

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL

April 26th, 2021 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(via Zoom)

MEETING MINUTES

Present: S. Axley; Y-H. Chen; S. Chittur – *note: joined the meeting at 3:17 p.m.*; S. Commuri; C. Fauchon (Recorder, non-voting); J.R. Gil-Garcia; J. Hwang *note: left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.*; Z. Lawrence (Chair); L.A. McNutt; L. Ndambuki; S. Rafferty; K. Reinhold; K. Rethemeyer (Ex-officio); J. Rivera-Wilson - *note: left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.*

Guests: G. Berg, College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity; K. Boyer, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; C. Davis, Graduate Studies ;T. Foreman (Finance and Administration);B. Franchini, Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership; J. Goodall, College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity; C. LaValley, School of Public Health ; J.A. Malatesta, Undergraduate Education; P. Millard, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; C. Moore, Information Technology Services; J. Pata, School of Public Health; K. Williams, Graduate Studies; K. Winchester, Undergraduate Education.

I. Approval of the March 31st minutes

The meeting started promptly at 3 p.m. Due to a heavy agenda a motion was immediately made and seconded to approve the minutes from march 31, 2021. The minutes were approved without revision.

Vote: Yes = 9 No = 0 Abstain = 0

II. Provost’s Report

The Provost was not available to join the Council for today’s meeting, No Provost’s report was presented. Please join the Provost at the next Senate meeting for updates.

III. Chair’s Report

The Chair moved directly to New Business due to a heavy agenda.

IV. New Business:

a. UAlbany’s New Learning Management System

Dr. Billie Franchini, Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership Director, and ITS Associate Director of Educational Technology Services Chris Moore reported on the progress of our transition to our new Learning Management System (LMS). Our current contract with Blackboard ends in December 2022 and the LMS currently in use will no longer be offered so there is no choice but to transition to a new system. A “Request For Proposals” (RFP) for a new LSM was put out a while ago and we know that Desire2Learn’s *Brightspace* won the bid. However, it is important to know that we do not have a contract in place yet and that the award is subject to completion of a contract with Desire2Learn. The proposed transition and implementation timeline as it stands now has the pilot phase starting in Spring 2022. The pilot phase is not fully determined yet but it could be as simple as having some “sandbox courses” for faculty and IT to test out so that we can start migrating some courses. The plan is to have the migration finalized in Fall 2022.

Chair Lawrence asked about the finances and resources needed for the transition, especially as it relates to staff support. Chris Moore acknowledged that, although we do not know the particulars of what is going to be needed yet, we can expect a learning curve; faculty, staff and students will need instructional support. ITS will not only have to shoulder the considerable workload involved when running multiple systems at one time during a migration, but we will also need to provide all the additional support needed to help faculty staff and students make that transition. So, it is possible that additional support will be needed. Chair Lawrence strongly agreed that the budget that is being put together to support the migration has to take this information into consideration.

Dr. Francini stressed the importance of feedback from faculty, staff and students and encouraged all to fill out the surveys that are going out on the subject. The Council was told to expect an update in the Fall.

b. Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Engineering Sciences

The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) provided the Council with a Letter of Intent (LOI) and a Campus Impact Form for its proposal of a new Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Engineering Sciences. The Campus Impact Form states that the program will not create additional fiscal impact, and that the proposer had consulted with the University Libraries. Dr. Paul Millard, Professor of Practice in the Environmental and Sustainable Engineering Department and Director of New Program Development, and CEAS Dean Boyer, Program Director, presented the new proposal. Current and future societal needs point to interdisciplinary trained engineers, and this program will prepare students for careers across the spectrum, from academics to industry. The proposed Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Engineering Sciences would allow qualified students to tailor a Ph.D. program that could include multiple fields in any of the UAlbany Schools or Colleges - such as biology, chemistry,

social sciences, environmental health sciences and so on. A coursework plan of study would be developed by the student and the doctoral advisory committee with the approval of the graduate program director, to support the student's research objectives and to permit them to progress and graduate fully equipped and ready to address interdisciplinary engineering challenges upon graduation. The proposed Engineering Sciences Ph.D. program would be using teaching facilities (classrooms and labs) located on both the uptown and downtown UAlbany campuses, but Dean Boyer stressed that the students' "homes" would remain CEAS. The program would not only benefit currently underserved students, but it would create healthy collaborations across-campus and beyond and generate new funding opportunities.

Chair Lawrence praised the core collaborative approach of the proposal but voiced her concerns regarding the ability of the departments outside CEAS to absorb the cost and have the space to accommodate additional students, especially in lab-intensive disciplines. Although it is understood that the number of students will probably be quite low in the beginning years, the proposal shows growth potential of growth and the University needs to plan for this eventuality. Dean Boyer and Professor Millard explained that CEAS expects the majority of the students to choose programs within the College, and the rest to be distributed amongst several disciplines within UAlbany, therefore creating a minimum burden on the departments. Expected numbers of students entering the program range from five to 25 in five years, but could be greater if the program is successful. CEAS graduate students are funded through the respective researchers, but the proposal does not address the secondary fields' costs. Additional UPPC members reiterated Chair's Lawrence concerns and added that, when submitting a proposal, it is good practice to have written feedback and support from the schools and colleges that might be involved. Although it is not critical for the Letter of Intent, in terms of SUNY it would make the proposal stronger. One member pointed out that the mathematic courses listed on page twelve of the LOI need to be corrected.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Letter of Intent (LOI) from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences for a new Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Engineering Sciences, with the condition that CEAS will provide emails or letters from the Deans of the two Albany Schools / Colleges that will likely be most impacted by the proposal: a) The School of Public Health and b) The College of Arts and Sciences. In addition, the mathematics courses listed on page 12 of the LOI will be edited to show the proper courses titles and numbers.

