APPENDIX

2016 Report on

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

Q8. Discussion of Written Responses to Question 8b: How effective is the Senate in consulting each constituency?

Part b of question 8 requested comments pertaining to the effectiveness of participation of the different constituencies in the Senate. This question simply asked respondents:

Please use the space below for comments.

Among faculty and staff, there were sixteen respondents that voluntarily shared their opinions. Their answers were divided into 4 main categorized themes: representation, the work of the Senate, unifying focus and performance of the Senate.

Representation	The work of the Senate
6	10

Theme 1: Representation

There were concerns about the poor representation of contingent faculty and undergraduates. Librarians are well represented but they typically do not raise their concerns.

Although the faculty is 55 percent contingent, there are only two part-time senators representing the majority of the faculty. That seems like a gross under-representation to me.

It's nearly impossible to get undergraduate representatives to serve on councils and committees, and then if they do sign up, they very rarely show up for meetings. Graduate representatives are the opposite -- some of the most reliable and hard-working committee members.

The undergraduate students do not seem to be participating in the work of the Senate except to make reports about their own activities at Senate meetings.   I only know of one emeritus faculty who is serving on a Senate Council. The part-time faculty are woefully underrepresented.

There seems to be good representation of librarians on the Senate but don't know that Librarians raise discussions on library concerns, decisions, constraints that would impact all faculty.

Theme 2: The Work of the Senate

Several responses were positive about the work of the Senate but would like to see more improvements.

I have noticed vast improvements in the Senate during the last year or two--since new leadership in the Senate and in the President's office--though I believe there is still a long way to go.

Some complain about serving in the Senate because there are too many demands on people's time. This is best exemplified in the following comment.

There is a certain amount of people, time and work to do at UA. Some of the work that needs to be done is very important/essential. That would be 1) quality teaching, 2 quality service (including quality governance) and 3 quality scholarship/research. Poor performance in those 3 areas are not worth doing at all and is a waste of money and time. UA needs to reign in 1) some of politically correct activities 2) some of the social/cultural "fun" activities 3) some of the endless committees, meetings, organizations, newsletters, communications, surveys, etc and 4) some of the weaker/less effective teaching, service, and scholarship activities --- so UA employees, money and resources can be funneled into delivering quality teaching, service and scholarship. I LOVED being in the senate and would do it again -----IF I wasn't being pulled in so many directions. Good, thoughtful, democratic government is essential for UA (and for American democracy!) -- but when UA, School and Department admin.

More direct complains or recommendations are exemplified by the following responses.

- o **Strive for more efficient meetings.**

Having served on the Senate, I can say that it is both poorly run and of limited value. The meetings were largely a waste of time. They could be managed far more effectively than they are and many of the issues I saw brought before the Senate should have been handled far more expeditiously given their limited importance to the broader faculty.

- o **Councils need more tenured faculty.**

Councils have far too few tenured or tenure track committee members. Councils can have a very high percentage of non-teaching faculty, nearly half, involved in decision making that is related to the core educational missions of the university.

- o ***Keep constituencies informed.***

Periodic brief summary updates on senate and council activities would be helpful.

- o **Unifying Focus.**

I distinguish between the councils and committees and the Senate itself. With regard to each of these issues, I regard the councils and committees as performing competently most of the time. I do not think the Senate functions effectively these days at all. It

operates more as a body of competing interests than as a collaborative and cooperative body. There is little sense of it being a _University_ Senate. There is no common cause.

There were also complaints about the relationship between the Senate and the Administration. This issue is discussed in Question 10 and is loudly expressed Question 11.

In terms of results, the senate does NOT seem to address basic concerns of a university: improving undergraduate student behavior/culture (e.g. bringing in scholars, instead of just famous basketball players) and outcomes (e.g. learning basic knowledge in 100-level rather than 400-level course), improving academic experience (e.g. investing to make more intelligent students through literature and history, instead of idiot savant machines), improving adjunct faculty pay and resources.

Discussion of Written Responses to Questions 9 and 9a

Q9: How transparent do you feel UAlbany's Senate is?
Q9a: How well does the Senate communicate the issues it engages to its constituencies and community?
Number of responses: 75

The qualitative analysis of survey responses was conducted with a team of four Governance Council members who read all of the survey comments for questions 8-12 and decided upon broad categories of classification (such as 'Senate is Transparent-Yes', 'Transparent No,' or 'Transparent Don't Know.'). After an initial tabulation of the number responses in each category, team members took responsibility for reviewing the written responses in each category and summarizing the results, taking account of the distribution of positive and negative responses, and discussing the range of responses.
There is a notable contrast between the distribution of responses to the closed-format portions of the survey and the open-format written comments elicited as part of the same survey question. On question 9, for example, 86% of respondents responded that the Senate was "very transparent" (20%, N 61) or "somewhat transparent" (66% N 205), with only 14% N 44 responding "Not at all transparent." In the written comments, conversely, only three responses unequivocally stated the Senate was transparent, one responded ambivalently about transparency, and a majority of fourteen said the Senate was not transparent. This is a striking reversal of judgment: 86% (266/310) saying the Senate is 'transparent' in fixed-format replies, versus 77% (14/18) judging the Senate to lack transparency in written comments. We attribute the difference in part to the nature of the fixed-format questions: a 'some', 'sometimes,' or 'somewhat' option garnered majority responses in questions about familiarity with the Senate, the quality of administrative consultation with the Senate, and transparency and effectiveness of communication in the Senate. We also attribute the difference also to the nature of written

evaluation, which often evokes a critical mode, perhaps a result of engaging a smaller number who have stronger feelings about the Senate and the issue being raised.

Theme 1: Transparency:

Written responses to the issues of transparency took a variety of forms. Some were sometimes witty, as with the respondent who wrote *"It[the Senate] is so transparent I cannot even see what they are doing."* Some were dismissive, as with the respondent who responded to the question "How transparent do you feel UAlbany's Senate is? By writing tersely *"Simple, nonexistent [transparency]."* Other responses, both positive and negative provided more information.

Subtheme 1: Improvements in Transparency.

A small minority of respondents described improvements in transparency:
"The Senate has made great strides in transparency in recent years. The problem I see is that information from the administration is planning [sic] doesn't often get through to the Senators until it's already been decided."
"Current leadership has been making a noble effort to ensure transparency, which is greatly appreciated. We need to ensure that this continues somehow, perhaps by writing it into the mission of the Senate, or expectations for the Senate."

Subtheme 2: Transparency and Senate Complexity

Respondents reporting that the Senate was not transparent frequently pointed to different aspects of the Senate as a complex organization. Many of these concerned communication, and will be discussed below, but some are pertinent here. Assessments of the general functioning of the Senate were provided in comments, such as the following, which address how transparency would be improved by relatively simple improvement of communication with constituents:
"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."
Other responses touch upon specifics such as representatives reporting back to their constituents as well as more general issues such as the complexity of Senate organization:
"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... ."
Some comments referred to the transparency of specific Senate functions, such as the recruitment of volunteers for Senate councils and committees:

"I have volunteered to serve on a senate council/committee several times, but have not been chosen. I would like to know how they choose people for these. This process is not transparent."

Respondent's questioned the relation between the Senate and contingent faculty, citing ambiguity in the status of contingents in the Senate:

"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."

"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."

