

# Report on the University Faculty Senate Spring 2011 Plenary<sup>1</sup>

*Plenary called to order at 8:30 a.m., 4/15/11:  
Williams, Hall, SUNY Fredonia*

## Reports & Presentations

### President's Report—Ken O'Brien

- complete text available online.<sup>2</sup> Reported on ongoing governance problems at Cobleskill, NYS guarantees (none) about future sweeps of tuition, other issues of state funding, rational tuition policy / advocacy. No one knows anything, and Vice Chancellor Monica Rimai canceled her scheduled budget update early the morning of 4/15/11. [*This marks the third of three plenaries where the chief financial officer has not appeared: she conducted a conference call in the fall, sent a subordinate to apologize for not having current info in the winter—right before the budget axe fell, so there was little to tell.*]
- Of particular interest—and a leitmotif throughout this Plenary—was discussion of what constitutes “Unrestricted Reserve Funds.” UUP’s use of language such as “SUNY has a \$600 million unreserved fund” is factually untrue, has been picked up by legislators, and misrepresents the idea of funds catalogued for use by grants, faculty, etc., funds that are not in any generally understood sense “unrestricted.” [*Our sector’s questions of the Chancellor allowed her to speak to this issue.*]
- Extended discussion of program deactivations, retrenchments and other restructurings included mention of a forthcoming article in the *UFS Bulletin* (By Dennis Showers, CGL at Geneseo) on the limitations of administrative power in filing the appropriate form(s) with System, faculty obligations in decision-making and how campuses can best proceed. In sum, this is not an “opportunity for building governance, but a test of your current governance structure” (Showers). He / O’Brien discussed generally awful ideas, including the establishment of a separate committee or task force rather than allowing established governance procedures to establish criteria—un-weighted so that no simplistic checklists are validated—. In general, faculty should be involved in setting criteria rather than involving themselves with (or being co-opted into) the actual decision-making.
- Strategic planning discussions are ongoing, and President O’Brien admitted to excitement about the conversations he has heard that might lead to the betterment of our state as SUNY becomes activated in every region and commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> Senator’s commentary and internal references appear throughout in italics within brackets. Errors of transcription are entirely the fault of the Senator, and all statements on policy-related material should be carefully checked with appropriate local and / or SUNY offices. Last, UFS Plenary meetings are often recorded, so concerned parties should check with Carol Donato of the UFS. The home page for the UFS is available at <http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/index.cfm>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.oneonta.edu/academics/senate/presidingofficercorner\\_files/President'sReportApril2011.pdf](http://www.oneonta.edu/academics/senate/presidingofficercorner_files/President'sReportApril2011.pdf)

## Provost's Report—David Lavallee

[His comments focused on student mobility, quality assurance and program flexibility.]

- Spoke to and supported upcoming resolutions on grade change policy and rational fiscal policy.
- Discussed the new transfer and articulation dashboard at the Provost's website.<sup>3</sup>
- Seven new majors have been articulated, including hospitality management, anthropology, and most of the complicated pieces of the various nursing majors throughout the system. A database of course descriptions (Gen Ed and forty articulated majors) will be ready soon.
- The next stage of the mobility puzzle will be to evaluate and audit high-school and other courses (A.P. & College in the High School, for example) and allocate a grant of \$5m available for developing, piloting and using the interface/software known as *Degree Works* [*SunGuard Microsystems is providing the \$.*] High school students using this system would be able to run hypothetical course, transfer and graduation scenarios while online
- Coordination of academic calendars needs to occur, at least regionally, so that (a minimum of) a three-day start-date window is agreed upon. This would allow greater student mobility. Currently there is up to a twelve-day variation between CCs and four-year schools, making it difficult for last-minute transfers.
- Focused on "Program Integrity" [*quality assurance, that is*]. Inevitably, some discussion of developmental programs and—especially—mathematics courses needs to occur. For example, his office is beginning to look at graduation-credit-bearing courses that lead to pre-calculus competency. University in the High School and other off-site (non-faculty-taught) courses should be evaluated very carefully to determine if these courses—and any others that carry SUNY credit—merit the SUNY brand. Even discussions of residency credits (too few required in some cases for a SUNY degree) are beginning.
- Student success and evaluation of best practices in even local policies should continue: programs with many credits, course re-take policies, and all other curriculum and policy issues should be open for debate—even tenuring practices should be re-evaluated. Innovative instruction and entrepreneurial activities related to scholarship might be more highly valued than they currently are (scholarship of teaching and learning, higher education administration, patents, non-peer-reviewed but substantial research, for example). [*N.B.—The Mobility Steering Committee will field evidence of courses where students are routinely under-prepared for advanced work in courses beyond the transfer course. A recent Inside Higher Ed.com article provides background for the Provost's comments. Sandi Cooper from CUNY, referenced below, page 7, is mentioned in the article.*<sup>4</sup>]

