

MINUTES OF
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
April 30, 2024

The fifth and final Faculty Senate meeting of the 2023-2024 academic year was called to order by Associate Professor and Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences Aaron Beedle, Faculty Senate Chair, at 11:47 a.m. in Old Union Hall.

1. Minutes

Minutes from the March 26, 2024 meeting were approved.

2. Obituary Notices

Chair Beedle notified the body that Retired Professors. Steven Jay Lynn, Psychology; Maria-Teresa Romero, Psychology; Robert Leon Basmann, Economics, have passed away. Chair Beedle spoke about each and then asked for a moment of silence to remember our colleagues.

3. Election of 2024-2025 Faculty Senate officers

The Nominating Committee of the Faculty Senate presented the following slate of nominees:

- Vice Chair – Rodney Gabel, Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Secretary – Heather Parks, Libraries

No additional nominations were received. A motion was made and seconded, the slate was approved with a unanimous vote in favor, no abstention, and no opposition.

4. Approval of degree candidates

Chair Beedle reported that 4,165 graduates have filed an application for a degree (2,943 undergraduate; 1,222 graduate).

A motion was made and seconded to approve the degree candidates. After no discussion, it was approved with a unanimous vote in favor, no abstention, and no opposition.

5. New Business

a) Chair Beedle announced that there were two programs proposed for deactivation and discontinuance: the B.A. in English and Rhetoric (Harpur) and the B.S. in Global and International Affairs (only the degrees partnered with Bilkent University and Bogazici University, SOM). The deactivation and discontinuance proposals have been recommended to the Faculty Senate (FS) for approval by the Program Review Committee and Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC). Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Advising, Kathy Brunt was available for questions.

After the proposals were presented, Chair Beedle requested a motion to approve both deactivation and discontinuance proposals. A motion was made and seconded. After no discussion, the motion was approved with a unanimous vote in favor, no abstention, and no opposition.

b) Chair Beedle announced that there were two proposals for the creation of new schools in the Watson College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. The Department of Computer Science is requesting approval for its proposal to become the “School of

Computing”. The Department of Systems Science and Industrial Engineering is requesting approval for its proposal to become the “School of Systems Science and Industrial Engineering.” Chair Beedle referred senators to these proposals, posted electronically on the Faculty Senate website ([Agendas & Minutes](#))

Watson representatives Dean Krishnaswami Srihari, Senior Associate Dean Peter Partell, Chair Mohammad Khasawneh (SSIE), and Chair Weiyi Meng (CS) presented and explained the reason for the creation of the new schools and were available to answer questions.

After the proposals were presented, Chair Beedle requested a motion to approve the new School of Computing and the new School of SSIE in Watson College. A motion was made and seconded.

Prof. Claudia Marques, Diversity Committee chair, noted that the committee approved and endorsed both proposals. The committee commended the SSIE for its proposal noting it is a prime example of a proposal in terms of diversity.

Chair Beedle opened the discussion to the senate for comments and questions.

Prof. Marcin Mazur, Mathematics and Statistics, requested clarification on the meaning of the school and the formal ramifications of the name change.

Chair Beedle explained that there is an implication with creating a new school within the Faculty Senate Bylaws and there is faculty governance participation in the process. She noted that the chairs of the new schools would be involved with faculty governance in their appointment. In addition, a leader would be considered a senior administrator for the evaluation by the Evaluation Coordinating Committee. The chair of the new schools could not serve on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee due to their senior leader appointment.

Prof. Mazur asked if there were any financial ramifications.

Chair Beedle explained that the Watson College proposals for the new schools are not requesting any additional financial resources currently.

Prof. Bridget Whearty, English, recommended the Computer Science proposal’s diversity plan under the third category, data collection, concerning gender, to include language around women, trans students, and binary students.

Chair Meng answered that the statement was a collaboration with the National Science Foundation. They have the opportunity to update it in November and will add those suggestions at that time.

Prof. Matt Gallagher, Libraries, requested more context with the peers that already have schools and if there are plans to create departments within the sub-specialties in Computer Science.

