

SUNY Faculty Senate Fall Plenary, Oct. 20-21, 2023 (SUNY Geneseo)

1. President Denise Battles (Geneseo) – Welcoming remarks . . . emphasis upon the college’s “Public Ivy” experience.
2. Meryll Tisch (President of BOT)
 - a. Very complimentary comments to our professionalism, etc.. Alluded to the issues at Potsdam in a vague way.
3. Chancellor John B. King
 - a. Remarks
 - i. After some opening pleasantries King discussed the 4 pillars of the SUNY plan he outlined when he arrived.
 - ii. Student Success &
 1. Enrollment – “critical to promoting student success [one of the pillars];” went through what he described as some successes in recruitment of students who had attended a SUNY campus but left without getting a degree [example, if you return you will be able to post-poner loan repayment].
 2. Outlined ramp-up of ACE and ACET (sp?) programs on a number of campuses and other retention efforts. King discussed how retention is both a moral and economic imperative.
 3. Described continuing efforts to improve seamless transfers (this is raised at virtually every plenary).
 4. Discuss Basic Student Needs (food, homelessness, etc.) – encouraged us to visit Hope4College.com where we may get language on basic needs that we may include in our syllabus. King found this helpful when he taught at the University of Maryland as many students do not know how to find the resources on the campus.
 5. Civil Discourse and Civic Engagement – Reiterated his commitment to these values, stated his strong support for academic freedom, etc..
 - a. SUNY will create a fellowship (10) in this area for who will advance discussions among students, faculty, and staff and help people promote engagement in these areas.
 - b. A certain number of schools will be awarded “Americorp Schools of National Service” (12 campuses??), apparently Bill Clinton will be part of the ceremony??
 - iii. Advancing SUNY’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 1. The Chancellor decried the SCOTUS decision from last year and its impact upon SUNY, etc.. but acknowledged it is the law.
 2. Detailed ways in which SUNY have recommitted to programs to advance goals in this area (more support for EOP programs, DEISJ Fellows, a subsequent DEISJ Curriculum Conference in Nov., and Implementation of SUNY-wide campus climate survey.
 - iv. Research & Scholarship
 1. Created research task forces in AI, Biotech/Biomed/Bioengineering, and Advanced Semiconductor Packaging.
 - v. Economic Development & Upward Mobility
 1. Created Healthcare Workforce Task Force and Sustainability Advisory Task Force
 2. Discussed critical need for campuses to get to zero emissions as SUNY has 40% of all state-owned buildings.
 - vi. SUNY’s Strong Future (system’s fiscal health)
 1. Discuss “historic investment” in all State-operated campuses
 - a. \$163 million in operating aid for all campuses – King’s allocation rationale
 - b. Questions
 - i. Research Centers
 1. Should there be a system-wide enrollment plan?
 - a. Chancellor discussed efforts System has done with letters to prospective students, a state-wide marketing campaign that is being refined after getting feedback campuses.

- b. “There are plenty of students out there” and despite feeling we are competing with each other but there are thousands of students who left and didn’t return, do not go to college, go out of state, etc..
 - c. Need to do a better job with transfers from 2 year schools
 - d. SUNY is required to provide state with a system-wide report about enrollment plans, etc..
 - 2. Discussion for System support for non-STEM fields (aimed really at grad students)
 - a. Not much here aside from encouraging non-STEM people to partner with STEM fields as the federal money is geared toward STEM. Mainly weak tea here.
 - 3. A question about difficulties obtaining federal and other grants and how System can better support these efforts.
 - a. The Chancellor emphasized the critical need for collaboration between System and campuses (example of wind energy, Farmingdale and other LI schools)(Micron and POLY, Oswego, etc.). Improvement needed in this area.
 - b. Thinks merging the role of System Provost & Research Foundation will help efforts in this area. The new hire in this area doubled the research funds at UVA and had some major position in Engineering at Clemson.
- ii. CGLs
 - 1. How is Chancellor empowering admin on campuses to more fully commit to shared governance (which is in decline on some campuses).
 - a. “Modeling” is important from System.
 - b. Governance is a topic in presidents meetings. He said this week they spoke to presidents about governance and strategic planning as one example.
 - c. During COVID there was a pause in evaluating presidents, that is now over so this element will now be evaluated.
 - 2. Lengthy discussion about his commitment to maintaining campuses as centers of excellence in light of financial challenges.
 - a. Chancellor went back to idea that we are not all competing with each other, that is an outmoded way of thinking about. Need to expand population of students as it is the “moral” thing to do and makes economic sense.
 - i. Discussed need to improvement recruitment practices.
 - b. There are some campuses whose financial problems would be “literally” solved with improved retention towards graduation (disc needs to assess advising, grades, etc.).
 - c. We need to keep evolving our program offerings.
- iii. Medical Centers
 - 1. Questions about Workforce Recruitment (retaining diverse workforce); particular attention to funding academic mission (Upstate is in bottom 10% in student-faculty ratio in nation); Downstate needs better marketing; facilities need upgrade esp. for nursing, physical therapy training, etc.
 - a. The Chancellor discussed the many challenges facing this sector, especially Downstate (a safety-net hospital) who rely overwhelmingly on Medicaid and uninsured patients (compared the model to other countries).
- iv. Tech Sector
 - 1. Asked for his evaluation of the sector (1-2 takeaways after his visit)
 - a. The Chancellor focused on the how this sector contributes to agricultural areas; did point out that a challenge they have in recruiting students in areas where they don’t see themselves reflected in the community as well as an absence of faculty of color.
 - b. Marketing – said Morrisville did a better job recruiting this year by emphasizing programs rather than a campus-wide campaign.
 - 2. This sector relies heavily on adjunct faculty that means more work on full-time and impacts student retention/success, what can SUNY do to invest more in full-time faculty?

