

University Senate Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM (Zoom Meeting)

Meeting called to order by Dr. Richard Larson, the University Senate President, at 3:30 PM. Meeting recording can be viewed [here](#). A motion to approve the agenda and the minutes from February 1, 2021 carried.

Greetings from Richard Larson, University Senate President

- Thanked University President and her team for their work during the pandemic.
- Encouraged everyone to get involved and join the senate in upcoming Senate election.

Report from President Maurie McInnis

- Full written report can be viewed [here](#).
- Announced one million dollars designated as new presidential awards for doctoral students to assist in the completion of their dissertation.
- Stony Brook University partnered with the State of New York in delivering COVID-19 vaccines to Long Islanders since January 18th in a newly opened POD on campus.
- Whenever we have additional vaccines, we offer them to stony brook university employees.
- School of Dental Medicine will move into the stony brook medicine ambulatory care system to leverage its resources. Dental care center will close temporarily as of today, and will resume normal operations, no later than March 15th.
- Planning for in-person Fall.

- Question: J. Sanders – Will Blackboard be replaced with another tool soon?
 - Answer – M. Schedel: We are working on this issue, but it will not happen this December. F. Sotiropoulos: We are aware of this issue and it will not happen without your thoughts and inputs.
- Question: J. Dubnau: Professional staff were asked to come back to campus now, although UUP and SUNY have telecommuting agreement till April 2nd. They often don't have private offices when they go to the office. Professionals are also more likely to come from underserved minority communities and have a heavy burden of caring for children and elders. They are also not eligible for vaccination. By allowing professionals, who had been telecommuting effectively all of this time, to continue to do so through the summer, I think we might have a better idea of whether the vaccine rollout has been effective and has included professionals and whether the levels of virus continue to fall, as these new variants take over.
 - Answer – L. Johnson: We're not looking for a sudden return, we are looking for a gradual and thoughtful return.

- Comment – H. Nekvasil: For my large class of 280 students, it's extremely difficult to know a single student personally other than the students have come to me, however, through zoom, I am able to directly know the name of every student in the class and I asked them questions continuously. It has really increased the participation in this class, and the students have given tremendous feedback about how much they enjoy it and, most importantly, it helps me immediately identify those students. I have found that the online aspects can be brought into the classroom and enhance the curriculum.
- Question: H. Spencer, USG President: Why if students get a positive result, they are not allowed to retest? I have seen students that tested false positive and it has been hard for them.
 - Answer: R. Gatteau: We do thousands of tests per week. It's possible to get a false negative, but we still need to treat that student as an actual positive, and not put others at risk.

Interim Provost Sotiropoulos's Report

- Full written report can be viewed [here](#).
- Stony Brook's Long Island Sound Research receives federal funding
- SBU's Physics Teacher Education program receives top recognition
- SoMAS' Ellen Pikitch Addresses UN's International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- Staller Center continues virtual programming this spring
- Task forces work to come up with a series of innovative new degree programs that can be put together by our current resources. We want to begin to generate revenue immediately for these and also for programs that are really market relevant
- Question – C. Gostic: I was wondering if you could comment on whether or not the university will consider allowing remote courses to continue when we have snow events.
 - Answer - We need to be fair, because many students and faculty might have their Internet disrupted in a storm. Also, there might be other issues such as having siblings at home which makes it difficult to participate in an online class. I believe it is our intention to consider on a case-by-case basis, depending on the severity of the storm.

Sr. VP for Health Sciences Dr. Kenneth Kaushansky

- Full written report can be viewed [here](#).
- Progress made towards becoming a NCI-designated cancer center at SBU, a journey that was supported by former SBU President Stanley, and is strongly supported by President McInnis
- In the drive to become NCI designated we have been in communication with the national cancer for many years and they have agreed to receive our application

this last September. With a site visit in early spring the NCI leadership shared that they were impressed with our research programs. They also voiced that support for cancer research from the stony brook Medicine is very important component of which we will be evaluated. We are working on that and on our way of becoming an NCI designated cancer center.