Prof. Mohammad Khasawneh, SSIE chair, explained that this was discussed at the department level and there are no plans to create departments within each school. He added that the SSIE may change in the future, but there are no current plans to create sub-departments for this department. He then thanked the Diversity Committee for acknowledging the diversity and inclusiveness efforts and international partnerships in the SSIE department.

Prof. Wei-Cheng Lee, Physics, asked if the new structure of the schools and hiring would affect resources in other departments.

Dean Srihari mentioned that this was discussed at the senior staff meeting. The goal of Watson College is to make all of the departments successful. He added that he hoped Watson College would be coming back to the Senate with proposals requesting approval for the School of Mechanical Engineering, School of Biomedical, and so on in the future as departments continue to grow.

After no further discussion, the motion to approve both proposals was approved with 44 favor, 1 abstention, and 1 opposition.

6. Reports

- a) Chair Beedle announced three reports.
 - i. Update on elections: Chair Beedle thanked all faculty who were willing to be nominated to serve on the faculty senate executive committee (FSEC) and the SUNY University faculty senate (UFS), and to all faculty that participated in the nomination and election processes.
 - FSEC elections were run from April 17 – April 23. All open seats were successfully filled (1 CCPA, 2 Watson, 2 Harpur/Fine Arts & Humanities, 2 Harpur/Social Sciences, 2 Harpur/Natural Sciences and Mathematics)
 - UFS elections were run April 19 – April 26 with three nominations to fill up to two UFS seats and two alternates. The two UFS seats and one alternate seat were successfully filled.
 - Faculty Senate elections were run April 23 or 24 – April 30. Election ballots are currently being tallied and notifications of election will be sent out later this week.
 - ii. Program revisions approved by PRC and FSEC. No full senate vote is required for revisions.
 - Harpur B.S. BCHM, program revision of cumulative changes > 40 credits
 - SOM B.S. Accounting (licensure and non-licensure), program revision to meet new state education licensure requirements and cumulative changes > 40 credits
 - SOM B.S. Business Administration, program revision of cumulative changes > 40 credits
 - CCPA TLEL M.S.Ed. Special Education, revision to meet new state regulations for certification
 - Decker Ph.D. Nursing (online), revision to semester schedule
 - iii. Lastly, Chair Beedle noted recent legislative changes with removing restrictions and delays with the first paycheck of new hires. The timeframe of this change is to be determined.

b) Report from Prof. Jonathan Krasno, Faculty Senate Executive Committee chair.

Prof. Krasno reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met fourteen times during the Spring semester of 2024. In addition, the FSEC participated in searches for the Watson Dean and the Graduate School Dean. He thanked the committee for all their hard work over the past few months.

The FSEC has scheduled weekly meetings every Tuesday. The committee's agenda includes reviewing recommended program reviews, and department proposals, and conducting meetings with various university officials such as the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, and Vice Provosts. These meetings play a crucial role in gathering necessary information and providing valuable feedback from the faculty's perspective.

Professor Krasno mentioned a new project, the Spring 2024 FSEC survey. The survey received a response from 479 out of 715 faculty members. Professor Krasno intends to examine the top 10 results and will present a complete report in the fall. He has requested senators to provide suggestions once the results are shared.

Finally, Prof. Krasno recommended the faculty to serve on the FSEC and thanked the Faculty Senate.

Chair Beedle then thanked Prof. Krasno for serving as chair of the committee.

c) Report on the UFS Plenary – Prof. John Starks, University Faculty Senator

Prof. John Starks, SUNY University Faculty Senator, reported items from the SUNY University Faculty Senate Spring Plenary Session held April 4 through April 6. Prof. Starks attended as one of your three, soon four, SUNY University Faculty Senators for Binghamton. Along with senators from the other University Centers of Albany, Buffalo, and Stony Brook, we developed two substantive questions for response from Chancellor John King during the Friday plenary.

