

## UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL

September 11, 2019 – 2:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

UNH 306

### MEETING MINUTES

**Present:** S. Axley; Y.H. Chen; S. Chengalur-Smith; S. Chittur; C. Fauchon (Recorder, non-voting); T. Foreman (Ex Officio, non-voting); J.H. Hwang; C. Kim (Ex Officio, non-voting); T. Knight; Z. Lawrence; L.A. McNutt; J. Mower (Chair); K. Reinhold; J. Rivera-Wilson

**Guests:** Jon Bartow, Graduate Education; Karen Chico-Hurst, Registrar; Steve Galime, Provost Office; Andrea Lang, Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences – CAS; Ann Marie Murray, Provost Office; Torn Ryan, Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences – CAS; Bruce Szelest, President Office

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#### I. Introductions

As this was the first meeting of the University Policy and Planning Council for the 2019-2020 academic year, Chair Jim Mower asked members and guests to briefly introduce themselves.

#### II. Welcome

Chair Jim Mower welcomed new and returning members to the University Policy and Planning Council. Chair Mower reviewed the role and responsibilities of the Council as stated in the Senate Charter section X.2. He briefly went over the 2018-2019 streamlining of the academic program review process for development and approval of undergraduate and graduate programs. The new process, which removes many of the redundancies that existed, clearly identifies the levels of approvals, and reduces the governance review time, was spearheaded by Co-Chairs Kevin Williams and JoAnne Malatesta and expertly shepherded by Provost Office Ann Marie Murray.

#### III. Approval of the Minutes from May 8, 2019

Minutes of the May 8, 2019 meeting were approved with suggested amendments from Bruce Szelest.

#### **IV. Provost's Report**

New Provost Carol Kim reported on her first six weeks as Provost and gave a brief overview of some of the Academic Affairs' immediate agenda items, which include: accelerating the development of online academic programs, developing budget strategies to support the needs of the schools and colleges, increasing the visibility of the University, preparing for the Middle States reaccreditation, and supporting ongoing faculty recruitment, student recruitment and retention. Although the student enrollment numbers for Fall 2019 are still settling, it is clear that there is a shortfall from the projected numbers and from last year's enrollment - both at the undergraduate and at the graduate levels. The deficit in enrollment is estimated to be between 400 and 500 students. This deficit has important budgetary repercussions, as this decline in enrollment transfers into a loss of revenues roughly estimated to be around \$10 million. This will be the topic of future discussion.

#### **V. Chair's Report**

No official report from Chair Jim Mower.

#### **VI. New Business**

##### *a. Letter of intent, MS in Atmospheric Science*

Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences Chair Ryan Torn and Associate Professor Andrea Lang presented the proposal for a new M.S. in Applied Atmospheric Science and fielded questions and concerns from the Council. The new degree would be a terminal degree for students who want to work in the Atmospheric Sciences field but do not specifically want to go into research. The program will be composed of existing courses and will require students to engage in applied research via internships. It would not compete with our existing programs, either within DAES or within other departments which offer similar or related courses. It would attract a complementary set of students and could make our DAES programs more attractive by offering additional flexibility. The proposed program would not require additional resources in term of teaching. Overhead costs are expected to be minimum and advertising can be wrapped in what the Department is already doing. The proposal is fully supported by CAS Interim Dean Jeanette Altarriba, and there are already a number of private sector companies that are interested in providing internships.

Competition from other academic institutions (Penn State, Columbia) was discussed and deemed not to be an important concern as the particular programs offered by these institutions draw from a different pool of students. There is no similar M.S. programs offered by other SUNY campuses. The Council also asked about the feasibility of the program being partly or fully online in the future. Ann Marie Murray explained that there are SUNY regulations that need to be considered when a certain threshold of online courses is reached in a program and that an online program would probably involve

another proposal, different than the one currently discussed. Professor Torn also reminded all of the strong internship component of the current proposal, but added that a Certificate option could be offered online in the future, independent of this proposal.

Concern was raised about the small “Expected Enrollment” numbers listed in the *Letter of Intent*, year 5 of the program only showing 6 to 12 full-time students. The Council agreed that by opening the program to part-time students, the numbers in year 5 could be larger, making the proposal more attractive.

Motion was made to approve with the following amendment: *Add part-time students to the number of students*, and seconded.

Proposal with amendment unanimously approved.

#### b. Changes in the University Calendar

University Registrar, Karen Chico Hurst, presented the new five-year academic planning calendar which took effect this Fall (2019). The calendars can be accessed online at [Calendars Posted through Spring 2024](#) . The new five-year academic planning calendar limits the suspension of classes to government/legal holidays and adds a fall break. The change mirrors a practice used at most of our peer and inspirational colleges/universities and other SUNY campuses, allows the University to better balance the academic needs of all our students and to maximize instructional time, while still satisfying federal, state, and SUNY guidelines and accounting for unforeseen emergencies that might require the cancellation of classes. Additionally, the changes allow the University to plan its academic calendar several years in advance, something that is of great benefit to our students and to their families. It also ensures that we are able to build a summer and winter session with the appropriate number of contact days.

Concerns about the new calendar have mostly regarded the fact that classes are in session during religious holidays. However, this is not new to our practices. Our diverse students and faculty observe various religious holidays (see the [frequently observed holidays](#) ) and in the past, we have only suspended classes for a couple of them. Additionally, all students and faculty members who observe religious holidays will be accommodated by the University. In fact, under New York State law, we are required to grant leave from class for religious observances without penalty to the students or to the faculty members, and campuses are required to provide reasonably equivalent opportunities to make up study or work missed due to such absences. The University in general, and the Registrar’s Office in particular, have greatly improved guidance to students, parents and faculty regarding absence for religious observance. In addition to the information being disseminated on the [Registrar's website](#) , the University has updated the [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) bulletins, the [faculty handbook](#), and required that the information be included in [class syllabi](#) . Detailed information to guide students, parents and faculty on the process of requesting religious accommodations can be found at

[https://www.albany.edu/registrar/registrar\\_assets/Religious Accommodations for Students and Employees.pdf](https://www.albany.edu/registrar/registrar_assets/Religious_Accommodations_for_Students_and_Employees.pdf) .

*c. Call for membership on UPPC Committees*

Chair Jim Mower reviewed the role and responsibilities of the two UPPC committees, as stated in the Senate Charter section X.2.9. (Resource Analysis and Planning Committee) and section X.2.10. (University Facilities Committee). Chair Mower thanked member Karin Reinhold for agreeing to Chair the Resource Analysis and Planning Committee, and member Louise-Anne McNutt for agreeing to Chair the University Facilities Committee.

Call for membership in the two committees will be going out shortly via email.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn, seconded. Meeting ended at 4:10 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by: Corinne Fauchon*

**Minutes approved without amendments: 10/10/2019**