

Old Westbury Faculty Senate Meeting
University Senator Report
February 21, 2003

This report summarizes the University Senate Winter Plenary Meeting at SUNY Geneseo (Jan. 23-25, 2003). It includes a summary of reports by Chancellor King and other SUNY officials, a summary of the Final Report of Task Force on Rational Fiscal Policy, and highlights of Committee reports and resolutions. Major topics at this meeting concerned the State and SUNY budget, impacts of proposed tuition increase, and concerns regarding proposed systemwide assessment.

In his welcoming remarks, the President of SUNY Geneseo, Christopher Dahl, stressed the importance of shared governance, an open budgeting process, and the teaching mission of Geneseo and other SUNY Comprehensive Colleges. As evidence of his personal commitment to undergraduate education, President Dahl informed the Senate that he is still a classroom instructor in the area of Victorian Literature and Intellectual History.

1. Report of Senate President (Joe Hildreth)

Advisory Committee on General Education (ACGE): The Senate President announced four appointments to ACGE, which replaces PACGE (the Provost's Advisory Committee on General Education). ACGE marks a change in the process of approving GenEd courses. The vast majority of courses will be approved at the campus level; only those courses which for which there is some "dispute" will be referred to ACGE. Faculty predominate on the 12-person ACGE. There are four appointees each by the University Senate President, the President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and the Provost's office. The University Senate appointees are: Sandra Michaels (Biology) from Binghamton, David Carlson (History) from Buffalo State, Melinda Karnes (Teacher Education) from Fredonia, and Norm Goodman (Sociology) from Stony Brook.

University Art Series: The display of artwork by SUNY students in the Gallery of SUNY Plaza (System Administration Bldg.) continues through this year, with a "best of" exhibit in the Fall. There will also be a faculty art exhibit at SUNY Plaza during this Spring.

Task Force on Faculty Development: This task force, established by the Senate President, has three sub-committees: teaching/research/service; recognition and reward; best practices in campus committees on reappointment/tenure/promotion.

Transfer Initiative: This Senate project is researching the feasibility of common course numbering throughout SUNY as proposed by the Provost's office; examining the issue of learning outcomes within the context of improved transferability; and studying well-operating transfer programs within other public university systems such as Maryland, North Carolina, Florida and California.

Distance Learning: The Senate, through its appointees to the Chancellor's Strategic Planning effort, is studying a model for inter-campus course sharing; simplified payment; intellectual property rights; and military coursework.

Systemwide Assessment: There is growing concern in the Senate regarding possible systemwide assessment. Senate President Joe Hildreth, together with Bob Axelrod, President of Faculty Council of Community Colleges, had a lengthy meeting with Chancellor King to re-iterate faculty opposition to standardized testing and systemwide assessment. Hildreth and Axelrod called the Chancellor's attention to Resolutions previously passed by the Senate and FCCC, which oppose systemwide assessment as being a burdensome unfunded mandate, intrusive on curriculum, in violation of faculty rights and campus autonomy. There is also the fear that centralized data collection (through standardized testing) would lead to inappropriate disclosures that could be used punitively. Due to his very public statements against systemwide assessment, Axelrod said he was contacted at home by Trustee Candace DeRussy. DeRussy stated her belief that standardized testing is needed in order to weed out the "lousy campuses".

Neil Levin Institute: With continuing concerns about how this new institute originated, and whether it is to be seen as the 65th SUNY campus, Hildreth indicated that the Chancellor has agreed to a joint Senate-SUNY Committee to develop the Levin Institute. Joe will make 3 faculty appointees, with expertise in the following areas: International Commerce, International Culture, International Law.

Rethinking SUNY II: At recent meeting of SUNY Trustees, a planning effort for Rethinking SUNY II was announced, for achieving greater efficiencies in System Administration, and enhanced excellence and quality throughout the system. (Note: Rethinking SUNY, the Trustees 1995 report, led to major changes in SUNY's budgeting, operations, and the relation of campuses to central administration.) This new effort will be led by Chair Egan, Trustees Daniels and Cox, and Bob Wagner, CFO SUNY Buffalo.

2. Sharing of Concerns: Sector Report for SUNY Comprehensive Colleges

Tuition Increase: Senators from the comprehensive colleges conveyed the fear of their campuses, that a large tuition increase would jeopardize their enrollment by making community colleges relatively more attractive. Since community colleges receive one-third of their funding from their local sponsor (usually county), they would not be quite as adversely affected by state budget crisis and tuition increase.

