

# REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CAMPUS GOVERNANCE LEADERS TO THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

## PREAMBLE

The *Policies of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York* states "The [University Faculty] Senate shall be the official agency through which the University Faculty engages in the governance of the University. The Senate shall be concerned with effective educational policies and other professional matters within the University." At the campus level, the 34 Local Campus Governing Bodies fulfill a similar governance function with the Campus Governance Leaders focusing on local campus matters. Though not exactly the same, the relationship between the campus governance bodies and the University-wide governance body is similar to the relationship between the states and the federal government in our country. Both are essential to an effective, responsive governance structure.

In order to provide greater communication among the Campus Governance Leaders, former Chancellor Boyer invited them to meet with him in Albany when he was the Chancellor. The tradition continued with subsequent Chancellors providing support for the Campus Governance Leaders to meet at the Fall Planning Meeting and Winter Plenary Session of the University Faculty Senate. More recently, the Campus Governance Leaders also have convened during the Fall and Spring Plenary Sessions as well. This past spring, in an effort to provide greater communication and participation of the Campus Governance Leaders in the University Faculty Senate, a motion was passed to increase the membership of Campus Governance Leaders on the Governance Committee and to include the Convener of the Campus Governance Leaders as an official observer at all meetings of the University Faculty Senate with full parliamentary privileges except for the vote. This recent inclusion of the Campus Governance Leaders in the meetings of the University Faculty Senate has raised a number of questions about the respective roles, responsibilities, and relationship of the two governance bodies. Responding to this concern, President Joseph Hildreth created a special task force of present and former Campus Governance Leaders and Faculty Senators to examine this issue and to report its findings and recommendations to the University Faculty Senate (see the Appendix for the specific questions of the Task Force's charge and a list of Task Force members). This report is the summary of the deliberations of the Task Force.

## DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS POSED IN THE TASK FORCE'S CHARGE

### Relationship of Campus Governance Leaders and the University Faculty Senate

The relationship of Campus Governance Leaders to the University Faculty Senate is an important element of governance within the State University of New York that requires



cooperation, communication and, on occasion, collaboration. The need for coordination is much greater now with a more assertive Board of Trustees and the broad nature of issues such as general education, assessment, transfer problems, intellectual property rights, distance learning, and other matters. It is no longer realistic to see these issues as either local or state-wide; they are both. The faculty voice in these matters will be strengthened by closer collaboration between the University Faculty Senate and Local Campus Governing Bodies through their representatives, Campus Governance Leaders. This does not mean that the two entities should merge. Each has many issues to address that are unique to its area of responsibility.

Campus Governance Leaders benefit enormously from attendance at Senate meetings because it gives them an opportunity to learn about the SUNY-wide issues before the Senate. It also affords an opportunity for Campus Governance Leaders to meet with each other to focus on shared campus issues such as local governance problems, bylaws, strategies for dealing with campus administrations, etc. These plenary meetings provide an open forum for regular communication.

This necessary close collaboration would be enhanced by the Campus Governance Leaders attending and participating appropriately in the Plenary Sessions of the University Faculty Senate. The present arrangement of Campus Governance Leaders being invited to all the general Plenary Sessions seems quite appropriate and useful, unless they decide otherwise. One problem with this, however, is that Campus Governance Leaders often need more time to meet on their own as well. It may be possible for them to arrange to meet as a group and share concerns on the Thursday afternoon and/or evening before the Plenary Session and/or to have a working lunch on the Friday of the Plenary Sessions. This would allow them to carry out their business as they see fit and as their needs require, and to respond to current -- and perhaps rapidly unfolding -- events while also attending the various parts of the Plenary Session. Assuming regular Campus Governance Leader meetings at the Senate's Plenary Sessions, separate, additional meetings of the Campus Governance Leaders at other times may occur as circumstances require them.

#### The Convenor of the Campus Governance Leaders

The Convenor needs to be elected by the Campus Governance Leaders themselves. In order to insure that the convenor represents the varied campus constituencies, s/he should probably be elected by mail (or e-mail) ballot at the end of the final spring term of the current Convenor. The person chosen as Convenor should be a Campus Governance Leader at the time of election. Also, to maintain some continuity in this position, it would be useful to have the Convenor elected for a two-year term, though re-election to non-consecutive terms may be appropriate in certain circumstances. A term of office for more than two years might be too burdensome and make it difficult to get someone to serve as Convenor; anything less than two years would mean that the Convenor would complete her/his term and leave the position too soon after getting a firm handle on it. While this may, on occasion, result in the Convenor no longer being a



Campus Governance Leader on her/his own campus, there is ample precedent for her/him to continue in that position since chairs of the standing committees of the Senate need not be Senators from their campuses and the President of the University Faculty Senate is no longer a Senator from her/his campus during her/his tenure in office

Having the Convenor as an official observer to the Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate would facilitate a direct and important relationship between the Campus Governance Leaders and the University Faculty Senate. It would enable the Convenor to present resolutions and to be a more active participant in the Plenary Sessions.

#### The University Faculty Senate and Local Campus Governance Bodies

By designation of the Board of Trustees, the University Faculty Senate is the official voice of the University Faculty to and within the State University. It is similarly clear that Local Campus Governance Bodies are the voices of their respective campus faculties. The role of the University Faculty Senate is to examine, debate, and represent the University Faculty with respect to issues at the University level. An example would be discussions on system-wide planning or on statewide budgeting. The Local Campus Governance Bodies have analogous roles with respect to issues affecting their local campuses; for example, standing committees of local campus governance often deal with curricular decisions, or local planning and budgeting concerns. But in recent times, issues have surfaced that reflect and impact on the traditional local decision making processes of local campuses, yet at the same time transcend the level of single local campuses to produce system-wide effects. A recent such issue is the imposition of a system-wide framework for general education, an area traditionally left to, and implemented by, Local Campus Governance Bodies that has now become an issue system-wide.