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.suny.edu/student/cmpCreditEquiv/courseEquiv.cfm#results> . This site is for prospective students. Check with the main SUNY website (SUNY.edu) for additional links, including course-credit evaluation and direct-to-campus links: <http://www.suny.edu/student/cmpCreditEquiv/index.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/04/21/cuny\\_divided\\_over\\_potential\\_changes\\_to\\_general\\_education\\_requirements\\_and\\_transfer\\_rules](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/04/21/cuny_divided_over_potential_changes_to_general_education_requirements_and_transfer_rules)

**Budget Presentation—Ken O’Brien** (Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Monica Rimai unable to attend)

- Still a moving target, but college presidents should know the specifics of campus cuts at or after the May or June 2011 Board of Trustee meetings. Campus CFOs have been presented with four scenarios that are relatively accurate, but do not include the possible (new legislation pending) 5.5% tuition increase for the fall 2011. [*Spreadsheets with four budget scenarios were distributed.*]

**Chancellor’s Report—Nancy Zimpher**

*The Power of SUNY: Shared Governance Transformation Team Update* [PowerPoint presentation to be made available. Printout available now.] At the afternoon session, before Sector Reports, the Chancellor spoke to the following points:

- Strategic Plan—“system-ness” and renewed NYS investment in SUNY as a leader in regional economic development. The Plan is moving forward. The Regional Economic Development Councils are a reality;
- We are launching (May 17<sup>th</sup>, electronically) the first “SUNY Report Card” that will evaluate metrics in three areas: Competitive SUNY (academics); Competitive NY (economic revitalization); & Commitment to Diversity. 2008-2009 is the baseline for all metrics;
- Budget: rational tuition policy push with the legislature.

**Comprehensive Colleges Break-Out Session**

- Reserve Policy (some reiteration of the unrestricted funds’ issue begun with President O’Brien): very complicated, related to UUP’s stated belief that SUNY has a \$600m unrestricted reserve fund. The draft of the policy notes that campuses with over 25% of operating funds in reserve will have the overages swept; those with under 10% will require “intervention.”
- Branch campus policies and their relationship(s) to the central campus discussed. Plattsburgh is particularly concerned about employees who work at branch campuses not necessarily being part of the core campus’s planning, governance, etc. [*Program deactivations at Plattsburgh were announced after the Plenary.*<sup>5</sup> *The representative raised the issue of branch campus activities being used as a way around contracting faculty directly—outsourcing of a sort. The idea was generally dismissed by senior members of our sector: those who receive a SUNY paycheck are covered by UUP or another union’s collective bargaining.*]
- Student evaluation information should be shared among the reps.
- Five points—two questions for O’Brien and three for the Chancellor—came out of our discussions. The general areas appear here: the exact questions and the Chancellor’s responses appear in the section, below, on Sector Reports: To the UFS President - *Clarification of proposed reserve policy & Need for better exchange on budget issues*; To the Chancellor – *Reaction to misinformation, Budget scenarios’ impact & UB2020 summit in May.*

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<sup>5</sup> [http://pressrepublican.com/0100\\_news/x103914476/Plattsburgh-State-cuts-programs](http://pressrepublican.com/0100_news/x103914476/Plattsburgh-State-cuts-programs)

## Sector Reports & Chancellor Zimpher's Responses

### Comprehensive Colleges—Richard Lee (Oneonta)

Jim McElwaine has been nominated [*elected 4/16 during that section of the agenda*] to serve another one-year term as Sector Representative. Lee summarized the concerns of our break-out session, mentioned, above, in the breakout-session summary, and asked the following questions about inaccurate financial information, contradictory rhetoric and advocacy positioning:

- *To the UFS President - Clarification of proposed reserve policy*

The Comprehensive Colleges lack information on this proposed policy. We request the UFS president to furnish us with the answers to these questions: What is the purpose of the expressed ratios between unrestricted reserves and core operations? What are the expectations or outcomes of this policy? What is the exact purpose of the lower figure of 10% in a time of continued scant budgets? Will overages be shifted to other campuses if swept?

