

**University Senator Report to the SUNY Old Westbury Faculty Senate
submitted by Dr. Maureen Dolan, University Senator
February 25, 2005**

The University Faculty Senate held its Winter Plenary Meeting in Albany, January 27-29.

Major agenda items included:

Reports by Chancellor King, Provost Salins, Senate President Joe Hildreth, FCCC President Kimberly Reiser and Student Assembly President Stephanie Gross; sector and committee reports and resolutions; and presentations on the Budget (Dan Sheppard, Office of Business & Finance, SUNY System Administration), Digital Imaging (Carey Hatch, Assistant Provost, SUNY System Administration), Library Funding (Meredith Butler, University at Albany and Christopher Brennan, SUNY Brockport) and Strategic Energy Issues (Maureen Dolan, SUNY Old Westbury).

➤ **Report by Senate President Joe Hildreth**

New Budget Allocation Process:

Funding "baskets" under new the BAP are for Undergraduate, Graduate 1 (masters), Graduate 2 (doctoral), Professional (medical), Research and Special Earmarks.

Assessment:

Intended as improvement and accountability. The participation of the University Faculty Senate (UFS), in development of strengthened campus-based assessment during 2004, stipulated that assessment data should never be used to publicly compare [SUNY] institutions.

Upon recommendation by the UFS Executive Committee, Provost Salins has named four SUNY faculty to each of the three "disciplinary panels" in mathematics, critical thinking and writing/basic communication (including Hedva Lewittes for critical thinking, and Maureen Dolan for mathematics; Dolan was forced to decline the appointment due to a prior commitment to a NYSERDA-PSC project). These panels, which also include four representatives each from SUNY System Administration and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, will develop rubrics and evaluate campus-based assessment plans which do not rely on standardized tests.

Mission Review II:

Campus site visits to be completed by December 2005. University Senators and campus faculty governance should be involved in interlocutory process. Major issues for all campuses are niche, distinctiveness, new academic programs and capital projects.

Honors Task Force:

Joint effort by Provost Office and UFS to promote best practices across the system. The Task Force will survey campuses and develop Guidelines for Honors Program Designation.

Levin Institute:

Two University Senators (Achim Koeddermann, Oneonta and Carl Wiezalis, Upstate Medical) are working on curriculum development committee for Levin, whose mission is graduate level programs in international trade, commerce and culture. A Provost has been hired and a "vertical campus" (building in Manhattan) is being purchased.

New University Senate Website: www.suny.edu/facultysenate

Nursing Shortage:

SUNY is preparing a response to statewide nursing shortage, involving the community colleges and possibly comprehensive colleges.

Personal statement by Hildreth:

Last year, as UFS President, Joe sought to improve communication and to increase the influence of the Senate in SUNY.

➤ **Report from Provost Peter Salins**

Update on Mission Review II:

MRII is “terribly important” and all campus guidance documents have been received. Salins emphasized that faculty must be active participants in MRII, including the interlocutory teams. He will communicate to campuses the important role of faculty governance in the process.

Graduation Rates:

A recent focus of SUNY Board of Trustees is the 4-year graduation rates. The overall SUNY 4-year graduation rate of 40% compares favorably to the 41% average national rate of private colleges, and is double the 20% average national rate of public universities. SUNY’s 6-year graduation rate of 58% exceeds the 45% average national rate of public universities and 57% average national rate of private universities. The SUNY data does not presently capture the graduation of students who transfer from the community colleges or between SUNY campuses. Rather than focusing on the success of SUNY relative to private and public universities nationwide, the Trustees say the 4-year rate is too low and have asked “Bob and Peter” to report back to them with an action plan. Many questions and comments followed from Senators regarding what was seen as a misplaced emphasis by the Trustees on the 4-year graduation rate, given the changing reality of students’ lives. Issues that impact graduation rates do not seem to be considered by the Trustees, e.g., students working longer hours, general education requirements and some major programs of study which lengthen graduation time, and decreased availability of courses needed due to reduced funding and inadequate facilities. Provost Salins agreed that resources were an important part of the discussion.