Theme 2: Senate Communication:

The question 9a asks how well the Senate communicates with its constituency. The fixed format section of 9a poses the question in terms of a three-way choice about access to information. 50% of respondents (N 155) responded "it is not easy" to find information, 39% (N 121) responded it "it is easy to find information about some issues…", and 10% (31) responded "it is easy to find information about all issues…"
On this section of the survey there was more agreement between the fixed-format and open-format responses, although as in other questions, there was more negativity as well as detail provided in the open-format written responses. Whereas question 9, 50% said it was not easy to access information, and 49% said it was easy, sometimes or always, in 9a, in the tabulation of written responses, 65% (34/52) said the Senate did not communicative effectively, 13% (7/52) said it did communicative effectively, and 21 % (11/52) said it communicated well in some ways but needed to improve in others. In brief, two-third felt the Senate did not communicate well with its constituencies, and one third felt it did, or did some of the time.
When the written responses were examined, some referred to communicative problems arising from general, multi-faceted aspects of how the Senate functions and communicates, whether expressing approbation or disapproval:

"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."
"I have looked up information on Senate matters and have found it very difficult to figure out what is going on. I think the webpage is poorly designed and it is difficult to figure out information."

"More concise summaries should be provided to constituents to learn at a high-level what's being deliberated. These summaries can lead (hyperlink) to deeper explanations for those inclined to read further. For example, it would be great to have a bullet summary of council reports."

"It is posted and anyone who want to read it can. I do appreciate the senates efforts to communicate. I also know they need my help and my attention -- but I don't have the time to read what they labor so hard to put out."

Subtheme 1: Communication from Representatives and Digital Sources

Many expressed the view that communication through Senate members, email and web-based documents worked fairly well, while noting that representative's reports or digital access could be inconsistent:

"I hear information from individuals that participate in committees or attend council meetings but not from the Senate directly."

"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."

"Until I actually served on the Senate I had little information about the various councils, and have seen little information since completing my term."

Subtheme 2: Faults with Website and Email from the Senate

When respondents focused on particular faults with communication, most had to do with either the website or email circulation of information:

"Faculty should receive a semi-regular bulletin updating us on issues being considered by the senate. This could be sent out via a listserve. Also, there should be a site that is regularly updated with current council members and their contact info along with a protocol for contacting our respective reps in order to make our concerns and preferences known. If these things already exist, they need to be maintained and publicized more widely."

"One issue is that one needs to actively search out information about the Senate or on Senate-related matters. There are no monthly updates, newsletters, or informing emails to the faculty or other constituencies."

"The Senate should have a page where the current issues are displayed and explained. Issues that the administration is considering should also be in that page."

"More effective ways of communicating is necessary, not just making documents available but effective summaries and bullet points."

"I receive emails when there are campus meetings which include the minutes from previous meetings, and elections. I have not looked on the web for this information so I am not sure how easy it is to learn more about senate."

Some comments addressed familiarity with how the Senate operates. They expressed awareness of the specificity of many Senate communications and argued that without prior knowledge it would be difficult for constituents to have the

motivation or knowledge to independently access information about Senate activities:

"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."

"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."

"To be honest, I'm not really sure what the mandate of the Senate is and what it does. All I know is that it had elections and was looking for representatives. That's the only communication I remember seeing from the Senate."

Theme 3: Distrust of the Administration

Comments expressing Faculty and Staff distrust of the Administration:

"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."

"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."

"There is little sense among faculty that what faculty know about issues under consideration clearly represents what really unfolds behind the scenes."

"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."

Theme 4: Distrust of the Senate.

Criticisms of the Senate focused on perception of it being too compliant vis a vis the Administration and biased in its representation of constituents:

"When I was a member of the senate for one year in 2007-2008, it was an incredibly isolating experience. There was a large, central table in which the "long-time" senators congregated, all of whom seemed to know each other (and were made up largely of

older, white men). I was never asked to introduce myself, nor was I ever introduced to other senators. I also found a small group of senators seemed to want to focus on what most regarded as trivial matters. I found my time on the senate to be a complete waste of time. I also came to quickly believe, and I continue to believe, that the senate is largely aligned with administration. Certainly it gives that impression to me and others. Finally, I know the senate meets fairly often, but as a faculty member I never receive updates on what the senate is doing, giving the impression that what it is doing simply isn't very important (it isn't even worth reporting)."
"I think many of us feel the senate is limited to tenured and tenure track faculty."

Q10. Discussion of Written Responses to Question 10: Relationship Between the Administration and Faculty.

Q10. How often does the University Administration (the offices of the President, the Provost, and other Vice Presidents) take into consideration the faculty and/or Senate councils' recommendations/opinions in areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility (e.g., curriculum, tenure and promotion decisions)?
Long-term Planning, Physical Resources, Budgeting,   Selection of Management/Confidential Candidates

Part b of question 10 requested comments pertaining to the relationship between the Administration and the Senate. This question simply asked respondents:

Q10b. "Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts."

Among faculty and staff, there were fifty-four respondents that voluntarily shared their opinions. Their Responses were categorized into four basic themes as follows:

Dissatisfied	Both satisfied and dissatisfied	Satisfied	Don't know
33	11	5	5

A couple of responses indicated that this question was poorly phased because nobody can really answer a question about the frequency. Therefore, it is recommended that this question be reworded next time.

This question is as poorly worded as it can get. In true conscience no one really knows the answer to this question except the President, the Provost, and vice presidents. All one can really say is that it is not never....

Theme 1: Dissatisfied

The source of dissatisfaction for most responses seems to be the perceived lack of meaningful consultation between Administration and the Senate. There is frustration about faculty being informed after important decision have been made – without proper consultation with the Senate or Senate representatives. Among the "Dissatisfied" category, there were two sub-themes: a) transparency and b) lack of performance evaluation of the administration.

Faculty should be much more involved in the managerial decisions and priority setting processes for the university. Almost always, faculty are informed of decisions that have already been made, rather than involved in meaningful consultation ahead of time.

Answering this question is difficult because it asks for a frequency measure. The problem is that the definition of "meaningful" is unclear. In my view, the methods of seeking input need reform. I have therefore answered "rarely" because I think that many of the episodes of consultation do not return "meaningful" input. More specifically, the approach to long-term planning and physical resource utilization relies on general calls to open meetings or siloed unit planning proposals. These do not, in my view, solicit the general views of the faculty regarding direction. In my experience, faculty input has only really been called for on the budget in moments of crisis (as with the Budget Advisory Groups in the past). I find that the use of outside recruitment firms and search committees with constrained authority over management officials reduces the degree to which the faculty actually influences outcomes.

The University Administration seems to have an agenda that the faculty are expected to mindlessly accept. For example, during the most recent (failed) search for a Dean of the Libraries, very little input was sought from the library faculty.

We didn't even get to be involved in selecting who was interviewed for our Dean position. And then when there were only two interviews, of candidates already selected, we got to meet them but our vote didn't mean anything.

Unilateral decision to relocate the ETEC building caused some loss of confidence in the administration's willingness to engage in dialogue with the faculty.

The Senate should choose faculty to serve on all search committees.

Subthemes:
  o   Transparency
There needs to be more transparency with respect to issues concerning university governance. Further, the University administration should be subject to regular reviews by faculty members in the same way that faculty are reviewed by students.

  o   Performance evaluation of Administration

In my opinion, the lack of leadership abilities and inability to manage conflict effectively, or to encourage or engage views differing from their own, is a serious problem in the deans' offices in at least two colleges and schools, and I suspect more. The University has fallen into a pattern of allowing deans to serve for extended periods evidently without any attempt at meaningful evaluation. Many faculty, in conversations, recognize the problems, but have come to accept them as normal. This ultimately is the responsibility of the Provost and President. In my opinion, the lack of effective conduct by administrative functionaries in such offices is the most important factor in the University's progressive decline on multiple indicators.

Theme 2: Both

The responses in this category reflect that progress has been made but there is room for improvement, while

These are areas in which it seems progress has been made in the last few years, but there is much much much more work to be done. Much could be accomplished, in my opinion, by drawing upon faculty/staff resources more and temporary outside consultants much less.

University Administration might seek input from Deans on Long-term Planning, but not regular teaching faculty. There is no communication in the decision process (how a decision is derived) regarding Selection of Management/Confidential Candidates. When making an interim become permanent, a 360 degree evaluation should be conducted.

Theme 3: Satisfied

Responses in this category seem to come from persons that have participated in some form of consultation or that are appreciative of the openness of the Provost.

