# *The Forum*

A t The Forum we write about the pressing issues our members face on campus. We do so from the perspective of labor, connecting our local concerns to those of the statewide agenda of UUP, the national crisis facing public higher education and the issues of working people in the US and beyond.

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**"The faculty of each college shall have the obligation to participate significantly in the initiation, development and implementation of the educational program" – Article X, SUNY Board of Trustees Policies**

UUP's officers submitted the following statement below to the administration concerning the University's strategic plan, based on the principle that "our working conditions are our student's learning conditions."

• **Employees are what makes the university run.** Building an environment of respect, dignity, and support is the single most important thing we can do to improve the university. This takes many forms, but it requires concerted efforts to recruit, retain, and develop new and existing employees, while valuing workers' expertise at all levels of the university. It necessitates correcting the university's over-reliance on adjunct labor and committing to the hiring of tenure-line faculty. And it requires addressing persistent issues with salary equity and compression, pressures to increase workload and relationships between supervisors and staff.

• **Student success requires affordable, accessible education of the highest quality across all fields of study.** We should focus on research-based methods of instruction and avoid any simplistic conceptions of "high-impact" or "student demand." We welcome the document's focus on first generation students, educational access and diversity.

• **A strong university requires strong departments**. The strategic plan should prioritize building strong departments, and giving departments the autonomy and resources they need in order to be nationally competitive. We need to ask departments what they need to be competitive nationally, rather than setting out abstract goals and asking them to conform (often undermining their capacity to meet the requirements and expectations of their disciplines).

• The plan should explicitly state the university's commitment to **shared faculty governance**, which reflects the expertise and experience of the employees who work throughout the university.

• While we recognize the distinction between strategy and implementation, many of these priorities have obvious **implications for implementation.** If research is described as "inter-disciplinary, innovative and emerging" this prioritizes certain types of work. Similarly "internationalization" only works if resources are devoted to supporting international students and to restoring instruction in language departments. These are only two examples of how strategy implies alignment, making the distinction between the two hard to maintain. We believe that the union has a fundamental role to play in every conceivable area of implementation.

# The Strategic Plan: Same As it Ever Was
## Paul Stasi, Academic VP

The University's Draft Strategic Plan was released on January 16th, 2018. Subsequently the plan was presented at over thirty roadshows across campus. These roadshows actively solicited input, presenting the same plan to every group in order to gauge people's reaction to a document that was always described as in progress. It is striking, then, to see that the final draft, released on March 7th, 2018, is, more or less, the same as the initial document. To be sure, there are some changes. But what one notices, quite often, is that a phrase that has been removed simply reappears somewhere else, leaving the impression of a reshuffling of the deck rather than a systematic rethinking of the document's core ideas.

In some areas this represents an improvement. The section on "Diversity and Inclusion," for instance, has become more concrete in its aims, shifting from "enhancing diversity . . . with a focus on staff and faculty from underrepresented groups" to "recruit and retain faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students that better reflect the strong multidimensional diversity of our undergraduate students." Here what was first a vague directive has turned into the more concrete "recruit and [crucially] retain," while also offering an argument for why this is important to our particular university.

With other areas, however, the changes are less clear. At times, one term is replaced by another whose meaning is basically the same, as in the shift from "globally competent" to "globally engaged" that happens in "Internationalization." At other times, more specific interests are replaced by more general ones. This seems most obvious in the shift around a set of terms signaling a progressive social mission. The January version, for instance, lists "Sustainability & Social Justice" as a value, while the latest draft offers "Common Good," defined as achieving "ends that benefit our communities." Similarly, the first draft suggested that our research might "effect positive change . . . for the betterment of society." In the latest draft this is dropped, in favor of "addressing societal challenges." The same thing happens in "Engagement and Service," where "collaborative work around thematic areas such as the environment, poverty, and public health" becomes "relevant thematic areas." Broadly speaking, then, a social justice mission for the university—something I would argue is implicit in the very notion of public higher education—has been partly effaced.

At the same time, the new document has removed some of the most blatant aspects of its free-market agenda: "commercialization" is no longer stated as a research goal and we no longer seek "to increase international enrollments" since, without justification, the monetary impulse behind this was, perhaps, too nakedly revealed. And yet, the logic of the market still dominates the sections on "Student Success" and "Research Excellence." In the former, the student experience will be enhanced through programs that "balance emerging demands of students, employers, and society" while in the latter we will invest in research programs that "drive entrepreneurship, public-private partnerships, and translational application" (this latter term referring to the ways basic research becomes something concrete in the real-world, either through commercialization or for use in clinical applications.) *The Forum* has spend some time addressing the University's bias towards revenue-generating research. Both versions of the strategic plan clearly illustrate this bias. But these drafts also reveal another aspect of commercialization that we have repeatedly addressed: namely the reduction

# By the Numbers:

**49th**     Rank of Oklahoma teacher's pay out of all 50 states

**1**     Billions of dollars cut from the public education budget in Oklahoma over the last decade

**20**     Percentage of school districts in Oklahoma that have moved to a four-day school week due to budget cuts

**500**     Estimated teacher vacancies across Oklahoma

**1200**     Emergency certifications offered in Oklahoma last year

**9 days**     Duration of West Virginia teacher's strike

**5%**     Pay increase eventually awarded West Virginia teachers

**0**     Dollars in Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin's proposed state budget for teacher's health care

**198**     Millions of dollars of cuts in the same budget for K-12 education

**96**     Average number of Americans killed by guns each day

**7**     Average number of teens and children killed in the US by guns per day

**50**     Average number of women per month shot to death by an intimate partner in the US

**62**     Percentage of firearm deaths which are suicides

**306**     Number of school shootings since the Sandy Hook massacre in 2013

**33**     Gun incidents in schools in the US in 2018 (as of March 20th)

**18**     Number of these incidents resulting in injury or fatality

# Strategic Plan in Context
## Aaron Major, Chapter President

Over the past year, our Chapter has repeatedly insisted on the need for the complete and thorough inclusion of our campus' faculty governance bodies--the Faculty Senate and UUP--in all levels of the Strategic Planning process. The important role of the Senate is clear and specified in the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies. UUP's role is to look after our interests as employees of the University. By setting institutional priorities, shaping the academic mission, and serving as a framework for resource allocation, strategic planning inevitably impacts our working lives, which means it necessarily addresses areas that fall under UUP's purview.

Done well, strategic planning can be a time for open conversation about the nature of the University, the pressures and constraints that it faces, the opportunities that are open to us, and ways to pursue those opportunities, all while dignifying the work done by our campus community. This is not our tradition. Now, as it has been for the last six years, the critical work of campus planning--setting institutional priorities and goals--is done at the top and the campus community is invited to comment on and, then align themselves with, those priorities without access to the detailed budgetary and operational information needed to participate in the strategic planning process in even this limited manner.

How did we get here? On the one hand, this is simply a reflection of a long-term trend in our institutions of higher education where authority and control is concentrated in senior administration and faculty are largely cut out from meaningful campus governance. On the other hand, there is something to this that is specific to our University or, more accurately, the SUNY research centers more broadly that is of fairly recent origin: namely the reconfiguration of the relationship between SUNY campuses and the State of New York under the SUNY2020 initiative, launched in 2012.

### SUNY 2020 Revisited

SUNY2020 was a watershed in New York State higher education. The legislation, authorized for five years, made individual campuses responsible for meeting a much larger share of their operational costs than they had previously been. Specifically, SUNY2020 held the State's support for SUNY campuses flat at 2011 levels, and in exchange offered campuses two mechanisms to meet rising costs. The first was a five year "rational tuition increase" program that allowed campuses to increase tuition by up to $300 per year for five years. Second, campuses could

apply for a share of $140 million dollars in "challenge grants." These grants were specifically for the University Centers (Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo and Stony Brook) to fund capital projects needed to develop new academic programs which would, in turn, bring in more students as well as outside funding from federal agencies and the private sector.

In 2012, the University at Albany submitted its Strategic Investment Plan to the State to secure its $35 million share of the Challenge Grant funding. The Plan laid out an ambitious set of goals to increase campus revenue over five years through a combination of targeted expansion into new programs and broad growth across the University's existing areas. The centerpiece of the proposal was the plan for the construction of the Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (E-TEC), originally slated to be built adjacent to the Life Sciences building on the south side of campus. E-TEC was to serve as the hub of interdisciplinary research and entrepreneurship on campus. In addition, the Plan anticipated hiring a total of 182 faculty in six areas: climate and environmental sustainability, computer science and forensics, human health and biomedicine, public service and policy, business and entrepreneurship, and liberal arts and sciences. This hiring would support 1,350 new undergraduate and graduate students and generate $43 million dollars in new outside funding on an annual basis by 2017.[1]

The implications of SUNY2020 are many and far-reaching. One of the clearest, and most troubling is that the conditions of Challenge Grant funding pushed campuses to adopt revenue models that are essentially "growth through speculation," requiring campuses to write Strategic Investment Plans that would support regional economic development. This shaped campus plans in two ways: first, it prioritized investments that could potentially have 'spill-over' effects supporting private businesses and private job creation; second, it prioritized the creation of entirely new programs that would require massive capital expenditures and massive new employment of academics, researchers, professional support, and facilities managers. What is troubling about this is not only the fact that SUNY leadership unflinchingly accepted this imposition on their academic mission by eagerly grabbing the dangled carrot of a massive, one-time capital injection into their campuses, but also the fact that the entire premise of the plan is disturbingly similar to the same set of free market economic ideas that drove the economy towards crisis in the first place: the solution to any problem is rapid expansion and growth, and growth is best

1. University at Albany, NYSUNY2020 Challenge Grant, September, 2012, https://www.albany.edu/news_images/nysuny2020etecfinal.pdf

achieved through a competitive, survival-of-the-fittest scramble for students and research dollars that pushes campuses to speculate on large, programmatic expansions into new areas requiring massive capital expenditures, rather than revitalizing existing programs and building on strength.