Assessment Update:

Every campus assessment plan has been approved by GEAR. Most campuses have already completed two GenEd assessment cycles.

Summary of situation re. FOIL of SUNY Assessment data:

Six months ago, Erica Rosenberg (Higher Education reporter for the Gannett chain) requested SUNY assessment data. Salins discouraged the SUNY public relations person, David Henahan, from meeting with the reporter, since the University’s assessment data is campus-based and not intended for public release nor for comparison of the diverse SUNY campuses. The reporter persisted, and a lengthy meeting was arranged with Rosenberg, Chancellor King, Salins, Senate President Joe Hildreth, FCCC President Kimberly Reiser, and Anne Huot (Associate Provost). Those present from SUNY gave a detailed and informative presentation on SUNY’s campus-based assessment initiative. Chancellor King resisted handing over SUNY assessment data to the reporter at this meeting. Three weeks later, SUNY was sued under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). An intense period of communication and strategizing followed involving Chancellor King, Provost Salins, campus presidents and University Senate Executive Committee.

It was suggested that campuses provide more nuanced, campus-specific data in a format that could not readily be used to compare SUNY's diverse campuses - and not report the data already collected by SUNY through General Education assessment. Salins said the reporter seemed to be satisfied by the data turned over, but that the Board is "anxious". (As a matter of public record, some of the Trustees have been advocating for system-wide uniform assessment of General Education using standardized testing.) The Chancellor and Provost have obtained external validation for SUNY's current campus-based assessment plan, by soliciting external experts to "assess our assessment". According to Salins, the reaction of nationally recognized experts including Trudy Banta (Purdue) and Commissioner Richard Mills (State Education Department) has been a "great success".

In response to questions from the floor re. Graduation rates, Salins agreed that resources were an issue, and said that "SUNY has not been effective in connecting the dots between resource issues and output variables". He said that Mission Review II includes connection between facilities issues, finance and academic issues.

➤ **Comprehensive Colleges Sector: Sharing of Concerns**

Increased workload:

Faculty from every campus are concerned by increased workload. Contributing factors include: increased advising responsibilities e.g. faculty use of Banner, advising and assessment for GenEd, fewer FT faculty to share departmental duties, and larger class size due to declining resources. Time required for this additional work detracts from time available for professional development.

Low salaries:

Low salaries are a continued concern, with senators from downstate campuses also referring to their higher cost of living. Persistent low salaries contribute to low morale and difficulty in recruiting/retaining new faculty.

Support for Chancellor King:

In view of recent attacks and unsubstantiated charges against the Chancellor appearing in the media and attributed to "anonymous sources", the sector agreed to express its support of Chancellor King for his goodwill in supporting excellence in SUNY, and for his leadership in the fiscal policy/tuition plan. (A formal resolution of support for Chancellor King was submitted by the Senate Executive Committee and passed by the University Senate on January 28.)

➤ **Chancellor's Report**

SUNY Tuition Plan

The Chancellor outlined the Tuition Plan he had submitted to the Trustees, which is now included in the Executive Budget with statutory language needed for implementation in Article VII legislation. Highlights of the Tuition Plan:

- Effective for 2005-06 academic year, the tuition rate for resident undergraduate students would be frozen for the defined term of their degree program.
- Beginning with 2006-07 academic year, tuition rate for incoming resident undergraduate students would increase by an appropriate economic index then be frozen for four years.

(Note: use of HEPI index was recommended by the University Senate Task Force on Rational Fiscal Policy, in its January 2003 final report.)

- Incremental revenue from indexed tuition increases would be reinvested in FT tenure-track faculty, equipment, scholarships, and other areas to enhance students' academic experience
- Higher incremental tuition for doctoral campuses is authorized.
- Freezing tuition levels would be contingent upon the State covering the growth in the University's mandated fixed costs (labor contracts, energy, government mandates, etc.).

