UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL
2009-10 CHAIR: JOHN DELANO

MARCH 26, 2010
MEETING MINUTES


GUESTS:  Robert Gibson, Registrar

MINUTES: Minutes of March 12, 2010 approved with revisions

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT
No report was given

CHAIR’S REPORT
No report was given

Discussion of proposed 2011-2012 academic calendar
Registrar Robert Gibson presented the proposed calendar for the 2011-2012 academic year. Dr. Delano posed a question about the Fall 2011 calendar as to whether there has been any concern from Jewish students about not having insufficient travel between 2:35pm dismissal to sundown. Mr. Gibson reported that there have been a small number concerns expressed over the years. Dr. Range asked if the classes that meet 12 times in Fall 2011 fulfill the State Ed department requirements. Mr. Gibson replied that the numbers are not mandated, and are based on the Carnegie unit definition, including exam time and out of class assignments. Graduate level classes assume that this is made up by effort outside of the official class times. Dr. Delano commented that he has found it awkward that December Commencement is scheduled before classes end, which is also true in 2011. He asked if there is any way that fall commencement could occur on the 15th or 22nd. Mr. Gibson noted that there is nothing in the policy regarding winter commencement dates. Historically, it has been everyone’s predisposition to hold commencement earlier. Mr. Gibson could make recommendation to Commencement Committee. Dr. Delano commented that another constraint is that students need to vacate dormitories at the end of final exams, raising December 11th as a possibility. Mr. Gibson responded that it would be appropriate to get feedback from involved students.

Mr. Ferlo asked whether there have been problems with students participating who did not in fact graduate. 5-8% of graduate participants do not actually complete their coursework. Mr. Gibson would be amenable to forwarding both December 4th and 11th to the commencement committee for their
consideration. Provost Phillips added that it would be a good idea to combine both commencement committees for this consideration. Dr. Wagner concluded the discussion with a suggestion that the commencement date that maximizes student participation would be the best choice.

The Council moved to approve the calendar to the Provost, unanimously approved.

**Recommendation from General Education Task Force to continue existing UAlbany General Education requirements through 2010-2011 academic year**

Reported to SEC this previous Monday; recommending that for 2010-2011 that we continue with requirements as they currently exist but continue looking into potential future alterations. Dr. Range commented that UAC is trying to put this in the form of a bill; they may or may not recommend some specific language to go in the Bulletin. No changes to what we have right now.

**Update on UAlbany Strategic Planning and the SUNY-wide plan**

Provost Phillips handed out materials regarding the SUNY wide and UA strategic plans detailing the design principles, timeline goals and outcomes of the process. She provided a handout to the council that highlighted progress to date on the UA plan. Documentation will be posted after April 9th, followed by Town Hall meetings between April 15-30. Provost Phillips invited all to attend the Town Hall meetings.

The Chancellor’s plan for SUNY will be out April 12th. Provost Phillips has seen previews of the SUNY plan and reported that we are in sync with the system wide strategic plan.

The Council offered comments regarding Provost Phillips’ presentation. Dr. Lahiri commented that there was no gender, race, etc. diversity statement in the goals; Dr. Range responded that when various groups reported on this, the picture that emerged that there is a consensus that the University is very strong on the diversity front, which may be why it didn’t emerge as a goal, but it is certainly an important value. Dr. Lahiri further commented that he found that the plan was not forward looking; the issue that we have to focus our resources on where jobs are being created in the future; communication, etc., finding that for him the plan misses the point that we are here to serve the students for the future. Dr. Wagner (as a member of the Graduate Education Committee) said that he has been considering that the objectives don’t capture where the graduate education group is now, and that he will be bringing it up at next meeting. Dr. Delano, speaking as a member of the Undergraduate
Experience Committee, asserted that looking to the future is very much on that group’s radar screen. Mr. Beditz brought up infrastructure; we are spending a lot of time trying to look over the horizon regarding modes of instruction, and we need to focus on how position ourselves to deliver that instruction in the right way. Dr. Range, a member of the Undergraduate Committee, spoke of making some consideration of future students dealing with writing, etc. He will take the message back to the committee and requested that Dr. Lahiri provide statement to take to them.