These issues, by themselves, make SUNY2020 and the strategic planning that has flowed from it, of vital importance to faculty governance in general. They also strike at the heart of UUP's core mission and principles. Historically, campus personnel costs, including the contractual raises and other benefits achieved through collective bargaining, were covered by the state. By holding state funding flat, SUNY2020 effectively made individual campuses responsible for generating the revenue to meet these costs. What this has meant, and what we have seen so clearly in recent years, is that UUP's priorities of ensuring fair, equitable salaries and other improvements to our working conditions now appear, to SUNY, as costs that must compete with other institutional priorities.

Getting those priorities established within campus strategic planning has not been easy, largely because the principles guiding SUNY2020 and the plans that came out of it are fundamentally at odds with the principles that guide the work of our union. Our position is that SUNY works best when we recognize and respect all of the individual pieces that come together to make it function. We recognize that the system needs to be dynamic and responsive, but responsive in a way that recognizes the impact that change has on real lives and real communities. The SUNY2020 operational model undermines this sense of systemness. The basic rules of resource allocation--such as how much money is available and what the core priorities are that will shape the distribution of those funds--are determined at the highest levels of administration, and yet individual units on campus are held accountable for the success, or failure, of the larger plan even when they are made to compete for those resources according to a set of rules that they had no meaningful role in shaping.

**Moving forward without looking back**

The SUNY2020 legislation 'sunsetted' after the 2016-2017 academic year, but its principles and legacy remain heavily imprinted on our campus. Surprisingly, while it resulted in a massive reorientation of campus priorities and operations, there has been no detailed, public accounting of how the University fared under its Strategic Investment Plan and how the legacies of that plan will continue to impact campus priorities and campus funding. Nevertheless, all available public data suggests that nearly all of the SUNY 2020 revenue targets were far

too optimistic. It is therefore quite troubling that the new round of Strategic Planning essentially continues in the same mold as SUNY2020--revenue through research expenditure and enrollment growth--without first addressing what seems to be the failure of these same strategies in the past.

Here is what we know about the results of the SUNY2020 process. With respect to enrollment--a key driver of revenue in this new era of flat state funding--our campus remains far from hitting the 1,350 new students the Plan promised. The Common Data Set shows that there were about 700 more undergraduates on campus this past Fall than at the start of Fall of 2012, but also 200 fewer graduate students, for a net gain of about 500 students.[1]

Research expenditures have also not reached the ambitious goals laid out by the Strategic Investment Plan, though not for a lack of trying. In fiscal year 2012-2013, 469 external funding applications were submitted, which generated $94 million in funded research; In fiscal year 2016-2017, 614 applications were submitted, but they only generated $88 million in funded research.[2]  This is not a reflection on the talents of our faculty but on the increasingly tight funding climate.  Federal R&D expenditures to universities peaked at $45 billion in 2011 and has since declined to just under $40 billion.

New programs have been launched, but not in the full-fledged way envisioned in the Strategic Investment Plan. Ground is only now being broken on the E-TEC building, originally slated to be open for business in 2017, with a target completion date of 2020.

Publicly, senior campus and SUNY administration have trumpeted the dramatic increase in faculty hiring that took under SUNY 2020. For example, in his 2016 State of the Campus address, President Jones claimed that 200 new faculty had been hired under the 2020 initiative, but it is hard to see where this figure comes from. The Common Data Set shows that at the start of the fall 2017 semester there were 68 more full-time instructional faculty on campus than there were at the start of the fall of 2012--only 35 of them in tenure track positions. This is far fewer than the net gain of 182 new full-time teaching and research faculty that the Strategic Investment Plan promised. In hindsight it is clear that all of the assumptions that undergirded the SUNY2020 Strategic Investment Plan--how much enrollment would grow, how quickly new

1.  https://www.albany.edu/ir/cds.htm
2. University at Albany, Division for Research, Annual Reports (various years), https://www.albany.edu/research/publications-reports.php

programs would come on-line, how much more grant money would flow into the University--were far too optimistic. To be sure, this optimism was virtually required by the SUNY2020 process itself, as the only way to get resources from such a competitive environment was to make elevated claims for their impact. Yet, even if we understand the forces behind this optimism, it is harder to make sense of why we would continue to pin our hopes for expansion and growth on these same sources, particularly when the prospects for a dramatic increase in enrollment and outside funding remain dim, not just for SUNY for across the nation. Indeed, undergraduate enrollment across the country fell by 6% between 2010 and 2015, and enrollment of graduate students was essentially flat. The National Center for Education Statistics projects that enrollment of full-time undergraduate students will not return to 2010 levels until 2023; graduate student enrollment is projected to increase about 1% per year for the next 10 years.[1]

Like most research universities, ours draws heavily on Federal agencies for external funding. Given the current political climate, it is hard to imagine that key Federal agencies--like the NIH or NSF--will see an expansion of their budgets. Support from private industry will likely not fill in this gap. Private industry's funding to Universities has grown significantly, but it is still quite small-- about one tenth the size of federal funding. In addition, the two programs that are slated to anchor E-TEC--the College of Emergency Preparedness and Cybersecurity and the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center--are both funded by large state grants. What about revenue from patents, marketable spin offs and other results of the "entrepreneurial incubator" side of E-TEC? Provost Sue Philips, back in 2013, told the Senate Executive Committee that any revenue coming from these sources were likely to be minimal.[2]

Yet, even as the campus did not see the flood of new students and federal grants that it promised in its Strategic Investment Plan, it saw--as did all of SUNY--a huge financial payoff from five years of rational tuition increases. Even with enrollment basically flat, our campus has brought in an additional $87 million in tuition revenue since the 2012-2013 academic year when the first tuition increases went into effect. Rising tuition has more than offset the decline in state aid to the campus.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, state aid and tuition combined accounted for just over $160 million of campus revenue; this year they combine to just over $187 million. So why, nearly 10 years after the financial crisis

of 2008, are we feeling the pinch of poverty?

Three reasons stand out. First, the unspoken and perhaps most irresponsibly optimistic assumption of SUNY2020 was that new revenue through campus expansions would not only be able to cover the costs of running the university going forward, but would also make up for the years of tight budgets that hit the campuses in the immediate wake of the economic crisis of 2008. Second, another component of the SUNY2020 arrangement was that it committed 17% of new campus tuition revenue to helping cover the cost of financial aid to students. Accounting for this cost still leaves our campus with more combined state and tuition revenue this year than it had in 2012-2013, but this year also saw the introduction of the Excelsior Scholarship and the impact of that program on campus budgets is unclear.

The third reason is that the campus effectively gambled the resources it had on a growth and expansion strategy without a solid resource base in place to support the long-term costs of these commitments. As far as we can tell, of the $165 million in projected costs for E-TEC, roughly half was borrowed.[3] The remaining costs that the University bears in bringing this project to fruition, both in the sense of the capital costs for the construction, as well as the operational costs to support the programs to be housed there, are unknown. What we do know is that the campus has made promises to hundreds of students enrolling in our new colleges that were launched without the facilities or the faculty to support them. Fulfilling that promise will no doubt require targeted hiring and capital expenditures. There has also been a much-needed expansion of our academic advising and career counseling services to support undergraduate student success--another key priority identified by the Strategic Investment Plan. But these units remain understaffed for the demands that are placed on them now, putting the dedicated professionals that provide these services in the difficult position of making up for the lack of resources with a heavier workload that is only projected to increase.

The key point is that the Strategic Investment Plan put in a place a process for significant campus growth and expansion in terms of new academic programs, new private-public partnerships, and additional services for students. That institutional expansion has begun, but it has not been matched by the needed growth in the number of students or number of faculty to support that expansion. The new Strategic Plan is completely silent on how these commitments will be met and what impact they will have on campus budgeting going forward.

1. National Center for Education Statistics, "The Condition of Education," May 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cha.asp

2. Minutes of the UPPC, April 5, 2013, "Provost's Report," p. 2.

3. Minutes of the UPPC, April 5, 2013, "Provost's Report", p. 1.

Absent this discussion, an invitation to campus units to 'align themselves' with new strategic priorities is an empty gesture.

**From a plan for growth, to a plan for redistribution**

Given that the new Strategic Plan does not even attempt to give a viable, realistic model of where the resources for growth will come from, it seems safe to assume that what is really being mapped out in that document is a plan for resource reallocation. And this would make sense, given that it would essentially be a continuation of a process that took place across the University in the two cycles of Compact Budgeting in 15-16 and 16-17. As we discussed in the May, 2016 issue of *The Forum*, Compact Budgeting was marketed to the University faculty as a tool for providing individual units with the resources needed to align their needs and aspirations with then-President Jones' strategic initiatives. In reality, it served as a vehicle to redistribute campus resources to a limited, pre-determined set of priorities. While Compact Budgeting was put on hold during the presidential transition, it continues to have this redistributive effect as the "operational efficiencies" that were mandated as part of the process are now put into effect.

For example, over the course of the two rounds of Compact Budgeting, the College of Arts and Sciences received $330,000 in recurring funds to support the development of three programs; this year CAS has been hit with over $400,000 in budget cuts tied to the Compact Budgeting efficiency targets. The net result is that while a few areas received some support, that will be paid for by losses in faculty and staff positions, research support, and other crucial areas with no net gain to the College as a whole.