Given their system-wide basis and effect, these transcendent issues fall within the purview and role of the University Faculty Senate. But since they also affect traditional campus-related decisions and decision processes, they also fall within the purview and role of the Local Campus Governance Bodies. Such issues are potentially dangerous and highlight the need for coordination between the University Faculty Senate and Local Campus Governance Bodies, primarily through their Campus Governance Leaders. Otherwise, there is a risk of both wasting energy and resources and the possibility of the existence, intended or not, of a divide-and-conquer strategy that dilutes the faculty's voice on system-wide matters. But such transcendent issues also present an opportunity arising from the potential strength of the combined and coordinated efforts of both the University Faculty Senate and the Local Campus Governance Bodies. The key determinant of which eventuality prevails lies in communication, coordination, and cooperation between the two levels of governance within the State University of New York.

Several structural strategies would facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation. One set of strategies needs to be taken at the system level—the level of the University Faculty Senate. Another set of strategies needs to be taken at the level of Local Campus Governance. At a system level, local Campus Governance Leaders need to continue to have opportunities to meet together to discuss common concerns, whether these concerns are about common local issues or about transcendent issues. In addition, local Campus Governance Leaders need to have a means for bringing their concerns to the University Faculty Senate. At the local levels, there need to be structures in place to allow and facilitate communication from the University Faculty Senate back to Local Campus Governance Bodies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force recommends the following actions that incorporate some ideas mentioned in the discussion above and some additional ideas that emerged from its deliberations.

#### A. For the University Faculty Senate:

1. Campus Governance Leaders continue to meet together several times each year at the three plenary meetings of the University Faculty Senate.
2. At the Plenary Sessions, Campus Governance Leaders meet together at a time that is independent of meetings of University Faculty Senate committees, sectors, and plenary sessions, so that they can both participate fully together with one another and also attend the various segments of the University Faculty Senate Plenary Sessions.
3. Campus Governance Leaders meet together with their respective sectors at sector meetings of the University Faculty Senate.
4. Campus Governance Leaders report the results of their deliberations to the University Faculty Senate through the Convenor independently of the standing committee and sector reports.
5. The convenor of the Campus Governance Leaders be an official observer to the University Faculty Senate and its Executive Committee.
6. The Governance Committee consider common local operational concerns brought to it either by the Campus Governance Leaders or the University Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
7. Reports and actions of the University Faculty Senate be sent to the Campus Governance Leaders.



B. For Local Campus Governance:

1. The local University Faculty Senators be members of Local Campus Governance Bodies and their Executive Committees.
2. The local University Faculty Senators routinely provide reports emanating from the University Faculty Senate Plenary Sessions to Local Campus Governance Bodies, their Executive Committees, and campus faculty.
3. The Convenor of the Campus Governance Leaders be elected by mail (or e-mail) ballot for a two-year term at the end of the spring term of the current Convenor. Re-election to non-consecutive terms may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

## APPENDIX

### Charge to the Task Force

In order to strengthen our relationship with the local governance organizations and to avoid a duplication of effort, this task force is being formed. The group is asked to develop a set of guidelines by March 15, 2002 that define and clarify the relationship of the Campus Governance Leaders to the University Faculty Senate. Suggested questions for discussion :

*[Questions about the Relationship between the University Faculty Senate and the Campus Governance Leaders]*

- 1) What is the relationship of the local governance leaders to the University Faculty Senate?
- 2) What is the reason for their attendance at University Faculty Senate meetings?
- 3) Which meetings should they attend?
- 4) Which portions of the University Faculty Senate meetings should the Campus Governance Leaders participate in?
- 5) When should the Campus Governance Leaders meet separately?
- 6) What is the purpose of their separate meetings?

*[Questions about the the position of the Convenor of the Campus Governance Leaders]*

- 7) How and when is the Convenor of the Campus Governance Leaders elected?
- 8) How long is the term of the Convenor?
- 9) What is the relationship of the Convenor to the University Faculty Senate?

*[Questions about the relationship between the University Faculty Senate and the Local Campus Governance Bodies]*

- 10) What procedures should be taken in order to avoid redundancy?
- 11) What is the relationship of the Campus Senate to the University Faculty Senate?

### Task Force Members

Vincent Aceto, Albany—Past Senate President; Chair, Public Information Committee; Co-editor, *Faculty Senate Bulletin*

Jan Factor, Purchase—Past Convenor of the Campus Governance Leader; former Campus Governance Leader

Norman Goodman, Stony Brook—Chair of the Task Force; Senator; Co-editor, *Faculty Senate Bulletin*; Student Life Committee; former Campus Governance Leader

Raymond Guydosh, Plattsburgh—Senate Executive Committee, Senator, Campus Governance Leader

Lorraine Horner, Delhi—Chair, Student Life Committee; former Campus Governance Leader

David King, Oswego—Campus Governance Leader

Daniel Murphy, Utica/Rome—Chair, Governance Committee; former Campus Governance Leader

Carl Wiezalis, Syracuse HSC—Senator; former Campus Governance Leader