Our new Provost very actively listens, encourages discussion and seeks input!!! This is an incredibly healthy direction! Thank you!

I've participated in job searches for administrators, served on strategic planning committees, and many other opportunities in which I was invited to share my voice.

Q11. Discussion of Written Responses to Question 11

Q11. "What are the top three University or Higher Education-related issues that you would like the Senate and/or Administration to engage? (Please provide a short explanation.)"

This question had three empty spaces, labeled Issue #1, #2 and #3, were respondents could enter their opinions. The combined number of responses among Faculty, Staff, Management Confidential and Part Time employees were as follows:

Issue #1: 277 (100%)

Issue #2: 239 (100%)

Issue #3: 186 (100%)

a combined total of 702 responses.

After reading all responses several times, we classified responses into eight major themes: Governance and Planning Issues, Resource allocation, Professional Issues, Teaching and Curriculum Issues, Academic Climate and Morale, Contingent Issues, Students Issues, and Life on Campus Issues.

These themes are not necessarily disjoint and issues frequently relate to more than one theme.

Theme 1: Governance and Planning

Although opinions related to governance were requested in the previous questions (8-

Governance & Planning	Resource alloc.	Profe- ssional	Students	Contin- gent	Academic & Morale	Teach. & Curric.	Life
25.5%	22%	20%	10%	10%	8%	3%	2.5%

10), it seems that respondents became more thoughtful with the open-ended format of Question 11 and were more explicit about their complaints and requests.

Subtheme 1: Advocate for Increased State Support of the University

The issue of resources the most prominent concern for all and it is discussed under Theme 2. Here we address lobbying for state support for the university, which accounted for about 10% of comments in Theme 1. Comments request the Senate and Administration to be more aggressive in their lobbying efforts. More can be done as demonstrated by CUNY's example. This issue is not only vital to keep a competitive university but also not shifting the burden to students by keeping tuition low.

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

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.

Advocacy on the party 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.

Subtheme 2: Issues with the Senate

The responses in this subcategory accounted for another 10% of responses.
A few respondents commented on councils that have not been working well within the Senate.

- o *Promotions and Continuing Appointments*
- o *University Planning and Policy*
- o *Academic Assessment*

Others complained that the Senate does not have a sufficiently strong role in the University Governance.

More governance should be placed in the hands of the faculty who are conducting the teaching and research, and in the hands of department chairs who understand the needs and strengths of their department.

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.

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

Faculty governance (e.g. control over curricular issues)

Issues of representation and input from contingent faculty is discussed in Theme 5. Among other issues the Senate needs to improve is the involvement of undergraduate students and recognition of Librarians.

Undergraduate Involvement in Senate.

Less concern for tenure and promotion among faculty and professionals and more support and inclusion of our student body in all decision-making processes.

Recognition across campus that librarians are tenure-track faculty members.

The Senate is seen as not working fast enough.

Speeding up the decision process on new academic programs and courses, and ensuring that decisions are taken and implemented over the entire 12 months of the year

Subtheme 3: Communication Between Senate and Administration

This is the loudest subtheme accounting for 18% or responses. Most of the faculty and staff would like to see the Senate and Administration working together, with the Senate having more input in the decision making process. The major complaint was that the Administration does not sufficiently consult the Senate, as is stipulated by the bylaws.

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.

Faculty input into M/C hiring.

Proper consultation before major budgetary plans/decisions.

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

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

Unilateral administration decisions to reallocate funding to new pseudo-academic ventures such as a homeland security school

Administrators making contracts with outside vendors need to consult with faculty about impacts on faculty.

The decisions the Administration makes have direct impact on faculty workload. But faculty do not feel consulted nor informed.

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

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

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

Faculty oversight of curriculum and programs.

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

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.

Some faculty complained about administrative instability.

Constant administrative turnover (instability) and insufficient professorial experience among administrators

Subtheme 4: Evaluation of the Administration

Many responses (about 6%) requested *Faculty rating of administrative officers' performance.*

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

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.

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

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

Subtheme 5: Transparency

Transparency was already addressed in Question 9. Some respondents may have reflected further on the issue of transparency as they were prompted by the survey to comment on issues that were significant for them. The responses in this subtheme accounted for about 6% and they ranged from transparency in budget allocations to hiring practices.

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

Transparency with respect to administrative priorities and investments.

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

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

More autonomy in faculty hiring.

Administration encroachment on faculty hiring decisions.

Figure out where all the University's money is going. Why do the other University Centers have more money for faculty positions and graduate assistant positions than Albany?

Opaque budgets, leading to uncertain cost-benefit ratios in hiring patterns (especially senior faculty and administrators) and unending vaporous initiatives.

More transparency of the budget changes the university administration is proposing.

Budget issues that revolve around the President's goal to increase the number of students.

Subtheme 6: Long Term Planning

There were several comments expressing the need to focus on *Long term planning*. These ranged from efforts to have more effective shared governance, with the Senate having more input in administrative decisions and improved communication between the Senate and the Administration as mentioned above, to more single item requests. About 30% of responses were in this category.

Insisting upon the academic mission of the university, and ensuring that educational principles are applied to the university's expansion.

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. Abandon intercollegiate athletics and redirect resources to academics.

Figure out how to leverage analytics in our educational offerings.

Long-Term Planning. What are we trying to be and why?

Long term planning and resources for new colleges and programs; their effect on current programs.

Direction of the university as a whole.

A sustained effort to move the University to the front ranks of HE in the Northeast.

Planning for growth of academic programs.

Raising money for engineering school from outside sources so as to not take away from existing programs.

Push for more effective use of existing departments (e.g., promote collaboration b/w social science departments).

There were concerns about the impact of current plans.

Departments consolidations.

Expansion into new areas. e.g. engineering, health care.

Enrollment growth through strategic expansion of online programs.

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

Future directions: what fraction of the budget to use in bringing in new programs, and which

But above all, respondents reminded us to not lose sight of our mission as the university expands and changes, calling for assurances about maintaining and nurturing the academic standing and research environment of the university.

Making sure students are getting a good education, and graduate from this university with usable skills in 4 years.

Making sure our University has the resources it needs to support very high quality research.

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.

Restructuring colleges to ensure the mission is being met by the departments within its unit.

Quality teaching of undergraduates.

As we plan for the future, more efforts should be made to improve pride for the education received at UAlbany.

Help foster school spirit. Why are UAlbany graduates not proud of this university?

Improvement to UAlbany pride.

Get the word out about our research (and not only about athletics).

Improved ops for departmental cross-collaboration & showcasing/sharing successes.

Making sure everyone is working toward the same goals - not the goals of their constituency.

The engagement in conversation around developing institutional activities/events that would include all sectors of the UA community (e.g. Commencement, Campus Clean-Up Day).

Regeneration of the sense of the common good in the pursuit of Senate objectives.

Concerns about the direction of the university:

Role of corporate sponsorship and resultant subsidizing of corporations.

Increasingly overlapping work concerns of Senate and UUP
Lack of Senate understanding of its role as DIFFERENT from UUP

Excessive rationalization/professionalization of higher education (i.e. cutting degree programs and facilities deemed 'unprofitable' or not linked to careers, over reliance on standardized metrics),

Administrators making contracts with outside vendors need to consult with faculty about impacts on faculty.

Subtheme 7: Recruitment and Retention

Concerns for the quality of students being admitted to the university, demographic trends and the need to develop strategies to improve the quality of admitted students and retention accounted for 10% of responses.

More transparency on undergraduate admissions; too many unprepared students are being admitted to UAlbany.

Do not lower standards of admission just to increase enrollment to make more money through tuition. Do not treat students as customers.

Better interaction with the Albany City Schools- engaging our future students
High school to college transition.

We need to promote ways in which to guard/raise the standards of undergraduate admission, especially in regard to the large number of transfer students entering our institution, many of whom seem ill-prepared for a Higher education experience.