- *To the UFS President – Need for better exchange on budget issues*

The Comprehensive Colleges need better information on the budget. We feel that we are operating in a fog. In order to be good partners in shared governance, we need more-accurate data, projections and information even or perhaps especially during this unstable fiscal period. We request the UFS president to furnish us with the answers to this question: How can we increase genuine discussion and exchange?

- *To the Chancellor – Reaction to misinformation*

The Comprehensive Colleges would like the Chancellor's response to the misinformation currently being circulated about System-wide and campus-specific reserves. How can we help you to counter rhetoric and misconceptions of unrestricted reserve funds in System Administration and on campuses? Why do you think these misconceptions are being promulgated?

- *To the Chancellor – Budget scenarios impact*

The Comprehensive Colleges have reviewed the four budget scenarios from April 4. It is our perception that the Comprehensive Colleges are receiving a disproportionate reduction. Is this true? If true, would you provide a rationale?

- *To the Chancellor – UB2020 summit*

The Comprehensive Colleges believe that the impact of the UB2020 summit meeting this summer would be best served by having good representation of SUNY constituencies, including governance leaders. Do you agree and will you be able to advocate for this?

- **Chancellor Zimpher's response** was supportive of working—carefully—to bring SUNY governance leadership into the Summit and trying to shift the focus from UB2020 to SUNY. She was very clear in her statements regarding disproportional cuts: they are trying to spread the pain, but “cuts to any part of the system disadvantage the whole system.” [*She emphasized her responsibility to the whole system, unequivocally stating that she is not—will not—favor one sector over another.*] Her responses to the indirection of the first two questions (to President O'Brien) were illuminating: she implied that split advocacy was a tactical error. [*It is quite clear that we have cast our lot with the Governor.*]

### Health Sciences and Colleges of Technology—Ed Feldman (Stony Brook)

The representative raised issues about accreditation committees and a “disturbing trend”: their observations about faculty involvement in shared governance. This sector has of course been hit very hard, but needs to understand how the future of clinical faculty will be considered.

- **Chancellor Zimpher’s response** was that of course some “unevenness of shared governance” is to be expected campus by campus. She summarized cuts specific to this sector. [*Some rah-rah here about a better future and the value of the forthcoming Report Card (especially as regards full- vs. part-time faculty)*].

### University Centers—Peter Knuepfer (Binghamton)

Their representative made mention of contradictory impulses in Albany (SUNY and legislature) regarding international students, out-of-state tuition payers and graduate students. For example, while great emphasis is put on Global SUNY, levels of support for internationalizing campuses, whether by recruiting overseas or establishing campus abroad, are simply not sufficient. Too, graduate students are part of this mix in general, so what discussions of increased graduate tuition (by campus, specialization, etc.) and what percentages of tuition capture are being had that would enable the research centers to more-appropriately fulfill their missions?

- **Chancellor Zimpher’s response** was brief. She noted that discussions of Buffalo and / or other research centers receiving special treatment at the upcoming Buffalo UB 2020 summit were premature. Everything is in flux, including the agenda for that summit. For now, the fact that she will be there will have to suffice. On the issue(s) of graduate students and international recruitment she said little except to note that each campus must do what makes sense in terms of its strategic plan.

### Campus Governance Leaders—Susan Camp (Oswego)

How can university service be more valued as faculty are stretched more thinly? How can the system help to ameliorate balkanization? [*Camp was re-elected for 2011-2012.*]

- Representatives (esp. Dennis Showers for CGLs) raised questions about tuition waivers for graduate students and the proposed cap on out-of-state students in The Empowerment Act.
  - **Chancellor Zimpher’s response** stressed that strategic planning and thinking can lead to regionalization of shared services to help offset budgetary problems and redundancies. She said very clearly that nothing in SUNY benefits by privileging one sector over any others. Allocations of cuts have to be dealt with carefully. [*She used Human Resources as a particular, extended example of an administrative service that could be regionally rather than locally housed / focused.*]

### Special and Statutory Colleges Sector—Maryellen Keefe (Cornell)

- Visibility of the colleges in the sector is crucial, and Alfred State is a particular victim of lack of attention.
  - **Chancellor Zimpher’s response** focused on continuing efforts to publicize all aspects of every part of the system. She mentioned the hiring of a new public relations person (Morgan Hook) and new websites.