So far, all indications are that implementation of the new Strategic Plan will reproduce one of the most pernicious, demoralizing aspects of the larger SUNY2020 initiative which became apparent in the Compact Budgeting process: senior administration will seek to monopolize control of the financial information that individual units need to make informed decisions about how to engage with this process, and control over the implementation of the Strategic Plan itself. At the same time, accountability will trickle downward to individual units, many of whom are being forced not just to play a game that they cannot win but one they never asked to play in the first place.

This is why, perhaps now more than ever, we need all faculty to demand their full, active inclusion at all levels of the strategic planning process. The questions and problems outlined here are not going to be answered or resolved by tweaking the wording of a campus priority or parsing the distinction between a "mission" and a

"vision." Rather, they are deeply embedded in the operating assumptions of our campus that pre-determine the outcome of these planning processes long before they are opened to public discussion. And yet it is also important to remember that this view of the public research University as a self-sufficient, revenue-generating machine is not hard-baked into our institutional DNA; it is a recent invention that came out of a unique set of circumstances.

Faculty can be forgiven for yielding to the temptation to throw their hands up in frustration and opt out of this process. We've been fooled more than once. But opting out will not stop the process of shifting resources from one unit to another, nor will it spare us the costs of that redistribution. We deserve the best, ideal version of strategic planning: a fully open and transparent process where faculty leadership and senior administration work on a co-equal basis to assess our budgetary realities, realistically assess our strengths and weaknesses, gauge prospects for enrollments, research expenditures, and other major sources of campus revenue, and set goals and priorities that emerge from a commitment to intellectual rigor, diversity of people and ideas, teaching the underserved, serving our community, and respecting the worth and dignity of everyone who works to make this University capable of reaching those ideals. We deserve it, but we will not simply get it. So we will have to insist on it.

## Why Strategic Planning Matters
### Jim Collins, Anthropology

The University has been through a two-year process in which two separate strategic plans were drafted and has recently presented a formal version of the final strategic plan. That many are not engaged is understandable, but I will argue that refusing to take part at this stage risks losing remaining opportunities to have a collective voice in how the plan is realized in coming years.

In the past two years, committees were formed and planning teams wrote an array of detailed "futuring" reports; faculty and staff were invited to a variety of large-, medium- and small-scale participation events in which the effects of that participation on the process of drafting strategic plans was never made clear. After two iterations of study and plan drafting, there is a current final draft of a strategic plan which presents five strategic imperatives, each with three strategic goals and a set of metrics.[1] Judging from attendance at recent "roadshows" and "round tables," it seems that many faculty and staff have not

1. https://www.albany.edu/strategicplan/files/UAlbany-Strategic-Plan-Final-Draft-March-7-2018.pdf

been involved in the process or taken the opportunity to comment on the planning activities to date.

It is easy to become skeptical if you attend mass participation events, such as the "concert of ideas," in which the diversity of ideas offered somehow disappears on the way to drafting an actual plan, or if you have taken part in this year's smaller-scale roadshows and roundtables, which elicited feedback on a plan that was already determined in its essential features. In a similar vein, despite the convening of planning teams and committees throughout both 2016-17 and 2017-18, and their preparing thoughtful discussions of issues and recommendations, it is unclear what happened to their work. As one member of a 2016-17 planning team said, it was hard to see any trace of their own "futuring" reports in the draft strategic plan that was presented at the 2017 Spring Faculty Meeting. A planning committee member for this year's redo of strategic planning said that she was called to only one committee meeting and not subsequently informed about the outcome or results of the committee's work. Even more disturbing, when I asked about the origins of the final drafts of strategic plans, whether in the 2017 or 2018 efforts, I was told they were composed and written by a small group of top University administrators. There may be good reasons for having a small writing team, but "darkboxing" the final stages of decision-making tends to produce suspicion and cynicism among those kept outside and uninformed.

Nevertheless, withdrawing from the process would be a mistake. The plan presented at this year's Spring Faculty Meeting is just a document. There is much to be done before it is a tangible, resourced reality, and we still have opportunities to play a significant role in how the plan is implemented and funded in coming years.

The past two months of eliciting feedback from road shows and roundtables will soon conclude. For the three months April-July, VPs of academic and non-academic units will lead their units in "alignment" or action-planning, during which the resources of units and sub-units will be committed to the general priorities of the new strategic plan. A glance at the 2010 Strategic Plan provides reminders and insights into what happens and what is at stake in action-planning.[1] At 77 rather than four pages, the 2010 plan is much more detailed than anything yet seen for 2018. In the 2010 plan, each of six "Strategic Themes" has associated with it six "Objectives" and each objective further specifies from three to six "Action Steps." Each step involves the allocation of resources and many of those steps have been acted upon in the

1. https://www.albany.edu/strategicplan/files/StrategicPlan_Summary%20and%20Detail%2010-29-10.pdf

years since 2010. This same process will happen for the current plan between April and July. We will not have control over it, but we should be alert to what is presented and what is being committed for the future by the departments and units of which we are a part.

In the summer months of July and August, the process of implementing the plans will be developed. The intent is to develop an organizational roadmap for to begin implementing the strategic plan in the fall of 2018. During that process, resources will be allocated and reallocated to the strategic priorities in their particular "action steps." In January  the leaders of UUP and the Senate recognized that although the strategic plan was largely a *fait accompli*, there were still unresolved issues about how it would be carried out and with what resources. Together, we sent an Open Letter to the Chairs of Strategic Planning. In early February we met with President Rodriguez, members of his staff, and leaders of this year's Strategic Planning. We had a frank and useful exchange, discussing among other topics the importance of having both the Union and the Senate involved in the implementation and budgeting processes necessary to realize the strategic plan. We were given informal assurances that we will be meaningfully involved. In the coming months we need to act to ensure that this actually happens.

If so, we need to ask members of the Union and the Senate to be involved in either of two ways: (1) to formally represent the Union or the Senate in implementation or budgeting groups; or (2) to lend your eyes and ears to the effort to keep processes as open and participatory as possible, alerting the Union or Senate to your experiences and concerns, in whatever aspect of your work life you encounter planning activities, implementation processes, or resource issues. If in the following months we can insert our representative organizations effectively into the unfolding of the new strategic plan, not allowing business-as-usual to "blackbox" how the plan is implemented or paid for, we have a fighting chance to practice a more consequential, transparent and participatory shared governance of our institution.

## Reflections on Research in the Draft Strategic Plan
**Loretta Pyles, Social Welfare, Chapter Secretary**

We live in challenging times, fraught with uncertainty about the sustainability of the planet, the strength of democracies, and the project of global capitalism. Fortunately, it seems clear that the research that we do in universities, along with education, community engagement, and social change efforts, can play essential roles in

addressing and, indeed, transforming the uncertainties and problems we are facing. In this light, I would like to reflect on the identification of "Research Excellence" as a core institutional priority in UAlbany's Draft Strategic Plan. Before going any further, though, I'd like to propose that we just go ahead and delete the word "excellence" from the narrative. I agree with scholars who have convincingly argued that it is an empty, non-referential unit of value invoked in a growingly commodified educational environment that is effectively meaningless.[1]

As someone who has experienced tremendous barriers at UAlbany in doing research because of poor pre- and post-award supports, all while being held to the standards of tenure and promotion of a research-intensive university, the university's commitment to righting this wrong is morale-boosting. To be sure, though, the implementation and outcomes of this goal need to be monitored vigilantly. It is also heartening to be a part of a university that has expressed a belief that research should "effect positive change and address global challenges for the betterment of society." But, we cannot go forward until we have clarified what we mean by "positive change" nor until we articulate who should really benefit from such improvement projects. It will take a group of committed faculty, staff, students, community members, and administrators to do so.

The current environment in higher education appears to be "grow or die," and thus the Strategic Plan's use of terms such as "entrepreneurship," "commercialization," and "high impact" is not surprising. I am sure that there are a substantial number of researchers on this campus who will benefit tremendously from such focal points. For those of us in a field like mine -- social welfare -- whose research concentrates on, say, the needs of child welfare workers, people coping with mental illness, disaster victims, or veterans, "commercialization" feels pretty irrelevant. For my colleagues in the humanities, who are also actively working for the benefit of society by inquiring into the historical assumptions of contemporary culture, or enhancing cross-cultural communication through the study of indigenous languages, a university that appears to be prioritizing "high impact" research also likely feels alienating.

Perhaps it would be better to think of research at UAlbany in light of the plan's more salient articulated values, i.e. accessible, collaborative, diversified, integrous, and socially just research. This should translate into research that engages community partners in ways that are reciprocal and equitable, that does not exploit the labor of

1. Allan, Kathryn L. "Excellence: a new keyword for education?" *Critical Quarterly*, 49, 1, 54-78, 2007.

graduate students, and that affirms that what counts and is prioritized as scholarship is seen through the eyes of peer reviewers, not university administrators.