Budget update and planning (Provost Susan Phillips)

Provost Phillips reported that the SUNY Empowerment and Innovation Act has been receiving different kinds of receptions in the NYS Assembly and Senate. The Chancellor has committed to move forward with all of the research centers on board. The prevailing view is that the provisions that are the most influential on our bottom line budget are not going to happen in time to make much of a difference.

State budget cuts to SUNY are $137m; this would land on our doorstep in an $8-9m cut effective in July. This is daunting, but the bigger worry is next year; conservative deficit projections are in the $15 billion neighborhood. Additionally, the final withdrawal of federal recovery money is a concern. That money has been heavily used by K-12, but it has buffered them from the impact. We can anticipate that they will make a much heavier draw on state coffers as this funding stream dissipates.

The next set of reductions should be strategic rather than opportunistic; the strategic planning process will assist with developing a rational plan. President Philip is putting together a 3rd Budget Advisory Group (BAG), intended to look more specifically at what our campus profile will look like under this new scenario – looking at this as a two year effort. The BAG will include membership of UPPC; composition of the group is still under consideration. Once named, the work of the committee is slated to begin their work the first week of May and extend through mid June. The next set of actions will include reductions and retrenchments. We can’t absorb the cuts without reductions, which will be selective and strategic. There is an important connection between enrollment and resources; we need to figure out how to balance them to preserve the institution – how efficiently can we serve the enrollments that we have.

UAC proposal to Remove the Requirement for a Minor

Dr. Delano introduced a proposal for an alternate to the existing minor which would offer students another way of satisfying the current requirement. He cited this as an important proposal; UAC did not provide info about what other SUNY campuses have done. In the interim, Dr. Delano has found that
other centers do not require minors. In lieu of a minor, Binghamton requires 10 courses at or above 300 or that have a prerequisite. Buffalo has no university policy concerning upper level requirements. Stony Brook requires 13 courses at upper level or with a prerequisite in order to satisfy an alternate to a minor. The concept under consideration at UA is whether 24 credits total at 300 level or above (in which some of those 300 level credits could be counted in the major) makes sense for us. Dr. Wagner expressed concern that this suggests deterioration of our standards, but this proposal makes sense in that it supports more advanced coursework. Dr. Murakami voiced her approval of the proposal as it supports student flexibility and competitiveness. If 40% are transfer students, this would help with graduation rates. Dr. Johnson echoed his support of increasing the flexibility in offerings, and urged focus on core college goals. Dr. Range saw this as an interesting move to offer more flexibility, especially for transfers, and was surprised to see what Binghamton and Stony Brook require. Dr. Range encouraged everyone to take this back to their departments for feedback. The proposal will be discussed at the April 12th Senate meeting.

Statement from Senate Chair Range in response to the CNSE statement presented at the March 12th meeting regarding his request for budgetary information (State funds) for CNSE.

Dr. Range, expressing his point of view regarding the CNSE statement read at the March 12 meeting issued the following statement and asked that it be read into the minutes:

3/26/2010

Statement by Senate Chair Range in reference and in response to the statement by CNSE Faculty Council Chair Groves entered into the UPPC Minutes of the March 12, 2010 meeting.

The term "fiscal autonomy" was used several times in Professor Grove's statement. However, neither "fiscal autonomy" nor any equivalent term appears in the April 20, 2004 SUNY Board of Trustees Resolution. The relevant text reads: "Resolved that the State University of New York hereby establishes the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering as an academic unit within the University at Albany-SUNY headed by a Vice-President".

