

University Faculty Senate: 185th Plenary Session – Spring 2020
April 17, 2020 – Virtual Session

Reports given by UFS President Gwen Kay, Chancellor Kristina Johnson, Provost Laursen

Major Topics the Plenary Session

2020-20210 Budget

- The Governor’s budget is set. SUNY received some of the funding requested, such as:
 - SUNY received \$550 million for critical maintenance;
 - \$50 million per SUNY hospital;
 - \$2.5 million for EOP, campus childcare services, and mental health programs;
 - PRODiG hires will continue to be funded next academic year (Chancellor Johnson)
- **NOTE:** Community colleges’ funding model changed from “floor” model, based on the cost to run campuses to fulltime enrollment (FTE) model. This is problematic because many CC students attend part-time. Expected loss of ap. \$18 million.
- SUNY Admin is waiting to see what the budget and tax revenues look like before making further decisions. Chancellor Johnson is recommending no personnel hires for the immediate future. Top priorities for such hires should be safety and student success. Budget planning guidance has been sent to campus presidents re: cuts in their campus budgets. According to Chancellor Johnson:
 - Best case scenario – no cuts;
 - Base case – there will be some money cut from a campus’ budget (probably at least 10% minimum);
 - Worst case scenario – a larger amount of money (up to 25%) will be cut from a campus’ budget.
- According to UFS President Kay, “no one knows how this will really play out”, and Chancellor Johnson recommends campuses be very conservative “with every dollar” spent.

COVID-19: *The Main Event* – COVID-19 Issues / SUNY’s COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 took over SUNY system’s priorities this Spring, as Governor Cuomo instituted the NY Pause policy and SUNY system shifted to remote learning.

- Governor Cuomo chose SUNY Old Westbury and Stony Brook University as sites for temporary hospitals spaces, or, alternate care facilities. Stony Brook is also another site for COVID-19 testing.
- 927 students were overseas in study abroad programs this spring semester. 816 students returned home between March 7th (students in Italy) and March 9th (students in Korea and Japan). If warranted, they were first taken to South Hampton and SUNY Brockport for

social isolation for two weeks. The remaining 111 students studying overseas chose to stay in place abroad.

- SUNY made the decision to allow early graduation for medical students in late April so that they can “join the COVID fight.”
- 50% of funding coming to campuses addressing COVID -19 matters and providing support are federal funds from the CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (lobbied for by SUNY and UC Chancellors Johnson and Napolitano). SUNY received \$300 million dollars (Chancellor Johnson). These funds have been/are being used for students, and any resources they need as a result of COVID-19, including academic-related support, housing and child care. For example: Tech support: 7000 laptops and 1800 Chromebooks were loaned to students.
- Across all SUNYs, except for graduating seniors, students are to be given credits for housing and meal plans paid for this spring that have gone unused since students were sent home (or for about half of the semester). Graduating seniors are to be refunded the difference.
- Requirements for **Excelsior scholarships** this year have been “eased” to accommodate COVID-19’s impact.
 - Students do not need to complete 30 credits (for the academic year) to get their Excelsior scholarship renewed. Students must inform Financial Aid if their credit deficit is due to COVID-19 impact.
 - **NOTE:** President Trump announced a three-month freeze on student loan repayments for federal student loans.
- Given the shift to remote instruction, NY State Education Department (SED) has “relaxed” requirements for **applied/experiential learning courses** taken by graduating seniors this spring, if the course is at least 50% online. Programs are also submitting proposals to SED re: alternative activities that may substitute for approval.
- Summer sessions will be mostly/totally online for many SUNY campuses. Some campuses will have to deliver a heavier load to graduating seniors.
- This summer 2020, **Global COIL Commons program** will replace Summer Abroad/overseas programs, for students and faculty.
- Many **high school applicants** have either not been able to take standardized tests, especially SATs and ACT, or there has been a delay in receiving their scores. SUNY is using a special admission policy this spring, where students without test scores will be evaluated looking at other measures. (**NOTE:** The test-optional resolution passed by the UFS last year is still under discussion by SUNY administration.)
- As of April 17th (the day of the plenary session), 154 SUNY students, faculty and staff were known to have tested positive for COVID-19.

Additional Concerns/Recommendations

- **Re: Academic Assessment:** Any and all changes in our academic assessment procedures due to COVID-19 should be documented and explained – including if specific assessments did not occur.
- **Re: Tenure and Promotion:** Given the cancellation of conference and workshops this spring, the closing or limited use of research labs, and cancellation of summer research opportunities, *etc.*, due to COVID-19, there is concern over about the impact on professional development. This issue is being discussed among various constituents, including UUP, SUNY Provost, etc. Provost Laursen is working with UUP and SUNY systems on a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on flexibilities of tenure clock, since “one size doesn’t fit all”, and some candidates may need the extension but not others. (Laursen).

Other Business

- **Plenary Votes**
 - No resolutions voted on this plenary.
 - Two votes taken: Election of sector representatives and re-election of UFS Vice-President (Keith Landa);
 - Both votes were unanimous.
- **NOTE:** Our First-Year Student resolution is still with Student Life Committee (SLC), which is now surveying the other SUNY campuses re: their language for first year students. SLC expects to put bring a resolution to the UFS at the fall 2020 plenary session.

Announcements

- Your feedback (comments, suggestions, questions) is desired by UFS President Kay and Provost Laursen regarding your experiences this spring.
- UFS’ Student Life Committee also wants to hear from us – with any feedback, stories, issues that presented themselves, *etc.* with regard to students and their experiences this semester, academic and especially nonacademic. The committee is especially interested in problems that arose for students, including negative acts directed towards Asian students.
- Numerous resources (links) were given at the plenary – to assist faculty, staff and students. These will be posted on our website.

Respectfully submitted,

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University Faculty Senator