The first major question began the entire Q&A session taking our lead from Steven Brint's *Chronicle of Higher Education* article from early March probing questions about the preparation of Higher Ed to buttress universities for the potential repercussions of a second Trump presidency. We asked this of Chancellor King, President Obama's last Secretary of Education, in light of numerous state government attacks on higher ed, with particular attention to how SUNY is proactively considering policy initiatives to defend New York against further roadblocks and attacks on international student populations and on international collaboration itself, targeting of accreditation systems' authority and recommendations, especially in areas such as DEI policy, and the floating of proposals to increase taxes on university endowments.

The Chancellor first noted that from 2017-2021 states, like New York, provided some stability and investments to make up for federal shortfalls and that New York has been making significant investments in higher ed that need to continue in strong partnership with the governor and legislature to protect and sustain these advancements in

support. He particularly pointed to the need to continue engaging supportive New York Republicans in DC and Albany as allies in the defense of SUNY, and even more importantly, the need for University Center Presidents to raise visibility in DC with Congress and federal agency officials to profile research and workforce development projects.

Our other question centered on concerns that the Chancellor himself has frequently professed his unfailing support of shared governance modeling, but that we have observed numerous instances of failure to engage in meaningful consultation with campus governance, especially when many SUNY campuses are facing fiscal crises that require difficult decision-making. We particularly asked him how he might use his professed support of faculty governance to ensure that these consultative best practices take place at the campus level.

He replied that he does intervene when things seem to be out of line on particular campuses, but he mostly defended campus presidents as honest brokers looking for faculty and staff to work with them cooperatively and acknowledge that hard choices have to be made and that fruitful governance discussions need to be based on recognition that resources are limited and that trade-offs are required in making choices that allow us to grow in some ways, while letting go of things that aren't viable, no matter how painful they might be. He repeated that compared to other states, we are relatively well off in SUNY, not moving backward in state support of higher ed, with dollars and genuine attention to the value and quality of New York higher education.

Other sectors such as 4-year comprehensives, technology centers, and health science centers were concerned that the increased state aid in the budget has been and is to be distributed based on current enrollments rather than need, by which they meant both the needs of individual campuses, but also the higher proportion of students at many of these smaller institutions who have greater financial need. Others were concerned about system-wide damage to many humanities and arts programs and a couple of prolonged or troubled presidential searches. In a follow-up individual conversation Prof. Starks had with the Chancellor after the Q&A, he took the opportunity to build on that question about SUNY support and advancement of the vital mission for arts and humanities in recognition of what he was acknowledging in his comments. He agreed with Prof. Starks's premise that in the midst of all the highly touted dialogue about universities as engines of workforce and technology development in research dollars the major cultural crises we are addressing nationally and internationally are founded on diminishing public and administrative attention to financial and vocal moral/ethical support for research in humanities, arts, and cultural studies, that is an investment in understanding of human systems. Prof. Starks asked specifically for more help from SUNY Central in actively combating the false narrative that degrees founded in these fields of human endeavor are somehow under-preparing students for leadership in a world in desperate need of enhanced social justice, interaction, and opportunity.

The major work of the plenary session was the passing of five resolutions, and the failure of a sixth, linked directly below:

- "[197-01-1: AI Tools for Research](#)"

This resolution requests that the Chancellor provide various AI tools to faculty and staff for teaching and research; to educate students about the ethical and acceptable use of AI tools in education, research, scholarly and creative activity, and practice; and to create a SUNY-wide forum where faculty and staff can discuss academic integrity regulations and ask questions regarding AI tools for various uses. For: 44 / Against: 0

- "[197-02-1: SUNY Cross Campus Research Support](#)"

This resolution requests that the Chancellor fund the organization of a SUNY-wide research conference under UFS G&R oversight to establish SUNY-wide discipline-specific research groups and to fund the leaders of these groups at \$4000 each. This resolution also requests a collaborative meeting between the SUNY Provost's office, members of G&R, and members of UAPPC to refine and scope the direction of future incentive programs for research collaboration. For: 30 / Against 13

- "197-03-2: Graduate Education Standards"

This resolution requests that the Provost create a SUNY-wide workgroup charged with creating best practices for graduate education and research professional development opportunities and the potential creation of a SUNY-wide website highlighting best practices for graduate education and student-faculty publication co-authoring guidelines. For: 16 / Against 25 - Resolution failed

A copy of the original proposed resolution can be found in the Proposed Resolutions tab of the Plenaries & Meetings dropdown menu. It is retained there for reference and archival purposes only.