In these times, we need research that will make a difference, but we need to define what that means. The university's interest in "interdisciplinary research collaborations" is exciting and an example from my own specialty field of disaster studies can help shed light on its possibilities in relation to the university's stated values. Research on disasters may make a difference because it results in an innovative app that can help people in the developing world know where to access relief services after a disaster. But, we likewise need research that helps us to understand the social and ecological determinants of the disaster in the first place, as well as the historical and colonial causes of underdevelopment that may have exacerbated the disaster's impact. Moreover, it is just as critical that we appreciate the literature of resistance that has shaped the unique culture of that country which can help us to understand disaster survivors, not as targets of aid or social entrepreneurship, but as human subjects capable of forging their own destiny. There is no better time to take the values of social justice, diversity, integrity, and collaboration and to deeply infuse them into an institution's collective pursuit of knowledge. But, we must not equivocate through the lazy use of buzzwords that may end up merely perpetuating the status quo -- there is just too much at stake.

## Metrics and Missing Faculty— Scholarly Research vs. Models of Administration

### Peter Breiner, Political Science

In a recent faculty meeting in my department, political science, we were pleased to hear from one of our colleagues that in a recent NSF HERD (Higher Education Research and Development Survey) Political Science at SUNY Albany ranked 22nd in Higher education R&D expenditures in 2016 for research per faculty. This was a remarkable result given the small size of our faculty as compared to political science departments in large state universities in the US at large and demonstrated the enormous efforts of a number of our faculty members in gaining outside support. Needless to say, we had good reason to be pleased. However, there was a certain irony in the data as it relates to the strategic plan. While our success clearly fit one of the metrics for scholarly excellence, --"increasing ratio of T&TT faculty with research grants"— the way it fit the metric had an odd implication. To take the size of departments into account the NSF survey

measured publications and research money per capita. However, what this meant in our present environment at the university was that all things being equal, we would move up in the survey the more faculty we lost. We recently lost a faculty members who left for another university, and we are about to lose two more in another subfield—one at the very center of political science—to retirements. None of these faculty members have been or will be replaced. Their salaries will be redeployed elsewhere. So as our research productivity in relation to grant money climbs per capita, our actual capacity to offer classes and enhance our actual research across the subfields—in what, by the way, is an unusually collaborative department—will decline. It seems, in other words, that the strategic plan leaves out the one thing that most concerns us: the university's full support for the most basic mission we all share, namely to provide research and teaching across the full range of our disciplines and subfields within those disciplines.

Our department serves a very large number of students, and for fairly obvious reasons interest in political science is increasing. Hence the tension between doing research and our teaching mission may seem more acute than in other departments. But I do not think we should see this situation as problem of political science. Other departments share this dilemma in different ways, but overall while we may be meeting different metrics in our fields "per capita," many of us are seeing our faculty shrinking as new programs are initiated, and salaries are redeployed to support them. The obvious response from the administration is that this is a problem of tight budgets—though one might ask, if budgets are so tight, is it prudent to start spending on new programs instead of supporting the core programs that one already has? Perhaps instead of debating budgets we might we see the matter as problem of three different models of university administration in tension with each other.

### Three views of a university administration:

*1. Stakeholder view*

The first concept of administration is the stakeholder view of running a university. Under this notion of administration of the university has to reconcile the external demands from the state government and private businesses with the internal the demands of new programs, and established departments, all viewed as different constituencies that have to be accommodated. The assumption here is that the administration has an "obligation" appease all those groups who have a stake in the university. And from the viewpoint of the top administration, policy has to be made that will recognize the often conflicting imperatives of all of these constituencies. The language of this approach implies, however, that all the stakeholders have a defensible claim on

resources, and that it is the job of the administration to treat them all fairly--that basically all of them "are in it together." There is, in other words, a view that all of the constituencies need to be satisfied, though it turns some stakeholders seem more important to satisfy, or perhaps appease, than others. On this model the faculty are merely one of the stakeholders.

*2. The Interest group view of administration:*

This view of the university has some strong similarities to the stakeholder view, but it clearly is more conflictual while the stakeholder implies a more collaborative undertaking requiring fair treatment. On this view the university consists of a large variety of interest groups: the faculty as a whole, individual departments, research institutes, colleges and schools within the university, private partners who demand resources in exchange for collaboration, and of course different offices within the administration itself—oh yes, and students. Each decision on this model represents a vector of different interest groups each trying to advance their particular demand on resources and exercise influence over policy at the expense of others. In this case administrators decide which groups will be favored, which will not, and resources are often taken away from one department, college, or administrative entity and shifted to another depending on who has lobbied most effectively or fits in with the most recent "strategic plan." In deciding among departments, for example, sometimes a department with higher enrollments will be favored, other times faculty bringing in outside grants, other times yet, new programs that ostensibly will bring in more revenue in the future, and sometimes even failing colleges or research institutes that the university cannot afford to let fail. But under this view, the university administration see itself as dispensing resources, especially positions, graduate support, and research support, in response to lobbying. There will be winners and losers. Viewing the university through this model involves turning decisions for and against departments or schools into a zero-sum game rather than furthering the education and research tasks of a university as a cooperative enterprise. Here the faculty is merely one interest or perhaps one input.

*3. The "keep the trains running on time" view*

What I call the "keep the trains running on time" approach seems simple but for one reason or another seems in the present climate the hardest to carry out. On this model, the primary role of the university administration is to enable the faculty of the university to do what it is hired to do: provide the conditions for us to do our research. This includes being able to make an impact and gain visibility for our departments in our respective fields including gaining recognition in the relevant professional associations and journals. It also involves making

sure that the faculty is of sufficient size so that we can discharge our teaching responsibilities without depriving us of time to do our research. And in doing a good job in enabling us to fulfill the former two functions, this approach elicits the kind of voluntary service that keeps departments and the university running. Above all this approach assumes that to strengthen research, you need to strengthen departments by listening to them and figuring out what they need to actually improve. In keeping with this last point, this view of administration treats the faculty as the core of the university, not as an interest group or input and not as merely one of a series of "stakeholders."

This approach is not glamourous. In the short-term it is not the sort of thing that creates a splash or for that matter brings glory to the administration of the university. However, in the longer term it works best for the actual aims of a university. Universities depend on the willful cooperation of the faculty, and when the faculty knows the administration is doing its best to aid them in performing the two tasks that define their commitment to their profession and vocation, teaching and doing research, they also will go the extra mile in providing service to the university. But when what is offered is a strategic plan that repeats the word excellence in conjunction with the criteria of the first two models—and then offers criteria to monitor performance from the top down—it leads one to wonder whether the administration is viewing the faculty as simply one stake holder or one interest group vying both with other groups for positions based on zero-sum struggle over enrollments, outside money, and the attraction of students with tuition dollars.

### Where we are:
One could very much imagine that university administrators might see our preference for the keep-the-trains running model as too narrow given all of the demands on the university. Or perhaps they think they already do a good job fulfilling its demands. But it should be fairly clear that as many of our departments become depleted of faculty in the various subfields that we are obligated to offer as part of our respective disciplines and as salaries from faculty who have left or retired are redeployed to support new satellite programs, the trains become harder and hard to keep running. And we as faculty members of our departments find ourselves having to cover areas that are not our areas of specialization; or worse yet, simply stop offering courses in the areas that are core to our fields—something that students typically do not notice but nonetheless deprives them of much needed educaton. We need not even speak of the problem of enhancing our visibility and our research agendas in our respective fields under such pressures. Indeed, what is

striking is how successful we are in doing this despite the pressure. But in the end, we are constantly faced with a tradeoff between the obligations to support our graduate students, provide a coherent undergraduate program, keep our department running, and doing research for an audience quite different from the one that the university administration views as significant.

What are the consequences when the stakeholder and interest group models take priority over the keep-the-trains running model in the strategic plan? Turning first to the interest group model, to treat the various departments and colleges as interest groups each vying for more resources may seem an efficient way to bring them behind a strategic plan. But in fact it is to degrade the academic process. It renders the offerings of the university and our efforts a zero-sum game so that the success of one department in gaining resources—in particular positions—can only come at the cost of another not gaining them. In this, however, we are all losers. It is no secret that departments depend on voluntary contributions and reciprocity among their members. It is also no secret that universities do as well. But the playing off of one department against the other can only undermine this process, and encourage each department, each college to think only of its interests. This is not a way to run a collaborative enterprise.

Now what about the relation of the stakeholder model to the keep-the-trains-running approach? I think all of us are willing to acknowledge in a public university there are many parties with a stake in its operations including not just faculty, but governmental institutions, outside groups, alums, students, and so on. But the faculty are not merely one stakeholder among many. Without us there is no university, no research, no teaching, no committee work, and no governance. To use a political science analogy, we the faculty are stakeholders in the university in the sense that citizens are stakeholders in a government. Citizens constitute the political community. They are not merely one of many different groups interested in what is decided. Without citizens you have authoritarian government—in other words, subjects. Viewed this way, the more modest model of an administration that sees its task as enabling us to do our research, our teaching, and our service in keeping our departments running rather than taking this as a baseline is a way of recognizing our unique stake in a university rather than just one of the groups among many who have an interest in how things are run and for whom.

### An eventual crises of the first two models
Now, in response we can imagine the administration saying that giving the last model priority is not viable given the financial and political pressures on the university these days. The remarks above, they may very well argue

are merely what we would expect the faculty to say. Don't all departments want new positions? Aren't all of them claiming that they are being disadvantaged at the cost of another department's gain? And we can imagine our modal administrator answering that it is unrealistic to focus on the "keep the trains running" model given all the other demands on us. But there is a case to be made that a failure to pay sufficient attention to the last model while giving priority to the first two may itself lead to some rather self-defeating outcomes. Let's just focus on two. First there is the policy of looking to increase enrollments while shrinking core departments. What happens if the various new programs fail to pay off to the rest of the university in the most literal sense of failing to provide monetary returns on the "investment" such that eventually we will be able to "reinvest" in the core departments? Do we not have a reason to be skeptical given that trickledown economics does not have a very good track record? What if these new programs continue to draw resources from the center ad infinitum? We then have a huge number of new programs that do not pay their own way, and the core departments of the university, depleted and stretched, will be unable to fill the vacuum that has been created in both scholarship and teaching. A corollary problem may also ensue. A very large number of the tenured positions at state universities today are held by baby-boomers. What happens when they retire, say in the next five years or so, while the salaries they represent are redeployed to new programs and the core departments diminish? Can a university depend for its future on a poor academic job market to fill these positions? Is there a "strategic plan" for these eventualities? Perhaps, it would be worthwhile to make the third model the priority and render the other two subservient to it before it is too late.

