Governance

The State University of New York (SUNY) is a post secondary and graduate educational system created under, and governed by, Article 8 of the New York State Education Law. Section 351 of the Education Law sets forth the mission statement of the State University of New York system:

...to provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional, and vocational post secondary programs including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary and customary. These services and activities shall be offered through geographically distributed comprehensive system of diverse campuses which shall have differentiated and designated missions designed to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students and to address local, regional and state needs and goals ...

In keeping with its statutory mission statement, SUNY is comprised of 64 geographically dispersed campuses and is divided into four categories of educational mission: state operated campuses, statutory colleges (colleges operated by independent institutions on behalf of the State), community colleges and health centers. Within the System, there are ten (10) University Centers and Doctoral Degree granting institutions (including the Health Science Centers, the College of Optometry and the College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry), thirteen (13) University Colleges, eight (8) Technology Colleges and thirty (30) Community Colleges. The System enrolls approximately 413,000 students per year; the students come predominately from the State’s 62 counties, but all other 49 states of the Union are also represented in the student population, as well as 4 US Territories and 171 foreign countries.

The University at Albany enrolls about 12,000 undergraduate students per year, and nearly 5,400 graduate students. Nine colleges and schools offer 54 bachelor’s degrees, 83 master’s degrees and 39 doctoral programs. Students also may enroll in more than 30 accelerated bachelor’s/master’s programs and joint degree programs with such institutions as Albany Medical College, Albany Law School, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Boston University’s Goldman School of Dental Medicine.

Board of Trustees

Pursuant to Article 8 of the Education Law, the System is governed by a 15 member board of trustees 1414 of whom are appointed by the Governor of the State with consent by the State Senate. The President of the Student Assembly serves ex officio, as the student trustee. Except for the student trustee, the trustees serve staggered seven year terms.

The Board is generally responsible for the over-all central administration, supervision and coordination of the state operated institutions and the general supervision and
coordination of the statutory and contract colleges in the state university. (See Education Law Section 355 (1) (a)). The specifically enumerated powers of the Board, which are set forth in sections 354 and 355 of the Education Law, include the following:

- Appoint its own officers, the chancellor and the System Administration senior staff
- Appoint the president of each state-operated institution, and approve the appointment of community college presidents by their respective boards
- Grant all degrees, diplomas and certificates for the completion of studies at any state campus, including honorary degrees
- Regulate the admission of students
- Regulate tuition, fees, charges, curricula and all other matters pertaining to the operation and administration of each state operated campus
- Once every four years formulate a long range plan for the state university as a system or revise the current plan, and make recommendations to the board of regents and the governor for the organization, development, coordination, and expansion of the University as a system

System Administration

SUNY’s administrative offices, System Administration, are located at SUNY Plaza in Albany. System Administration is responsible for SUNY’s—administration and supervision for coordination of SUNY’s Administration includes the following offices: Chancellor, Vice Chancellor & Chief of Staff, Vice Chancellor & Secretary to the University, Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, Vice Chancellor for Business and Industry Relations, Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment and University Life, and Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for University Relations.

General Counsel

General Counsel is the legal adviser to the SUNY and its state-operated campuses as provided in Article IV., Title C. of the Policies of the Board of Trustees. The General Counsel is appointed by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the Chancellor, and s/he sits at the pleasure of the Board. General Counsel’s main office is located in the System Administration offices. However, campus-based offices operate on the campuses of the University at Albany, Binghamton University, the University of Buffalo, Stony Brook University and the Health Science Centers at Stony Brook, Syracuse and Brooklyn to serve the needs of those campuses.

The campus-based office of the General Counsel at the University at Albany (“Counsel’s Office”) was established in November 1997 to provide the campus, its administrators, faculty and staff with timely, cost-effective, high-quality legal services on all matters affecting the management and operation of the institution. It is intended to be a resource for informed decision-making and creative problem-solving to facilitate fulfillment of the University’s educational mission. It represents the University and its employees in
administrative hearings, monitors and responds to ongoing litigation, reviews and drafts contracts, leases and other legal documents and offers on-going training and guidance to the University community to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and to minimize the legal risks associated with the conduct of the University’s business. Finally, Counsel’s Office plays a critical, though not expressly assigned, role in furtherance of virtually every initiative articulated in the University’s strategic plan. The office is staffed by two full time attorneys, one full time paralegal, and one full time secretary.

**University Faculty Senate**

The Policies of the Board of Trustees also establishes a University Faculty Senate of the State University of New York. The University Faculty Senate is “the official agency through which the University Faculty engages in the governance of the University.” (Article VII, Title A, Section 2). The Senate’s focus is with the “effective educational policies and other professional matters within the University.” (Article VII, Title A, Section 2).

