Minutes of the May 11, 2012, July 31, 2012, and September 12, 2012 meetings were approved.

Chair’s Report

The membership of UPPC subcommittees RAPC and UFC have been approved by GOV. The President’s office will designate the undergraduate student representative. Susanna Fessler will serve as chair if there are no other applicants.

Dr. Fessler reported that the SUNY2020 plan was presented to the Governor recently. She characterized the presentation as promising, although we are still waiting for the governor to sign.

The Writing program submission has gone to UPPC and UAC. We will begin to review it at this meeting, and continue more in-depth at the next meeting.

Academic Calendar

Note: UPPC also had, for reference, the document prepared last year about the academic calendar. This is available online at http://www.albany.edu/academics/files/final_instructional_year_calendar_report_9-10-12.pdf

The Registrar provided a recap of scheduling guidelines looking back to 1990-91, which was the most recent time that the Senate has reviewed them. Her goal is to create scheduling guidelines that are as flexible as possible moving forward.

She noted that Federal, State and SUNY policies must be adhered to. Plus, we have to include new factors like intersession shutdown. We are trying to build the guidelines to allow us to accommodate any scenario that may come up in the future.

The Registrar noted that the academic calendar has to incorporate graduate and undergraduate requirements. A suggestion was made regarding making suspension hours more flexible if there are future changes. A question was raised about suggested minimum vs. required minimum class meetings.

Breaking over St. Patrick’s Day has been an ongoing controversy. In order to close the dorms, we have to be off for an entire week. Current public opinion of the University is that we are still closely associated with the Kegs & Eggs incident of two years ago. A discussion was held
around how this will play out in the long term. A council member suggested we address behavioral issues and not cave to press and minority of students who cause problems.

Final approval of the academic calendar is made at the president and provost’s levels. A comment was made that UPPC is independent, and although we cannot force a guideline change, the goal is to create a framework that allows enough flexibility to make changes over time. The Registrar will ask other campuses if they schedule breaks around St. Patrick’s Day. The Registrar agreed that two years of calendars would be acceptable for planning purposes, although the other university centers plan 5 years in advance. Having a calendar sooner rather than later is better.

A suggestion was also made that we look at policies the schools may have in place for events on Reading Day. We may want to consider two reading days in the future. The Registrar noted that there was disagreement about what events could or should not be held on reading day. Some students do not like events to be scheduled on Reading Day because they want to use that time to prepare for examinations.

Further scheduling discussion raised a question as to why we observe Labor Day. Mr. Beditz responded that there would be a large absenteeism problem and resulting labor cost if we remain open, not to mention the ensuing labor relations fallout. It could potentially be a class day with an administrative holiday, but that would still have an absentee problem.

A question was raised about the spring start day. In the spring semester, starting before Martin Luther King Day impacts transfers and orientation schedules significantly. Financial constraints seem to be a big factor. If we moved the start date back a week, there would be a major impact to food service shutdown savings.

First Year Writing Program Proposal

Chair Fessler expressed a concern that classes will have 24-25 students, which works out to seventy five students per instructor per semester. Dean Wulfert pointed out that these are instructors whose only obligation is this program, and will carry a 3/4 load. They are expected to provide additional support to students who are struggling. She cautioned the council not to think of instructors as traditional faculty as they have no research or service requirements. A realistic assumption is that the instructors will carry a 3/3 load. Adjunct lines will not have benefit implications but there are campus resource implications – space, computers, etc. Those costs will run through ITLAL. The timeline for director hire is Spring 2013. Members of the council wondered how feasible this is, and what kind of shift this will cause in student registration. This will impact the English department as GA’s teach 100 level writing courses that will see declining enrollments as a result of the writing program courses.

A Question was raised regarding international students and IELP communication difficulties. The Provost clarified that while matriculated international students go into regular classes, IELP students are not UAlbany students. It is a precursor program. The Writing Center has a tutor dedicated to ESL instruction. Provost Phillips added that she hopes that the writing instructors are prepared to deal with ESL issues.
Provost’s Report

A collaboration between UAlbany, Albany Med and RPI has been formed with funding from the regional economic development corporation. This will provide close to $1m in funding to create synergies across the area.

SUNY 2020 distribution of faculty hires is unchanged. The next step is approval, after which we get to change our tuition and billing, putting us on par with other university centers.

The Provost recapped the new SUNY rational budget program, and noted that there will be competitive funding available as part of the program, but the elements have not been revealed yet.

A question was asked about how we make out with this model. Provost Phillips responded that it is still being worked out. A question was posed regarding where CNSE fits into the research distribution and what does this mean for us if only RF dollars are counted and not state, flow through or Wadsworth. CNSE is treated as a separate entity. Because our research profile is heavy on service and training and not NSF and NIH funding, it may have negative implications for the campus.

Enrollment is the area where we will be heavily impacted in the model because we do not have high cost programs such as Engineering or Medicine. However, the Chancellor is intent on basing a portion of each campus’s budget on performance, with funding subject to evidence of gain on selected metrics (which are under discussion and will include retention and graduation rates, sustainability, etc.)

A question was posed regarding the Schuyler High School purchase from the city of Albany. The Provost reported that the resolution was passed by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Meeting adjourned at 10:59am

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy Stern