Presentation on SUNY's Budget by J. Greiman:

- Governor has made a budget proposal:
 - The budget is based on New York receiving \$6 billion in federal support.
 - A reduction of about \$69M in direct state tax support for the SUNY budget.
 - A continuation of predictable tuition authorization of up to \$200 per year for resident undergraduate tuition.
 - Grant SUNY the ability to give U Centers and Doctoral Degree institutions a different rate of tuition than the rest of SUNY while holding students with financial need harmless.
 - Combine the Centers for Advanced Technology (CAT) and Centers of Excellence (COE) requiring the COEs to compete for renewals as the CATs currently do. Institutions across the state including Stony Brook, have been lobbying against the change. The issue was widely discussed at the recent budget hearing on Economic Development with legislators signaling they may reject this proposal as they did last year.
 - The state's financial plan extends contractual salary increase delays until 2022/23.
 - No cut in financial aid programs
 - New program approvals with no long processes.
 - Increase for Clean Water Technology Center
 - Continuing to fund SUNY Critical Maintenance at \$550 million of which \$153M is allocated directly to campuses, with Stony Brook receiving \$22.3M for the academic campus, Health Sciences Center and the Long Island State Veterans Home. Plus, an additional \$50M in critical maintenance for Stony Brook University Hospital
- SUNY institutions continue to request that the Tuition Assistance program be fully funded and that the gap between TAP level tuition and current tuition be closed as this is currently costing each institution millions of dollars.
- We think that we may be getting about \$104M Covid relief. %50 will go to student financial aid, another 50% can be used for general support for Covid expenses
- Office of federal relations is working very closely with Rich Reeder in the office of research and with a number of faculty to advocate for certain increases.

- Question – J. Sanders: Can our students take advantage of forgiving student debt?
 - Answer - I think that a \$50,000 forgiveness is happy talk.

UFS Winter Plenary Report by Statewide Representative Pam Wolfskill:

- Full written report can be viewed [here](#).
- SUNY university faculty senate held their 187th plenary on January 21 and 22nd.

- Central theme of this plenary was pandemic and our responses to it
- How can we begin to expand some level of in-person instruction and co-curricular activities, while maintaining the ability to deal with our increases of Covid cases.
- What lessons learned from the past year of remote instruction, and can we apply them in our future planning.
- The pandemic has had and will continue to have severe impact on our budgets. Several senators mentioned the need to follow any ongoing discussions of the potential to use furloughs as part of SUNY's response to budgetary impacts of the pandemic. The executive budget from the governor's office seeks a 5% cut from all state agencies.
- A few bright spots on the budget included that \$50 million critical maintenance allocation for all of our hospitals, the funding of a new offshore wind energy training institute at Farmingdale, and proposed streamlining of academic program approval.
- Chancellor:
 - Plans for opening up more on-campus activities in upcoming semesters.
 - He said we should revise our criteria for campus closures, based on the more robust testing that has been implemented across our campuses and make use of selective policies for specific programs instead of campus wide closures, as appropriate.
 - Priority in the recent budget negotiation was to maintain funding as much as possible in the face of expected cuts statewide and to have the flexibility to limit the harm to specific programs rather than across the board cuts.
 - The prospect for additional federal stimulus funding looks promising
 - He saw approvals for furloughs as a way to avoid personnel and program termination, but that was not approved, and so far, he said there's been no discussion of early retirement incentives as a way to cut costs and dealing with budget shortfalls.
 - For the fall of 2021, encouraged campuses to think about how they can safely expand on campus instruction and co-curricular activities but have a plan B in place in case the pandemic gets worse regionally or nationally.
 - We need to do a better job of marketing the importance of public higher education
- SUNY Provost:
 - Presented summary and snapshot data to show how the system is tracking changes in motive instruction across the sectors in order to plan resources and support for students, faculty and campuses
 - Spoke on the student mental health and wellness Task Force
 - The general education Advisory Committee is on track to solicit feedback on a new framework for SUNY general education this spring, with the goal of new policy being adopted by the Board of Trustees this summer.
 - Racial Equity Action Plan Task Force is meant to include shared governance and build on existing efforts by SUNY to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.
- No budget reports.

- Stony Brook has gone fully on to the SUNY system. Combining all the SUNY schools into one system makes a lot of efficiencies.

