**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, November 14, 2014**

Senators Presents: Kathleen Velsor (Chair Presiding.), Fernando Guerrero (Vice-Chair/ML), Robert Gero (Secretary/Treasurer/VA), Minna Barret (University Senator), Kathie Greenberg (Senator at-Large), Lisa Whitten (Senator At-Large), Costas Hadjicharalambous (Senator At-Large), Caroline Sawyer (University Senator Alternate/Senator At-Large), Ana Martinez (Professional), Camilla Swasey (SGA), Curt Friehs (Library), Lingxian Li (Accounting), Shalei Simms (MMF Dept.), Jeanne Shimizu (Adolescence Education), Samara Smith (American Studies), Manya Mascareno (Biological Studies), Michael Colaneri (Chemistry & Physics), Amara Graf (English), Juan Galvis (H&P), Yogesh More (Math/CIS), Edislav Manetovic (PEL), Ashlee Lien (Psychology Alternate), Amanda Shigihara (Sociology), Cary Lange (CAP Committee), Ryoko Yamamoto (TLRC), Jacob Heller (FRR Committee).

Senators Absent: Vacant (At-Large Representative to EC.), Alonzo McCollum (Professional), vacant (Professional), Frank C. Ilozue (SGA), vacant (Student Gov’t. Assoc.), Laura Anker (First Year Experience), Stephanie Schneider (Childhood Education), Diana Sukhram (Exceptional Education), Shijian Li (Public Health), Cary Lange (CAP Com.), Chris Hobson (ARPT Com.), Zenaida Madurka (HLCC).

Non-Voting Members of the Senate Present: Calvin Butts III (President), Patrick O’Sullivan (Provost/AVP), Mona Rankin (Executive VP), Mary Marquez Bell (VP Enrollment), Barbara Hillery (Dean, SAS), Anthony Barbera (Dean, SOB).

Excused Senators: Werner Sbaschnik (Parlamentarian), Nicole Sieben (Senator At-Large)

Visitors Present: Deborah Rhem-Jackson (Assistant VP/Director College Readiness Program), Alireza Ebrahimi (TLRC/MMF Dept.), Rafat Sada (Enrollment Dept.), Myeshia Price(Psychology Dept.), Ed Bever (H&P Dept.), Laurie Morris ( Psychology Dept.), Angel Lara ( ML Dept.), Rajendra Gharbaran (Biological Sciences), Dinorah Martinez (Recording)

1. Call to Order: 12:36pm
2. Approval of Minutes of October 31, 2014

Minutes were approved unanimously after highlighted amendments made by senators.

1. Chair’s Report

* The executive Committee met to discuss SUNY Excel Matrix and we will continue to discuss this today. We met with the RABPC yesterday and Provost O’Sullivan presented The Strategic Reports and copies of the Matrix. The next senate meeting will be on December 5th. We want all the items identified and explained in each section. The Executive Committee discussed sending a representative to the Public commentary of the SUNY Board of Trustees. Dr. Barrett represented OW at that meeting and will give us a brief review of what happened there.
* Provost O’Sullivan charged me with the Student Evaluation criteria and Ed Bever and I discussed using Blackboard. Then after further discussions with the Provost we agreed to create a small committee to address this issue in a very serious way. Therefore if you are interested and would like to participate, please, send us an email. I would be glad to organize a group and by the end of next semester we will have the results available for all of us.