## Resolutions

*[First readings Friday, revisions presented and final votes taken Saturday. Copies of the resolutions are included in the Appendix. Synopses are provided here for ease of use. The UFS website and the University Faculty Senator's Corner have e-versions of all final drafts.<sup>6</sup>]*

### 1) **Resolution in Support of a Five-Year Tuition Plan for The State University of New York**

[Ten whereas clauses precede] “Therefore, be it resolved that the SUNY UFS strongly supports the State University’s proposal for the enactment of a five-year tuition plan.”

**Passed**

### 2) **Resolution on Grade Change Authority.**

[Three whereas clauses precede] “Whereas, the assignment of a grade by someone other than the instructor of record remains a faculty responsibility, therefore, be it

(1) Resolved that the UFS urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process procedures by which a student can appeal or grieve a grade, which are clearly publicized to students, and

(2) Resolved that the UFS urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process policies that address circumstances and procedures under which a grade change can be made by someone other than the instructor of record, consistent with the principles outlined below.” [Details available at

**Passed**

### 3) **Resolution on Appropriate Use of System-wide Data**

(1) “Resolved that the UFS requests that the Chancellor establish an advisory committee to develop and recommend system-wide policies and practices for gathering data from campuses throughout the system, and to make recommendations with respect to appropriate use of that data, and be it further

(2) Resolved that the advisory committee have broad representation including representatives from the UFS and the FCCC.”

**Passed**

### 4) **Resolution on Governor’s May 2011 “SUNY Summit”**

[Three whereas clauses precede] “Therefore, be it resolved that the UFS requests the Governor and political leadership of NYS to work closely with Chancellor Zimpher to expand the scope of the planned May “summit” to include the Board of Trustees’ proposed five-year tuition policy and additional flexibilities for all campuses of the State University of New York rather than focusing on a proposal that affects only one campus.”

**Passed**

### **Proposed Bylaws Changes**

A resolution was passed at the Spring 2010 Plenary charging the UFS Governance Committee with “developing specific recommendations for electronic meetings between

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<sup>6</sup>UFS: <http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/ApprovedResolutions.cfm>. University Faculty Senator’s Corner: <http://www.oneonta.edu/academics/senate/Fac%20Senator.asp>

scheduled plenaries . . .” Specific changes to enable virtual meetings are being made to two Articles:

*Article the V: Special Meetings of Senate, Section A* (adding “meetings, electronic or otherwise”);

*Article XI, Section C: Quorums and Actions* (adding “by electronic means”)

- Issues related to asynchronous meetings, methods of meetings and other concerns were not included.

*To be acted upon at the Fall 2011 Plenary*

## Committee and Liaison Reports

**Executive Committee update**—Norm Goodman (Stony Brook)

- Met with FCCC to discuss the pervasiveness of attacks on public sector employees and higher education
- Survey forthcoming to CGLs about shared governance, including the creation of a governance toolkit
- Other conversations involved joint advocacy (FCCC and UFS) for the Governor’s Summit in May 2011 (see Resolutions, below), bylaws changes

**Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC)**—Ann Catalano (Niagara CC)

- New era of cooperation between CC and UFS representatives, including concurrent resolutions supporting advocacy for SUNY and several inter-committee involvements
- Increasingly, CC experts are becoming convinced that “course-based assessment” for General Education is outmoded. More-appropriate paradigms might include outcomes’ assessment rather than course-specific evaluation. Promise was made of website availability for info on this rather major paradigm shift, one which would (in one scenario) allow students with a two-year degree to be “done” with Gen Ed [*See report, just below, by CUNY Faculty President.*]