Given projected decreases in New York's population of 18 year olds in the near future, reconsider unrealistic plans to increase undergraduate enrollment.

SUNY schools need to "Ban the Box" on University admissions applications. Previous incarceration should not be a consideration in admissions decisions at the University. Enrollment management: We need strategies besides marketing for increasing enrollments.

Retention factors - i.e. what can we offer outside academics to keep students.

Ways to increase retention.

Increasing standards and expectations for students (i.e. admission standards and student academic socialization).

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.

Abandon intercollegiate athletics and redirect resources to academics.

Subtheme 8: Other

Additional requests for the Senate not represented in the above categories are displayed here.

Making a more personalized University where the first answer to a question is not "check our website".

Information about the budget should be displayed in the Senate webpage. Information about important directions the university is taking should also be there. President & Provost reports at Senate meetings should be recorded and displayed in the Senate.

Improved utilization of current IT for communication, staff continuing ed etc.

University community development: equity and trust.
Facilities use and information.
Community engagement: Albany and beyond.
On-campus race relations.
Increased faculty research activity and marketing of faculty research.
Stronger and more emphasis on hard science.
Protection and support for academic programs.

More aggressive environmental program. Develop a zero-waste program for the cafeteria and the whole campus. All new buildings should be green, especially new dormitories. Universities should be leading edge of positive changes. We educate the future.

Theme 2: Resource Allocation

Subtheme 1: Efficiency
Many responses (about 10% in this category) were critical of the use of resources and some offered cost-saving suggestions.

How to invest more in academics, and less in ornamental face-lifts to the physical structure of the facilities.

Administrative bloat: in my college, at least, we have an absurd proliferation of admin staff, without comparable faculty growth.   The administration's preference for "new" initiatives (developed with little planning, in response to some hastily announced deadline) instead of supporting/enhancing existing, often more central/core programs.

Disproportionate growth of administration/administrative costs. The growth of the administration is alarming to me. While the colleges struggle to hold onto minimal, ever-decreasing resources, the administration continues, at great cost, to grow.

Allocation of Finances - A university that prides itself as an educational institution shouldn't be throwing money at football stadiums and administrative pay/bloat and then claim they can't afford to teach French anymore.

Abandon intercollegiate athletics and redirect resources to academics

State rules that require the spending of dollars that are wasteful (e.g., having printed pay stubs every 2 weeks - all payments and verification should be electronic!!).

Subtheme 2: Faculty Lines
Responses (about 10%) asked for strengthening academic programs by relying less on contingent faculty, fewer administrative positions and instead increase the number of faculty lines.

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?

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.

Increasing the fraction of tenure-track vs contingent faculty.

Decreasing number of admin staff relative to tenure-track faculty.

Subtheme 3: Support
The issue of quality of education is intimately tied to support for the different aspects of programs. TA stipends belong here but because of their importance, it was discussed as a separate subtheme.

Support for Research:

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

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

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

Funding for Graduate students for going to conferences.

Grants for graduate students.

Funding for the Libraries:

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.

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.

Improving the library funding and contents.

Staffing Needs:

Desperately! Compact planning does not appear to fund any staff.

Staffing levels across programs/departments/units. They are simply uneven relative to size/throughout.

Other Support:
Institutional needs regarding online education (technology, SARA, faculty training, policies, etc.)

Adequate tech resources. It would be nice if the Internet worked reliably on campus.

It would be nice if there was at least one tech-ready LC with plugs throughout for laptops and some secured machines on the edge tables for students without laptops.

Cybersecurity.

Subtheme 4: Student Programs
25% of resource requests were concerned with support for students, the majority of responses in this category request more funding for TA stipends in order to be more competitive.

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

Better cross-department resources for students.

Support for undergraduate research.

Funding for Doctoral Students.
Requests for more support for TA stipends and well as for number of TA positions and length of support.

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

More graduate TAs for graduate courses.

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).

Duration of graduate student funding.

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

Graduate Student Stipends/Assistantships. Graduate student pay is TOO LOW and GAs are unevenly compensated for their labor at the University. Stipends should be guaranteed until degrees are finished.

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.

Subtheme 5: Salaries
Not surprisingly, a considerable number of responses (25%) concerned the level of compensation.

Adjuncts:
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.

Address the state requirements for pay considering experience of adjuncts.

Meaningful wage for adjuncts that encourages going the extra mile.

Reinstatement of merit pay raises as additions to base pay .

Professional Staff:
Increase in pay for Professional Staff.

Faculty:
Merit raises for academic and professional faculty.

Reinstatement of merit pay raises as additions to base pay.

Better raises through UUP.

Salaries have gone up, but we are still not competitive

Faculty salaries -- low compared to other research universities.   Student: faculty ratio -- too high at Albany! Too many administrators taking funds away from education -- why do we need so many vice provosts!! And why are they paid more than faculty?

Bring back discretionary pay increases rewarding high-quality work (raises) not just 1-time-only bonuses at end of year (DSA awards).

Equity:
this issue is better addressed in Theme 3, Professional Issues.

Equitable pay for all faculty.

More equitable distribution of funds to all faculty, not just tenured faculty.

Subtheme 6: Support for Humanities and Social Science (15%)
There is a strong sentiment (15% of responses) that the social sciences and humanities are not adequately supported.

Failure to support academic areas that do not bring external funding.

Balancing budget needs of high performing schools/centers with others.

Budget for College of Arts and Sciences.

Support for humanities and interdisciplinary programs.

Crafting a systematic approach to supporting the Humanities.

Research support outside of STEM.

Theme 3: Professional Issues

Subtheme 1: Teaching Issues
About 20% or responses in this theme talked about teaching issues. *Academic freedom and freedom of speech* were the loudest complaints.

Academic freedom and quality of education, which is linked to the increased reliance of contingent faculty.

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

Free speech in classroom without repercussion.

Politically correct nonsense (incursions on freedom of speech).

Abolition of ridiculous safe space culture that leads to coddled fools incapable of functioning in the real world.

Academic freedom. Individual faculty should have the right to speak on social media on their own time, independent of their employment, on any topics they choose, without reprisal.

There were several complaints about the teaching evaluations.
Teaching Evaluations - to include positive goals supporting critical conversations – Currently those who do "diversity work" in classrooms are judged negatively and unfairly by those who may fear to change curriculum or are privileged by it...

SIRF scores - some comments on why an over-reliance on SIRF scores is problematic.

Either get rid of SIRF or replace it with better system such as written and mandated student participation so that results are statistically robust.

Teaching is perceived as not being appreciated appropriately.
Excellence in teaching not just research.

Severe disconnect between teaching (not well-regarded or rewarded) and recruitment goals (increasing tuition base and student quality).

There were concerns about the impact of increased enrollment and teaching. Class size is discussed in Theme 7 but it is addressed here as well because of its impact on faculty overload. Class enrollment increases have occurred without the necessary support for teaching (assistance with graders). Therefore increase in enrollment directly affects the quality of teaching and research.

Class size.

Enrollment growth.

Delivery of courses - especially if enrollment is to be increased.

Student: faculty ratio -- too high at Albany! Too many administrators taking funds away from education -- why do we need so many vice provosts!! And why are they paid more than faculty?

Other miscellaneous teaching related issues.
Placing more importance on the role of faculty as educators.

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

Issues related to leveraging online learning and blended formats.

Professional development for effective teaching.

Internationalization.

Compensation for offered and developed courses that are not completed due to low student enrollment.

Subtheme 2: Diversity
Another loud issue was the issue of diversity of faculty, staff and administration, which accounted for approximately 18% of responses in the Professional Issues Theme. Complainants also point out the need to improve not only the hire of diverse faculty but also their retention.

Hiring and retention of faculty of color.

Recruitment and retention concerning racial diversity.