1. President’s Report

* I want to hear what everyone has to say about the SUNY Excel Program. Presidents as well as individual schools will be judged according to certain standards that the State University of New York sent to administrations. Presidents have been going back and forth on this for about 18 months. We recognize something is to be put in place and we will try as best we can to adhere to whatever that is, however I want to emphasize several things I think are important.
* There is no comparison among the campuses in the State University System. We are all unique. Some are more compatible with each other, but the Old Westbury campus stands apart not only for its diversity, but its commitment to teach students to live in a more equitable and just world. I think that all campuses have to be recognized and not be forgotten by those who try to set some standards by which each campus can be judged.
* Also it is important for SUNY to understand that campuses like Old Westbury will not change its instruction. They should not ask our teachers to do anything that in anyway looks like a standard that take us away from our mission. Our mission has distinguished us in the past and will continue to distinguish Old Westbury in the future. We came a long way and it has been a rough journey in many places but it has been a good journey. I do not want in any way to have to compromise the advances that we have made, the strength of our faculty and our commitment to justice, just to meet some overall standard that SUNY thinks should apply to all of our schools. We can improve our graduation rates, but I also think we do very well when we take a look at our completion rate. Most presidents that I talked to are not necessarily impressed with the full extent of what is being proposed by SUNY Excel. We provide our students with a great education. Nothing is more important than your classroom teaching; however those research grant opportunities will demonstrate that we are meeting some SUNY Excel expectations.
* We are increasing the opportunities for our students to be involved in internships, study abroad programs, and research opportunities. Our faculty members are engaged outside our campus in a host of community involvement activities whether it is fighting against police brutality, fighting for the rights of women, or engaging in political commentaries on unjust policies be it in Municipalities, State or Federal government. Our faculty is also represented in articles and editorials that are published in newspapers. We need to do a better job highlighting to the world what we really do, not only as individuals and faculty, but what our students are involved in too. I hope that SUNY will learn more about what we do at OW as we tell them. I also think there are some other things they are trying to emphasize in Excel that we already do.
* We are very accessible not only for the Long Island community and for those who live on campus, but also for those people in the larger metropolitan area and the Five Boroughs that are closer to us than the city of New York. We are an excellent value and we are marketing it more and more. We have a new brand and we are putting more into advertising, which is paying off. We are part of the SUNY System and will try the best we can to adhere to whatever aspect of the Excel program that is important, but we will not rollover and let them paint us with the broad brush of SUNY wide standards that cannot apply to every individual campus. Because of our mission, many of our students are older and have families and jobs. Many of these men and women wouldn’t have a chance if it were not for us; the compassion of our faculty and the value of our education.
* This institution has been expanding and continues to build its resources. None of this could have been done without the participation of the faculty. We are in good shape and can make our point. I have no problem on speaking out in the presence of other presidents and I know that our faculty representative has no problem speaking in the faculty gathering and administration.
* Dr. Velsor question: Should we request an extension or should we comply with what we have been asked to do? I wonder what your thoughts are.
* President: I think there should be an extension because there has not been enough discussion. We will do it anyway, but I think it is not fair and we are in the position to make a strong case. What we can adhere to and work with we will and what we cannot, we will not at this time. We can adhere to some standards and that is what SUNY excel is trying to do right now. Our faculty needs to go through a process, it may be long and cumbersome, but in the end we will finally recognize the value of having done so. It will come out with something that will not apply to all equally but everybody cannot be judged or evaluated by the same standard.

I am interested in hearing you feedback.

* Velsor question: Should we be identifying areas in the Matrix that we know we are going to improve on, or should we choose something that we know we are already doing well?
* President: It should be both. There are some things we can improve like our graduation rate, although completion should be considered in this also. We can do a lot better in research. We can do better in some areas, but we are doing well in others. Maybe some reasons why we are not doing better are that we can always use more money and hire more full time faculty. We can look at the budget and see what has been taken from us in order to support the State administration so they can impose unsupported mandates. We are running around trying to discern and solicit more views, which takes time away from teaching and they are taking money away from us at the same time. I need to hear from you about your sense of what is happening.

1. Provost’s Report

* Since a number of departments are working on their Five Year Review Programs, I have few suggestions. Departments should actually collect the data and analyze it. You should be forward looking, rather than analyzing what happened in the past. It is truly important for departments and majors to look at the difficulties and challenges.
* I want to say thanks to those that are working on the schedule. Jacob Heller is chairing this group and also working on it is Cary Lange, Ron Welton, Amy Hsu, the president of SGA and Duncan Quarless. They have been spending many hours working on this and it has been really a very helpful effort.
* I want to thank those who have been working in General Education for the last two years: Amanda Frisken, Caroline Sawyer and Lana Barber have been working diligently to move those issues forward.
* We had a meeting yesterday with Budget and Planning Committee. Thanks to Kathleen Velsor. We have been working together to coordinate discussion and prepare an agenda.
* I mentioned the correct action plan for the SAS and SOE. This probably sent the wrong signal, but because there are rumors about this and what will be next, I want to say that I think we should wait until the end of this process. We will continue to have education programs that serve ours students and have the quality that we can be proud of. We had two meetings this week and will have another next Friday. When it is done, we will give the report to the Faculty Senate and to other constituencies.