## The Empowerment of Faculty who Conduct Health Sciences Research

Roxana Moslehi, School of Public Health

In the University at Albany's most recent strategic plan, among the metrics measuring Research Excellence, we find "Number and value of research grant applications, awards, and expenditures" and the goal of "Increasing ratio of faculty with research grants." To achieve these goals, the University community needs to continue working together to address obstacles and find solutions. When I was awarded my first Federal grant as the Principal Investigator (PI), I felt immediately empowered. Even before receiving the notice-of-award, I was empowered by words of encouragement from the grant reviewers and administrators at the funding agency, the National

Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant scored highly on all categories (Significance, Investigators, Innovation, Approach, and Environment), the words "innovative" and "novel" appearing throughout the review. The sentiments of the review panel were summarized in the first paragraph of the critique letter: "the panel was unanimously enthusiastic about this timely and exploratory project." All this was happening shortly before my tenure vote at the department, which gave my empowerment a whole different dimension.

Alas, the euphoria did not last long! My feeling of empowerment gave way to despair when I faced a major obstacle in getting the University to accept my grant from the NIH and establish the contract and subcontracts, an obstacle I had never heard of nor imagined could happen. This was not because I was research naïve; after all, I had come to Albany as an Assistant Professor following a successful and productive research-intensive post-doctoral training. Before that, I had worked on funded research projects for my master and doctoral degrees. I knew this was a unique issue if I had never encountered it before.

It did turn out to be unique in that the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) concerns about the clinic-based activities of my grant were preventing the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), as it was called in 2014, from setting up the subcontract with the collaborating clinic on my grant. I was told that because UAlbany does not have a medical school, IRB would not be able to conduct a review of the clinical aspect of my project, which was basically collection of blood samples from study subjects at the collaborating clinic [of note, biospecimen collection is done by trained medical personnel working under the supervision of the physician who is my collaborator on the grant]. The director of OSP told me that he did not have any specific concerns about the business aspects of the subcontracts but was not able to set up the subcontract with my clinician collaborator until the IRB concerns were addressed.

These initial interactions with the IRB and OSP directors left me utterly confused! Our research project had obtained preliminary (grant-specific) IRB approvals from the University. The research methodology I had proposed in this grant was 100% in line with previous research I had successfully conducted, and with my 'proposed future research plans,' which I had presented to the University administration on several occasions including during my candidate interviews.

I immediately went into action to find a solution to this problem, and found out that there were other faculty engaged in health sciences research who had faced the same obstacle. The directors of the OSP and IRB later

agreed with me that the standard operating protocol (SOP) for establishing contracts and subcontracts would need to be followed separately from the IRB protocols that govern human subject aspects of the grant, although, paradoxically the IRB director was later appointed as the director of both the OSP and the IRB (in an office now titled Pre-Award and Compliance Services). The IRB concerns were resolved when I was told that I could use an outside IRB for the full review of my project [the downside is that outside IRBs are expensive]. Resolving these issues caused a one-year administrative delay in the initiation of my project, and we came dangerously close to losing the grant.

However, once the contract and subcontracts were set up, everything moved quickly and smoothly. The outside IRB reviewed and approved all aspects of my project in less than two weeks, and my collaborators and I are now in the midst of completing our exciting clinic-based molecular epidemiologic study.

If the University wishes to live up to its research goals, it needs to implement several concrete changes to its current policies. Crucially, it needs to make sure that there are enough pre- and post-award personnel to support faculty research. It also must examine its own practices to ensure that there are no unnecessary roadblocks in the way of faculty's ability to receive grants. And it needs to support the full range of grant-related activities at the University, particularly those of Assistant Professors who are being increasingly judged primarily on their abilities to obtain grants. These concrete steps will help the University live up to its stated goal of becoming a truly excellent research University.

## The Only Future Worth Imagining
Derik Smith, English

I'm leaving the University at Albany.  After six years of teaching African American literature and culture in the Department of English I've accepted a position at another school.  It wasn't easy for me to make the decision to move on from UAlbany.  My experience here has been positive. Many of my colleagues have been very supportive, personally and professionally. They've mentored me and treated me with respect and kindness.  My students have been wonderful.  I've learned much from them, and year after year they've enthusiastically engaged with my teaching.  Despite all this, I couldn't turn down the opportunity to take on a new job at a college that is eager to have me and wants to support my research and

teaching with considerable resources.

I expect to be well-supported in my new job because I'll be working at a college beginning to recognize the institutional value of individuals whose perspectives and professional interests have been shaped by life-experiences long ignored and degraded by the American academy.  Thankfully, colleges and universities are starting to acknowledge the benefits that come to institutions as they begin to diversify their student populations, their course offerings and their labor forces.  Relative to other institutions UAlbany has achieved impressively in this area, and I've learned to appreciate this achievement.  Our administrative leaders seem to understand the need to make the University more representative of the nation and the world in which we live; our academic and professional faculty glimmers with signs of diversity; and our student--an element of the University I cherish—is becoming genuinely diverse.

But it's impossible to deny that UAlbany exists in a world devastated because of the social exclusion and exploitation of large segments of humanity.  This devastation is mostly taken for granted.  We rarely think about the multitude of intellectual, material and spiritual deficits that it has produced for all of us—even less do we consider the great potential of a world in which these deficits are addressed honorably and with justice.  Indeed, the university classroom is one of the very few spaces that, from time to time, allows us the opportunity to calculate and contemplate what has been lost because of the material exploitation and social degradation of masses of human beings.  Sometimes we get a glimpse of a hopeful future when we see these classrooms filled with students and teachers of African, Asian and indigenous descent, with people who come from economic disadvantage, and with those whose perspectives have been forged through experiences of social marginalization.

Certainly, the only future worth imagining is one that offers justice and real opportunity to everyone, and especially to those who bear the heaviest burdens of history.  Right now UAlbany is attempting to think about an institutional future built on the foundation its new Strategic Plan.  We should be glad to know that at the heart of this plan is a commitment to value "diversity of all forms…and the rights, dignity and perspectives of all individuals." But if the plan is going to be more than the rearrangement of rhetorical furniture, the University will need to redouble its commitment to the constructive inclusion of populations that have been excluded from (and deemed knowledge-less by) knowledge-building institutions.  It will also have to begin strengthening those sectors of the university that specifically contemplate and thereby honor the

history and culture of those who have been trampled in the building of the modern world. In fact, the promise to value the perspectives of historically marginalized people will always sound hollow unless it is followed by support for the study of the history and culture of the marginalized. Needless to say, this study will primarily take place in those divisions of the University devoted to humanistic study, and unless academic departments in the humanities are materially supported, UAlbany will simply fail to honor the mission proclaimed in the Strategic Plan.

The university will authentically pursue its vision to be "the nation's leading diverse public research university" only insofar as it tries to cultivate a diverse professorate capable of leading our students into clear-eyed explorations of history, culture and the workings and mysteries of human societies. In the near term, this effort to attract and retain a diverse faculty will be a challenge for UAlbany because, after generations of exclusion, many forward-thinking universities are now oriented toward inclusion and diversification. This means that UAlbany's drive to assemble a diverse faculty will inevitably stall out unless that drive is powered by a budgetary strategy that allows UAlbany to compete with other institutions that are similarly seeking to diversify their faculties. Decision makers at every level of administration and in the faculty will have to realize that those who bring diversity and energy to the professorate will sometimes be itinerant travelers, positioned to move from one workplace to the next more easily than some other professors. If this labor market reality breeds resentment in certain corners of the University, any plan to diversify the faculty will be poisoned. And, certainly, hiring schemes based on tacit quota systems—i.e. "We're fine as long as we have one black professor in the department!"—will need to be rejected in favor of ongoing and deeply-held commitments to ever-expanding forms of diversity.

UAlbany will be able to retain a diverse faculty to the degree that it can nurture an institutional environment that is broadly warm and supportive. While the shaping of university culture is a multifaceted, complicated business, there are a few practical steps that can be taken to conjure professional milieus that are welcoming for a diverse professorate at a research university. To identify just some of those steps, the University should assess the diversity of its graduate student population. What is being done to ensure that professors who bring diversity to UAlbany can teach and mentor likeminded graduate student scholars? Moreover, what is UAlbany doing to ensure that the next generation of faculty is increasingly diverse? These are only some of the questions that need to be taken seriously if the diversity commitments of Strategic Plan are to be taken seriously.

In my view, we can only dimly perceive the full extent of the social, philosophical and spiritual distortion created by centuries of exploitation and exclusion based on race, gender and other categories. As we reckon with the devastating results of this distortion, we'll begin to recognize that our systems of education, like most all systems of social order, need to be radically reoriented—humanized so that we regard each individual as a mine rich in gems of inestimable worth. The aim to diversify our University is a small, necessary and laudable step toward a reorientation that might help us recover from history and properly value all human beings. This reorientation is the noblest and loftiest project of the human collectivity, and I believe that UUP through its invaluable work on our behalf contributes to this project. While many powerful forces seem to be arrayed against our efforts, those of us who believe in the need for reorientation will work to bring it on, wherever we may be.

