A regular meeting of the University Council was held on February 19, 2016, at the SUNY Global Center in New York. Council members present included: Robert Balachandran; Nancy Burton; Patricia Caldwell (Secretary); John Fallon; Abner JeanPierre; and Marc Cohen (Elected Student). Council Members joining via teleconference: Michael Castellana, Chair; John Clancy; Mark Eagan; James Jackson; and Caitlin Janiszewski (Graduate Student Representative). Also present were President Robert Jones; Chief of Staff Leanne Wirkkula; Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Jim Stellar; Vice Presidents Joseph Brennan, Fardin Sanai, Simeon Ananou, James Van Voorst; John Reilly, Counsel’s Office; Chief Frank Wiley and Inspector Aran Mull, University Police; and Sheila Seery, Government and Community Relations (telephone).

After a roll call of attendees via teleconference, Mr. Hyde confirmed that the membership physically present constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. The Chair requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (Cohen/JeanPierre), which passed unanimously. Chairman Castellana then turned the floor over to President Jones.

In the President’s report, Robert Jones touched upon the University’s commitment to increasing both enrollment and rate of retention through enhancing the undergraduate experience. He then introduced Simeon Ananou, recently hired as the Vice President for Information Technology Services and CIO. He then updated the Council on the expansion of the Government and Community Relations Office through the addition of two staff positions: Director of Government Relations, State Relations and Director of Community Relations) which are key to drive the portfolio and agenda. President Jones spoke briefly on the University’s legislative agenda and budget priorities including the need to extend SUNY 2020 which sunsets in 2016-17; and budgetary support needed to renovate the future home of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (formerly Schuyler) which will have a transformative impact upon the community by enhancing that corridor.

He then discussed the Governor’s announcement of providing the University with 12 acres on the Harriman Campus to house the ETEC facility which will include the new College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. In addition, he mentioned Laura Schweitzer’s work on re-thinking the East Campus, including a re-branding strategy; working to synergize relationships including public and private partnerships, collaboration and affiliation with Wadsworth Laboratories, and biomedical initiatives.

Commentary about branding initiatives ensued from Chairman Castellana. The Chairman then opened the floor to questions.
Balachandran inquired about the status of the affiliation with Albany Law School to which the President discussed the next steps to formalize the affiliation agreement. Conversation then ensued: JeanPierre, Stellar, Caldwell. President Jones then summarized the results of the URI award and CREDC’s task of determining which projects from the proposal would have the greatest impact if implemented. The Chairman added that the Governor’s commitment to urban renewal and economic development, awareness of the needs of upstate, may allude to the opportunity to secure additional funding to address strategic initiatives to benefit the region.

With no further discussion, Chairman Castellana sought a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with the NYS Open Meetings Law which permits a public body to conduct an executive session for the purpose of discussing information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which, if disclosed, would imperil effective law enforcement. More specifically, for the purpose of discussing the investigation or criminal prosecution in relation to the alleged assault on a CDTA bus on the UAlbany Campus on January 30, 2016.

Pat Caldwell – Motion
Abner JeanPierre and Robert Balachandran --Second

Membership voted unanimously to enter executive session at 2:45 p.m.

At approximately 3:15 p.m. a motion was made (Burton) to reconvene the public session of the meeting; Balachandran (Second).

After a unanimous vote, the Chairman reconvened the public session of the meeting.

Chairman Castellana introduced James Van Voorst, Vice President for Finance and Administration. Jim provided a brief introduction of the University’s Emergency Preparedness Management plan and then introduced Deputy Chief of Police, Aran Mull.

Mull provided an overview of why the University has instituted a plan, training, National Incident Management System (NIMS), the importance of establishing Incident Command; and conducting drills to help identify areas needing improvement.

Conversation regarding the initiation of incident command and flow of communication from the ICS team to the community and vice versa ensued (Burton, Jones).

Mull then introduced the Chief of Police, Frank Wiley. The Chief’s discussion focused upon University Police’s active shooter response training. UPD’s training and response protocol has been in place for 14 years. They conduct training in University spaces and work with campus partners. Though such scenarios are statistically unlikely, UPD’s focus is upon education, prevention and mitigation. They work collaboratively with partners including the State Police, Homeland Security, and local law enforcement agencies.
Next, Chairman Castellana introduced Sheila Seery, Associate Vice President for Government and Community Relations who provided a brief overview of the University’s legislative agenda. She discussed at length the University’s future home of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (former Schuyler building), its renovation costs and the press conference scheduled to address the need in this budget cycle. The undertaking is a transformative element to the educational corridor with economic impact and benefits to both neighbors and the region. Also of note was the need for the Governor to add the University’s Center of Excellence back into the budget, the extension of SUNY 2020 and addressing the critical maintenance needs of our existing facilities.

Chairman Castellana strongly encouraged the Council membership to manage the messaging within their own network to push forward the agenda.

With no further discussion, the Chairman then introduced Jim Stellar, Senior. Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

Stellar provided an update on the results of the SUNY Performance Fund awards. He indicated that the University received $1.5 million which was being used to enhance the student experience, thus increasing retention. This includes making the undergraduate experience more personal, implementation of an early warning system to identify students whose academic standing is in jeopardy, emphasis on critical writing required classes. Data on freshmen/sophomore from these initiatives should be available in fall 2016. He reiterated the President’s charge to grow enrollment to 20,000. Stellar discussed the work of an enrollment task force which is targeting multiple avenues (domestic, graduate, international) to realize this goal. Conversation ensued (Caldwell, Jones) regarding visibility of the University through successes of the athletic programs and impact on applicants.

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

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Hyde
Liaison to the University Council