1. New Business

* Black Board for faculty organizations on Campus (Ed Bever)
* Blackboard has the ability to create organizations. They call the person in charge Leader instead of Instructor, and the people involved Participants rather than students. However, as soon as you get beyond that initial designation they keep referring to them as instructors and students. The leader, not banner, is the one who controls enrollment, where if you want to use a course shell to have as a common space for an organization you need to create a place where you can go. A committee can create a shell where the chair becomes a leader and can populate it with the members of the committee. It will become an online space where documents can be stored, downloaded by people, discussion can be conducted, analysis can be made, and Wikis could be used to create common documents where everybody is participating. Once an organization is created it is like going into a course, the only difference is that it is stored in a different place. It has a robust calendar feature and the organization can use it as a common calendar. You can have links, and also pdfs, which people can download.
* Subgroups can be created where they have access to certain forums. There are discussion forums that can be used to cut down on commuting and gas use, and also serve as back up for snow days. In a case where there is a meeting and something important is happening, everybody can sit at home and work on it. It is possible to work on synchronized communication. You can email different groups or individual so it is a good tool for group communication. It is efficient and allows you to make the work quicker and greener.

It will enhance the campus and allow a better hybrid experience for students.

* If you want to create one of these, there are two paths to do it. One is to email me and I will help you and send you the information needed. I can quickly create it. If enough people want to do it, I can set them up on how to do it.

The other way to do it is to have the senate as a whole decide if they want to set it up as a standard structure for every committee. Committees can use it or not to create a more institutional memory, documents that are generated and stored could be kept from semester to semester. It is for you to decide how you want to do it. I will help you set it up and keep it in use to get the campus to the next level in online activity. This is an enhancement to the online environment we create.

* Public commentary to the SUNY board of trustees (Mina Barrett)

Faculty was invited by The Board of Trustees to offer open commentary at a public hearing on November 6th. The executive committee voted to create a commentary and I was elected to delivery it at the hearing.

We knew we couldn’t cover everything that we need to address about what is going on at SUNY and the way it impacts the college, so we picked six topics that we thought were very essential and one is SUNY Excel.

* At the point we were writing the commentary on Excel, we knew that the University Senate had created a resolution asking for more time for deliberation and the capacity to allow independent units to decide what indicators are important and have them define those indicators. We have been granted that although the time frame is very small. We have to get back to our sector representative who is our college representative. There are four sectors: Community Colleges, Statutory and Technical, Comprehensive Colleges (as we are), and University Centers. In the discussion of the UFS as it is translated by Caroline Sawyer, SUNY indicates that sectors are extremely upset about the timing and about having it dropped on us. The issue of creating standard performance measures on campuses has been discussed for at least eight years. This is the third incarnation of their attempt to get us to agree with it. The first was thru FIAT, the second was through the RAM two years ago and we refused to accept it by sending a resolution to the University Faculty Senate. The financial officer at the time essentially resigned and left the system because he couldn’t institute it.

This is another format to institute the performance Matrix model. Based our sense of the Senate from former meetings, we testified that we agree with the UFS that people want to support the Senate resolution. We want to request that the Matrix should be more flexible, that we should have more control over defining what we view to be success. We want metrics that truly take into account diversity; which is why you can’t exclude income, immigration status and, first generation to college students. You can’t take all this into account when you only look at graduation grades, especially with people working full and part time.

* In the Matrix at SUNY Excels, there is a measure for Financial Literacy. Standard measures for Financial Literacy assume students should come in with a certain income and then come out with some amount of debt, but they complete studies in four years and get a job which puts them in better financial circumstances and so they don’t default on their loans.

What we mean by Financial Student Literacy we need to discuss. We have students doing full and part time who are stretching their dollars, and are going to be more in debt when they get out of college because they are working for their own survival and to pay off tuition, books, and transportation. They came in poorer than the average person in the system. We talked about the fact that student loans in higher education are being encouraged and tuition is being raised. It serves big banks very well because they can keep raising interest rates and decide when the default takes place. We are essentially mortgaging our children or walking people to the banks in order to pay for their education. SUNY has the responsibility to lower tuition and make school more affordable.

