

## **SUNY University Faculty Senate Report Fall Plenary Meeting at SUNY Cortland, October 26-27, 2007.**

### **President's Report.**

UFS President Carl Wiezalis submitted an extensive written report in advance of the meeting. He discussed the numerous activities he has been involved in on behalf of the senate since the last meeting in spring 2007. Highlights include

- Interview and evaluation of John Clark as candidate for Acting Chancellor
- A meeting with BOT chair elect Hayden
- Work with UFS Vice President Goodman and Past President Hildreth together with SUNY Provost Rita Palm's office to provide input for the Governor's Higher Education Commission
- Attending two national conferences related to K – 16 issues

Wiezalis reported favorably on Chancellor Clark's efforts to increase faculty engagement in shared governance, citing as examples the engagement of UAlbany governance in the recommendation for a new Acting President for UAlbany, the chancellor's insistence on faculty engagement in the search for a president for SUNYIT, and his efforts to resolve the long standing differences between Alfred University and Alfred Ceramics. Chancellor Clark and Carl Wiezalis will draft a "Best Practices Position Statement" on the process for selecting interim leadership for SUNY campuses.

### **Opening Remarks.**

SUNY Cortland President Erik Bitterbaum welcomed the senators and introduced **NYS Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton**. Ms Lifton gave an overview of what she perceives as a major crisis in the state and in the country, as evidenced by the war in Iraq, global warming, the decline of democratic practices, the failure of the federal government to act when New Orleans was hit by Katrina, and the remoteness of the elite from everyday problems. She questioned whether there still is a government of the people for the people. As for New York, the \$4b deficit is not being addressed by Gov. Spitzer. She does not see how the budget can work. Ms Lifton urged that academia get involved; professors must learn about the issues and contribute their powerful voice to reverse the trend that has turned citizens into consumers.

### **VSA (Voluntary System of Accountability)**

Muriel Howard, President of Buffalo State College, presented an overview of VSA. This nationwide initiative coordinated by AASCU and NASULGC represents a response to the Spelling Commission Report. Accrediting agencies are requesting that colleges provide a system of accountability.

VSA has the following goals:

- Redefine what is important when choosing a college
- Make it easy to find information on colleges and standardize its presentation
- Add process and outcome measures to what is reported

This later component is the most controversial one. Participating colleges will be required to administer one of three tests (CAAP, CLA, or MAPP) every three years. They will initially have three years time to try out which test works best for them. Assessment will be based on a comparison of average institutional freshmen scores and average senior scores in the areas of *Critical Thinking* and *Written Communication*. VSA claims that not measuring and reporting learning outcomes is a failure of our duty of public accountability. A kick-off is planned for November 7, 2007. It will include several SUNY schools, including Buffalo State, Fredonia and UAlbany.

Strong objections were raised in the ensuing discussion to the proposed measuring of learning outcomes. The UFS has been against this form of value-added assessment, SUNY already has an assessment process, VSA focuses on consumers.

Patricia Francis, SUNY Assistant Provost for University Assessment and Academic Initiatives, reported on the implications of VSA for SUNY. Provost Palm does not support a SUNY wide requirement to participate in VSA. Individual campuses may choose to participate, and IRA (Institutional Research and Analysis) will provide assistance. At this time eight SUNY campuses are participating. SUNY will continue assessment of the major without any significant changes. There should also be a single unified GenEd assessment. Senators from the participating SUNY campuses expressed surprise about hearing of their campuses' participation in VSA and reported (with one exception) that their campus governance has not been involved in such decisions. (See below for a resolution concerning this matter.)

### **Proposal for a Comprehensive SUNY Digital Library**

Carey Hatch, SUNY Assistant Provost for Library Services, spoke about this proposal. It will be an essential component to position SUNY as a world-class university system. The plan is to acquire access to digital resources through negotiations at the System level, thereby incurring significant savings and more stability in library budgets.

### **Service Learning**

Cortland President Bitterbaum, Professor Kendrick, Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, and James Heffernan, Executive Director of New York Campus Compact, discussed Service Learning projects at Cortland. Several Cortland students described their successful experiences. The key feature of such programs involves integrating service activities of students in the community with learning objectives that are part of regular courses. The panelists expressed hope that their programs will lead to implementation of similar activities across SUNY. More information can be found at [www.cortland.edu/civicengagement](http://www.cortland.edu/civicengagement).

### **New Vice Provost for Diversity and Educational Equity, System Administration.**

UFS President Wiezalis introduced Dr. Pedro Cabán, who has been appointed to this new position (an initiative of former Chancellor Ryan) after a nationwide search. SUNY received \$300,000 in funding from the state budget to create the Office of Diversity and Educational Equity. Dr. Cabán spoke about his background and his new responsibilities. He has extensive experience in academia, having taught at Fordham, Rutgers, and Cornell, and most recently having served as Professor and Director of the Latina/Latino Studies Program at the University of Illinois. He will be responsible for the Offices of Educational Opportunity Programs and SUNY Educational Opportunity Centers. He already started visiting SUNY campuses to assist them in developing and implementing diversity programs and curricula. He is charged to create a diverse leadership and to diminish inequity throughout SUNY. Of note for UAlbany is the fact that Dr. Cabán has been offered a tenured appointment in Albany's LACS department.