**Report of the CUNY Faculty Senate President**—Sandi Cooper

- New, dangerous resolution on General Education working its way through their administration: cap on the number of Gen Ed credits senior colleges can offer. [*See past reporting and current comments from, especially, the FCCC.*<sup>7</sup>] The net effect will be a forced acceptance of junior colleges’ sign-off on general education and inevitable program deactivations (and retrenchments). Senior colleges could only add six-twelve credits beyond junior-college completion of Gen Ed. [*A great deal of side chatter about this one, as this paradigm shift—away from course-based assessment of Gen Ed—is clearly where the CCs are heading.*]

**Committee on Ethics and Institutional Integrity**—Janet Nepkie

- Committee has reported to the Executive Committee on recent matters regarding academic freedom

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<sup>7</sup> See also the article on [inside.highered.com](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/04/21/cuny_divided_over_potential_changes_to_general_education_requirements_and_transfer_rules), “Who Decides on Transfer Credit”:  
[http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/04/21/cuny\\_divided\\_over\\_potential\\_changes\\_to\\_general\\_education\\_requirements\\_and\\_transfer\\_rules](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/04/21/cuny_divided_over_potential_changes_to_general_education_requirements_and_transfer_rules)

### **Operations Committee—Ron Sarner**

- Executive compensation review continues, with some difficulty getting accurate information
- Is continuing to study the effects of budget cuts
- Is gathering data on the use of mobile computing devices in the classroom
- Work is almost complete on the next phase of the Longitudinal Faculty Profile: it should be finished by the fall 2011 Plenary
- An examination of Fringe Benefit Recovery by “the Committee concluded that the method of charging fringe benefit costs to research or IFR activities did not, in aggregate, disadvantage the University and decided that further work on this project was not warranted.” [*His words: “Let this dog sleep.”*]
- Delivered a report on budget cuts by campus (only nine of thirty reported). UFS will continue to compile specific information (data) on issues such as average class size, actual cuts by \$, position, etc.

### **Programs and Awards Committee—Janet Nepkie (Oneonta)**

- Update on Conversations in the Disciplines guidelines, available at [www.suny.edu/provost/facultyawards.cfm](http://www.suny.edu/provost/facultyawards.cfm) and [www.brockport.edu/CID](http://www.brockport.edu/CID)
- Comments on Chancellor’s Awards, reminders of guidelines and mention of data & technology transfer [*from Brockport’s well-supported website, maintained by one “stellar” Brockport faculty member who is also a member of the Committee*] to System Administration
- Discussion continues on the Faculty Exchange Scholars Program and additional, possibilities for distinguished rank faculty
- Two new CID funding opportunities (sustainability and entrepreneurship)

### **Ad Hoc Committee on the Authority for Grading—Janet Nepkie (Oneonta)**

- The Committee has completed its charge by crafting and forwarding for consideration a resolution on grading authority. [*See above, Resolution on Grade Change Authority.*]

### **Graduate and Research Committee—Ed Feldman (Stony Brook)**

- Graduate Research Symposium: “Research That Matters—An Exposition of Graduate Research in SUNY and CUNY” was held on 3/8/11 at the LOB in Albany
- A sub-committee, led by Richard Smardon, is setting up a workshop on sustainability, inviting experts from four areas: energy, environment, green chemistry and social/political consequences and opportunities. A summer 2010 meeting is envisioned. Senators are asked to nominate experts in these four fields. More info will be forthcoming on the UFS website.
- A Graduate Research Portal, “Find a SUNY Scholar,” has been launched and is accessible through the Research Foundation website: [www.rfsuny.org](http://www.rfsuny.org)

### **Governance Committee—Dennis Showers (Geneseo)**

- *Governance Handbook* is available, and they now have a mechanism for updating it every two years

- Working on updating the *Campus Governance Leaders' Guide* and a website for CGLs and other campus leaders
- Put forward changes to bylaws that allows for electronic special meetings [*See above.*]
- Is working on a website—a web Help Desk—for Middle States on Governance. “We will have a discussion at the next Plenary to identify questions that could be made into an FAQ and work out a way that other questions could be routed to more experienced contracts [*sic*] on campus.”