Reports from UUP:

- Carolyn Kube, Stony brook HSC report:
 - Please visit uupinfo.org to send letters or call your federal Senators and Congressman to urge them to pass the stimulus package, so we get our raises sooner than later.
 - UUP is in full gear advocating for its HEALS agenda which contains various funding asks for SUNY. Such as funding for the TAP GAP, pickup of Debt Service for the hospitals and support for expansion of opportunity programs. As well as asks to support revenue raises Billionaire, Millionaire, Pied –a-Terre Tax and Stock Transfer Tax. The Stock Transfer Tax will not impact our pensions. This is an expansive agenda that can be viewed on the web site uupinfo.org. If you are interested in doing political action for UUP please sign up for March 11 Virtual Opportunity Advocacy Day also on the UUP website.
 - Nominations are closed for Chapter Elections. Due to the slowdown in the mail many nominations did not make it to Albany by the deadline of 2/17/21. If you want to run as a chapter delegate you still have an opportunity to do so. The ballots will be mailed to your home beginning 3/10/21. They are due back on 4/26/21. Mail in your ballot at least 10 days early to ensure that the ballot will make it in time for the deadline of 4/26/21. If you would like to be a delegate you can write your name on the ballot. You must get at least 5 other people to also write your name on the ballot to be a voting delegate.
 - IDA: Individual Professional Development Awards are on hold due to continued negotiations over guidelines with Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER). Our committee is ready to go as soon as we get the guidelines from Albany. Make sure you save all your paperwork and receipts.
 - SBHSC will be putting out a workload survey for both Academics and Professionals this month check your emails.
 - No word on extension of Telecommuting policy at this time.
 - SBHSC is open daily from 10am to 4pm. If you have any question or concerns please stop by.
 - will be meeting with HR about the dental clinic tomorrow
- Ed Quinn:
 - Working on including in-person residential staff in the vaccine category of 1b so that they can be vaccinated
 - The discretionary and compression salary increases are moving forward, they should show up in checks on the 17th
 - Travel assistance program and employee assistance life balance program will no longer be available

- UUP offices are open. We recommend you to make appointments for in-person (Mon-Thurs 9am-1pm, Fri 9am-12pm), or you may call between 9am-3pm, Mon-Fri.
- General membership meeting on March 4th at 12 noon, will be discussing our proposed chapter budget for 21-22.
- Executive board meeting on March 18
- Question - M. Rafailovich: Where should we refer to resolve the accessibility issues for faculty who are on wheelchair?
 - Answer – Forward your concerns to the standing committee that looks at accessibility issues.

Old Business

- No old business.

New Business:

- UFS Resolution 187-04-1 “University Faculty Senate Recognizes and Supports Black Lives Matter”
Endorsed 61%
- University Senate Resolution “Faculty Determination of Mode of Instruction for Fall 2021” by Senators Norman Goodman & John Shandra:
Yes: 53%
No: 36%
Abstain: 11%
 - John Shandra:
 - Discussed the concerns faculty have about returning on campus
 - Suffolk county remaining a hotspot averaging 600 new cases daily
 - Over half a million people in the United States have died, this is equivalent to losing one person every minute during the year
 - Stony brook is on track for a business-as-usual opening this fall, and faculty expressed their concerns about their health to me.
 - Faculty members should not have to choose between contracting this deadly disease or teaching in front of a classroom
 - There is little to no scientific evidence that suggests vaccines eliminate the transition of the virus from people that receive them.
 - This proposal not only allows us as a university to support and welcome students back to campus but also supports the faculty who are concerned about well-being of their own, their families and their students
 - Richard Larson:
 - Executive Committee read the proposal and we noticed that the key element of the proposal, basically, has to do with organization of the workplace, so we asked Ed Quinn to comment on it:
 - E. Quinn:
 - UUP is not formally endorsing this but we can advocate to management as much as possible and to get much choice as possible
 - Robert’s rule suggests this outside the scope of the Senate and the Chair, that would be me, is ruling this resolution out of order.
 - N. Goodman:

- I don't think that's the case. I challenge your resolution.
- You have every right under Roberts to raise the resolution from the floor. The Senate is not objecting to you making a proposal or a resolution. I, however, have the right to rule that resolution out of order, and I am.
- Robert's rule suggests need of two thirds vote of the Senate body and we do not have 66%, so the resolution is out of order, and we will not consider it any further.
 - N. Goodman:
 - You are blocking faculty from their voice be heard about an issue that's important to them
 - There are significant number of faculty who are concerned
 - Don't use Robert's rules to form a difficulty
 - We have major concerns about academic matters and nothing is more academic than the mode of instruction, in addition to working conditions
- Question – M. Bowman: Can we have the chats for this meeting, so we could continue our interaction with each other?
 - Answer – Yes.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.