Vote: Yes = 9 No = 0 Abstain = 0

c. Proposal to Suspend the School of Public Health Interdisciplinary Studies B.S. Concentration in Bioinstrumentation

School of Public Health Dr. Janice Pata, Chair of the Department of Biomedical Sciences, and Celine LaValley, Administrative Manager for the School of Public Health gave the members an overview of the history of the program. The Bioinstrumentation program was initiated a number of years ago by Professor Martin Tenniswood at the cancer research Center, who has since retired as of a couple of years ago. This is laboratory-based program and the rationale for suspending admissions into the program is that over the past couple of years, the resources needed to run the program have been gradually eliminated. Instructors are no longer available, the initial instrumentation is also no longer available, the funding is no longer there, and it is no longer feasible to continue offering the program. There are two Freshmen in the program, and they are fully aware of their options. If needed, there is a contingency plan to continue to working with them, but further admission into the program needs to be suspended.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal to suspend admission into the School of Public Health Interdisciplinary Studies B.S. Concentration in Bioinstrumentation. One member abstained due to his direct involvement with the program.

Vote: Yes = 6 No = 0 Abstain = 1

d. University Email Accounts and Electronic Communications Policy Draft

UPPC Chair Zina Lawrence presented the draft. The UPPC has been asked to provide feedback on the draft of a proposed permanent Albany's policy regarding University Email Accounts and Electronic Communications. The policy would affect the entire campus community: faculty, staff and students. It addresses information sharing, privacy, confidentiality, retention, and proper and improper use of email. Chair Lawrence went over the different clauses included in the draft and invited discussion. One of the clauses in the draft as it is now written states that the University employees and students are expected to check their UAlbany email account on a regular basis and are presumed to have read all official University emails. Improper use of email includes UAlbany account holders forwarding or redirecting their University emails to their personal email account. While the members appreciated that the policy is meant to protect as well as protect the University, there were concerns regarding the fact that all are supposed to keep up with their emails especially when not permitted to forward emails to private accounts. Members felt it would create more work (especially for the faculty) if they had to keep the information in a Ualbany approved folder. There were differences of opinions regarding the lack of time constraints for reading incoming emails: while some members thought it would be good to have clear parameters, some thought it was better to keep it vague.

Some members were surprised to hear that as State employees, their communications were not private and might be subject to disclosure to anyone (including students and members of the public under the Freedom of Information Law); regarding disclosure inside UAlbany, members were mostly concerned about what constituted a valid request from their supervisors or higher-ups for ITS to authorize access to someone's emails, and felt that this needed to be better defined in the policy.

Some members suggested to make some of the content of the draft policy a "Best Practice" document instead of a "Policy".

e. Combined Undergraduate - Graduate Degree Policy Proposal

A proposal to change the language of the Combined Undergraduate - Graduate Degree Policy Proposal was submitted to the Council and put on the agenda however due to the late hour it was decided to postpone the discussion.

V. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 5:29 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Corinne Fauchon.

Minutes Approved: 9/22/2021

ADDENDUM: Documentation needed as a condition listed on the vote on the Letter of Intent from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences for a new Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Engineering Sciences (see item IV b).

From: "Holtgrave, David R" <dholtgrave@albany.edu>

Date: Monday, May 3, 2021 at 3:16 PM

To: "Boyer, Kim" <kboyer3@albany.edu>, "Altarriba, Jeanette" <jaltarriba@albany.edu>

Cc: "Williams, Kevin J" <kwilliams@albany.edu>, "Millard, Paul J" <pmillard@albany.edu>

Subject: Re: Request for support

Greetings Kim,

I am happy to send this email of support.

Is that truly all that you need?

Please let me know if anything else is required.

All the very best, David

From: Altarriba, Jeanette <jaltarriba@albany.edu>

Sent: Monday, May 3, 2021 5:37:01 PM

To: Boyer, Kim <kboyer3@albany.edu>

Cc: Williams, Kevin J <kwilliams@albany.edu>; Millard, Paul J <pmillard@albany.edu>; Holtgrave, David R <dholtgrave@albany.edu>

Subject: RE: Request for support

3 May 2021

Dear Kim,

CAS supports the creation of a PhD program in Interdisciplinary Engineering Sciences with students having a secondary concentration in one of the CAS areas. Since you are only talking about a small number of students, we do not expect there to be issues with course availability. We do, however, expect these students to have the appropriate background and prerequisites to take the graduate courses in our science or math Departments. We also want to mention that the courses in the Data Science program would not be readily available for these doctoral students. We have a large enrollment in this program, and the seats in these courses typically fill with the Data Science students.

We have consulted individually with each of our relevant Departments on this matter, and they look forward to future collaborations with your faculty and students.

Jeanette