### **Sector Concerns**

- Transfer credits. There are indications that the report of the Governor's Higher Education Commission will ask for expanding and facilitating the transfer process. A system wide process for determining transfer credits could be imposed from outside. It is important for faculty on both sides to get involved to develop a manageable process.

- Participation in VSA without consultation with local governance bodies. As a follow up to this discussion Vice President Norman Goodman (Stony Brook) and Senator Ken O'Brien (Brockport) drafted a resolution that was discussed on the next day. (See below)

### **Friend of Senate Award for UUP President William Scheuerman**

After many years of service, Bill Scheuerman is stepping down from his position to pursue new challenges in labor relations at a more global level in Washington, D.C. He was presented with the UFS Friend of Senate Award at the dinner on Friday evening. In his keynote address, Scheuerman highlighted the successful collaboration of the senate and UUP over many years.

### **Report by Milton Johnson, President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges.**

The transfer process continues to be high on the agenda for community colleges. This issue has been lingering for a long time, and needs to be addressed.

Johnson also reported on the meeting of the SUNY BOT on the preceding day, Friday, October 26, 2007. The new trustees Hayden and McCall replaced outgoing trustees Santiago and DeRussi. Father John Cremins continues on the board. This was the first meeting chaired by Hayden. He is making quality and excellence his highest priority for SUNY. The search for a new chancellor will start as soon as possible.

### **Highlights of Committee Reports**

#### **Graduate Committee:**

- Research Road Show. The committee continues work on this program designed to provide effective guidance on ways to secure funding for research and other creative activities.
- The committee will examine examples of cooperation among SUNY units in research and creative activity.

#### **Governance Committee**

- Completed the UFS Campus Visitation Protocol to be used to help campuses resolve disputes between governance and administration. The final document was presented to the UFS for approval.
- Completed a bibliography on Faculty/Administration governance issues.
- Distributed a survey sent to CGLs to get information on issues related to faculty involvement in governance. The goal is to develop recommendations for campuses to improve effectiveness in recruiting faculty to work in governance.
- Working on updating the UFS Governance Handbook.

#### **Awards Committee**

- Publicize more effectively to CGLs the details of the application process to *Conversations in the Disciplines*. Seek funding increase from SUNY from \$ 30,000 to \$ 50,000.
- Provost Palm has approved the Committee's recommendation to change the interval between different Excellence Awards from 10 to 5 years.
- Promotions to Distinguished Teaching Professor (DTP). The committee is discussing some flexibility in the eligibility restrictions for faculty holding administrative positions. A resolution will be forthcoming, to be presented at the February plenary meeting in Albany. (Based on the ensuing discussion, one may expect a lively debate about this item in Albany.)
- Updated guidelines for DTP and DSP will go to campuses in October and will be valid for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

### **Undergraduate Committee**

- Completed a guidebook for faculty on Internships. It is available from the UFS office.
- Plans to review SUNY policies on credit/contact hours
- Planning for an Undergraduate Research Conference

### **Student Life Committee**

- Developing a “how to” guide for campuses to implement Service Learning
- Discussed recommendations of the Chancellor’s Critical Incident Task Force (available on UFS website). There should be a mental health counselor to student ratio of 1:1000. Current SUNY statewide ratio is about 1:1700.
- The committee will explore action items to enhance SUNY’s preparedness.

### **Operations Committee**

- Organized the *SUNY Sustainability Conference* scheduled for Nov. 12 – 14 in Saratoga Springs. The conference is supported by NYSERDA, SUNY and the UFS. It has attracted leaders from academia, industry and government, and it features Congressman Steven Israel as keynote speaker. There will be remarks by Senator Bruno, Chancellor Clark, SUNY BOT Chair Hayden, and First Lady Silda Wall Spitzer.
- Developed a Resolution in support of the Digital Library Proposal
- Finalizing the final report on *Longitudinal Study of Faculty Diversity*.

### **Resolutions and Legislation**

Three resolutions were passed unanimously on October 27, 2007.

- **Resolution** in Support of *Proposal for a Comprehensive SUNY Digital Library*
- **Resolution** on Endorsement of the University Faculty Senate Consult and Visitation Procedure
- **Resolution** on the State University and the “Voluntary” System of Accountability, to the effect that
  - a) The UFS strongly opposes any move to implement the Voluntary System of Assessment as a SUNY-wide requirement, and
  - b) The UFS urges prohibition of any additional campus involvement in the pilot process without explicit and meaningful consultation with local governance bodies.

### **Winter Plenary Meeting at UAlbany, January 31 – February 2, 2008**

**Reminder:** Check the University Faculty Senate Website at <http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/>

Respectfully submitted,

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