- a. Chancellor – “we have to pay adjuncts better” and he hailed the UUP contract; he would love to grow full-time faculty but it is tied often to the local dynamics (money, programs, etc.). *“At the end of the day, each campus’ financial model is going to dictate how many full-time faculty we have.” This should be informed by shared governance and it will not always work out like we all hope it will.* [italics my own]
 - 3. Has there been any discussion of mission-focused funding for this sector (working farm, diesel operations, etc.)
 - a. There are opportunities to get workforce funding in certain areas (nursing, renewable energy). Went further down this line and discussed federal funds.
- v. Specialized & Statutory
- vi. The SUNY Maritime Rep crowed about the new boat they got and how it is neat (540 feet)
 - 1. Asked about the difficulties there practicum programs have confronted. SUNY Poly discussed delays their med students are having do to slow processing of legal documents in Albany (approving contracts). She asked if legal approval could be decentralized or they may have to reduce enrollment in this area.
 - a. Chancellor had not heard about this and will get an answer to her today.
- vii. Comprehensive Sector
 - 1. Appreciate knowing how decisions were made about allocation, and will note that treating all campuses the same is not the same as treating them equitably - some places like some students have greater needs, and we would ask that our individual circumstances can be recognized. The bottom line is: Do you anticipate that closing campuses will be necessary?
 - a. Chancellor: No, he does not anticipate the closing of campuses. He went further into how money was allocated and how the formula has changed. Is now the time to rethink the formula while he danced around how enrollment figures into that formula. Quite open-ended in my opinion.
 - 2. We believe the best way to sustain our campuses over the long term is to maintain options that provide flexibility and social mobility to our students. Current funding models lead to the closure of programs, because the number of students in a program is easier to quantify than a discipline’s contribution to the curriculum. Experience with a wide variety of disciplines is crucial to developing well-rounded citizens, yet significant courses of study are being eliminated at many of our campuses. What strategic direction will you provide for the comprehensive sector campuses to offer our students a well rounded experience in the context of “academic program optimization?”
 - a. There are a number of factors that go into evaluating a program. This has been a subject of conversation in part 2 presidents meetings.
 - i. Complimented the Potsdam President for outlining their criteria (including diversity of students, community need, the program’s relationship to Gen Ed offerings). Are the programs core to the institutional mission? Core to need? These are questions that every campus should be regularly asking.
 - 1. This all should be a subject of shared governance. He also alluded to how this discussion goes against UUP position not to participate in any planning that leads to members losing positions. The Chancellor clearly disagrees with this stance.
 - 2. Ended by offering a generic overview of how campuses need to be creative in evaluating and sustaining programs (usual take).
- viii. Open Question Period
 - 1. Fairly interesting question about inability of Ed Dept at Geneseo to replace track lines (asked for 5 and got 1 lecturer position)
 - 2. Eve asked an excellent question about the need to address faculty burnout and lack of admin assistants on campus (need for civil service exams) – the Chancellor was very sympathetic and recognized the need for movement for this area.