Overall Threats to Sector: Some Senators went a step further, voicing concern that all comprehensive colleges are seriously threatened not only by enrollment pressures due to increased tuition, but also by GenEd mandate, and evolving missions of Community Colleges and SUNY Colleges of Technology. Since students may complete most of their general education requirements at two-year colleges, this affects the attractiveness of four-year institutions to lower-division students who have class schedules heavily weighted with GenEd courses. Comprehensive colleges may be forced to increasingly focus on upper-division students. (Support for such a hierarchical structure was outlined in Rethinking SUNY.) The expansion of community colleges and SUNY Colleges of Technology into four-year programs further compounds the perceived threats to the Comprehensive Colleges sector.

Systemwide Assessment: There was unanimous opposition to standardized testing and systemwide assessment. In the strongest language possible, the Sector Convener, Ray Guydosh from Plattsburgh, informed the Chancellor of the concerns expressed by Senators from the Comprehensive Colleges. After questioning the lack of empirical evidence showing that standardized testing improves quality, Guydosh indicated that SUNY's image would certainly suffer if the Trustees pressed ahead with this issue, which would lead to a public confrontation with SUNY faculty.

3. Budget Update: Brian Stenson, Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance (see attachment)

2002-2003 Budget Reduction: Stenson summarized the state fiscal crisis and presented an overview of budget timeline and SUNY's budget request for next year. This year's projected 5% mid-year reduction (applied to unexpended funds for balance of 2002-03 fiscal year) was closer to 2% for most campuses. Stenson indicated that most campuses have reserve funds and were managing okay. There were 1100 SUNY employees who took advantage of early retirement incentive, avoiding layoffs on those campuses participating in program. (Only four campuses, including Old Westbury, did not participate.)

2003-2004 Budget Request: In response to the call letter from the state Budget Director, next year's SUNY budget holds state tax support to the current year's level. Core Instructional Budget is 1.86Billion, with total budget of \$4.31Billion at the State Operated campuses. "To the extent that additional resources are available", the budget request asks for \$18.7Mil for collective bargaining, \$7.0Mil for enrollment growth, \$17.5Mil for inflation and \$8.4Mil for campus development funds. Stenson indicated that such funds are for "campuses in transition", and cited Old Westbury and the Colleges of Technology. Enrollment growth systemwide will be held to 2%, although the "campuses in transition" will be allowed 6% enrollment growth.

4. **Chancellor King**

Budget and Tuition: The Chancellor said that every element of state government will see a budget cut. He cited the need to offset reduced state funding by increased tuition, in order to maintain quality and viability throughout SUNY. King said the legislature is proud of the TAP program, and cited the need to preserve TAP eligibility and to increase amount of maximum award. He said he read most of the Task Force report and found it thoughtful and reasonable (but it would be premature for him to endorse it).

Plagiarism Case: The Chancellor asked for the Senate's assistance on what he termed a "very unpleasant matter" regarding plagiarism at SUNY Albany. Following a professor's acknowledgement of plagiarism and a finding of guilt through the campus' internal procedures, King is asking for Senate input regarding the possibility of public disclosure. He said that sanctions are up to the campus, but wondered whether a public disclosure by System Administration might deter others. Senate President pointed to the Policy on Misconduct in Research adopted on each campus. Hildreth believes that, under this policy, if guilt is determined then it must be disclosed. There were various comments from the floor regarding whether the issue involves faculty governance or terms of employment.

Community Colleges: King indicated that he has resisted pressure from Community Colleges to allow them to become 4-year colleges. Rather, he has permitted Bachelor Degrees to be offered at community colleges if they are "housed in" a SUNY Comprehensive College. In response to concerns raised in the sector report of the Comprehensive College sector, King said he sees no reason why the role of the comprehensive colleges will be diminished.

Systemwide Assessment: King said that if the Trustees want standardized assessment of GenEd and the faculty are saying "no way", he hopes that a rationale compromise can be found. Given that SUNY's resources are seriously constrained, he recognizes faculty concerns about unfunded mandates.

Presidential Evaluations: Last year the Chancellor initiated annual performance reviews of campus presidents. Annual reviews are done "at headquarters"; any faculty input is informal. The five-year reviews involve a professional reviewer and broad faculty input; governance as well as individual faculty are invited to submit comments. All faculty input is kept confidential. The Chancellor cited what he saw as an effective process for faculty input; Oswego used a survey developed by its Faculty Senate.

