MINUTES: JANUARY 21, 2016

PRESENT: S. Birge, S. Chittur, C. Fox, S. Goel, M. Leventhal, C. Parker, J. Stefl-Mabry, J. Van Voorst, E. Wulfert

GUESTS: Jim Collins, Mark Steinberger, Michael Stessin

The meeting convened at 4:15 pm. A motion and vote was taken to accept the minutes from 11/24/15. They were unanimously approved.

Chair’s report

The Chair talked about governance and leadership. The leadership changes from one year to the next. The Chairs take on different roles and positions. She invited Jim Collins, Vice Chair of the Governance Committee, to observe UPPC so that he has a good idea about what takes place in UPPC when he takes over as Chair. Jim Collins thanked the Chair and made the point that there were sharp learning curves when it comes to taking on the new role of a chairperson in the three years serving on the governance committees.

The Chair also mentioned the formation of the UPPC subcommittees (Resource Analysis Planning Committee and Facilities Planning Committee). The governance committee is taking a look at this.

Old business

The Chair opened with a discussion of the Campus Impact Form. The Chair will make some final changes to the formatting. The 12/18/14 version of the program expense table will be used. There will be a change to the place where the form is signed. Under Service Units, Core Facilities will be added. The form will be uploaded to the website.

Presentation: MS Program in Data Science

Mark Steinberger and Michael Stessin of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics presented on a new Master of Science program in Data Science.

Powerful new mathematical methods of data analysis have been developed over the last 10 years, incorporating algebraic, topological and function analytical tools (arising from corresponding areas of “pure” mathematics) along with traditional statistical methods. The resulting new fields of Topological Data Analysis, Computational Algebraic Geometry, and Machine Learning have developed techniques to reveal the internal structure of large data sets, resulting in striking new findings such as distinguishing between different types of breast cancer.

Only three mathematics departments in the country, Bowling Green State University, South Dakota State University and University Nebraska at Omaha currently have Data Science Master’s degrees. None of them incorporate either the topological methods or the reproducing kernel techniques that have become valuable in machine learning.

They currently have experts in Topological Data Analysis, Machine Learning and Statistics on our faculty, and are uniquely positioned to produce rigorously trained work force in these dynamic new STEM fields. The program will contain three clusters: Topological Data Analysis and Computational Geometry, Machine Learning, and Statistical Methods. Each cluster contains a “practicum,” in which students analyze real world data sets.
Students will take 36 credits, including Applied Linear Algebra, along with courses in Topological Data Analysis and Computational Geometry, Machine Learning, Statistical Methods, and at least one of the three practicums. They should be expected to complete the program in two years.

**Question and answer**

A councilmember asked if this is a thirty-six credit program or thirty-nine. It will be a thirty-six credit program when they merge some clusters and practicums. This has to be finalized.

A point was made that this program exists at other schools and they are well-known programs. The point was made that these programs are not in math departments.

The council asked about data security and capacity. Can our computing facilities handle large data? The answer was that this is not a research-oriented program. But there are connections and access to data for teaching purposes and practicums.

The council asked about the department’s plan to place graduates. The answer was that they have alumni in the Department of State and Wall Street. They will look into placement. This is a rigorous training and there is the potential for actuarial jobs as a back-up.

The council asked when there would be more tangible components for placement. The answer was that they are currently working on it. They are making connections with alumni and for internships. Practicums could take place at the university. They have the available resources.

A question was raised about the budget. Are the projected figures enough? The answer was that this was the best estimate they could come up with for the projected 30 majors. A councilmember asked about faculty raises. What about over five years and salary raises? The answer is that this is dependent on union negotiations and overall adjustments in budgets will be made across the university.

The Dean made the point that we should definitely get a data program going. Other SUNYs are working on this already like UB. We do not want to be behind the curve.

The Chair asked about impact on other programs. How come they did not consult with ITS and other service units? The consultation needs to be undertaken before it is accepted. And the application needs the required signatures. It might be conditionally accepted until those are obtained.

**Discussion and vote**

The consensus by the council is that this program is good for the university. It can work alongside the new data center. A council member raised concerns about infrastructure capacity for large data sets. This is a concern overall for the university.