## Notes of a Language Instructor on the UAlbany Strategic Plan

**Timothy D. Sergay, Russian Program, LLC**

Formulating a strategic plan for the University including a new "mission statement," a "vision," newly defined "values," and characterizations of "institutional priorities," a plan that honestly reflects extensive input and participation, is a huge task. Our new final draft strategic plan is probably no less presentable than similar texts composed through comparable procedures at peer institutions and obeying the same strict conventions of the genre—one close to the ode with strong elements of advertising and public relations. I read it with mixed emotions, dominated by gratitude that so many of my colleagues have done so much to get this unwieldy institutional task done and behind us, so that we can all get on with our many individual tasks. That said, the first thing to note about the Strategic Plan is how thoroughly, how unmistakably the whole document is magnetized toward economics and the Ur-narrative of American society, the drama of personal success, albeit with a nod toward "the common good." The trope "engine of opportunity" still opens our mission statement, still promising that the institution exists essentially to lift students into higher socioeconomic classes and to boost business and job creation, as in Nancy Zimpher's "power of SUNY" campaign. There is no question about the strictly economic sense of the word opportunity in such slogans in US English. When opportunity knocks, we respond strictly in the hopes of greater material prosperity. Perhaps there is no other definition of the mission of a university that could possibly win favor during budget debates in state legislatures, where elected officials evidently dread having to answer Ronald Reagan's famous question, "Why should we subsidize

intellectual curiosity?" We then claim that our particular engine is "fueled" by "our unique mix" (at least we are not mixing metaphors!) of "academic excellence"—whatever excellence is—, research, and faculty. The excellence of the latter two elements is conferred by the idea of internationalism: our research is "internationally recognized," and our faculty are "world-class" ("world-class" is essentially a synonym for "internationally recognized"). The term excellence itself, of course, like success, is obligatory for today's discourse of academic institutional identity and self-justification. How exactly we can claim that our "mix" of excellence, research, and faculty (all universal elements for R1 institutional identity) is "unique" is left unanswered. Is it perhaps a matter of proportions, then, among the components of our "engine's" "fuel"? Do we run on 62% excellence, 20% research, and 18% faculty? The very question is unfair and violates the conventions of the genre: this is poetry or, if you like, rhetoric: it is not a charter, not an organizational chart. The terms mission, vision, and values are vague, even largely interchangeable, as if by design. We declare a mission with Churchillian resolve: our "single-minded purpose" is "to empower our students, faculty, and campus communities to author their own success." We all gain power to succeed, to be the "masters of our fate," "the captains of our souls." But our "institutional priorities" are then listed in a way that suggests no very "hard" or even discernible internal prioritization: "student success is at the center of all we do," but "Research drives our Excellence," and "Diversity and Inclusion are intrinsic to our success," and so on. Tell me again what drives what, and what's intrinsic to the center of all we do? Couldn't our Excellence drive our Research for a while, if our Research got tired? It almost doesn't matter: the result in any case of all this single-minded application of exceptional resources is surely the salvation of the individual and even the community in socioeconomic terms: it is American success. We are all succeeding, and our aim is only to succeed still better.

How does internationalization figure into this American success algorithm at UAlbany, and what should the role of language learning be in that internationalization?

I asked my colleagues in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures to consider this question and offer me their observations. A common thread in their responses is that "learning another language is the first step in developing intercultural awareness and literacy." This premise is quite consistent with the Strategic Plan: although it never mentions languages, under "Internationalization" the document promises to "prepare our students to be globally engaged citizens by identifying intercultural learning opportunities for all disciplines" (p. 3). It seems to me that this context is precisely where an

explicit role for language learning should be designated and better articulated. Learning a new language is indeed the very first step toward intercultural communication, and thus the first step toward any "global engagement" and "intercultural learning opportunities" that are not entirely conducted in—and thus circumscribed by—World English. This view of language learning is certainly well established internationally. At Moscow State University, for example, the specialization "foreign languages" was officially renamed "linguistics and intercultural communication" back in 1996 (Ter-Minasova, Iazyk i mezhkul'turnai kommunikatsiia [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2008], 8). Modern language textbook systems are invariably designed to guide students to proficiency in both using a new, foreign, language and negotiating the foreign society in which that language is dominant. Such proficiency entails learning a new "speech etiquette" and a set of "key words" (Wierzbicka) denoting concepts, values, institutions, and practices specific to that society. Such key words are liable to be represented as components of a distinctive "linguistic world picture" and termed "culture-specific" or even "untranslatable." (The thinking behind this view of language and culture harks back to the Enlightenment and particularly Wilhelm von Humboldt.) But my colleagues also note that UAlbany's language requirement is satisfied with only a single semester of study, and thus the progress our students are required to make toward global engagement and intercultural learning beyond the bounds of English is strictly limited. I would add that the scanty formulation of that unusually modest General Education language requirement at UAlbany ("demonstrated competency in a language other than English") leaves open the question of what quality or category of non-English competency we require: strictly linguistic (i.e., communicative), both linguistic and cultural, or perhaps almost exclusively cultural, with only the briefest, introductory exposure to the grammar and lexicon of a foreign language. In any case, especially in the more difficult languages, our students do not gain a great deal of that competency in a single semester. The absence of advanced courses in the European languages other than Spanish at UAlbany also limits our students' opportunities to engage with foreign-language sources in all disciplines, a practice known as "languages across the curriculum" (LAC). This is regrettable for the Strategic Plan, since LAC is a natural, even obvious mode of "identifying intercultural opportunities for all disciplines" and "facilitating internationalization across teaching and research" (p. 3). LAC arrangements could conceivably be made for many cases of naturally bilingual or multilingual students. I have done what I can along these lines on an ad hoc basis. But there is certainly considerable room left at UAlbany, it seems to me, for both greater systematic recognition and scope for language learning, and better defined objectives for language

learning in regulatory and planning documents.

The Strategic Plan invokes internationalism as a marker of excellence and promises to foster "global engagement," and thus aligns itself clearly with UAlbany's tag line, "the world within reach." Unless we simply want to affirm our satisfaction with the continuing status of English as the global lingua franca, a stance of American-English monolingual complacency, then it seems we should incorporate languages more rigorously and boldly into our new definition of success.

## Internationalization: what is it good for and how can we get more of it
**Annette Richie, CIEGS**

UAlbany may have replaced its longtime motto, "World Within Reach," but its sights are more firmly fixed on internationalizaion than ever before. Indeed, internationalization is one of five "institutional priorities" of UAlbany's Strategic Plan 2018-2023. So why seek to become the most international of universities? And what course will we chart? How will we deliver on our promise to "prepare our students to be globally engaged citizens while expanding UAlbany's international visibility and impact"?

I am privileged to be part of The Center for International Education and Global Strategy, UAlbany's hub for internationalization, as the Director of Global Academic Programs. My CIEGS colleagues and I recognize and celebrate that, for decades, internationalization has been cultivated by many allies on each of UAlbany's three campuses. Therefore we are particularly interested in seeing how the Strategic Plan treats Internationalization.

To begin with, we might look at where things stand today. We see internationalization across the University, including in the form of
* hundreds of globally-focused courses, integrated into various Majors and Minors
* sustainable community engagement projects throughout the Caribbean, led by UAlbany faculty
* Fulbright Scholars in the School of Social Welfare and the Honors College, to name just two
* dozens of articles/books co-authored/edited by UAlbany faculty and their international colleagues
* the School of Public Health's International Night, and Languages, Literatures, and Cultures' Francophone Day, both held last month
* International Celebration, which honors all graduating international students and students who studied or interned abroad, departing international scholars and exchange students
* Humanities and Social Science classroom learning

outcomes revolutionized through Collaborative Online International Learning (with the SUNY COIL Center)
* the new Global Distinction, which blends interdisciplinary global-oriented coursework, language training, and international immersion into every Major offered at UAlbany, and guides undergraduate students to where and when to study and intern abroad
* two National Science Foundation Partnership in International Research and Education (NSF PIRE) grants awarded to Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences in support of graduate, and undergraduate research collaborations with Taiwanese, Argentinian, and Brazilian partners  In fact, there are too many other equally valuable examples of UAlbany faculty, administrators, and students internationalizing research, education, and community engagement to mention here.

Where, then, does the Strategic Plan want to take us? To loosely paraphrase the Strategic Plan's goals for  internationalization involve (1) interdisciplinary curricular internationalization: weaving global learning outcomes and experiences into all disciplines (2) fomenting and sustaining international collaborative research and teaching opportunities for faculty, and (3) guaranteeing access, quality, and future career prospects for students in the process (through study/research/service/internships abroad, language and dual degree programs, virtual exchange, and international student services).

If the Strategic Plan as a whole contains elements of "business as usual" alongside some welcome calls for "institutional cultural change,"  the tenets of the internationalization institutional priority are no exception. Members of our university community who task themselves with internationalization will continue to bridge real obstacles as well as imagined barriers, now with what we hope will be explicit support from UAlbany's senior administration.

What is an example of a "real obstacle" to internationalization?  Consider a multi-year decline in student mobility (outgoing and incoming) due to familial concerns about security both abroad and in the U.S. This trend is due more to the mainstreaming of xenophobic rhetoric and policies than to the world actually becoming less safe.