5. **Provost Salins**

Enrollment Planning: Salins said that future enrollment growth must be tied to resources. A systemwide planning is being led by Joe Filippio. Enrollment models strategies must feed into the BAP model.

Faculty Survey: The Provost's Office is conducting a survey of faculty across SUNY, using a nationally recognized format. The survey data and findings will be put on CD's and sent to all campuses.

New Vision for Teacher Education: Salins praised Mayor Bloomberg's changes in the NYC school system and cited the new SUNY Teacher Education in NYC. His office has produced Guidelines for campuses regarding the implementation of changes in Teacher Education programs. Some existing Teacher Education programs at SUNY campuses will no longer be offered.

Security Issues: There is a new SUNY Task Force on Infrastructure and Cyber Security. This is chaired by Yacov Shamash (Vice President for Economic Development and Dean of Engineering, SUNY Stony Brook). The Provost's Office is also establishing a Task Force on Biological Security.

SUNY Connect: SUNY has been asked to lead an interstate library initiative. Salins said content is very expensive for Libraries, and we need to do a better job of pooling our resources in order to compete with huge institutions such as the University of Michigan and Texas at Austin.

6. **Task Force on Rational Fiscal Policy** (attachment)

The Task Force, which was established in Spring 2003, presented its Final Report to the University Senate. Members of the Steering Committee included Ram Chugh (Potsdam), Task Force Chair, Maureen Dolan (Old Westbury), Task Force recorder, Joe Hildreth, Senate President and David Demarco, Associate Vice Chancellor for Resources and System Planning. Following discussion and debate, the University Senate unanimously passed a Resolution to endorse the Task Force Report.

Key issues examined by the Task Force include: national trends in the funding of public universities; New York State's declining Direct State Tax Support for SUNY vs. increasing Indirect Support (debt service and fringe benefits); SUNY's declining share of the state general fund; the increasingly larger share of SUNY's operating budget funded by tuition; the increasing reliance of campuses on revenues from student fees (which are not reimbursable under TAP); the impacts on financial planning and academic planning of sporadic and dramatic tuition increases.

Major recommendations include:

- Increase State Tax Support of SUNY over time, recognizing that SUNY is an engine for economic development; the percentage of State General Fund allocated to SUNY should also increase over time.
- Create a New York State Higher Education Stabilization Fund, which would provide additional funds to SUNY and CUNY in times of state fiscal hardship, and be replenished during periods of state fiscal health.
- Index tuition annually to a recognized index such as the Higher Education Pricing Index (HEPI) to provide stability and predictability in campus revenues, and to facilitate financial planning for students and their families; increased funding from tuition must not be offset by decreased state support.
- Implement a SUNY enrollment policy to reflect the fact that enrollment growth and consistent academic quality are not feasible without appropriate resources; enrollment increases must be accompanied by additional funding.
- Student fees should be set in an open and consistent manner, with itemized reporting and accountability.
- Amend the TAP program so that TAP award covers broad-based student fees in addition to tuition; maximum TAP award should be adjusted annually to reflect increases in tuition and fees.
- Provide adequate funding for currently unfunded mandates, which impose an unfair burden on campuses.
- Intensify efforts to diversify sources of funding from external sources (e.g., sponsored research, campus based initiatives); such increases must not result in any decline in State support.
- Enhance public confidence and trust by providing open budgeting and reporting by New York State, SUNY and the campuses, in the sources and uses of state and external funds.
- Continually look for ways to economize in campus operations; share best practices among campuses and throughout the system.

7. **Resolutions** resulting from committee reports (attachments)

The University Senate Awards Committee has recommended, and University Senate has unanimously endorsed, the creation of a Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service. This will be a faculty award to recognize outstanding achievement in service to SUNY, the state or the community. Each campus will be allotted one award nomination per every 5000 FTE students.

The Governance Committee has collected Campus Governance Bylaws from each campus and posted them electronically (on a webpage available through SUNY Plattsburgh, the campus of the committee chair).

The Public Information Committee has recommended, and University Senate has unanimously endorsed, the establishment at each SUNY campus of an area on the campus website for the local Faculty Governance body of that campus.

*Respectfully submitted by Maureen Dolan
University Senator, Old Westbury*