Institutional bias--gender as well as race, ethnicity, ability, etc., and at all levels--full and part time faculty; graduate students; undergraduate students; professional and regular staff.

More diverse faculty and staff that reflect our student body.

Diversity in faculty hiring, especially the dearth of Latino faculty.

Diversity - would like to see diversity in administrative roles in each department, including libraries and other non-academic departments.

Subtheme 3: Other Hiring Issues
In addition to diversity, spousal hires were also mentioned as a means to retain and attract excellent faculty.

Fair search and hiring practices.

Spousal hires. What is with UAlbany refusing to do spousal hires. Other universities think we're horribly sexist. UAlbany should come up with a consistent spousal hire policy and retroactively apply it to faculty spouses who are trapped as adjuncts.

Establishing a policy for spousal/partner hires as a way to retain faculty.

Subtheme 4: Promotion and Tenure
There were several comments (about 10% of responses) asking for clarification of expectations and standards for promotion and tenure.

Promotion and Tenure--the process, the documentation to be provided, standardizing and overseeing the process to ensure quality and consistency across the University.

Disgracefully unfair treatment by some faculty in T & P process.

How to handle promotion/tenure cases, if a colleague published extremely well, yet, did not get major federal funding (STEM fields).

Incorporating service learning into tenure and promotion criteria.

The issue of workload was partially mentioned when we discussed teaching. Another issue pertains to service obligations, that is, the request to make service obligations and expectations consistent across the university.

Work load.

Make sure faculty has time to do research (i.e., balance among research, teaching and service).

Service load for faculty.

Service work distribution among TT faculty. Consider how service obligations vary across departments and think of steps for making service obligations and expectations consistent across the university's departments.

Problem of unequal distribution of research mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students across faculty within units.

Subtheme 6: Family Life and Work Issues
This subtheme was also a popular one, accounting for 18% of responses. The vast majority of responses in this subtheme complained about the lack of a university-wide policy on *Paid Family Leave* or *Paid maternity/paternity leave.*

Clearer guidelines on maternity leave.

Establishing a consistent family leave policy

Family and medical leave (paid family and medical leave, clear expectations for effects on tenure clock, etc).

Fertility issues related to the timing of the tenure clock and the biological clock

Extended leave without pay is a right through human resources at other schools. At our school, we have to ask our Dean, and it is discretionary

Other issues in this subtheme deal with more flexibility and family-friendly policies for faculty and staff.
More family-friendly policies for faculty and staff.

Life - work balance: part-time/flexible/telecommuting positions for new mothers until children are in school rather than forcing them to work full time or leave the job

Personal Time for Faculty and Employees

Offering of designated breast milk pumping locations at the campus which is a NYS law. There is not one dedicated space on main campus for mothers to pump milk.

Subtheme 7: Compensation

Of course, one of the prevalent subthemes (10%) is the issue of compensation across the board. Fair compensation and path for growth are themes that affect performance and morale. Definitely we can not maintain academic excellence –research and teaching- if we are not willing to offer competitive compensation. We partially talked about this issue in Theme 2, Resources, asking for more competitive stipends for TAs. However, compensation is also an issue for permanent faculty, contingent faculty and professional staff.

Advocate to back the DSI (not simply an award) for the upcoming contract. We need to keep our excellent faculty!   (DSI=Discretionary Salary Increases)

Faculty salaries -- low compared to other research universities.

We need to sustain yearly salary raises that compare to those of other higher education institutions. Identify and correct gender inequality of salaries.

Full-time tenure track/promotion must be promoted/protected--it's a great disservice to academia & students paying/treating academics (contingents) as ditch diggers--we need a strong, dedicated academic faculty to lead the nation into the future

The issue of equity in compensation is also reflected in the perceived inequalities with regards to gender; faculty vs administration and of course contingent faculty.

Equitable pay for all faculty

Student: faculty ratio -- too high at Albany! Too many administrators taking funds away from education -- why do we need so many vice provosts!! And why are they paid more than faculty?

Pay equity among levels at the University - explore systemic gender pay inequality for SL's   (SL=Senior Lecturer)

Gender equity, including payment and promotion.

Equal pay for women.

Inadequate attention to faculty issues with regard to equity, research and teaching.

One person mentioned compensation for chairs.
Providing better incentives for individuals who become departmental Chairs.

Subtheme 8: Professional Support

There were several comments requesting support for professional development and training.

More University support mechanisms within for employees
Promotion and advancement opportunities
Professional development for faculty and staff
Built In Technology Training Workshops for All Units.
Resources/Training
ADA Compliance for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants

Other issues were "*Workplace safety*" and respect and recognition of professional staff.
More respect and equality for professional staff.
Civility.
Recognition of Professional Staff.

Subtheme 9: Support for Research

An important issue among faculty is support for different aspects of research, from workload discussed above to funding for research and travel. Once again, we compete with better-funded institutions so if we are serious about academic excellence, the issue of funding needs to be seriously addressed.

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

Research infrastructure.

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

Support for research, including finding funding and having access to research space.

Return on overhead to departments needs to be sufficient to cover the costs of doing research.

Subtheme 10: Miscellaneous

Inadequate support for newly hired faculty.
Expectations for newly hired faculty

withholding the first paycheck of new faculty. This is a burden that is unjust

Postdoctoral Policy

The real insights into grant funding should be provided by experienced colleagues in seminars.

Additional issues about working conditions.
Hostile working environment within Rockefeller College.

Union breaking policies
More Union support mechanisms for employees

Free Parking for Univ. departments hosting Events on Campus!

Theme 4: Students' Issues

A large percentage of contingent faculty consists of graduate students. This theme addresses their concerns. The issues discussed herein also appear in the discussion of students' responses to the survey.

Subtheme 1: Cost of Tuition

One of the top concerns among students (26% of responses) is the cost of education, financial aid and student debt.

Cost of education with top-heavy management.

Creating or restoring fellowships and other forms of economic support for students who come from economically stressed families.

High cost of tuition and related fees; limited or entirely lacking financial support of undergraduate and graduate students

Subtheme 2: Support for Graduate Students

The other top concern among students (26% of responses) is support available for graduate students.

First is the stipends and remuneration for adjuncts.
Higher stipends/salaries for graduate TAs, GAs, & RAs - we receive just bare minimum to meet our ends

Pay/Benefits for graduate, doctoral, and adjunct workers

Followed by other forms of support.

- *Grants for graduate students.*
- *scholarship funding opportunities.*
- *Additional research/travel funds.*
- *Student support services (i.e. writing, reading, tutoring, etc.)*
- *More support and services for international students - the services available on campus are minimal at this point.*
- *Career support and planning.*
- *Better cross-department resources for students.*
- *Promoting greater awareness of financial assistance for travel and other student expenses.*
- *Providing greater assistance for purchasing necessary research software.*
- *Promoting greater membership and participation.*
- *Student rights.*

Subtheme 3: Relationship Between Students and Faculty

Students request improvement in the relationship with faculty, easing the overload of faculty so that they can have more time with students with improved mentoring practices, and increasing the number of faculty.

Student satisfaction

Communication

Improved and enhanced interaction between faculty and students - more student access to faculty.

Better monitoring and enforcement of faculty teaching workloads - more faculty in the classroom.

Problem of unequal distribution of research mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students across faculty within units.

Keeping a steady workforce at the university (less contingency, more tenure track teachers and long term contracted other workers).

Amending tenure so that it does not mean that you can do a poor job in your position, but rather moves it back to protecting your rights to have different opinions.

Subtheme 4: UAlbany Environment

Issues here deal with the quality of life at the university from diversity and inclusion, students with disabilities to social climate and pride in our university.

Improving the campus climate for students of color.
Issues related to diversity and reaching more non-traditional students.
Diversity & Inclusion - Faculty/Senior Administration.
more aggressive recruitment and financial support for Latino graduate students.

Continue improving town-gown relations, specifically addressing increased income and educational disparities among Albany CITY African-Americans.

