A regularly scheduled meeting of the University Council was held on December 8, 2017, at the University at Albany, University Hall, Room 306.

Council members present included: Michael Castellana, Chair; Robert Balachandran; Nancy Burton; Patricia Caldwell; James Clancy; Mark Eagan; John Fallon; James Jackson; Abner JeanPierre; James Mower (Faculty Representative); and Alondra Berroa (Elected Student).

Also present were President Havidán Rodrigúez; Provost and Senior Vice President James Stellar; Vice Presidents James Van Voorst; Simeon Ananou; Michael Christakis; Laura Schweitzer; and James Dias. In addition, Bruce Szelest, Chief of Staff; Mark Benson, Athletic Director; Sheila Seery & Jordan Carleo-Evangelist, Government & Community Relations; Paul Miller, Communications & Marketing; Larry Lichtenstein, Development; Alice Oldfather, President’s Office and Howard Architzel, SEFCU.

Mr. Hyde confirmed that the membership present constituted a quorum and Chairman Castellana called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The Chair requested a motion to approve the consent agenda items, Clancy moved the motion and Fallon seconded. With no discussion on the consent agenda items, the Chair introduced President Rodrigúez for his report.

The President provided the Council with a brief update on the status of his listening tour across campus and recurring themes that were present across the units visited. He reemphasized the five core priorities (Student Success; Research Excellence; Diversity & Inclusion; Globalization / Internationalization; and Public Engagement / Community Outreach) that will be central to the Strategic Plan. He introduced the President’s Council as an opportunity to expand communications and serve as a conduit to share important initiatives and issues across the university. He then highlighted development of a new university website, IT security initiatives, the move to establish a tobacco free policy for the campus, approval of two new Albany Law collaborative degree programs; and the establishment of an MOU with Albany Medical Center which expands opportunities for our student population.

Upon completion, the Chair opened the floor to questions. Discussion on the status of the tobacco/smoke free policy (JeanPierre, Christakis, Caldwell, Balachandran). The Chair inquired about the impact upon the campus by the forthcoming tax policy. Finally, there was a brief exchange about commencement related activities (Mower, JeanPierre).
Chairman Castellana then introduced Michael Christakis, Vice President for Student Affairs and Jim Stellar, Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost to engage the Council in a discussion about the strategic plan. Jim Stellar provided the Council with an update on the status of the plan and the new direction the process has taken since President Rodríguez arrived to campus. The two engaged the Council members in a robust discussion on topics (Vision; Mission; Values; Diversity & Inclusion; Globalization; Public Engagement) derived from Council participation in an interactive polling presentation. Discussion ensued among the entire membership.

Upon completion, the Chair introduced Larry Lichtenstein, Associate Vice President for University Development, who provided the Council with a brief Development update including the status of the capital campaign. Currently, the silent phase of the campaign has reached 57% of its intended goal.

Seeing no further new business a motion was called (Berroa) to adjourn, which Balachandran seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Hyde
Liaison to the University Council