

**Report of the University Faculty Senator  
151<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting  
SUNY Morrisville  
February 5-7, 2009**

**Announcements**

- The University Faculty Senate's 151<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting was dominated by the discussion of the new chancellor and of the budget crisis. By now, you all know that Nancy Zimpher, a teacher-educator, and former president of the University of Cincinnati, has accepted the position at a salary equivalent to \$540,000 per year. Carl Weizalis, the president of the University Faculty Senate, served as the faculty representative on the search committee.
- In honor of SUNY's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the university is hosting a scholarly conference on the history of SUNY on April 3-5 at the University at Albany. One of New Paltz's eminent scholars, Gerald Benjamin, is on the program. The registration deadline is March 16<sup>th</sup> and can be completed at the following site, [www.suny.edu/provost/2009ScholarlyConference.cfm](http://www.suny.edu/provost/2009ScholarlyConference.cfm)

A pdf copy of the conference brochure is attached to this message.

- The University Faculty Senate has formed a committee, under the leadership of Janet Nepkie of SUNY Oneonta, to study the possibility of more involvement for the faculty and the university in the field of ethics. The committee is titled, Committee on Professional Behavior, Ethical Conduct, and Institutional Integrity. They will be sending out three surveys, with the first one coming to everyone on the 27 state-operated campuses. It will be a three-stage effort:
  1. Survey to Identify Existing Ethics Concerns – to all SUNY Sectors to ascertain existing concerns and top plan seminars, webinars or other programs.
  2. Survey to Identify Existing Ethics Policies – to all CAO's in early summer.
  3. Establishment of a SUNY Ethics Institute with a website similar to those on many other campuses.

The committee has found that SUNY is behind other universities in this area. Many already have such institutes, some for decades.

- The Senate is also forming sustainability focus groups to advise the Senate on how faculty can support sustainability across the university. The University Faculty Senate is seeking nominations for leaders of these groups. SUNY is the largest consumer of energy in the state of New York. Focus group themes will include: Science, Technology, and Engineering, Education, Social Justice and Global Issues, Policy and Law, Economics, Finance and the business of Energy, Buildings, and

Physical Plant Operations, Service Learning, Community Outreach, and Volunteerism, Health.

- There is a new transfer and articulation website, as ordered by the Board of Trustees and finalized by the Joint Committee on Transfer and Articulation. Its address is: <http://www.suny.edu/student/cmpCreditEquiv/>

## **Budget**

Jim Van Vorst, SUNY's Interim CFO gave a grim report. The Governor is campaigning for the budget to be passed by March 1<sup>st</sup>, lessening our chances to achieve changes.

The SUNY budget, along with the open letter to the NYS Legislature from Carl Hayden and Carl McCall is attached. It is based on four pillars:

- Proper Funding,
- Flexibility,
- The ability to act on opportunities and join forces with other entities.
- Rational Tuition Policy

You have all heard about the tuition increase and its erasure by the legislature and the governor. The bottom line is that the 90%/10% split actually is more than a 100% equivalent reduction and the net decrease to the SUNY budget of the tuition increase is a \$300,000 reduction to the SUNY budget. We're still pushing for all the tuition to stay in SUNY.

The state did fund the collective bargaining agreements.

OTPS was funded.

The energy funding increase is also in the state's budget. \$10 million.

A 16.5% reduction in hospital funding is in the 09-10 year. Some reductions in Medicaid will also affect our hospitals. In 09-10, the reduction is \$53 million.

The governor proposed that we raise graduate tuition by 21%. That would add up to a further reduction in our budget by \$10 million.

The governor also proposed that we should recoup \$7.8 million that was reduced in our state support by taking it from the Research Foundation. They also want us to recoup funds from IFR and other revenue sources.

University-wide programs are being cut by 50%. Empire Innovation – 15%, Student Assembly – 50%, Levin Institute. There is a net reduction university-wide of \$23 million.

The bottom line is that next year we are facing a potential \$271 million cut university-wide out of our of a \$1.6 billion dollar base next year.

### **Actions Taken by the Senate**

The Senate passed three major resolutions at this plenary. When I receive the final wording, I will send it to you. Here, I will present the wording that I think we passed on the two major resolutions on consultation and assessment, and summarize the resolution on Farmingdale's request for a change of sector.

#### ■ **Resolution on Consultation and Collaboration**

- ❑ Whereas the University Faculty Senate knows the current budget crisis is threatening the quality of public higher education in New York State; and
- ❑ Whereas the University Faculty Senate recognizes that the current fiscal crisis creates difficult choices for New York State and the State University; and
- ❑ Whereas the University Faculty Senate affirms our continued support for educational quality;

**Therefore be it resolved that:**

**The University Faculty Senate calls for transparency and appropriate consultation between local administration and faculty governance prior to any major decision concerning allocation of resources that affects educational quality and curriculum.**

Passed Unanimously

This resolution was the result of sector discussions in which senators voiced dismay at decisions such as 4-day class schedules and increases in class size at their institutions with no faculty consultation. These decisions were made in the name of cost-savings, but consultation remains a necessary part of governance, even in times of crisis.

#### ■ **Resolution on Assessment Streamlining**

- ❑ Whereas the multiple layers of assessment and accreditation in SUNY represent redundant efforts that have often become counterproductive to teaching and learning, and
- ❑ Whereas those assessments are a costly use of faculty time and university resources, and
- ❑ Whereas those assessments represent a significant and real cost to the State University of New York, draining money from instruction and educational quality, and
- ❑ Whereas the UFS is committed to accountability, with evaluations that are efficient, effective, and applicable;

**Therefore be it resolved that:**

**The University Faculty Senate recommends to the Provost that assessment be streamlined to reduce the multiple layers that now exist in SUNY and that**

**The Provost should work with the University Faculty Senate in  
Assessment Streamlining.**

Passed Unanimously.

There is already movement at System Administration toward this goal of eliminating duplication. The Senate supports this reduction in duplication.

**Resolution on SUNY Farmingdale**

**The Senate also unanimously passed a resolution supporting SUNY Farmingdale's choice to move from Group 4, Specialized and Statutory Colleges, to Group 3, Colleges of Technology/Agriculture.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rose Rudnitski, University Faculty Senator