Awareness and recognition of students with disabilities as part of our diverse community.

Increase social, emotional and financial support of First Gen undergraduate students - from BOTH rural and urban family backgrounds - monitor support's effectiveness, celebrate, and SHARE University-wide the experience that is unique to this subgroup

Making a more personalized University where the first answer to a question is not "check our website".

University Libraries space - students use this extensively and it is being repurposed (3rd floor) without faculty/student input or usage data analysis.

Support and positive messaging to students for all disciplines, including natural sciences, professional schools, and humanities.

Help foster school spirit. Why are UAlbany graduates not proud of this university?

Subtheme 5: Curriculum
Many simply mention *course offerings*. Others were more specific.

- *General education.*
- *Community engagement*
- *Applied Learning*
- *More courses/sections offered within the class schedules*
- *Civic education*

Offering better selection of majors, which this generation of students want to take.

Offering more sections/class options for undergraduates/graduate students.

Student development opportunities within the University (versus outside internships/externships).

Quality control of graduate courses offered by senior faculty (e.g., in my unit, senior faculty "claim" courses but doctoral students are not learning what they should -- b/c of small class size, students can't address this in evaluations).

Theme 5: Contingent Faculty Issues
Among this theme, the most salient topics were:

Subtheme1: Salaries and Treatment of Adjuncts

Pay Equity for part-time faculty.

Meaningful wage for adjuncts that encourages going the extra mile.

Improving the remuneration and support services given to adjunct faculty.

Contingency faculty: Rights, Treatment, Compensation.

Subtheme 2: Contingent Path to Permanency

Significantly improved salaries and integration of part-time and other contingent faculty, especially those who are long-term with renewable appointments. Include recognition of their work with "Senior" lecturer or similar title.

Pay equity - would like to see the pay equity issue get addressed for both full-time and part-time faculty, especially those who have been underpaid for years.

solving the ever-rising contingent faculty budgets by offering permanent solutions such as full-time lecturer lines.

Subtheme 3: Working Conditions for Contingent Labor
Several responses simply asked for *better treatment of part time employees* without qualifying what that means. However a few respondents explained:
- *Improved status of contingent faculty*
- *health benefits access*
- *pay, workload, contracts,*
- *class size equity for instructors, especially regarding part-time faculty*
- *Equal representation for non faculty*
- *Input from contingents on curriculum*

I applaud the attention and consideration given to contingent faculty; we should do more to integrate part timers into our structure if that is the direction we are headed

Consideration of what the job entails when hiring contingent faculty. Adjuncts are paid per course but over the years a number of unfunded mandates have gone out that have increased time per course without changes in what counts as full time.

Creating more opportunities for the contingent faculty, rewarding them for contributions to teaching and research which go beyond their obligations.
Funding

One response recognizes that we are starting the conversations to improve the situations for contingent faculty.

Theme 6: Academic Climate and Morale

Subtheme 1: Intellectual/Academic Climate on Campus
The majority of comments in this theme (27.6%) were concerned with the intellectual climate among students.

According to responses, the main contributors to the perceived lower than desired academic climate are

- o *Student preparedness and capabilities,*
- o *Pressure to increase enrollments leading to lowering of standards.*
- o *Maintaining academic standards as we admit more students.*
- o *Students are coming in with poor communication skill.*
- o *Grade inflation and academic standards*
- o *Academic honest policy enforcement and guidance*
- o *Academic rigor*

The concerns for academic climate are two fold. On the one hand students are being admitted without the appropriate skills to engage in university level education. This problem is attributed to the pressure to increase enrollment by lowering admittance standards. On the other hand and related to the first is the perceived loss of academic rigor and lowering of standards in the courses not to fail too many ill prepared students, leading to grade inflation. Along with this is the problem of academic honesty that needs to be transmitted and enforced across programs.

Changing the culture of the university. I just spoke to another student today who wants to transfer because the people around her are not serious students. I spoke to a teacher who said his students "just don't show up."

Strengthen the curriculum/increase standards/increase entry requirements--stop watering everything down! Students can't think, write, speak cogently, make a logical argument, speak a foreign language, ask questions, seek knowledge--disservice to all.

Enhance student awareness and responsibility re: developing appropriate study skills and expectations.

Subtheme 2: Quality of the Academic Program

Related to the academic climate there were 13% of responses that talked about the quality of the academic program. The main request among comments was the need to support our programs at all levels, support for research & travel and support for teaching.

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

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

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

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

Budgetary problems hampering academic excellence.

Proportion of fulltime to contingent faculty.

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

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

Subtheme 3: Program Reputation

The issue of the reputation of our program/university accounted for 22% of responses in this theme. Responses request to promote the excellence of our programs and generate a culture of pride in our university.

Get the word out about our research (and not only about athletics).

Improvement to UAlbany pride.

Others were more critical of our programs and requested to improve the competitiveness of our programs.

Consider NY State job potential indicators and make education and department focus match those needs so that our students (and NY taxpayers) are not pouring time/$$ into dead end situations.

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.

Competitiveness of our graduate programs (as we are constantly losing good students to our peers, such as SUNY Binghamton); improving the recruiting process, making the stipends even more competitive.

Innovation and entrepreneurship (meaning encouraging and supporting good ideas related to quality education and our competitiveness as a univ.

New schools to make us a real university (Law, Engineering, Medical).

Subtheme 4: The Role of Arts and Humanities
The role of Arts and Humanities was as prominent as Program Reputation, also accounting for 22% of responses. There is a strong perception that the university character has changed and has moved away from a liberal arts education to one that does not value the contributions from arts and humanities.

Importance of the arts & humanities to a liberal arts education.

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

Decline of support for humanities (in the university and the general culture), and increasing support for technical training.

The promotion of STEM fields at the expense of a well-rounded liberal arts education.

Full University (President, Provost, Vice Provost, and Deans) support of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences on campus.

Subtheme 5: Morale

Responses were varied from remuneration and recognition to new directions of the university.

One issue that affects academic morale is the treatment of contingent faculty: compensation, benefits and working conditions as well as respect for their work, already discussed in Theme 5. The other side of this issue is the heavy reliance on contingent work. The decreased proportion of full time faculty to contingent faculty is seen as eroding the academic quality of our programs.

Contingency and the Attack on Academics

Proportion of fulltime to contingent faculty

Over-reliance on (underpaid, under-supported) contingent faculty.

All issues discussed within this theme as well in all other themes affect academic morale. A few additional sentiments that were not expressed elsewhere are the following.

Equitable contributions -- Non-research active faculty need to teach an additional course or retire! Otherwise, they are hurting the reputation of their department and the University.

The transformation of UA into a vocational school, on the one hand, and a business, on the other.

At the University, the zero sum climate that is increasing as a consequence of the pressure to increase graduate and undergraduate enrollments all the time-- do more with less and make sure it is more than the department down the hall.

How employees are treated by upper management.

Employee morale.

Theme 7: Teaching and Curriculum Issues

Some of the issues related to teaching were mentioned in Theme 6, subthemes 1 & 2 pertaining to preparedness of students and resources for teaching. We now focus on additional themes related to teaching issues.

Subtheme 1: Curriculum

Curriculum responses varied from content to approaches.

Among the content, we had specific requests for:

- o *Information literacy for students*
- o *Expand Language Class Offerings*
- o *Community Engagement*
- o *Local Community Building*

There were also requests to improve the curriculum offerings to reflect modern trends of leadership and well-informed individuals.

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

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 -

Faculty sponsored programs, campus book reading projects, Campus Seminar Courses, a course on Diversity/Sustainability-Ecological/Biodiversity - where each department creates one class of that course... Integrating.

Opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary co-teaching and learning experiences for faculty.

There was also a call to include more contingent faculty in the development of curriculum.

Input from contingents on curriculum.