**Student Life Committee**—Ray Krisciunas (Canton)

- Returned surveys on honor codes have been analyzed
- Work compiling SUNY Campus Traditions III continues, including outreach to CCs and statutory colleges, to culminate in website creation due by April 2010

**Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Comm.**—Joy Hendrick (Cortland)

- A draft version of the (Revised) *Guide to the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs* is available, updating the 1999 version. An e-version is to be made available.
- A draft guide for best practices for teaching assistantships and internships at undergraduate institutions is forthcoming. E-version forthcoming.
- Will be conducting reviews and continuing discussions on the contact / credit hour relationship, campus changes to Gen Ed, and cross-registration and / or dual enrollment issues

**Comm. on Diversity and Cultural Competence (CDCC)**—Phil Ortiz (Empire State)

- Coordination and publicizing of campus-based diversity activities continues.
- “In the fall of 2009 the Office of Diversity and Educational Equity organizing a conference on STEM education. The office is now planning for a similar conference this fall, and CDCC is assisting . . . [hopeful] that each campus [will] send a team to participate: [www.suny.edu/provost/stem](http://www.suny.edu/provost/stem)
- “Each summer the U of Buffalo hosts a research and training conference for minority [*and other*] students. This nationally sponsored conference hosts McNair Scholars and other undergraduates, and provides opportunities for attendees to network, prepare for graduate school, and present research projects: [www.ubetc.org/mcnairscholars/conference.html](http://www.ubetc.org/mcnairscholars/conference.html)
- CDCC will work to increase awareness of the annual “Somos el Futuro” conference that is being organized by the NYS Legislature
- The Committee continues to collect data from each campus on issues of concern, including SUNY’s compliance on Title IX. A request for campus-specific respondents to a short survey is included in the Committee’s report.

**Business Committee**—David Carson (Buffalo State)

- After nominations closed, one vote was cast after a seconded motion that elected Ken O’Brien to another term as UF President.

### Old Business—Carl Wiezalis

- Continues projects and liaisons for UFS at President O'Brien's behest, including sustainability meetings, Business and Leadership seminars in Albany and New York, the Retirees Service Corps, the Peace Corps, Project Hope, among many others

### New Business—Ken O'Brien

- Reminder by Beth Bringsjord (System) about "System-ness": leveraging the power of information on other campuses throughout the system for mentoring, conferences, data gathering, reports, and everything else mentioned at this Plenary. The power of the system as the Strategic Plan works itself out is a real solution to many problems and opportunities offered here.

**Adjournment at 11:30am on 4/16/11**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Lee  
UFS Senator*

## Appendix

### Resolutions from the spring 2011 UF Plenary

University Faculty Senate  
Executive Committee  
158th Plenary  
SUNY Fredonia  
April 16, 2011

#### RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A FIVE YEAR TUITION PLAN FOR The State University of New York

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the State University of New York is to provide broad access for students, irrespective of economic status, to public higher education of the highest order, and

**WHEREAS**, in fulfilling its mission and meeting its commitment, the State University is supporting the economy, the culture and community life across New York State, and

**WHEREAS**, direct state support for the State University has been reduced by more than \$1.4 billion in the past four years, and

**WHEREAS**, SUNY's resident undergraduate tuition rate is \$4,970 per year, the lowest for public universities in the region and among the lowest in the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, SUNY tuition raises have been historically unpredictable, with 13 raises over the last 48 years, which have ranged from 7% to 43%; and

**WHEREAS**, SUNY, the largest comprehensive university system in the United States, has the potential to create unprecedented opportunities for current and future college students and their families, for businesses and industries, for educational, social, and cultural agencies, and for the workforce of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, SUNY campuses need fiscal stability to realize this potential; and

**WHEREAS**, a five-year tuition plan that is fair, predictable and responsible for students – and that keeps all tuition revenues at SUNY campuses – will enable current and future students and their families to plan adequately; and

**WHEREAS**, an effective five-year tuition plan entail a commitment by New York State to meet a specified portion of the mandatory operational costs for the University,

beginning with the restoration of the cut in the current adopted budget, and to maintain that level of support in the future; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Cuomo indicated in a press conference that a “rational tuition plan” was worthy of serious consideration and that the current method of legislative action was broken;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the SUNY University Faculty Senate strongly supports the State University’s proposal for the enactment of a five-year tuition plan.

