A regular meeting of the University Council was held on December 4, 2015 in University Hall, Room 306. Council members present included: Michael Castellana, Chair; Robert Balachandran; Nancy Burton; Patricia Caldwell; James Clancy; Mark Eagan; John Fallon; James Jackson (by telephone); Abner JeanPierre; Marc Cohen (Elected Student); James Collins (Faculty Representative); and Caitlin Janiszewski (Graduate Student Representative). Also present were President Robert Jones; Vice Presidents Joseph Brennan, Fardin Sanai, Michael Christakis, Laura Schweitzer; John Reilly, Counsel’s Office; Mark Benson, Director of Athletics; Carole Sweeton, Interim CIO; William Hedberg, Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Harvey Charles, Vice Provost and Dean for the Center for International Education and Global Strategy; Sheila Seery, Government Relations; Alice Oldfather and Leanne Wirkkula, President’s Office.

Mr. Hyde confirmed that the membership present constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. The Chair requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (Eagan/Balachandran), which passed unanimously. He then asked that the Council address a new business item regarding the recording of Council meetings which was raised during the September meeting. A motion to enter executive session was made by Fallon. In executive session a vote was taken (motion Fallon and Caldwell) to eliminate the recording of Council meetings which passed unanimously. Chairman Castellana announced a return to the public meeting and turned the floor over to President Jones.

In the President’s report, Robert Jones provided an update on the successful completion of the Vice President for Information Technology Services and CIO search with the appointment of Dr. Simeon Ananou. He then spoke on the University’s legislative agenda and budget priorities including the need to extend SUNY 2020 which sunsets in 16-17; critical maintenance needs; the Chancellor’s Stand With SUNY initiative to reinstate the 5 year capital plan which would equate to approximately 30 million dollars in revenue annually for UAlbany. The funding is imperative for critical maintenance and capital projects. Conversation ensued between Castellana, Caldwell, and Collins regarding lobbying efforts. President Jones indicated that this was a system-wide effort which the 4 centers have designated a top priority and are working collaboratively. The President then addressed campus climate in light of issues highlighted nationally in the media. He indicated UAlbany is committed to engaging students in issues of race, diversity and equality. In addition, that there is an obligation to be transparent and attentive in responding to student needs, issues and/or concerns raised. Conversation and comments from Christakis, Collins, Eagan, Caldwell, Balachandran and Cohen.

Chairman Castellana introduced Chief of Staff Leanne Wirkkula to discuss the University’s Strategic Planning Process. The President provided background detail, including the groundwork established around the four stakes which have driven
transparency in hiring, investment and shared governing strategies. Leanne reported that the executive committee has been working diligently on the process. In addition, that a steering committee along with subcommittees will be established to provide a comprehensive framework for the plan. Leanne emphasized that multiple listening sessions will be conducted to engage all campus constituents along with community stakeholders. The timeframe targeted for completion is 2016. Conversation between Castellana, Caldwell, Eagan, Jones, Collins, and Janiszewski followed.

Harvey Charles, Vice Provost and Dean for the Center for International Education and Global Strategy was then introduced by the Chairman. Harvey provided an overview of international education and a shift in demographics with regard to student population and emphasized the international student population as a critical component of UA’s enrollment strategy. Conversation ensued (Caldwell, Jones).

William Hedberg, Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs was introduced and reviewed the University’s report on Part-time, Contingent Faculty and Professional Staff. Statistics on salary, benefits and diversity were shared in relation to national averages. Also, the impact that the academic expansion will have on the distribution of these type of faculty and staff was discussed. Conversation and comments from Fallon, Castellana, Balachandran, JeanPierre, Collins, Caldwell, and Janiszewski.

Finally, Chairman Castellana introduced the first of two naming resolutions from University Development. Motion carried by Cohen and seconded by both Eagan and JeanPierre. Sanai provided background on a gift from Dr. Peter Brusoe ’03, ’04 who pledged $10,000 in support of the Athletics Academic Support Center. After reading the resolution, the Council unanimously voted to name the tutor room in the Center in honor of the Brusoe/Reyers family.

The second resolution, motion carried by Eagan and seconded by Balachandran, was then read by Sanai. The sisters of Psi Gamma Alumnae Association pledged $25,000 in support of the University Libraries. The Council again unanimously voted in favor of naming a group study room in the main uptown library in honor of the Psi Gamma Alumnae Association, Inc.

With no additional business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the session was approved 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Hyde
Liaison to the University Council