

SUNY Senate Plenary Report
150th Plenary held at SUNY Potsdam October 16-18, 2008
Report made to Fredonia Senate Meeting November 3, 2008
Cheryl Drout Fredonia Senator

Resolutions

(1) Resolution on Implementing the Recommendations of the New York State Commission on Higher Education:

Whereas, the final report of the New York State commission on Higher Education recommended a series of actions that would enhance the value of public higher education to New York State by moving it more firmly into the 21st century.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the University Faculty Senate urges Governor Paterson and the New York State Legislature put into effect the ten major recommendations of the New York State Commission on Higher Education at the earliest possible time.

The University Faculty Senate (UFS) passed this resolution and would like the individual campuses to endorse it.

(2) Resolution on the support for the mission and leadership of the Office for Diversity and Educational Equity

Whereas, New York State's public higher education system is among the world's largest, educating more than 400,000 degree candidates on 64 campuses in the State University of New York, and

Whereas, New York's colleges and universities must meet the challenges posed by rapidly changing demographic, scientific, technological and economic trends in order to prepare students to be successful in commerce, science, education, government, social sciences, humanities and the arts, and

Whereas, a well educated workforce is a necessity for the success of our state, and

Whereas, the young adults aged 18 to 29 are already the most ethnically and racially diverse segment of the current population, and

Whereas, by 2028, Hispanic, Black and Asian people will be in the majority within that age range, and

Whereas, the State University of New York has an obligation to educate the entirety of the populace of New York state, and

Whereas, a diverse classroom leads to an enhanced learning experience for all students, and

Whereas, the Office of Diversity and Educational Equity (ODEE) led by Dr. Pedro Caban was created with the intention of meeting the needs of our state and our University system, and

Whereas, ODEE has thus far not been adequately funded to accomplish its mission, and

Whereas, given the current budget crisis, there is a real and present danger of further reductions in funding,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the University Faculty Senate states our unequivocal support for the mission and leadership of the Office for Diversity and Educational Equity, and urgently requests that the Chancellor provide a budget that is appropriate for the importance of its mission.

The University Faculty Senate (UFS) passed this resolution and would like the individual campuses to endorse it.

(3) Joint Committee on Articulation and Transfer Resolution.

See attached resolution.

See report on the Comprehensive Colleges Sector Concerns below for discussion of the issues.

The University Faculty Senate (UFS) passed this resolution and would like the individual campuses to endorse it.

The Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) also recently endorsed this resolution.

Comprehensive Colleges Sector Concerns

The resolution on transfer and articulation was the primary focus of discussion. Joe Hildreth explained to the group the behind the scenes negotiations involved in the transfer and articulation issue. He made it clear that if the UFS did not support its own resolution regarding SUNY-wide articulation and transfer that the Board of Trustees was prepared to take over the issue. The only assurance of any faculty involvement was via the proposed resolution. He also informed us that there is a SUNY-wide transfer and articulation website now activated and on-line. We were told that this information was supplied by the individual campus transfer counselors and should be consistent with campus determined transfer agreements already in place. The website was activated

without faculty consent. He urged support for the resolution highlighting the inclusion of a Transfer Review Committee. This committee would be made up of faculty selected by the UFS and the FCCC who would resolve transfer issues. This was said to be of paramount importance. Without passing the resolution, this proposed committee structure for resolving transfer issues would be lost. It is possible that other structures would be solely administrative and have little to no faculty input. Further, the resolution makes first and second year courses the focus of the transfer process and maintains campus control over upper level courses. The Comprehensive Colleges Sector agreed to support the resolution. This was not unanimous support but a strong majority.

Presentations

- (1) The 150th Plenary opened with a welcome to Potsdam by President John Schwaller, CGL Walter Conley, and UFS Senator Joe Hildreth. June O'Neil, Chair of the New York State Democratic Committee, addressed the assembly. **Carl Wiezalis** delivered his President's report. He noted that the Chancellor's search is ongoing and that misinformation had been circulating about supposed problems with the search. Other highlights included his report on a meeting with Carl McCall, of the Board of Trustees Finance Committee, the President of UUP, and Carl Hayden of system administration regarding the New York State and SUNY budget. Students are now advocating for a rational tuition policy, however, even a tuition increase would only close a third of the expected budget gap.
- (2) **Chancellor Clark** addressed the gathering. He announced the ongoing success of the China 150 Project through which 150 students from the Earthquake devastated region of China have been given scholarships to study in the US. He noted that the funding for this project came from private sources. He also announced that a conference on the History of SUNY was being organized and details should be available soon.
- (3) **Ram Chugh** spoke about the SUNY Retirees Service Corps and requested that campuses identify 4-5 retirees who might be interested in initiating campus programming under his tutelage. Please send me names of individuals who might be interested.
- (4) **Jim Vorst**, Interim Chief Financial Officer for SUNY, gave a budget update. He noted that there is another 96 million in cuts on the table now and that the total cuts to SUNY could reach 210 million. Funding is already below the level the 06-07. He reported that Central Administration is looking at one time items to cut and that there is already planning in place for 71/96 million. There is a special session of the Board of Trustees on November 18 with a public hearing. See attached details. He also announced that there is an effort underway to release the 2009-10 state budget as early as 12/16/08. There is expected to be a special legislative session in November and SUNY hopes that there will be minimal cuts to SUNY and instead that other areas, that have been minimally hit so far, will take the brunt of the latest round of cuts.

- (5) **Barbara Drago**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Business, Industry and Workforce Development for SUNY system administration, reported on the Internet Information Portal Project. This project brings together SUNY, the private universities, and businesses to share resources in support of research and workforce development. Drago shared an example of the need for this. She explained that there are cases in which a company wants to set up business in a region and is unaware of the specialized labor available to them. (One company avoided the Washington D. C. area believing that there were insufficient chemical engineers available due to misinformation.)
- (6) **Risa Palm**, SUNY Provost, spoke to the body about the importance of higher education in New York state. Higher education is New York's number one industry and 77% of our students go to public institutions so that less than a quarter are attending the private institutions. She also noted that New York state is the number one destination for higher education across the country. Such statistics speak to the need to avoid further cuts to SUNY as SUNY itself represents an investment in New York state's overall economy.

Committee Announcements

Executive Committee: Apparently SUNY system administration is undertaking an assessment audit of program reviews or reviews of the majors. The focus is "procedural review" rather than a focus upon findings. Nevertheless, those already involved have reported that very specific and detailed questions have been posed about their self studies. The system is spot checking campuses so the executive committee wanted campuses to be aware of this.

Faculty Senate Committee on Professional Behavior, Ethical Conduct, and Institutional Integrity: The committee is conducting a pilot survey regarding ethics and would like feedback. Senators provided feedback at the plenary, however, in addition the committee would like further input. The committee is interested in Codes of Ethics that apply to particular disciplines as well as the campus as a whole. They are also interested in the procedures used to address ethical concerns involving faculty and administrators. Please send me any input. In particular, I would like to hear from the disciplinary reps about their particular areas.

Highlights from other committee reports will be shared at the upcoming Fredonia Senate meeting under the report of the University Faculty Senator.