What about "imagined barriers?"  These are walls that we erect when we do not actively work together and/or do not value our own or others' contributions.  Many faculty, administrators, and students are engaged in the everyday business of internationalization.  But some may not realize that they are, that there are many others like them and that there is untapped support at the ready.

There has also been a history of "institutional barriers," at UAlbany, as a public research university that is part and

parcel of both SUNY and New York State's megabureaucracies. Regardless of the Strategic Plan's goals, underfunding and other forms of inattention to ongoing internationalization initiatives threaten our collective success. We need, for instance, to support our international students with increased services to help them succeed in their coursework. At the undergraduate level, international student enrollment and satisfaction are currently on an upswing, but sustaining these requires constant effort. And we need to provide support for our students to encourage them to study abroad—including increased offerings in foreign languages and cultures. Without the necessary resources and personnel, and without real and frequent collaboration with a wide range of university stakeholders, CIEGS' efforts to support international research teams, innovative teaching, and broad student access to international study and research cannot reach their full potential. We need an "institutional culture change" to follow up on each of the publicly stated "institutional priorities." We need collaborative actions and assessments as well as ongoing institutional commitment. Let's continue to internationalize UAlbany together and remind our leaders what we need to keep the ball rolling.

## Student Success
### George Robinson, Biology

Under the category of Student Success, three goals are stated, and as stated they deserve some scrutiny, particularly the two directed at undergraduate education. Both emphasize the undergraduate "experience," as enhanced by "experiential education" and broadened by "interdisciplinary programs." Details are said to be forthcoming, but even without them, this part of the Strategic Plan seems driven by marketing rather than academic achievement. We owe our students our best efforts to promote academic success, and that includes testing new approaches that include experiential learning and engagement outside the classroom – but as learners, not consumers. A more fundamental challenge for public universities is to serve a broad array of learners – some are ready to jump into advanced scholarly pursuits, while others can use more help to reach their full potential. All of our students are owed inclusion into higher-level, rigorous learning, to build strong analytical, and investigative, and deliberative skills. Engagement and experience are two of the pathways to these loftier goals, not end points. UAlbany faculty members are dedicated to foster learning, not entertainment, and I hope they will be given a fuller opportunity to contribute to the Strategic Planning process.

The stated desire for interdisciplinary undergraduate

programs also rings hollow, but for different reasons. In the first place, students at the undergraduate level need a mix of breadth and focused learning. Engaging a discipline in depth is a valuable component of learning, one we should be careful to avoid diluting over the brief period available to juniors and seniors. Second, even at the graduate level, many so-called multi- or interdisciplinary programs are not much more than smorgasbords of coursework with little, if any, real cross-talk between academic units. Sharp graduate students are able to navigate such programs successfully, but most undergraduates would need considerable guidance. And what about faculty? Incentives to cross disciplines are not in place, so individual professors and departments who do cross those borders are taking on risks without commensurate recognition or reward. Prior to investing in new undergraduate "interdisciplinary" programs, UAlbany (like many of its counterparts) needs to evaluate its actual capacity to foster interdisciplinary training. For UUP members, this is a workplace issue, and they need fuller participation. Union representatives are ready and willing to work with the university to overcome systemic constraints, in order to gain fair treatment for faculty who risk crossing disciplines in the interests of student success.

## A Strategic Plan Without Graduate Students
### Jessica Manry, PhD Candidate

Though the first "institutional priority" of UAlbany's "Strategic Plan 2018-2023" tells us that "student success is at the center of all we do," it is worth pointing out that graduate students are noticeably absent from the Plan. (A quick search for "graduate students" in the Plan turns up a total 2 results.) For this reason, it is critical to ask not only who, exactly, constitutes the "we" of the Plan, but also how UAlbany intends to move forward (strategically) as a comprehensive public research university without a concrete strategy for graduate education.

Unintentionally, it seems, the Plan illuminates the university's struggle to consider the reality of graduate education at UAlbany. Some of the difficulty, perhaps even confusion, surrounding graduate students arises from the multiple but also nebulous roles that they are asked to play at any given moment in the structure of the university; they are, often at once, researchers, teachers, employees, and students. I place the latter role last for rhetorical as well as realistic reasons: graduate students are first and foremost students, but this is often forgotten in much of the day-to-day of what they do for and at the university. This is particularly true, I think, for Ph.D. candidates, whose roles less and less reflect "student" work, and who

instead spend the majority of their time in much the same way that faculty do: researching, writing, publishing, serving on committees, contributing to the health of their respective departments, and teaching. Thus, graduate education is tied to the concept of the "university" not in a vague sense, but in the very maintenance of the details that allow the university to function.

Indeed, so separate is the academic work of the graduate student and the labor of the employee in the organization of the university that many funded graduate students transition to the role of "adjunct" in their fourth or fifth year of study. The result of this transition, from "funded" to "unfunded," from "graduate/teaching assistant" to "adjunct," quite literally forefronts the work performed on behalf of the university, that of the employee. Often, this is to the detriment of the work performed on behalf of the students themselves, that of academic pursuit and inquiry. Without a "strategic plan" to address the current reality of graduate education, this trend promises not only to continue, but to intensify and multiply.

The mission statement for UAlbany's "Strategic Plan 2018-2023" promises "students, faculty, and campus communities" the opportunity to "author their own success," but such authorship is only possible with support from the university, with a commitment to a "we" that includes graduate students in the vision of the university. On this note, I would like to remind the university of the findings of the Blue Ribbon Panel from 2015 and underscore their importance.[1] Those findings, the results of a "comprehensive analysis," offered eight "recommendations to strengthen graduate student support" which we have, as of yet, not seem come to fruition.

If UAlbany administration is truly interested in ways to "open opportunities" for graduate students, then it must follow through on its own recommendations. Namely, the future of graduate education at UAlbany depends largely upon the university's ability to meet the first two of its goals from the Blue Ribbon Panel: to "Increase the number of years of guaranteed funding for doctoral students" and to "Bring all doctoral student stipends up to the market value established by our peer institutions." Anything less amounts to a strategic plan without graduate students.

## The Case for Pathways to Permanence
### Contingent Concerns Committee

As the University moves to implement the recommenda-

tions of its Blue Ribbon Panel on Contingent Faculty, the questions of whether and how to develop pathways to permanency—tenure—for contingent faculty looms large. This has been a pillar of UUP's proposals on contingency, so we devote time here to address objections we've heard to this plan and to spell out the case in favor of such pathways. This proposal goes hand in hand with other necessary measures including raising per-course compensation, providing longer term appointments, and better integrating contingent faculty into campus governance. However, we consider pathways to permanency among the most significant reforms needed to address the crisis of contingency on our campus and beyond.

We begin from two linked principles. First, we contend that tenure is the bedrock of academic freedom and that tenured faculty provide the basis upon which the university's academic mission is built and maintained. There can be no university—in any sense that we have understood that term for the past several centuries—without tenured faculty at its core. One manifestation of the current crisis of US higher education has been the steady diminishment of the role played by tenured faculty. This has at times been achieved through legislative or policy measures that actively attack tenure. More often, though, it has been the consequence of austerity budgets and the modern university's turn toward contingent faculty as a cost-cutting measure.

Second, we contend that the best way, indeed the only way, to prevent the further erosion of tenure is to significantly expand the number of tenured faculty on campus. Expanding access to tenure not only provides job security to the individuals. Even more important, it provides institutional stability and academic systems of peer review that, in turn, ensure that academic faculty can continue to establish and vigorously defend the integrity of the academic curriculum.

Our ultimate goal is to reduce our University's over-reliance on contingent faculty. This will likely happen gradually, but we see a significant opportunity right now. The most obvious place to begin, we believe, is with our current Full-Time Lecturers. In recent years the University has significantly increased its number of full-time, non-tenure-track teaching faculty. This group includes many long-time contingent faculty, as well as a large cohort of newly hired full-time faculty across the university, but notably clustered in key undergraduate-intensive teaching areas such as the Writing and Critical Inquiry Program (WCI) and the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP). This group of faculty has varied professional obligations, but collectively they play an essential role in providing undergraduate instruction for the campus.

1 https://www.albany.edu/academics/files/Report_of_the_Graduate_Stipend_Committee_final_draft_070615.pdf

To be clear, we are not advocating that these employees simply be granted tenure. Rather, we are looking to establish tenure criteria and a process of review that would make it possible for these employees apply for tenure. In other words, they would have the chance to earn tenure, just as other tenure-line academics and professionals at the university currently enjoy, following a thorough, multi-level academic review. It is important to note that most current full-time contingent faculty have professional obligations with heavier teaching responsibilities, and fewer research (and in some cases, service) obligations than most current tenure-line faculty. We would, therefore, be looking to develop a set of tenure requirements that put a heavier weight on teaching for this group of employees than is currently the norm at a research university such as UAlbany.

We typically hear two primary objections to this idea. Most frequently we hear concerns that pathways to permanence will undermine the institution of tenure by creating a two-tier tenure system, that divides research-focused faculty from teaching-intensive faculty. This is a legitimate concern. In our view, however, a two-tier system already exists. At present, though, that system includes some faculty with tenure (or the opportunity to earn tenure) and a growing number of other faculty who, by virtue of their job titles, can never achieve permanent appointment. Pathways to permanence, then, would not create the two-tiered system; it would instead take an existing hierarchy and move a greater portion of instructional faculty into tenure-line positions. Again, we believe tenure is best defended by expanding access to the maximum number of teaching faculty.