* We covered the gentrification of public higher education. Particularly at our college with the inability to fund enough full time lines, we have up to 55% of adjuncts in some departments. This impacts the quality of our education, not because we don’t appreciate adjuncts, we do, but because adjuncts are not required, and are not paid, to be here for independent studies, to provide research, extra help and advising. This truncates the faculty’s ability to develop, deliver and maintain educational quality and to engage in the process of doing that.
* We talked about administration versus academic budgets in public higher education. The Delta Cost Project, which was reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education in February 2014, shows that public universities have had little to no expansion of faculty salaries and faculty lines have been going flat since 2000, but administrative costs in public universities have skyrocketed 40%.
* We talked about faculty salaries differential in upstate and downstate cost of living, and the problem that downstate faculty have when they try to compare to upstate faculty salaries. The Union sets the salaries across the board downstate and upstate, and we have only a very small cost of living differential. Not only that, we had very limited union increases during the last 40 years in state contracts arrangements. It seems unreasonable that SUNY itself should be encouraging such income inequality and lack of income mobility among the faculty who teach students that the university is trying to move into social mobility.
* Discussion SUNY Excels Matrix.
* Once we describe what we are by choosing within Access assessment, then we can talk about the others that follow.
* CSTEP has a high proportion of students on our campus, and is not only for the Sciences; accounting is also involved in this and those programs attract diverse students from the general student population and following across you will see the impact on the other factors.
* Once we have our estimation of the market defined, then, we can talk about how our measures relate to how we serve our market. We have to have a clear argument about what that is. If we look at this SUNY market in general, that is looking at college age students. But not every sector of SUNY represents every college in the same way and as someone who only represent 1% of the SUNY population we have to articulate the magnitude of who that 1% really is, and once we have that, then we can say here our social mobility takes place because here is the market in particular that we are serving and how well we are serving it.
* All of these measures represent viable categories, but our responses will be completely different and should not be subject to standards that are supposedly across the board. We are arguing from another perspective in other words. We have the answer to all of this and we think we are legitimate and strong, and SUNY should accept what we think is a credible completion rate. Access in terms of diversity, research, success. We think we do well in all these categories, and we can do better in some others.
* In regards to graduation rates a senator commented that the same administration who is cutting our budget wants students graduated in two years. That makes it harder to achieve.
* The concern for the students and their progress should not force us to lower our expectations for the students to perform at the highest level. This means that they could need sometimes to come back, because lowering the expectations is the worst thing that could happen.
* Whatever we respond to, it should be on isolated rates, so it would be in the context of those who we try to serve.
* About Research it was mentioned that there are a large number of faculty at OW who are involved in research and other leadership activities outside of campus.
* It is interesting they use the word persistence rather than retention. We can understand you persist in college so you graduate. That doesn’t mean you have graduated from this college, but you graduate and we should take credit for that. This is convergent with diversity.
* Because of the difference between sectors supposedly they won’t expect the same amount of research funding generated across them.
* We have five days to go through all of this. Given the time we have it is better to take the measures we know we are strong in and tell them this is what we have.
* Diversity is the basic mission of this school. We could go to persistence or success rate and ague from that as the measures of our success in terms of our completion.
* I am listening and there is a lot of consensus as we work on this about who we are and we are narrowing it down.
* The president commented that we are not prepared to embrace SUNY Excel. We work along with SUNY were we can but this deserves a much longer conversation. We are not ready to embrace SUNY Excel. We don’t reject it, but need more time to talk about it. We have a uniquely different view because of the successes we have witnessed; our college has done well and continues to move forward. On some of those categories we are getting stronger while in other we are excelling.
* The majority of students anywhere in the state system fall under the category of economically deprived. The vision of our education is to extend down and out. We are trying to produce people coming from a diverse and underprivileged background and send them back to their communities to make a difference.
* The conversation has supported The President in the thought that SUNY Excel doesn’t match at this point where we feel we are and we have a lot of work to do. We should respond in a minimum way.

The president added maybe there are some areas we can find a common ground. I think it would be helpful to be able to express a more comprehensive ideological position on why.

1. Old Business

* At Large Representative to the Executive Committee election.

No nominee.

-Adjournment 2:35 PM