The Senate is comprised of the Chancellor of the University, two University representatives having University-wide responsibilities, and representatives from each State-operated unit and contract colleges. Each unit has one representative plus additional representatives in numbers calculated per a formula set forth in The Policies of the Board. (See Article VII, Title B, Section 1(b)). The University representatives are selected by the Chancellor and serve at the Chancellor’s pleasure. The college representatives serve a three year term. The Faculty Senate meets at least twice per year.

**Councils**

A Council operates on each State operated campus in accordance with the mandates of the Education Law Section 356 and the Policies of the Board of Trustees. The individual Councils are responsible for local supervision of operations and affairs at each of their respective institutions, subject to the general management, supervision and control of and in accordance with the rules established by the Board of Trustees.

Section 356 of the Education Law enumerates the following eleven (11) specific powers of the Councils:

1. Recommend to the Board of Trustees an appointment for the President of the Campus;

2. Review all major plans of the President for the more effective operation of the Campus and make recommendations on such plans. (While defined by the Board of Trustees, “major plans” typically include plans for the appraisal or improvement of the faculty and personnel, expansion or restriction of student admissions, appraisal or improvement of academic programs and standards for earning degrees, and expansion of institutional plants and appraisal or improvement of student activities and housing);
3. Promulgate regulations governing the care, custody, management of lands, grounds, buildings and equipment;

4. Review proposed budget requests of the President and recommend a budget to the Board of Trustees;

5. Foster the development of advisory citizens committees to render such assistance as the Council may request and to appoint such members;

6. Name buildings and grounds;

7. Make regulations governing the conduct and behavior of our students;

8. Prescribe for and exercise supervision over student housing and safety;

9. Make an annual report to the Board of Trustees on or before September 1 of each year, and report to the Board from time to time on matters it believes requires their attention;

10. Perform such other duties as authorized or required by the Board of Trustees by general rules or special directives; and

11. Make and amend regulations pertaining to the affairs of the Campus, not inconsistent with law and regulation or the Policies of the Board of Trustees, as may be necessary to carry out the foregoing powers effectively.

Each Council has ten (10) members, nine (9) of whom are appointed by the Governor, including the chair as designated by the Governor, and one of whom shall be elected by and from among the students of the institution. Five (5) members constitute a quorum. The members sit uncompensated, although reasonable travel is reimbursable. Terms are for seven (7) years, although the student sits for one (1) year. Meetings are held at least four (4) times per year, and the time frame for notice of agenda information and resolution drafts are strictly governed by statute, and all such documents are public records.

**University Senate, University at Albany**

Per Article X of the Policies of the Board of Trustees, the Faculty of each campus is organized into a voting entity, with the Chancellor and the President of each campus as part of the faculty. The Policies require the faculty to draft by-laws for its governance on the campus. As specifically set forth in the Faculty Bylaws of the faculty at the University at Albany, the Faculty is responsible for the development of education programs and for the conduct of the University’s instructional, research, and service
programs, subject to the provisions of the NYS Education Law and the Policies. However, at the University at Albany, the Faculty has delegated these responsibilities to the University Senate to carry out on behalf of the Faculty, although retaining the responsibility of dealing with academic standards. (See Article I, Section 3.2, and Article II of the Faculty Bylaws).

The Senate is governed by a Charter, and it is the principal policy-forming body at the University. Eight (8) senators are elected at large from eligible Voting Faculty of the Senate; twenty-six (26) senators are elected by the schools and colleges from the eligible Voting Faculty; these elected senators serve three (3) year terms, with one third being elected each year. In addition, ten (10) are appointed jointly by the President and the incoming chair-elect of the senate from the Voting Faculty; the appointees serve one (1) year terms, and may be re-appointed. Fourteen (14) undergraduate students are also elected annually through the election mechanism of the Student Association. One (1) graduate student is elected each year by the separate schools or colleges on a rotating basis in alphabetical order. The ex-officio voting members of the Senate are as follows: the President or his/her designee; the Vice President for Academic Affairs; the Vice President for Research and Graduate Education; the Vice President for Student Affairs; the immediate past Chair; the University Senators to the Faculty Senate of the State University of New York; the dean elected by the deans of the schools and colleges, and the President of the Student Association.

For efficiency in conducting its business, the Senate currently utilizes eleven (11) Councils which specialize in a certain area of responsibility as delegated to the Senate. Each Council has committees under it to further enhance its ability to carry out the duties assigned to each Council. Attached is a list of the Councils and their Committees with a brief description of each.

The Senate year runs from July 1 to June 30. It meets once per month during the academic year, and may meet in the summer and by special meetings called by the Chair, the Executive Committee or by petition of any five (5) senators. The Senate reports annually to the faculty as a whole.

**Governing Statutes, Regulations and Policies:**

Education Law, Article 8
8 NYCRR Part 300
State University of New York Policies of the Board of Trustees
University at Albany Faculty Bylaws
University at Albany Senate Charter