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

DECEMBER 3, 2009
MEETING MINUTES


GUESTS: John Bartow, Vice Dean for Graduate Education
Rey Koslowski, Associate Professor, Political Science

MINUTES: Minutes of November 19, 2009 approved with one addition from Dr. Lahiri; two abstentions

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT

No report was given

CHAIR’S REPORT

No report was given

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Rockefeller College Master of Global Affairs (MGA) Degree Proposal

Dr. Koslowski returned to the council to provide background on the development of the MGA proposal, Levin Institute and relationship of the two. He also addressed modifications to the Letter of Intent and the budget.

In the February 2006 Rockefeller College compact, an undergraduate global affairs initiative was proposed, which resulted in funding for one line. The Levin Institute of International Relations & Commerce launched in 2003 as tribute to those who died in 9/11. SUNY hired Garrick Utley and Dennis Simon to head it up. The plan was to offer a MA in International relations beginning in 2005. The degree proposal failed at the SUNY Provost level. The Compact Plan proposed that we apply to become members of APSIA with a semester in New York City. The program was originally going to be based in Albany, but since we are now presented with an opportunity to take advantage of space in New York City, the program will be focused there, but we may still have MGA students in Albany.

The Letter of Intent has been modified; references to certificate programs have been removed, as have referrals to joint programs with any other schools other than Rockefeller or the School of Criminal
Justice because of recruitment and ‘systemness’ issues – to make it clearer. Additionally, references to the faculty survey have been eliminated; a Global & Homeland security concentration has been added to contribute to program distinctiveness. The University of Denver is the only APSIA with a similar program. 12 UAlbany faculty members are willing to go to New York City; 5 are willing to cover 6 core courses. The program still needs an international economist. Dr. Koslowski addressed terms of the enrollment projections and budget, (passed out enrollment projections and budget), explaining that additional concentrations in year 3-4 will aid in recruitment – international diplomacy and e-government. APSIA application in year is 2 anticipated. Part-time incoming enrollments will be held to 10 for the first 5 years. No increases or inflation are built into the projections. Dr. Koslowski passed out list of NY area APSIA membership, pointing out that our tuition compares very favorably against other APSIA members.

In regards to the program budget, they will be starting with Rockefeller faculty going to New York City, not overload teaching. They have to be replaced here, with a need for funding for each replacement. They would hire 1 FTE lecturer for each 4 course replacements. Adjuncts in New York City or faculty from other universities would fill out the complement. Dr. Delano sought additional context on why $120k would buy someone of the stature they’re looking for. Dr. Koslowski noted that there are a variety of options for lecturers. Some are coming from the practitioner community and have pensions; many are interested in teaching over salary. The United Nations has a mandatory retirement age of 60, so there is a large pool of experts looking for a part time gig.

Dr. Bangert-Drowns asked about the small salary figure for the Director. Dr. Koslowski would be the Director, and would only need summer salary. Dr. Koslowski explained that Levin institute design was top heavy whereas this approach funds faculty – we don’t need additional administrators. Dr. Lahiri asked what would happen if SUNY sells Levin Institute building? Dr. Koslowski acknowledged that such an eventuality may be on the table, but moving Mitch Leventhal there and renaming the building the SUNY Global Center indicates that they are keeping the facility. This all hinges on cooperation from SUNY Central. Dr. Fossett asked Dr. Koslowski about what he anticipated the equilibrium staffing to be between regular faculty and adjuncts. Dr. Koslowski responded that there are different modalities for this – 40% UAlbany in year 4-5; UAlbany as course buyout for the most part. Dr. Lenart asked if majors here interact with the New York City program. Dr. Koslowski responded that the SUNY Global Center loaded rooms that have video conferencing capability. Milne 215 is now equipped with technology, so they could team teach with groups on both sides, which is another opportunity to create ‘systemness’. Dr. DeBlasi stated that he saw the marketing advantage of the New York City base, and asked if in a worst case scenario we don’t get the space, do we then proceed with MGA from Albany? Dr. Koslowski replied that there was not sufficient internal support to proceed with just the Albany side
program. Dr. Lahiri inquired if many centers for global efforts are springing up. Dr. Koslowski’s idea is to fund schools with masters’ programs in development practice. (Emory and Columbia have these). He also expressed hopes for a concentration in International Development. If that takes off, they could apply for grant money to fund this; it a bit premature to pursue at this point.