3. In terms of answers at one point the Chancellor said “we have to be realistic in terms of what we can expect in federal dollars . . .” “. . . I am going to continue make the case for more investment . . .” “. . . it is a challenging political environment . . .”
 4. A senator from Downstate (who graduated from Downstate) asked a powerful question about the numerous difficulties she faces, everything from spending 90 minutes to find a parking space, a 90 year old building that is falling apart, no research support, and teaching students who have incredible difficulties in their own homes.
 - a. The Chancellor expressed sympathy, told us some of these are societal issue, etc.. Described how important Downstate is in terms of training medical professional who actually stay in the city, train diverse workforce. Said the hospital is harder to make a case for as hospitals in Brooklyn are all doing poorly and there are too many beds in Brooklyn (though not enough out-patient facilities).
 5. A Buff State senator asked a great question about how L & A departments fit within his vision, how they can “demonstrate” their importance aside from King’s “belief” in their importance.
 - a. Chancellor said we must continue to “make the case” for the importance of these areas. How STEM can get you a job but L & A helps them beyond that first job (growth in a job, citizenship, etc.).
 6. 3 Advocacy Issues the Chancellor Recommends
 - a. Most NYers think SUNY is more expensive than it is, we need to message more about how affordable our schools are compared to most privates.
 - b. We need to get our NYS congress people to come out in favor of doubling Pell Grants.
 - c. TAP income threshold has not been changed in 20 years. It has been \$80,000 for decades, it should be \$140,000 to make up for inflation. This is an area of significant interest for the Chancellor in his lobbying efforts.
4. President’s Report (Keith Landa, Purchase College)
- a. SUNY is Organizing a National Conference for Nov. 2024 in Albany on topic of Higher Ed (Public) as a Public Good; it will involve CUNY, state legislators, Chancellor’s office, national opportunities, it will be an opportunity to build national conversation.
 1. Want participants to leave with a tool kit to advocate on the important of public higher education.
 - b. SUNY DEISJ in the Curriculum Conference (Nov. 3-4) in UAlbany Conference Center
 - i. 5 Conference Trakcs
 - ii. Over 200 registrations
 - iii. SUNY Diversity Fellows will participate
 - c. Transfer Task Force
 - i. SUNY has had great policies for decades but the transfer has not often met the policies. Keith is hopefully the task force is producing concrete policies that will move the needle in this area.
 - ii. Why transfer is important?
 1. We are losing students who start in SUNY and find it easier to move to a private school to graduate.
 2. This is an equity issue, we have too many students that start at a 2 year school with intention of getting a 4 year degree but too often do not. Keith sees these students as being left behind.
 - d. Other Task Forces and Advisory Committees (AI, Biotech, Microchip Packaging, Cannabis, Healthcare, Sustainability, Digital) – general discussion ensued about these groups, why they were created, the Chancellor’s particular interest in them, economic impact, etc..
5. Executive Committee Report & Resolutions (UFS VP/Sec. Jan Trybula)
- a. Informed the body that 2 resolutions that had been proposed by the Operating Committee had been delayed by the Executive Committee and sent back to the OC for more revisions.
 - b. The VP went over the remaining two resolutions

- i. The first may be found here (NYS Budget Resolution):
http://www.sunyufs.us/uploads/1/1/6/9/116933050/nys_fiscal_year_2025_executive_budget_resolution_10_13_2023.pdf
 - ii. The second, on microcredentials, may be found here:
http://www.sunyufs.us/uploads/1/1/6/9/116933050/195-uappc-microcredentials_resolution.pdf

- 6. A session with Michael Berube, author of *It's Not Free Speech: Race, Democracy, and the Future of Academic Freedom*
 - a. Bruce Simon (Faculty Gov Comm Chair) moderated the discussion
 - b. Berube offered an interesting discourse as to when “academic speech” does not necessarily fall under the protection of academic freedom. He is alluding to poorly-argued work, that comes from a place of bad faith, and is morally odious.
 - i. The Zoom connection was poor and the talk was hard to follow. I believe he is arguing that at times if faculty on a campus believe some speech does not meet the threshold for academic freedom if it is incorrect, undemocratic, morally reprehensible, etc., but this needs to be determined by faculty on a campus.

- 7. Provost’s Report/SUNY Provost in Charge (Shadi Sandvik)
 - a. Thanked everyone for their help over the past 3 years as she filled in
 - b. She went over some of the achievements her team have had over the past 3 years—it was a lengthy list that I could not track (they included a number of taskforces).
 - c. SUNY DLE – Brightspace Environment (Dr. Sandvik summarized how it went, why it is significant).
 - d. DLE Post-Implementation Governance Structure:
 - i. Based upon campus reps. and SUNY DLE Council (which also contains campus reps). They both have different charges.
 - ii. There was input from UFS in this process
 - e. Academic Program Development, Review, and Approval Process
 - i. Listed improvement efforts (a lengthy list of bullet points)
 - ii. Description of Quali software that will be used for proposed new academic programs. Already rolled-out but still being trained on, etc..
 - f. DEISJ Implementation Support for Gen Ed
 - i. DEISJ Fellows shows (including our own Emily Estrada!) and their office hours
 - ii. Final announcement for the “DEISJ in the Curriculum: Building a Community of Practice” this November.
 - g. Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation – PLA
 - i. There is a Provost Fellow of PLA (prior learning assessment) – seems to indicate Albany’s interest in this area. Her name is Ellen Gambino and will work with campuses to assist them to advance PLA.
 - ii. Described the ACE “Modernized Military Guide” to apply PLA assessment for veterans.