- "[197-04-1: SUNY Research Communication Enhancement](#)"

This resolution requests that the Chancellor facilitate better research information and resource sharing through the creation of a SUNY-wide email list and provide enhanced research networking opportunities for all SUNY faculty members.

For: 36 / Against: 0

- "[197-05-1: Recommendation for Basic Needs Resource Communication](#)"

This resolution recommends that all SUNY state-operated campuses consider adopting a policy regarding basic needs statements and that SUNY campuses identify and implement broad and equitable communication strategies for these statements on syllabi, department websites, LMS frames, or others as appropriate. For: 39 / Against: 0

- "[197-06-1: Requesting a Progress Report on the Financial Sustainability of State University of New York Campuses](#)"

This resolution requests the Chancellor and SUNY System Administration provide a progress report on the financial sustainability of SUNY campuses, including an analysis of the strategies that have shown progress, the challenges that are being faced, and necessary initiatives that campuses have had to implement and that this report be provided to the SUNY UFS, SUNY Board of Trustees, and the state legislature no later than the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester, and to consider publishing such a report on a regular basis. For: 41 / Against: 0

Prof. Starks briefly added the following major updates from SUNY Faculty Senate President Keith Landa which he provided for all faculty last week.

Only a few weeks overdue, [the enacted budget gives SUNY a lot to be happy with.](#)

- **Direct state aid:** We received a \$114M increase in direct state aid (\$54M proposed in the Executive Budget proposal plus \$60M added in the negotiations). This is on top of the \$163M increase in last year's budget, which continues. We await the final guidelines on allocation, but it should help relieve a lot of pressure, and make a good effort in paying for the latest contract.
- **Downstate Health Sciences University:** The enacted budget includes \$100M in additional operating aid this year to cover Downstate's ongoing structural deficit, and \$300M in capital funds for needed construction/renovation. There will be a commission to explore Downstate futures over the next year, with the option to propose up to \$750M in additional capital. This, plus some existing capital funding, would likely be enough to support core in-patient and expanded out-patient services at Downstate.
- **Empire AI:** \$250M to establish the Empire AI Institute at the University at Buffalo, serving the research and teaching needs of SUNY, CUNY, and private colleges (members of the Empire AI consortium).
- **Tuition Assistance Program:** TAP received a \$54M increase to allow individual awards to go from \$500 to \$1000, the income threshold to be raised from \$80K to \$125K, and to support part-time TAP.
- **Miscellaneous other items:** EOP cuts in the Executive budget were more than restored in the enacted budget; no sweep of hospital revenues; capital increases over that proposed in the Executive budget (\$1.3B if I've added all the pools together correctly); and mandatory FAFSA.

Finally, Prof. Starks shared the following regarding Distinguished Professor appointments.

Two concerns of the President that Prof. Starks shared with the Senate regarding the nominations the Board of Trustees are receiving from campuses included:

- Fewer nominations for Distinguished Teaching Professor (5) and Distinguished Service Professor (7) than for Distinguished Professor (29). A need to show that we value teaching and service as well as scholarship, but that's not what is seen in the nomination packages.
- Even more disturbing is the gender breakdown for the nominations to the three awards. For Distinguished Professor, 21 of the nominations were for men (72%) and only 8 were for women (28%). For Distinguished Teaching Professor the breakdown was 2 men and 3 women, while the breakdown for Distinguished Service Professor was 3 men and 4 women. The President wrote, "A cynical view would be that it's OK to nominate equal numbers of men and women for the awards we don't care as much about, but for the premier award we're nominating men at three times the rate as women." The President promises a further look into these and other potential disparities represented in these nominations for and conference of the highest rank in the SUNY system.

Chair Beedle thanked Prof. Starks for the information and representation.