The December 16, 2004 MOU between Interim President Ryan and Vice President Kaloyeros uses the term "Budgetary Autonomy" in the heading for item III. However, the relevant subsection III. 1 does not establish "budgetary autonomy" or "fiscal autonomy" of CNSE separately from UAlbany. The actual text reads: "Establish the budget of CNSE as a separate and stand alone line item within the UAlbany campus budget that is not subject to oversight by the University Senate or Senate councils and committees." (Emphasis added)

This MOU, and in particular the quoted text, was never discussed or approved by the UAlbany Senate or by any of its councils or committees. Removal of UAlbany Senate oversight appears to be inconsistent with the Bylaws of UAlbany, Article 1.2.2.3: "2.2.3. The Faculty shall provide ongoing consultation on
in institution-wide budget or business initiatives that affect the teaching, research, or service programs of the University. Detailed annual reports shall be provided on actual budget expenditures."

The "fiscal autonomy" of CNSE from UAlbany was established by the November 18, 2008 SUNY BOT Resolution.

Dr. Eisenbraun stated that he reserved right to review these statements and take them back to the CNSE Faculty Council for review and correction, if so warranted. Dr. Johnson asked that as we (the council) have discussed issues of CNSE, where do we want clarification – where is this going to take us as a council and how does it help us move forward in light of the budget cuts. There is no right/wrong discussion, but he sees both perspectives, asking where do we go with this and how do we move forward effectively. Dr. Fossett concurred – we are facing significant problems regarding the long term future of the institution, and are the stakes in this debate commensurate with those problems that we need to address this as a council. Dean Bangert-Drowns requested clarification on why this is being read into the minutes, as he sees no large difference between fiscal vs. budgetary autonomy. Removal of the UA Senate oversight is an interpretive statement. He has no interest in an ongoing battle with CNSE; the statement was not voted on by UPPC; it represented a counterpoint, and he is not comfortable with that. Dr. Eisenbraun asked for clarity senate chair versus personal opinion.

Dr. Range introduced a motion:

"The UPPC moves that Chair Delano respectfully requests that the Council be provided with the total NYS allocation to UAlbany for the budget years 2001-02 through 2009-10 before its next meeting scheduled for April 9, 2010. The request should be submitted to President Philip for referral to the appropriate administrator."

Dr. Range spoke in favor of the motion as a natural sequel to request for budget information that the council had made last fall. Responses were received, and he noted that certain CNSE data was not contained therein that should be part of the overall record. This data should be public knowledge as it deals with state tax dollar allocations. We are going to have to take a hard look at how to make cuts, and knowing the history is very important. As stated in the UAlbany bylaws, UPPC should receive annual budget reports and statements on expenditures, and the council should insist that bylaws are observed. It is a matter of transparency that we do not have to go to CNSE; just asking for total state budget allocation over all these years. Dr. Lahiri seconded the motion. Dr. Delano suggested voting by secret ballot. Dr. Lahiri added that CNSE is a huge organization that has grown over the last 10 years – don’t we want to see how the financial resources have been distributed to this entity that started as
part of SUNY Albany. Dr. Delano asked Dr. Range about how article 3 section 1 of the 2004 MOU that reads: “establish the budget of CNSE as a separate and standalone budget item that is not subject to oversight by the University Senate…..” constrains us. Dr. Range noted that it appears to be inconsistent with existing bylaws, and sees the MOU as putting aside the bylaws. If this is being challenged, do we go to a lawyer. Dr. Johnson stated that given that the state is giving CNSE a separate allocation, the discussions of legal right/wrong is a fight over old information; does that help us move forward as we face these challenges. Submitting a request for data on the full allocation makes sense, but beyond that, how does that help us move forward in light of potential that allocations go directly from SUNY to CNSE. Not sure where we need to be spending our time and resources on this matter.

The motion was reread to the council; written ballots were submitted with a vote of 9 yeas, 6 neas and one abstention. The motion as read was passed. Dr. Delano will forward to the President with the introduction indicating the vote at 5:57pm.

Motion was made to adjourn at 6:00pm with Dr. Delano’s thanks to all in attendance with best wishes for spring break week.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Stern