University Faculty Senator's Report: Spring Plenary Session (U Buffalo)

1. SUNY Financial Strain/Campus Closings?

This question of whether there were plans to close any SUNY campuses was posed to Gwen Kay, UFS President (as it has been at both of the sessions I attended this year). Her response was more definitive this spring:

- No, not in the near future anyway, because campuses are economic drivers for their community.
- State senators are motivated to not let their particular campus close, and will presumably fight to keep their campus open.
- However, two-thirds of the SUNY campuses are "financially strained";

Other financial circumstances:

- FTE enrollment is down in many of the upstate campuses, both CC's and the comprehensive colleges;
- Some upstate private schools are also in financial trouble;
- At comprehensive colleges sector meeting, various strategies being employed by various comp colleges included:
 - o increasing class enrollments
 - o decreasing evening classes
 - o decreasing the number of adjuncts
 - o investing in higher paying students (e.g. graduate programs)
 - SUNY Brockport → budget and planning committee, consisting of administration, faculty and staff that met and brainstormed for over a year on how they could cut costs without retrenching full-time faculty...
 - o some campuses (e.g. New Paltz, U Buffalo) are financing their own new buildings/facilities via partnerships (e.g. U Buffalo → Drs. took out mortgage for their new medical training facility, and then partnered with private agencies, etc. to gain the financial support cf. sports world where corporate sponsor pays for the new stadium, perhaps with some public tax relief, then has the new facility named after the corporate sponsor.)
 - o SUNY Potsdam now resorting to taking loan \$ as a source of funding!

Impact of Excelsior:

- o Fall 2017 → ap. 17,000 SUNY students received Excelsior Scholarships
- → decrease in students (esp. FTEs) in the CCs, some comprehensive colleges (e.g. SUNY Oneonta),
- → decrease in FTEs in private colleges as well;
- O However, students who receive TAP or PELL grants are not eligible for Excelsior
 → decreases the percentage of Excelsior-eligible students on SUNY campuses

- AY2016-2017: 104,480 SUNY students were offered a TAP grant; 42% of all matriculated undergraduates received a federal loan;
- Fall 2017: 130,997 SUNY students received PELL grants, and
- Some concern expressed that the Chancellor will advocate for privatizing SUNY (or at least some campuses), but that option was not mentioned at the Plenary.

2. Chancellor Johnson's Visit and Q & A (via Zoom Conference)

- has been visiting SUNY campuses (just recently visited OW) where she meets with the President, President's team, faculty governance leadership, faculty and students;
- had major health scare the previous week (prior to Spring plenary) → has had some impact on her priorities, although her *overall vision consisting of four themes* remains:
 - o energy and sustainability
 - o innovation/entrepreneurship/research
 - o "individualized education" initiative (see below)
 - o partnerships key to bringing more resources to SUNY
 - Cultivating partnerships with private corporations, philanthropic partners, and other sources
 - ➤ (e.g. working on strategic plan with NYPA / partnership with National Grid regarding utilities..."stay tuned")

• Chancellor's more recent concerns/additional priorities:

- o safety of students, faculty and staff from active shooters and sexual assaults;
- o seamless transfer
- o more full-time faculty
- o stability and respect for our university system

3. Individualized Education – Update (Interim Provost Grace Wang)

- An update on this theme of the Chancellor's vision;
- Rationale and Goals:
 - o allows students the flexibility and capability to learn on their terms;
 - o helps students with different backgrounds and different resources to succeed;

> Micro-Credentialing

[SEE: (1)Memorandum to Members of the Board of Trustees from Chancellor Kristina Johnson re: SUNY Micro-Credentialing Implementation (dated 1/23/18) with attached Excerpt from and Highlights and Notes: Report of the SUNY Micro-Credentialing Task; (2) Memorandum from Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development Grace Wang on Final Report of the Micro-Credentialing Task Force (dated 2/7/18); and (3) Ed Bever's Presentation to OW Faculty at Full Faculty Meeting (May 11, 2018)]

- ➤ Academic Advising more facilitative to student success;
 - → <u>Degree Works</u> → Individual Academic Plan (utilizing single, interactive software) allows students to determine their progress towards degree completion, and what they need to complete their degree requirements;)
 - → NOTE: Degree Works is intended to interact with academic advising (from humans)/ supplement not replace it!
 - → Degree Works Usage data 2017:
 - 43 campuses
 - **♣** 230K users
 - **4** 3.9 million logins