Someone also pointed out the need to make sure that courses are in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
ADA compliance

Subtheme 2: Students
The issue of students' preparation was already addressed under Theme 6, subtheme 1: academic climate. The teaching specific issues related to this topic were:

- o *Enhance student awareness and responsibility re: developing appropriate study skills and expectations.*
- o *Reduce the amount of cheating.*
- o *Making courses more interesting to students.*

- *Encourage students to be more involved in community activities.*
- *Student Engagement and Excellence.*

Subtheme 3: Class Sizes
The issue of class size was seen as contributing to student performance and quality of education. Underlying this issue is the growth of enrollment leading to larger classes and increase faculty burden.

- Lack of small class experiences for students.
- More emphasis on academic programs especially teaching, for example reducing classroom size.
- Managing class size to improve the quality of education

- As well as a call of support to deal with the changing environment.
- New learning models for large classrooms.

Subtheme 4: Online teaching
Some respondents question if it is effective or mention that there should be a balance between online and traditional classes, others point to current problems.

Online learning - is it really effective?

Online Curriculum and the (broken) Open SUNY network. We should be moving forward on this front, but are not.

Curriculum --approval, movement toward online curriculum approval of courses.

Balance between online and in person education.

Subtheme 5: Diversity
We included most of the diversity, gender and equity responses among theme 3: professional issues. But diversity also needs to be addressed as part of the curriculum content and how we are preparing and educating students to live in a more diverse world.

Issues related to diversity and reaching more non-traditional students.

Issues around diversity, inclusion and cultural competency (or lack thereof) affecting the ENTIRE campus.

Theme 8: Life on Campus

Responses in this theme were varied. Most responses dealt with the issues of safety, the quality of food on campus and the state of campus facilities.

Subtheme 1: Safety

Safety (i.e. Air quality, construction issues, emergency responded-ness).

Can the Senate ask UPD to do more patrols? There are many people who drive like they are in a road race: too fast. Safety issues of concern, here.

Increase security in Downtown campus.

Title IX data released concerning our campus's statistics of sexual assault and what we're doing to help combat this pandemic of rape culture across U.S. Campuses.

Subtheme 2: Food

This subtheme is better represented under student survey responses, but it is also an important issue for faculty and staff who dine on campus.

Higher quality food service.

Subtheme 3: Facilities

According to responses, there are problems campus-wide with physical accessibility for people with physical disabilities.

Accessibility (Physical - elevator, door buttons; academic - university-wide solution to content accessibility).

Campus facilities, specifically, physical accessibility for people with disabilities. There are new-ish buildings on campus that include spaces that are un-accessible. This is outrageous, and illegal.

Subtheme 4: Miscellaneous

The rest of responses about life on campus are too diverse, from recycling to measures of gender inclusiveness.

More aggressive environmental program. Develop a zero-waste program for the cafeteria and the whole campus. All new buildings should be green, specially new dormitories. Universities should be leading edge of positive changes. We educate the future.

Bringing life and catering to our campus during breaks, Winter session and Summer so that we're a genuine 12-month community of researchers, instructors, students and support staff.

Coffee Machines in the Vendor machine areas for the new Business school!

Better busing and bicycling.

Please bring the counseling center back on campus.

Student Recreation Center.

Offering of designated breast milk pumping locations at the campus which is a NYS law. There is not one dedicated space on main campus for mothers to pump milk.

Gender inclusive restrooms on academic podium.

Gender-Inclusivity, including allowing preferred/chosen First Names on SUNY Cards.

Q12. Written Responses to Question 12

Q12. "Please use the space below to share any additional thoughts..."

Among faculty and staff, there were seventy-two respondents that voluntarily shared their opinions. Their responses were categorized into four basic themes: governance, academic, professional, miscellaneous.

Theme 1: Governance:

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.

There are too many implicit assumptions behind some questions. Is it obvious part time faculty or undergrad students should be better represented in the Senate?

After the deactivations years ago, I really got the sense the Senate is not respected by administrators and ultimately fairly powerless. Is there any truth to this? What can be done to change it if so?

If by "governance" we mean more grass-root activities initiated by faculty, then there is not much. Most academic-related activities are top-down micromanaged. Quite suffocating really. Unless there is a real communication between upper management and the faculty, otherwise all is for naught. The fluidity of the upper management is just not beneficial to long-term residents here. They say they want to run it like a business, but they are not running it like a business.
Administrators are too many and faculty input in governance is too little.

Universities are not commercial corporations and should not be governed as such.

Adjunct staff comprise a large segment of the faculty but aren't allowed to elect their own representatives for the Senate. The number of adjuncts in the Senate should also be adjusted to reflect their growing importance.

The SUNYwide 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?

Too often the queries and concerns of Councils of the Senate are ignored in the Governance process. Faculty input is discounted or blatantly ignored when serious questions of resource allocation are raised. Obfuscation and a lack of accountability by the bureaucracy of the university is abundant. Participation on the Councils of the Senate is largely a meaningless exercise conducted solely so the Administration can claim that the faculty were involved in decision making. Faculty input is only considered when it supports or justifies a previously made decision. In my career here I have never seen faculty input lead to a change in direction, or to a meaningful corrective response.

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.

Faculty should be asked to conduct regular reviews of Administrator performance. Without such review, the Administration is free to ignore faculty advice, and frequently does so.

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.

It'd be nice to know how the Senate affects me.

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, Theatre, 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.

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.

I know UA Senate works hard and is under-supported. I do appreciate those who do the work. I also hope that better support can be given by UA finding a way to cut non-essential or political positions and activities.

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 work load problem with a shrinking staff and growing senior administration. I would love the senate to have say in that.

The rapid turn over at top administrative positions has hurt Albany's performance and image regionally and nationally. I hope that a more stable leadership will result in a more steady long-term vision for the university befitting of its students, faculty, and staff. In addition, faculty face relatively high levels of bureaucratic red tape that stifle innovation in research and teaching. I hope that the administration can continue to streamline such procedures and reduce resistance to new ideas.

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.

I really do not know what it is the Senate/Administration can/will address.

It is unclear whether or not there truly is shared governance at this University. It often does not appear that there is. Faculty often feel dis-empowered and disrespected. Decision making at the University often seems to have little to do with what faculty might define as public higher education.

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. Issue #2: I see several colleges with departments that do not belong in that particular college; for example, the ITM department in the School of Business. The ITM core curriculum does represent the mission and vision of the Business School, but with the strong, growing emphasis on cyber security and digital forensics, these pieces do not fit into those values. The new College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity seems a better home for these kinds of programs. The Administration needs to recognize that the University is evolving, and should take measures to make changes where needed.

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.

It is a good idea to have this survey.

The governance does not reach down to the average members of the University community so we understand what is going on.

I'm a long-time adjunct, but have never had any meaningful contact or involvement with governance.

Responses are likely to be biased by years of neglect or negative senate work. Thanks very much to the new senate leadership of the last couple years for engaging faculty again, inviting and encouraging participation and enabling faculty to again have a positive impact on their school and on the professions they are so passionate about. To clarify earlier responses--CAFFECoR doesn 't seem effective because its power was stripped from it in the last few years, LISC years ago seemed to have limited progress/effectiveness--no idea how it's doing now. Why are students on the faculty senate? They have their own representative bodies that can interact with senate. Perhaps this form could be less conspicuous in the future so people can complete it without others knowing what they're doing? Thanks for asking for our feedback/thoughts/suggestions/input. Keep working--it's going to take a while to convince all faculty (and admin) the Senate is real, has power, and can effectively govern. Thanks for all the time each of you are committing to improving our U.

The current faculty senate leadership do a terrible job of communication with the rank and file faculty. Committees lie fallow, and the web site is not kept up to date.

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.

The number one reason that many faculty across the campus ignore governance is that no issue is too trivial to debate at great length and no issue of substance is too important to ignore.

Most of all, I'd like to see a genuine commitment of 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.

