

## **Comprehensive College Sector Report -- Fall Plenary – Purchase, NY**

The University Faculty Senators from the Comprehensive College Sector met at the Fall Plenary Meeting of the University Faculty Senate in Purchase, NY, on October 18, 2002, to discuss common concerns.

The discussion at the meeting briefly revisited the GEN American History Pilot Project, which was discussed extensively at the previous plenary meeting in April, 2002. This project concerned the development of a web-based American History course that would meet SUNY system requirements for General Education. The course would be developed by a non-SUNY, for-profit organization. At the conclusion of the Spring 2002 plenary meeting, both Provost Salins and chancellor King had agreed to stop all SUNY participation in the development of the course. The Senators at the Fall sector meeting recalled that two members of the University Faculty Senate Executive Committee were to write a letter to the Provost and/or Chancellor thanking them for their response. The senators questioned whether that letter had actually yet been written and sent. The Senators also indicated a concern that the concept behind the GEN American History Pilot Project might resurface in another discipline or in another manner.

The Senators next discussed compensation for new faculty hiring in SUNY. Compensation was broadly defined to include salary, benefits, moving expenses, equipment budgets, and other such items. There was a concern that SUNY colleges remain competitive with other colleges nationwide, but also remain competitive with respect to one another. A knowledge of what types of employment compensation offers are being made in various disciplines by similar SUNY and non-SUNY colleges would facilitate maintaining a competitive position. Recognizing the potential overlap of these issues with those issues within the purview of the collective bargaining agent, nonetheless the Senators thought it appropriate to request that the University Faculty Senate Operations Committee be charged with gathering such data.

Considerable discussion followed on the impact of the current budget situation within the SUNY system. Many issues were discussed; among the topics were the following. The Senators present commented on the effects of the budget situation on their own campuses. Senators learned, for example, that Buffalo State had lost approximately 80 class sections, having adopted a strategy of reducing expenditures for the current year rather than attempting to put off major consequences of a financial shortfall by spending reserve funds as did most other colleges. The senators considered whether the current funding strategies represented by the RAM or BAP formulas were really appropriate for flat or declining budget situations. The Senators reflected on the relative severity of the effect of the budget situation on academic programs as compared to those programs in other categories such as student life or on administrative overhead.

And the Senators discussed the effects of fee increases in lieu of tuitions increases.

The Senators also discussed the issue of campus-based curriculum decisions, particularly in the context of the creation of the Advisory Committee on General Education (ACGE), of the determination of faculty representation on ACGE, and of the remarks of Trustee Daniels which seemed to support local campus decision making on curriculum issues. Several Senators suggested that the University Faculty Senate Public Information Committee be charged with publicizing Trustee Daniels expressed position. The sector chair could not discern the degree of seriousness of those suggestions.

Finally the Senators were pleased that the schedule for the Fall plenary meeting allowed more time than in the recent past for the various sectors to share concerns among their members. The sharing-of-concerns sessions have always been thought to be an important part of University Faculty Senate plenary meetings. In addition, some accommodation for respective CGLs to attend sector meetings would also be appreciated. Of course that accommodation would require that appropriate other times for CGL meetings be found.