Another member also raised a concern about the lack of concrete ideas about placement. It was noted that the courses have not yet been developed and that they are evaluating resources and that they need time to work on these aspects of the major and let opportunities develop over time. The dean raised the point that collaborations occur across campus and that the deans work together to foster opportunities and problem solve and facilitate solutions and target specific goals.

A vote was taken conditional on signatures, correcting table, getting letters. There were nine votes in favor and none opposed or abstained.
**James Van Voorst budget presentation**

Jim Van Voorst, Vice President for Finance and Administration, gave a presentation on the state of the budget for 2015-16, the Compact Process 2016-17 and 2017-18 and a high level view of state funding based on the governor’s executive budget.

As far as the state of the university's budget for this fiscal year, there are no major surprises and no midyear cuts.

However, there was no enrollment growth and we do not foresee major growth yet.

The level of international student enrollment was low and came short of projections.

Graduate involvement was “soft,” did not hit projections. About 3-4 percent short or equaling about a million dollars.

International programs were short due to ongoing contract negotiations with Navitas, an international recruitment effort and pathways program. They were not able to get students enrolled by fall 2016.

There will be adjustments in budget, but not cuts. In building revenue projections, there are more unknowns than definites.

More crunching of numbers needs to take place – looking at out of state tuition, etc. By sixth week of semester there will be a better sense of revenue.

The Provost's Office and Student Affairs are working on retention and trends. They are looking at new freshman and transfers, graduate students, etc. Each group has its own patterns of retention.

The Dean mentioned research into loss of transfers due to students in sciences, how they are not prepared due to poor grades, and then ultimately how this can be remedied. The council raised the point that we do not want same program for all students, for all groups, for their success.

Cathy Parker talked about assessment – strategic assessment, operational, demographics, new programs and how well learning, satisfaction, engagement, and programs students feel are important. Student Affairs is working towards analyzing data. They are analyzing success benchmarks and long terms effects of programming and interventions. They are working with Bruce Szelest to post briefs on assessment website so that would be useful for other departments. Jim Van Voorst recommended that the council invite Mike Christakis to speak to these issues at a future council meeting.

Jim Van Voorst continued his discussion of on-going funding: There was 18 million dollars granted of one time money by the governor and 82 million from the Chancellor for good ideas. There were12 proposals. She has awarded 18 million awarded for a data center and other performance improvement plans – two on this campus and two with other campuses.

The governor gave a presentation on 2016-17 budget for fiscal year beginning April 1. (The university fiscal year begins July 1.)

The 2106-17 executive budget extends the SUNY 2020 maintenance of effort. This executive budget is the first step and a start. The legislature takes it under advisement. Over the next few months there will be back and forth negotiations, but there is currently a lack of leadership in key positions due to Silver and Skelos departures. Will there be a budget by April 1? The Governmental Relations Department is working on this.

Some notes on the governor’s proposal: It extends 2020 maintenance of effort but is undefined. It allows SUNY board increase tuition – but to what limit?
It allows for increase of tuition—but not for operational expenses of campus. It now has to go for faculty, faculty support, and TAP.

The biggest discussion will be around SUNY 2020 and having the ability to adjust tuition. That is major concern for the university.

Critical maintenance/rehabilitation budget was reduced by 900 K to 9.5 million. It needs support from legislature because that money goes back into local economy. That is not really adequate funding for maintenance costs and rehab.

The increase minimum wage will be phased in until 2021 to total 24 mil. It will be a number of years before that kicks in.

The union contract will be under negotiation.

There will be 3 mil available to students— to assist implement sustainability programs— but is that for higher, secondary, or elementary education?

Jim Van Voorst concluded with a discussion of the Compact Process: The Compact Process is continuing. Some projects have already been funded from Compact Process of last year.

The 2017-18 Compact Process is underway. It will follow the same approval stages as last year. The deans will work out an internal process for the format of proposals in order to reduce work load. Some may ask for a letter of intent to reduce the amount of time faculty spends on their proposals. If the proposal passes the first stage, a more detailed proposal will follow.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:30**