The failed Libraries Dean's search looked more like a CEO search than an academic search. Librarians had no say unless they were on the search committee, and I doubt they held much sway on that large a search committee.

I feel I have no idea/ no information as a Professional Staff member what this is all about / not sure it pertains to me?

I know a great deal but am rarely consulted. I suspect I'm not alone.
Good Luck!

During my time here the senate moved from a more broadly representative group to a tenure - tenure track teaching faculty senate and did so planfully. During that same period the size of that group has decreased. I see the Senate as a more privileged group but one that has become less relevant to the life of the campus.

I applaud gestures this year and last to bring shared governance and UUP in line as upholding the interests and needs of professional and academic faculty. I'd like to see relations between governance and UUP continue to strengthen even as they maintain positive relations with administration. Tension is important between administration and faculty, but I hope it continues to be productive rather than adversarial tension. I also hope other initiatives undertaken this year will not fizzle out in future years as bodies change. The forums, for example, however many people attended, are super important. I think we're moving toward real cultural change on our campus, so I hope we can take measures to sustain it. Kudos!

Theme 2: Academic:

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.

UA is planning to grow to 20k plus. Every college and university in the state is vying for the same shrinking pool of potential students. In order to attract the best students we have to remain academically strong while indicators suggest the quality of students is dropping, especially in comparison to the smaller SUNYs. We need to continue to create the smaller university, personal culture.

We need to seriously change what we are doing as we are on a very bad path. I had high hopes for the new president and new administrators when they came in. After witnessing what has happened over the past year and a half, I am seriously disheartened and seriously thinking about leaving.

The higher ed environment is getting increasingly competitive. We need to ensure that our faculty profile is strong. This will be even more important as we expand enrollment through online programs, including international enrollments. We will need to show results in terms of career path for our students to compete with other

universities. Using analytics to demonstrate student outcomes aligned to the accreditation goals would be one way to point out the success of our students to future employers.

To continue my response to Q11, Issue # 1. a) In general, the response rate is very low. Consequently, there is no way to tell if those who do respond form an unbiased sample, or are simply the unhappiest ones. One way around this could be to have students fill out the evaluation forms in class; the response rates will be higher and you will get a better representation of students. b) If students are required to take a class that is outside their major, they are generally less interested in the material. It's a class that they have to take, like it or not, which usually leads to lower evaluations by the weaker students. This is especially true of lower division classes, when students are still not very mature. c) Well known academic studies show the existence of student bias when it comes to rating professors, e.g., older, white males are generally rated higher than women and minorities. It is feasible that SIRF scores suffer from the same issues, especially when the professor is demanding and challenges the students to perform. d) Honors classes present their own set of issues. There students are, in general, academically stronger, and so when these students run into a challenging class and not perform as well as they would have liked, they find it easier to blame the professor.

I appreciate the awards for work in the arts, for example, this year through the administration combined with the union development awards. More of that would help generate enthusiasm for working at the university in the arts. I'd like to see greater promotion of the arts, (and theatre in particular,) as skills that can be learned for working in any profession, from presenting oneself with confidence, to conflict resolution, as well as how to complete projects on-time, as theatre must with each show. As a long-time performing arts professional and an adjunct who has taught at major universities, I would like the state schools to value experience in the field as a comparable to a terminal degree.

I feel like the administration is more concerned with bolstering enrollment and making the bottom line than it is about the quality of education for students.

President Jones has gone some way toward refocusing efforts on raising the research profile of this research university. And more needs to be done in this regard.

Theme 3: Professional:
The university is operating on the backs of poorly compensated contingent faculty. This is my top priority.

The University at Albany concentrates so much on the faculty and the secretarial staff have CSEA as a union that the Professional staff get lost in the sauce. You can't even find on their website the proper procedure for professionals coming up for

permanency. It brings you to a link for faculty. The professionals work 12 months a year and are not recognized by the University.

Right now there exists no specific policy on either the state side or the RF side that deals with defining a postdoc's position within the university. All information concerning postdoc benefits and protections are spread across different union documents. The state side has UUP the RF side does not. Having a policy defining the rights and position of a postdoc would benefit the entire postdoc community. Such an example can be found at NYU, linked below. I am not asking for any specific change other then having one guideline in one place that is an easy document to find and access for anyone with questions. http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/postdoctoral-appointments-policy-for-nyu-washington-square.html

General education courses have the highest level of part time and contingent faculty teaching them. However due to the way the department system is set up, there is little funding or means of moving into permanent positions. We should be looking at new ways to govern and new structures to administer and pay for general education courses (where there is little research funding available). For example, while there may not be very many foreign language majors, the foreign language requirements mean there is a need to faculty. There are not many tenure lines available because there is no need for the major. However, if there was a general education department, there would be a justification for tenure lines.

Graduate Assistants and Adjuncts are exploited in the SUNY system quite widely, it seems, since they save the Universities a lot of money.

Theme 4: Miscellaneous:

In my capacity and level of workload I do not have time to participate in governance. I feel the bodies in place have done a fairly good job representing the community and issues. Any issues that impacted my area, I have found that the corresponding governing body has contacted me or my department to gain an understanding of operational procedures in the pursuit of their fact finding and recommendations on these issues. Consequently, I have always had a positive experience with the few issues that have come up over the many years of being employed here.
There should be more bus stops on the campus or relocate it back to the Science Library. As it is, all of the students and faculty must gather in one place to catch buses--too far away for most people. The food service is the worst of any public or private campus I've been on, and it's very expensive.

The debacle of the 2010 downsizing of tenured faculty by administrative fiat (coupled to the Senate's impotence) has not been forgiven or forgotten. Those who were

complicit have not been forgiven or forgotten. See above for comment on the impunity of the administration.

When my child was born I requested an opportunity to work part time or have flexible job arrangement for a while. After 8 months working part time I was told to either go back to work full time or leave my position. It was the most heart breaking decision I had to make. Most of my work was done on computer so I could easily telecommute but that option was never offered to me. After I left, two people were hired to replace me. I did not ask for extra help, or a raise, I just wanted flexibility in doing my job, which could have saved University money. Instead I had to leave the job I loved because I loved my child. While working, I had to pump milk in the basement in the janitors locker room. It was horrible because the room had no windows, was nothing more than a big closet and every moment somebody could have knocked on the door to request access to their lockers. It was a humiliating and dehumanizing experience.

The readiness of international students for study at UA and the availability of resources to support their adjustment to the university (in terms of language facility and social life).

I'm looking forward to learning more and serving in the near future.

College affordability First year retention

Re: issue 2 above: evergreen positions treat 4 courses as full time despite the fact that ualbany profs spend an average of 15 hours per class. That means 60 hours a week is full time. That's not crazy if you aren't expected to have an extra 10 pages of syllabus above what was expected 10 years ago, increased pressure to use prep and intensive teaching methods such as TBL, additional admin overhead like helping with assessment, and answering emails from hundreds of students. 4 courses full time is only sane if you have a 1 page syllabus, never prep, refuse letters of recommendation, don't participate in assessment, and have nothing to grade but a midterm and a final. What counts as full time for contingents needs to be adjusted to match increased expectations of the job. It wouldn't be crazy to consider the additional load these demands are putting on tenure track faculty as well, but since tenure track faculty get paid a living wage and have job security. starting the dialogue with fixing things for contingent faculty would be good.

Consider avoiding religious days when scheduling events. For example, there is a panel on Good Friday, one of the most important religious days for Catholics.
More PR may be advisable re whatever success (and areas of improvement) shared governance demonstrated in the response to the 'Bus Incident' by the Senate AND Administration.

safety and health issues on campus like handling of construction debris and cleanliness of restrooms

Senate leadership last year was an embarrassment to the entire campus. The way that the elections and the bylaw amendment were handled--with ballot violations and other shenanigans--left me with absolutely no confidence in the Senate, UUP, or the Administration.