The second related concern frequently voiced is that pathways to permanence will undermine the research mission of a university such as ours. Faculty worry that cost-saving pressures will push the university to hire more teaching faculty rather than research faculty, especially in fields such as the Arts and Humanities where research does not typically generate significant external funding. Again, this is a legitimate concern, one that we share. We note several points in response.

First, under the NYSUNY 2020 requirements that the university hire "full-time" faculty, we saw a considerable spike in the number of full-time contingent faculty brought to campus. Likewise hiring patterns for tenure-line faculty over the past decade suggest a notable realignment, with the Humanities bearing the largest losses of tenure-line faculty. In other words, we already see evidence that bears out the dual fears that university hiring will be increasingly geared to teaching-intensive faculty, and that research-intensive faculty will more likely be hired only in revenue-generating disciplines. Again,

creating pathways to permanence would not initiate this dynamic; it is already taking place. But at present the teaching-intensive faculty are being hired without the possibility of tenure.

Secondly, we believe that there are internal limits that minimize the degree to which teaching-intensive rather than research-intensive hiring can take place. Because the university's R1 status remains a key pillar of its institutional identity (see the current Strategic Plan as evidence) it must continue to meet requirements for the number of doctoral programs offered and the research productivity across its many disciplines. Departments cannot run doctoral programs staffed largely with non-research faculty. While fiscal pressures may incentivize hiring fewer research faculty, our core status as a research university establishes limits on how far this trend can proceed.

Finally, we turn to those disciplines (e.g., Arts, Humanities, and some parts of the social sciences) who might be most harmed by the university's potential willingness to hire teaching-intensive faculty over research faculty. We contend that among the most profound crises that these disciplines currently face is an ever-increasing scarcity of national tenure-line faculty positions. Where graduates once entered an academic job market in which tenure-line positions were competitive but available, they now increasingly enter a job market in which contingent employment becomes the only way to remain within the academy. Without a viable academic job market, doctoral students in these disciplines face years of work, high debt, and few prospects. No factor is a bigger deterrent to graduate study in these fields than the limited prospects for academic employment upon completion. In other words, contingency itself is among the primary challenges faced by these disciplines. Although creating pathways to permanence at UAlbany would not in itself remedy this problem, it would contribute to a potential national trend to slowly claw back the ratio of tenure-line to contingent positions within the university. Our university can establish itself as a national leader by expanding its commitment to hiring tenure-line faculty.

There are additional pragmatic arguments in favor of pathways to permanency that speak directly to the interests of both current tenure-line faculty and the institution itself. Tenure-line "research" faculty know full well the degree to which their workloads have gradually shifted over the past few decades to include the administrative service work of running programs, departments, and the university. Increasing the number and percentage of tenure-line faculty would help spread the work of service and faculty governance over a larger number of people, and would be able to draw on the creativity and expertise of a deeper pool of faculty members.

For the campus, expanding the number of tenure-line academics is among the most direct ways in which its stated commitment to student success and academic excellence can be achieved. We've often repeated the mantra that "faculty teaching conditions are student learning conditions." Put bluntly, additional job security and stability will produce better instruction. But tenure-criteria also offer the university a way to verify this, by installing systems of rigorous review to ensure that the highest standards are being met. The benefits extend to faculty, students, and the institution.

Indeed, shifting the ratio of tenured to non-tenured faculty will have immediate and measurable effects on our university's academic reputation. We don't put much stock in the various national ratings systems for universities, but we admit that they play a significant role in student decision making. Consider the ranking methodologies that US News and World Report employs. They place a high value on graduation and retention (nearly ¼ of the total score). Retention, here, means students who stay between their first and second years. Likewise the methods place heavy weight on undergraduate academic reputation. Empirically, they measure the number of faculty with terminal degrees, and the percentage of faculty that is full time.

Increasing the ratio of full-time, tenure line faculty will produce an immediate bump in rankings based simply on the empirical data and will initiate a sustained rise in rankings over time as the composition of the faculty shifts and UAlbany's academic quality and reputation improve. Advertising tenure-line positions will allow the university to recruit more qualified faculty with terminal degrees. Who teaches the majority of those first year classes so important for retention rates? Contingent faculty, especially in programs such as WCI and EOP. Nearly 2/3 of the total undergraduate seats are taught by contingents, with even higher percentage of Gen-Ed and lower-division classes. Provost Stellar has, since his arrival, made a point to emphasize how much revenue can be secured by raising first year retention rates. And, in the longer term, what would be more effective in attracting new students to UAlbany than a PR campaign, aimed at high school guidance counselors, parents, and students, touting the fact that UAlbany has made a commitment to academic quality by ensuring that, unlike at many other campuses, first year college students will be taking classes from tenure-line faculty rather than adjuncts?

Is this an ideal solution? No. We would prefer to see a massive round of hiring at the Assistant-, Associate-, and Full-Professor levels such that our ratio of tenure-line to non-tenure-line faculty reverted to the 70/30 split of twenty years ago. Ideally this massive investment in ten-

ure-line faculty would be mirrored at institutions across the nation, and our current contingent faculty and graduate students would have ample opportunities for academic employment. But we must work concretely from the realities of our present moment. We keep our eyes on a long-term realignment of faculty composition. But we also make every effort to address the current crisis with reform options that are available to us. The university has indicated a willingness to seriously consider pathways to permanence. UUP urges the administration and all of our members to work conscientiously in support of this initiative.

## Same (cont. from page 2)

of education to a student experience that we faculty must then enhance. This is to be done in numerous ways: through service-learning, education abroad, internship experiences, experiential learning and community service. Quite a formidable list! Two issues immediately present themselves. The first concerns discipline specificity. It is not clear that every one of these "experiences" is relevant to every discipline, but the Strategic Plan seems to suggest that all disciplines must pursue them. This issue will only become more relevant as we move into the ominously named "alignment phase." The second issue, however, is what is strikingly absent from this list: high quality, small-classroom sized instruction from tenure-line faculty. No doubt there are excellent examples of all of these innovative kinds of learning, but the bedrock of the University must still be experts in their fields teaching students about their subject areas. Hiring tenure-track faculty, then, is necessarily at the center of both research excellence and student success. The fact that this document can't speak to this issue— and therefore leaves aside, for instance, the crucial question of adjunct teaching—suggests its limited utility for actually improving life at the University at Albany, both for its students, and for its academic and professional faculty. And the fact that it emerged unchanged in its basic structure after such an extensive and much touted process of consultation only makes these limitations all the more dispiriting.

Alignment will now begin in earnest. Departments will be asked to translate their own sense of mission and need into the language of the document. No doubt this is part of the retreat to the general, the movement from specific proposals to "relevant thematic areas." But the underlying assumptions of the document are clear: research is revenue-driven, students are consumers who must be satisfied. These assumptions have not changed through extensive campus consultation, suggesting that though research might drive our excellence, it is the market whose needs will drive the University for the next five years and beyond.

# URGENT

**from UUP President Fred Kowal**

## Private companies selling faculty course materials
### Possible theft of intellectual property: Faculty input needed for union action

It has come to UUP's attention that private companies such as StudyBlue, Course Hero, and Study Soup are posting course materials such as syllabi, exams, study guides, notes and homework questions without permission from the faculty to whom this intellectual property belongs. Materials can be submitted by students and then sold to other students.

UUP brought this to SUNY's attention at a Feb. 15 state-level labor-management meeting and we agreed to work collaboratively to investigate and address this problem. Some UUP chapters have already discussed it at campus labor-management meetings and are exploring possible campus actions, including campus Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedures.

UUP is seeking legal advice to consider possible action on behalf of impacted members and we need to identify faculty whose material has been posted without their permission.

We ask faculty to do the following:

- Search the following websites to see if any of your course materials have been posted **without your permission**.

- Inform UUP if your intellectual property appears on any of these sites—or any others you may know of that are posting course materials without faculty permission.

**StudyBlue:** www.studyblue.com
**Course Hero:** www.coursehero.com
**StudySoup:** www.StudySoup.com
**Chegg Study:** www.chegg.com

To inform UUP or if you have questions, please contact Jamie Dangler, UUP vice president for academics, at jdangler@uupmail.org; 1-800-342-4206.

### Protect Your Intellectual Property

1. Make sure all your work, including course syllabi and other course materials, includes a copyright notice. In the United States, the copyright notice generally consists of three elements:

   - The © symbol, or the word 'Copyright' or abbreviation 'Copr.';
   - The year of first publication of the copyrighted work;
   - The name of copyright owner.

2. Tell students that posting your course materials without your permission is a copyright violation.

3. Add the following to course materials: "Reproduction of this material is prohibited without the author's consent."

**For more information on copyright, click on the QR code at right or go to goo.gl/EUaYtq**
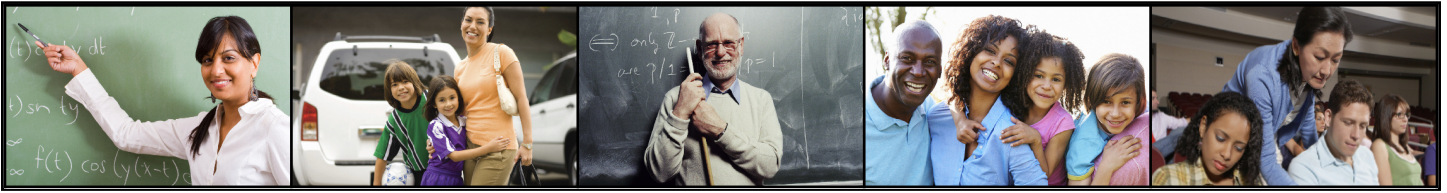
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