Dr. Range commented that continued funding prospects for the Levin Institute are weak, and asked that if this facility is not available, how could this work in New York City. The proposal is based on the availability of the Global Center. The current program run at the SUNY Global is really good – combining that with a degree program would be strong. Dr. Range asked if the students would be supported; they would not. Dr. Range also asked how much Rockefeller can put in to subsidize the program – are they committing any additional resources. Dr. Koslowski replied that no funding for the MGA program would come from Rockefeller. The model is to be startup from SUNY Central and tuition sharing. With reasonable expectation for growth, we could raise sufficient tuition to cover program costs. The program has potential to mushroom. 15-20 students per class is ideal; over 25 is untenable. Dr. Delano expressed concern that multiple joint programs with other SUNY schools will dilute ‘UAlbanyness’. However, he saw the value in promoting ‘systemness’. How do we not diminish appeal from Downtown if you exclude that aspect. Dr. Koslowski responded that if we have support, it might help us at Central. This is a good policy in terms of recruitment; this program appeals to students looking for dual degrees in 4 years. Not a large population, but it provides an attractive option. It also engages other campuses. Dr. Delano asked why these references were deleted in the edited Letter of Intent. Dr. Koslowski responded that they had been removed in response to concerns expressed at the November 19th UPPC meeting. He went on to say that an administrative lift is necessary to run all these programs.

Dr. Bartow noted that Rockefeller has proposed a main program with corresponding dual programs – anybody looking at curricular issues wants definition and integration. Levels of complication are understandable – at the Letter of Intent stage it may not add to much, but at the second stage, you would need to specifically define the aspects of the joint programs. Dr. Bartow would recommend expanding the concept of the program to launch. Dr. Delano suggested adding a sentence about how this may lead to joint programs in the future. Dr. Koslowski agreed. Dr. Eisenbraun said that there appears to be some overlap between the MGA and existing Rockefeller programs. Dr. Koslowski acknowledged that most of the overlap is with Political Science and International Relations, and we might lose some Political Science students to the MGA. Dean Bangert-Drowns asked if Columbia is our major competition; no, the main competition would come from other state schools. We are a good alternative to other state institutions which include the University of Texas at Austin, Penn State, Rutgers, and the University of Maryland. New York State residents who have the financial resources
for a Columbia degree probably will go there. We can’t compete with Columbia’s offerings, and won’t aspire to. New York University and The New School have relatively new programs in their schools of continuing education, and not a lot of core faculty – again, an opportunity for us. The UAlbany MGA program would likely draw applications from international students and returning Peace Corps members.

With no additional questions, Dr. Delano thanked Dr. Koslowski for his presentation. Dr. Delano reminded council of its charge; we are instructed to examine the Letter of Intent as we have done. Dr. Bartow commented that if the council believes there is a good basis for this idea and the proposal is complete, that the council should indicate their support with a vote and relay that to the Provost. The Provost would then take the Letter of Intent to SUNY system administration for their consideration. Graduate program development is a two phase process. SUNY responds back; if they agree with concept, then a more complete development proposal is pursued. Ultimately, Provost Phillips wants to see whether the program is compatible with mission and resources. Resource implications remain to be developed, so it is ok to say so – by endorsing it, we’re not committing any money and questions can’t be answered until we push it forward. Dr. Range commented that he thinks it is great that a proposal comes forward with costs associated, and that they’re not asking UPPC for the funding. We should make a recommendation that the concept fits in well with mission of UAlbany and Rockefeller College. However, as the proposal is written, we want to make clear that financing is not responsibility of UAlbany, and that resources are sought from SUNY central.