→ <u>SUNY</u> → <u>SUNY</u> Transfers

- nearly 60,000 students transfer across the SUNY System each academic year; (Majority: 60% 2 → 4-year campus)
- Degree Works Transfer Finder → allows students to compare Individualized Academic Transfer Plans by comparing degree progress if students were to transfer to one SUNY campus vs. another SUNY campus (Academic History → Search for Programs → Compare Individualized Academic Transfer Plans).
- ➤ <u>Cross-Registration</u> → allows students from one SUNY campus to take a course at another SUNY campus;
 - provides course availability;
 - decreases time to degree completion;
 - **↓** → streamline, standardize, and automate process of cross-registration:
 - new cross registration electronic platform replaced paper-based process;
 - implementation: 52 campuses participating.
- ➤ <u>Re-Enroll to Complete</u> → encourages students who withdrew before degree completion to return to school and finish credential/degree requirements:

 - currently: in a two-year pilot project with multiple campuses; 1185 students contacted;
 - **#** message themes to students included:
 - financial benefits associated with degree completion (Associate Bachelor's Advanced degrees);
 - "Come back to SUNY";
 - academic program counseling available;

- free financial aid literacy and financial aid resources.
- \rightarrow over 80% contacted re-enrolled at SUNY (N<1000)
- Next Step → Scale up of Re-Enroll to Complete program (launched on March 14, 2018)
 - \$1M investment;
 - 29 participating campuses;
 - 3,184 withdrawn students already receiving target outreach (as of March 2018).

Issues of Concern:

- *Nina Tamrowski, FCCC President*: Individualized education plans (aka: guided pathways) may result in streamlining that decreases course offerings at the community college level;
- Anastasia Pratt, Empire State College: There are financial aid restrictions to students doing micro-credentialing → a "policy problem" according to Interim Provost Wang that should be addressed.

4. Applied Learning Degree Requirements by Campus

- UFS Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Committee → Report presenting compiled data (including survey responses) re: applied learning as a graduation requirement for individual SUNY campuses, and degree of shared governance involvement in the policy decision whether or not to require AL for graduation.
- Seven of the 27 (26%) of the campuses included in the report have an applied learning graduation requirement.
- SEE: Applied Learning Degree Requirements by Campus Report (dated April, 2018).

7. Open Educational Resources (OER) Update

- report by Mark McBride, Library Senior Strategist at Library and Information Services SUNY Administration:
- **Open NYS** = collaboration between SUNY and CUNY showcasing and supporting the use of sharing of open educational resources (**OER**);
- Numerous workshops as part of education campaign: 12 in Fall 2017; 14 in Spring 2018;
- 65.817 SUNY students enrolled to take an OER course in AY 2017-2018:
 - o Estimated textbook savings = ap.\$7,460,733.00 (based on national averages);
 - o Top five disciplines utilizing/benefitting from OER (based on enrollments) thus far:
 - math
 - English
 - first year experience
 - business
 - psychology
 - o *OF NOTE*: October 10-12, 2018 → an international Open Education Conference to be held in NYS. Among the members of the conference planning committee is

SUNY Student Assembly member **Evan Rufrano (OW)**, who is forming a student panel to present at the conference.

Issues of Concern:

- Use of OER materials/texts may be questioned by transfer and post-graduate institutions, compared to the validity of established texts);
- Maintaining ownership of original material/work (e.g. Creative Common license);
- More information needed on best practices for use of OER → stay tuned, survey data to come:
- Problem of texts online via OER having different pagination compared to original texts;
- Can OER encourage students to go → library and actually read real books?!
 - McBride noted that students actually do want both options, that is, digital and print materials;
 - OER is still working on this...

6. Resolutions

- Five resolutions that were voted on:
- Two resolutions (*Program and Awards Committee*) addressed eligibility of full-time, non-tenured track faculty to be eligible for (1) Chancellor's Award for Faculty Service, and (2) Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities; ("Must have completed three out of five years of full-time appointment just prior to the year of nomination.") → Vote: Approved.
- One resolution (*Student Life Committee*): SUNY-wide policy for announcing names of graduating students with their military rank at their Commencement ceremony -> Approved.
- One resolution (*Communications Ad Hoc Committee*) to convert an ad hoc committee into a standing committee → Approved.
- One resolution (*Governance Committee*) to establish a SUNY-wide Office of Ombuds Services → Vote: Send back to committee...

7. "Social Media and First Amendment on Campuses Today"

- Panel discussion
- First Amendment rights and hate speech/social media postings:
 - o what we can do;
 - o what we cannot do;
 - o the need to help our students.