Academic Bill of Rights:

Trustee DeRussy has proposed that the Trustees adopt an "Academic Bill of Rights" which would require, among other things, "balance" in the political views of speakers on SUNY campuses (see attached). In his remarks to the University Senate, Chancellor King stated that Trustees DeRussy and Egan wish to "influence" the selection of speakers on campuses, but that he has refused to direct certain campuses to invite specific speakers.

Budget issues:

Chancellor King said the objectives of the new BAP are predictability, transparency and fairness, together with appropriate financial incentives to achieve goals accepted across SUNY. (Note: some portion of campus funding under new BAP will be merit-based, in accordance with performance indicators to be specified.)

King said a high priority must be reversing the trend in the decrease of full-time tenure-track faculty. The proposed Tuition Plan may provide additional resources to campuses to help fund faculty lines and faculty development. He said faculty salaries, class size and morale are all tied to financial resources.

The Chancellor also commented on the release of SUNY assessment data to the reporter for Gannett chain, reinforcing Provost Salins' statements regarding the very positive evaluation of SUNY's campus-based assessment by external experts.

Mission Review II:

Chancellor King said he is very "comfortable" directing the Provost to ensure that faculty governance be included in the interlocutory process and site visits. "Otherwise, it is a waste of time if there is no faculty governance support".

Health Science Centers and Hospitals:

There is a possibility of changing the status of the SUNY Health Science Centers and Hospitals to Public Benefits Corporation; this is more probable now than four years ago.

Emergency Capital Funds:

In response to a question about emergency repairs needed for the ship at Maritime, King said that the Executive Budget restored a \$30 million lump sum in SUNY emergency capital funds. In response to a subsequent question about use of such emergency funds for repair of the Academic Village on the Old Westbury campus, King said he hasn't yet decided what to do about that, since \$30 million is not nearly enough for all that is needed.

PRESENTATIONS

- **SUNY Budget Report** by Dan Sheppard (SUNY Office of Business and Finance).
Division of the Budget projects budget gaps in the New York State budget of up to \$5.8Billion in 2006-07 and \$5.6Billion in 2007-08.

SUNY 2005-06 All-Funds budget:

Estimated at \$8.7Billion, about \$400Million above 2004-05. The All-funds budget has grown 65% over the past decade, principally due to increases in research grants, endowment revenues and improved hospital revenues. Highlights of All-Funds budget:

- Rising costs especially due to energy and collective bargaining
- \$500 tuition increase
- EOP cut in half (by \$8Million) effecting 8000 students in SUNY. The Executive Budget says that direct state aid was never the intent of the program
- Tuition guarantee (see Chancellor's report)
- \$234.4 Million provided for new capital projects; the existing multi-year capital plan has been re-authorized.
- \$50Million provided for University-wide projects

Core Instructional Budget (combination of state tax dollars and tuition revenue):

Increase from \$1.98 to \$2.05 Billion in 2005-06, primarily due to assumed \$500 "across the board" tuition increase, which will generate approximately \$85 Million. For the second year, Executive Budget includes state tax dollar funding for centrally budgeted fringe benefits in the core instructional budget, which will increase by \$110.8 Million (from \$757.3 to \$868.1 Million).

PAC T (Partnership to Accelerate Completion Time):

Incentive for "timely completion" for Associates and Bachelors.

Campuses awarded \$500 for each bachelors degree and \$250 for each associates degree student who "graduates on time". Campuses will guarantee availability of courses

PACT is mandatory for SUNY and CUNY; voluntary for private institutions.

- **Digital Images and Electronic Assets:** report by Carey Hatch (Assistant Provost for Library and Information Services)

Elsevier:

SUNY has signed a 5-year agreement for Science Direct to make available 1835 titles electronically system-wide; all paper subscriptions to be dropped during the next five years. Cost to SUNY of \$30Million over next 5 years. Hatch said that, at current funding levels for journal acquisition, SUNY would be unable to maintain access after 2009.

ARTstor:

With funding from the Mellon Foundation, SUNY acquired 500,000 virtual art (digital images), available at www.artstor.com. Provost's Office Library Services paid a one-time fee; campuses will pay annual access fees.