Dr. Delano asked the council if there is any doubt that this is concordant with Rockefeller or UAlbany missions. The council agreed that it fits well. Dean Bangert-Drowns asked if the council can give it a ringing endorsement. Dr. Lahiri added that this is coming from great people in the field, and Rockefeller has demonstrated that there would be a market in New York City, making the MGA an attractive program. Dr. Delano endorsed the proposal quality, noting that everyone was clear that resources come from SUNY Central and tuition, and are not provided by UAlbany. Dr. DeBlasi commented that the startup gap is all in year 1 if enrollment doubles in year 2. Dr. Range noted that there is no figure attached to cost of the physical location. Dr. DeBlasi affirmed that the proposal this proposal is right up mission, but wanted to know that as we make the transition to resource question, is this sustainable if the Levin Institute declines to participate. What is their level of commitment to the program – Dr. DeBlasi expressed concern that if that piece falls out, there’s no backup plan. Mr. Bessette noted that the proposal is based on it going forward if SUNY and Levin are on board. If both don’t happen, the proposal dies. Provost Phillips commented that what you learn as you go forward is that the funding package may evolve. What’s clear is that there are questions about the sustainable funding to support the program – it’s unknowable right now, as the funding remains to be determined. Dr. Fossett asked
that even if you get full funding up front from SUNY, what does this do to department finances. Presumably you’re buying out a course and replacing it with cash. This has the potential to go up and down in a given year. Still, taking 10 courses/year – are departments supposed to take the cash and hire an adjunct? Cash doesn’t necessarily hold us harmless. Provost Phillips responded that when a faculty member is bought out, there’s cash that comes back in and is used to fulfill the obligation. Typically, there is more funding coming in than you need to pay for adjunct. Dr. Wagner asked about who is teaching the courses that are bought out, and expressed concern that the substitute may not have reputation and qualifications of bought out professor. Does that affect quality of local programs? Dr. Fossett noted that this financing model may not allow us to hire a full FTE to cover those courses. Dean Bangert-Drowns responded that these may be questions to raise at the proposal level, and Dr. Range added that buyout and faculty replacement questions are ultimately decided at departmental level. Provost Phillips added that this particular program may provide adjuncts of a higher quality than standard, and it is appropriate for the Dean or Dept chair to address these issues. Dr. Wagner moved to express the council’s enthusiastic support for the Letter of Intent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bessette, and was approved unanimously by the council.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Middle States Self Study Chapters 2 and 3 – call for comments**

Dr. Fossett queried a point of information – how are we to understand the context in which this document is written? Is the intent to show Middle States how well run we are or is it something else – is there an element of salesmanship? Dr. Delano expressed concern that the tier 3 status of UAlbany was never mentioned in these chapters as something we really had to take seriously and address. Too many platitudes (excellent, great), and Tier 3 is neither. Provost Phillips commented that it is in the document somewhere. Dr. Delano felt that it was appropriate to address Tier 3 in the chapters reviewed by the council.

Dr. Range asked to revisit the budget data provided at the November 19th UPPC meeting since chapters 2 and 3 in the Middle States document deal with resources,. He called the council’s attention to Page 15, Chapter 2 of the self-study document. The chart showing state support does not match data provided by Ms. Bessette at the November 19th meeting. Dr. Range asked where other state appropriations figure in to the budget. He also referenced the November 23rd Presidential memo regarding budget cuts – there is a discrepancy in numbers between this and the Middle States document as well. Dr. Range requested data on how graduate student support has been altered in the last year since the mid year cuts. Mr. Beditz will ask Ms. Bessette to explain the discrepancies between the charts.
Ben Shaw commented that the recommendations seemed of two voices – some of the things we’re telling them seem odd. Dean Bangert-Drowns was on the Governance subcommittee; his understanding was that the charge was to be frank; the focus to be honest. However, the process may have biased us toward being more positive. Dr. Fossett approved of the forthright language in the report about the problems we’ve been having – management turnover, adjunct costs, no rainy day fund, etc. Provost Phillips added that the first chapter concludes with a statement that we took this as an opportunity to take a serious look at ourselves. She commented that the last time we went through a review process, the resulting report was more self boosting – this one is much more critical. Middle States is interested more in our evidence of continuous improvement than in how we are absolutely doing. The set of recommendations coming out of this process is our sense of what’s on our task list. The subcommittees weren’t asked to come up with solutions, but many did. Mr. Beditz noted that an initial meet & greet was held a couple of weeks ago, and a representative from Middle States was complimentary of the document.

Feedback is requested by December 7th. Dr. Delano asked that comments be submitted to him within next 24 hours, and he will forward compiled UPPC remarks to the Middle States Committee.

Motion was made to adjourn at 5:28pm with Dr. Delano’s thanks to all in attendance

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Stern