- 8. Call for Nominations of VP/Secretary Position (Nominations Chair, Frank Byrne, Oswego)
 - a. I tried to be extremely brief in describing the process that will lead to a vote for VP in the spring plenary.

- 9. SA President Alexander Ruiz’s Report (he is from Geneseo which is unusual, most SA reps come from Centers)
 - a. He described what SA is and its role, its functions.
 - b. Described how representation works.
 - c. “Action Months” focused on one each month (mental health, food insecurity, etc.)
 - d. Conference, Nov. 17-19, (Syracuse NY, DoubleTree) – open to all students
 - e. Policy Team
 - i. Farm Bill & community colleges getting access to more money (tied to food insecurity)
 - ii. Mental Health (NYS Bill) – addressing advocacy for addressing mental health crisis of students
 - f. An impressive person!
 - g. How can you support SA?
 - i. Encourage students to get involved in local government, clubs/organization, or SA.
 - ii. Some focus on community college students

10. CUNY Report (Matthew Cotter, Chief of Staff)

- a. CUNY has created discipline councils from every field with special attention to those areas that seem primed to be cut.
- b. Described a number of DEISJ and other committees being created in CUNY.
- c. "CUNY Cares" – effort to create infrastructure to assist students with needs (40% of those surveyed have at least 1 or 2 basic needs and they don't want to reach out). Cotter thinks this is more substantive than efforts in the past. Reminder that the country's poorest congressional district is in the Bronx.
 - i. This effort was piloted by CUNY School of Public Health; this is a way of creating infrastructure for students to communicate their needs.
 - ii. Faculty are actually trained (paid by stipends) to assist fellow faculty in helping students navigate their circumstances. Student peer-mentors (navigators) will be compensated to assist fellow students. An attempt, in part, to remove the stigma of poverty and having needs.
 - iii. Another goal is to create safe spaces where students can come together to discuss their situation without judgment (thus morally/ethically important but perhaps helps student success).
- d. Budget
 - i. CUNY has structural deficit of \$101million last year (city making cuts and more coming).
- e. Enrollment – improved but not where they need to be (85% at colleges; 70% at community colleges)
 - i. They will learn more about how leadership will handle these challenges in November.
- f. CUNY Online – growth but pretty far behind SUNY at this time.

11. UUP (Fred Kowal, President) (via Zoom)

- a. Theme of "Good Times, Bad Times" (referring to Led Zeppelin)
- b. Good: contract, approval, etc., (see UUP report)
- c. Bad: budget crises that are gripping a number of campuses across the System (Potsdam, Fredonia, Buff State, Downstate).
 - i. We need to be ready to push back.
 - ii. We need to be cognizant of the cause, enrollment is short term, but long term yearly cuts under Cuomo that created a system based upon enrollment and fees. Not enough resources to attract and retain students.
 - iii. Fred complimented Governor for better budgets of late.
 - iv. Predictably, Fred went after how Chancellor spent the distressed money (namely to University Centers).
 - v. Fred attacked austerity budgets and said if we don't do anything we risk going the way of WVU.

12. Committee Reports

- a. Ethics Committee (Eve) – Continuing to work on a study on faculty burn-out. Some trouble producing a report as faculty continue to leave the committee due to burn-out. Also working on issue of hard and soft ethics and faculty duties and the ethical implications of having SUNY work with companies that use prison labor.
- b. Programs & Awards (Keith filling in) – Committee is reviewing all the awards, trying to make the Excellence Awards a little bit more inclusive (for example, allowing library faculty to apply more easily). The committee is working with System Admin to restart the "Conversations in the Disciplines" program which has been dormant for several years.
- c. Operations Committee (Ken missed the name) – revising the resolutions on Corcraft and Professional Advancement.
- d. Academic Committee (Isabelle) – Working on 7 agenda items (several shared with Chancellor's agenda). One related to a grad conference (Friday, April 6, 2024 with submission deadline in March) and attempts to increase more grad collaboration (for example in a virtual meeting phase). Another item related to creating a white paper on AI/ChatGPT and best practices for faculty. Several other agenda items were listed and explained. Please contact Isabelle for particulars.
- e. DEISJ Committee – (Ritu) – **Faculty Safety**
Working on research for anecdotes (case studies) for white paper. Include an action task/item to recommend to SUNY Academic Affairs.
Racial Climate Phase II

Individuals who feel they are not finding supports at SUNY for incorporating DEI, but they are finding supports outside of SUNY.