7. Upcoming Faculty Senate meetings, Fall 2024

Chair Beedle announced the dates for Fall 2024 meetings of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate planning meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 27 (meeting for FSEC, and all incoming/outgoing committee chairs). The full senate will meet on Tuesday, September 17, and on Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

8. Open forum for the Faculty Senate

Chair Beedle asked if any senators had business to bring to the floor.

Prof. Whearty, English, commented that faculty and staff have been pushing her to raise the following points:

- In follow-up from the last Senate meeting, they would like clarification on how we define academic freedom. She noted from the “American Association of the University of Professors”, which includes the right to freedom of extramural speech as a member of the public. This includes the right of speech of faculty in their line of expertise. In addition, who is determining this clarification?
- Continued concern with the lack of public safety and support for our Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students, staff, and faculty. As well as the lack of support for critical discussions about Israel and Palestine feeding into a sense of censorship.
- The University has experienced several instances of people outside campus shutting down campus events through pressuring emails. Doxing has happened a variety of times with our campus students. They would like your statements about what Binghamton does to defend doxed faculty, staff, and students. She added that doxing affects faculty members who identify as people of color, women, transgender, and intersex more frequently than their white male counterparts. Therefore, the University needs policies to protect individuals from doxing before a crisis occurs. This is a clear value that the petition seeks to uphold.

Professor Whearty was asked by Provost Hall to share her concerns with Provost Hall through email. Provost Hall did not want to give a quick response to her comments and promised to provide an update in the fall. He assured that President Stenger, himself, and the deans are committed to protecting the safety of faculty, staff, and students, including their right to discuss controversial topics without fear of intimidation. No one has been asked to shut down an event as long as it is within the purview of the University. This year has been challenging for everyone. Students have been targeted by off-campus emails and other forms of harassment. At the same time, faculty and administrators have received hateful emails and accusations, mostly from external voices that are impossible to control.

Provost Hall commended the maturity of our student organizations, leaders, faculty, and staff for ensuring a safe and successful year.

Chair Beedle thanked Provost Hall for his response and for answering Prof. Whearty's questions.

Chair Beedle then thanked all AY2023-2024 Faculty Senators for their service this year.

After no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

- Present: Christina Balderrama-Durbin, Aaron Beedle, Lina Begdache, Megan Benson, Jeremy Blackburn, Zu-yan Chen, Junghyun Cho, Leon Cosler, Sidney Dement, Laura Fine Hawkes, Rodney Gabel, Matt Gallagher, Donald Hall, John Havard, Brendan Hennessey, Nora Henry, Leslie Heywood, Murali Jagannathan, Barry Jones, Clarice Kelleher, Jonathan Krasno, Wei-Cheng Lee, Colin Lyons, Andre Mathis, Marcin Mazur, Ralph Miller, Debi Mishra, Jason Moore, Luiza Moreira, Christopher Morgan-Knapp, H.R. Naslund, Vladimir Nikulin, Thomas O'Brien, Julien Panetier, Heather Parks, Xingye Qiao, James Rea, Jeffrey Schertzer, Anton Schick, John Starks, Harvey Stenger, Bridget Whearty, Melvin Whitehead, Wei Xiao, Hong Zhang, Ning Zhou, Melissa Zinkin
- Excused: Christopher Bishop, Sean Dunwoody, Ariana Gerstein, Rebecca Kissling, BrieAnna Langlie, Meg Leja, Anthony Meder, Kirsten Prior
- Absent: Nancy Abashian, Manoj Agarwal, Jobial Alex, Michael Armstrong, David Bisaha, Peter Borgesen, Nicole Cameron, David Campbell, Luca Cassidy, Laura Cook, Alex Chase-Levenson, Kenneth Chiu, Weiyong Dai, Guy German, Douglas Holmes, Michael Lawler, Tom McDonough, Paul McShee, Titilayo Okoror, S.B. Park, Mark Poliks, Shay Rabineau, Olga Shvetsova, Gurpreet Singh, Marguerite Wilson, Bogum Yoon