the bookstore on "principle". We can debate profits, and packaging, but if the bookstore doesn't know to order books, students who rely on loan funds to purchase book simply cannot obtain those books in a timely manner. In order to address the problem the bookstore has begun an incentive program for departments.
10. I doubt that Barnes and Noble will refuse releasing book lists- in my experience the lists are published on the UAlbany B&N website. I've used the website to find what books I need and shop around. It's true that sometimes online retailers take time to ship. Often, if the price difference is small, I will shop at the bookstore and pay extra to know that I will have the book in time.
11. ... the agreements that UAS has with Barnes and Noble, Coca-Cola, Canteen, SEFCU, etc. provide for additional funds for things like student scholarship, and internships. UAS has the contracts with the above mentioned companies who are trying to turn a profit. As part of their contracts, and an important part of the bid process, the companies give money to the campus to improve the quality of life- which is the mission of UAS to begin with.

UAS and University Governance

12. The UAS budget and proposed meal plan rates are reviewed annually by committees and the entire board. Chartwells presents UAS with proposed rate increases based on their increased food and overhead costs and Residential Life also proposes room rate increases based on their cost increases. We try very hard to be sensitive to potential tuition increases as we conduct these annual reviews. We have all been to the grocery store so I don't have to tell you about the increased cost of food.
13. The activities of UAS and our governing board are defined in our bylaws and subject to guidelines of system administration applied across the state and an agreement between the University and UAS.
14. The Finance and Audit committee of UAS reviews progress reports of revenue and expenditures of UAS by accounts e.g. banking, bookstore, vending, beverages, etc., etc. during the year to monitor how effective our budget is and if we are true to form. Several years ago we ran a barbershop and a computer store and they were losing propositions so we did away with them. We continually review services and costs and attempt to provide the best bang for our buck. I think our governing board does a pretty good job working with UAS to improve services for our campus. One of the things our Board tries not to do is micromanage UAS as they have very capable staff to run the day to day operations and work with our Board on long range planning.
15. According to the faculty bylaws the University Senate is charged with overseeing elections of UAS board members. In addition, according to the Charter, the University Life Council is charged with some oversight of UAS. "X.9.4. The Council shall take under consideration and make recommendations concerning the operations of the University Auxiliary Services, and other service providers." The

communication between UAS and ULC has been less than perfect over the years. This seems like a good time to renew the link.

16. I think the question of what ULC *controls in the process of setting prices on campus, for example, is different than what we *learn of by getting a report. ... ULC doesn't control anything! There is no way for ULC to be involved in the operational management of UAS beyond having representation on its Board of Directors. The Board develops expertise and does oversee these matters in ways that the Senate cannot.
17. *How many representatives of the faculty are supposed to be on UAS (currently there are four listed: Carol Anderson, Tom Bessette, Richard Goldstein and John Murphy).*
18. *How long is the term of office? (Particularly important in attracting "new blood" willing to run!)*
19. *Are there term limits?*
20. *If there are term limits, for how many years have each of the current members served?*
21. *Are duties, term limits, eligibility, etc., written down in some bylaws or similar document? Jayne and I could find nothing two years ago and I again drew a blank on the web. That would seem to be the sort of thing UAS would put on their web page for the sake of openness, transparency, etc., as the University Senate, Student Association, and Graduate Student Organization do.*
22. *On the UAS web page (<http://www.albany.edu/uas/bod.html>) there are fifteen members listed, of whom four are labeled "Administration", six "Students" and one Alum. The same page lists five standing committees. Assuming the committees have more than three members, on what basis are other members selected?*
23. *Although the ULC section of the Senate Charter indeed states: "X.9.4. The Council shall take under consideration and make recommendations concerning the operations of the University Auxiliary Services, and other service providers.", what is the means whereby ULC and UAS communicate when they have no members in common?*
24. *If the Senate is willing to amend its Charter accordingly, is the UAS board amenable to an additional faculty member (again, within a total of 18 max) elected from ULC ...?*
25. *UAS Board terms: While our board minutes do reflect elections/appointments of new board members and officers when that occurs, they do NOT necessarily state whether elected members are appointed to a 1, 2 or 3 year term, which I believe is what has led to any real or perceived confusion about current members' terms . . . clearly on a go-forward basis, we will want to ensure that the record reflects the length of the term to be served when members are elected.*

Excerpts from UAS Bylaws

Article II, Section 5

- C. Board members appointed by the University President, Committee on Nominations and Elections of the Faculty Senate and Executive Director of the Alumni Association shall be appointed for one (1), two (2) or three (3) year terms with at least fifty percent (except the Alumni section) in each section appointed for terms exceeding one year. Board members appointed by the President of the Student Association shall be appointed for one (1) or two (2) year terms with at least fifty percent of students on the Board of Directors appointed for terms exceeding one year. The term of office shall commence at the time of the appointment and continue until a successor is appointed.

Article II, Section 1

The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be derived from four (4) sections: Administration, Faculty, Students and Alumni Association. With the annual approval of the University President, the Board members from the Administration section shall be: the Director of Residence Life and Housing, the Associate Vice President for Finance and Business/Controller, and a professional staff member from the office of Financial Management. In addition, the University President or his/her designee is an ex officio voting member of the Board of Directors, and serves as an Administrative representative. The Board members from the Faculty section shall be: four (4) members of the Faculty of the University at Albany, to be appointed by the Faculty Senate Committee on Nominations and Elections.

The Board members from the student section shall be: the Student Association President, or if he or she so designates, the Vice President of the Student Association, the Student Association Student Senate Chairperson, or if he or she so designates, the Vice Chairperson of the Student Association Senate, and four members of the student body of the University at Albany that provide broad-based, diverse quad and class-year representation, to be appointed by the President of the Student Association and confirmed by the Student Association Senate. The Board member (1) from the Alumni Association section shall be appointed by the Executive Director of the Alumni Association upon consultation with the Alumni Association Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.