Next step: analyze the data, write a report to present at the November conference, coding qualitative responses for faculty incorporating DEI in courses, categorizing data from campuses/discipline, publishing through communications as white paper. Addressing SUNY Academic affairs with a resolution.

Transgender/Nonbinary Subcommittee

Part 1: Develop a white paper based on national data on inclusive practices and policies for supporting transgender and nonbinary.

Part II. Review SUNY-specific websites, polices, and practices as publicly available.

Part III. Develop a resolution for SUNY.

Action item: Is there an initiative in place to change the SUNY wide data published on gender identity?

DACA Resolution

Canchu (getting connected with Isabel/Graduate Committee)

International Faculty Support

Working to create SUNY-wide platform.

Operations Committee is working with Excelsior Scholarship. Inequity issues within this scholarship. Need 1 or 2 people interested in collaborating on a white paper on Excelsior. Students who are negatively impacted are first-generation and students of color. Eventually hope to change the way Excelsior works, have a working draft of the White Paper. Looking for the EID perspective

DESIJ in the Curriculum conference

November 3rd and 4th

Albany, NY

Announcements of acceptance are going out next week. Registration follows within the month. Fees will be under \$100. Space limited to 250. Great collaboration with SUNY Administration.

Undergrad Committee (RJ Miltari) – Produced a resolution on microcredentials (to be voted on today) to support the creation, implementation, and assessment of microcredential programs. A second resolution in the works for winter focuses on examining (and determining the prevalence of) credit courses offered by non-faculty on campuses (even when faculty may have support roles) and how those courses are evaluated, assessed, etc.. Also working on a 10 year update that will offer campuses more guidance about reviewing programs every decade.

Communications Committee (Alithea Alleyne) – Described the charge and encouraged volunteers. A discussion of their methods and goals ensued.

- f. Governance Committee (Bruce Simon) – they have been very busy and Bruce gave a nice overview of their many activities and projects. If you are interested in the subject of freedom of speech on campuses, etc., contact Bruce.

13. Governance Committee Discussion on Campus Representation (Governance Chair, Bruce Simon)

- a. Raised the question of changing sector structure and number of senators.
- b. Bruce said there seems to be no interest in this area and there has been a discussion of a moratorium on the subject.
- c. Discussion ensued over types of organizations. There were several comments against moratoriums (including yours truly).

14. Discussion and Voting of Resolutions (moderated by VP Jan Trybula)

- a. Resolution: Support for Microcredentials
 - i. This is a resolution mainly asking for continuing shared governance in outlining and creating these programs/courses. Assessing these offerings is also a critical element in this resolution. These programs have exploded with seemingly little or no assessment whether they are meeting learning outcomes. This resolution came out of the Undergraduate Committee.
 - ii. This resolution also asks for more equity and accessibility for these programs (most of them are not eligible for federal dollars). Some are eligible for certain state program money. See: http://www.sunyufs.us/uploads/1/1/6/9/116933050/195-uappc-microcredentials_resolution_20oct2023.pdf
 - iii. Lively discussion ensued: *Resolution passed 44-4*

- b. Resolution: NYS 2025 Executive Budget Resolution
 - i. Basically asks for SUNY Chancellor's Office to make budget more equitable and affordable for students. The resolution lists a number of direct recommendations. See:
http://www.sunyufs.us/uploads/1/1/6/9/116933050/195-suny_ufs_nys_fy2025_executive_budget_resolution_20oct2023.pdf
 - ii. Discussion ensued, nothing especially controversial.
 - iii. *Resolution passed 49-0*
- c. Resolution (under New Business) coming from the floor (Comp Sector):
 - i. Resolution to Endorse Potsdam Faculty Senate Resolution to Freeze the Financial Stability Plan
 - ii. In short, as there has been virtually no consultation with shared governance or the faculty as a whole whereas there has been little to no sharing of the university's budget data with faculty this asks for a freeze on the plan to discontinue programs until there is an inclusion of significant faculty voices and UFS President Landa.
 - iii. *Resolution passed: 47-2*
 - iv. An interesting discussion on the inherent conflict between faculty governance and the union in the process of budget consultation and program closure ensued.
- d. President Landa (closing remarks)
 - i. Promised to continue to make the case for significant faculty consultation in budget planning (cuts) process.