### **158-01-1**

#### **Resolution in Support of a Five-Year Tuition Plan**

**Passed without Dissent**

**April 16, 2010**

#### **Background**

On Tuesday, February 1, 2011, Governor Andrew Cuomo released his Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Executive Budget, in which he recognized the pressing need for the New York State to change the way it conducts its fiscal business. For the first time in many years, the Governor submitted a budget that actually cut total spending, rather than merely lowering the rate of growth.

The State’s public universities (SUNY and CUNY), like other state agencies, received a 10% cut to their operating budgets. If this were the first reduction in state support for its public universities, it would not be unwarranted, especially given the looming \$10 billion deficit facing the state. But, it is not. This reduction is the fourth in as many years, leaving SUNY with three-quarters of a billion dollars less (well over 30% of state support) with which to fund its core operations.

This budget proposal continued recent cuts in state support for community colleges, the gateway to higher education for so many of New York working citizens, and further eliminated all state support for SUNY’s teaching hospitals. The loss of \$130 million in public support to the hospitals, which is in addition to the 10% to the SUNY operating budget, would have significantly reduced their ability to serve patients in their respective regions, who are often the poorest in the area. Additionally, these cuts would quickly result in the loss of thousands of jobs.

In the months that followed, it was recognized that despite the dire condition of New York State’s public finances, reductions of this magnitude were unwise. The final resolution of the political process has been a budget with modest restorations for community college support and a \$60 million restoration of the hospital subsidy, which still left a \$70 million cut to institutions that provide medical services to otherwise underserved populations. Modest regulatory reform was also included in the package, but there was no restoration for the operating budget of SUNY’s 32 state-operated campuses and there was no tuition increase in the budget package.

Unlike all other state agencies, public universities constitute investments in our collective future, and as such they are important continuing investments in our state’s infrastructure. The public university system in New York educates people from all walks of life, enriching their lives and, because better educated citizens earn more, and hence pay more taxes, they enrich the state's

coffers. In this way, the public earns compound interest on its investment in higher education, a claim that can be made by no other public investment.

Both the University Faculty Senate and the SUNY Student Assembly embraced a solution for what is clearly becoming a funding crisis for public higher education in New York, a rational fiscal policy. Such a policy, which the Faculty Senate first advocated almost a decade ago, would have three components: 1. The state's commitment to maintaining its support for public higher education at predictable levels, levels sufficient to cover the core mandatory costs, now and in the future; 2. An aggressive campaign by the universities to generate new streams of income (such as government grants and contracts, foundation and alumni gifts); and 3. Mandatory, moderate annual tuition increases.

A responsible fiscal policy for higher education asks students to do their part by funding a bit more of their educations each year through modest tuition increases. Make no mistake; the increase is needed now, beginning this fall. Modest annual tuition increases would provide the means necessary to deliver educational services and would eliminate the need for those sudden, large increases that have so often come without warning in the past.

This is precisely what Chancellor Zimpher and the Board of Trustees advocated with their five-year tuition plan that is "fair, predictable and responsible." And, it is what the SUNY Student Assembly has supported in each of the past two years, and it is what the University Faculty Senate has supported for a decade.

With fewer resources, the public universities have often been forced to adopt a number of cost-saving strategies, such as replacing retiring full-time staff, both professional and teaching, with part-time employees, a short term solution that in the long-term consequences for educational quality. In some cases, they have increased class sizes and in others have recommended the elimination of academic programs. Students on some campuses may soon find fewer options available to them, both in terms of programs (a number of campuses have already announced the discontinuance of programs) and the number of sections offered. Between the Fall 2009 and the Fall 2010 semesters, SUNY lost approximately 2700 course sections, which translates into many thousands of seats that are no longer available to students. And more will be lost by Fall 2011.

SUNY and CUNY must do their part to address both the short-term fiscal problems and the long-term possibilities by working ever more efficiently, by examining closely how each dollar is spent, and by safeguarding those expenses essential to the continued delivery of educational opportunity to students. And, they must also aggressively pursue every possible means for increasing funding from external sources, whether through public-private partnerships consistent with their educational missions and respectful of traditional personnel patterns or through grants and gifts.

But, the state must also do its part, through regulatory relief, a firm commitment to maintenance of effort and a responsible long-term tuition policy. Each of these is an important element in creating a stable, predictable funding base for public higher education in the state.

At one point in the past six months, the Governor told us that tuition is not a tax. He's right, it isn't, if the tuition collected remains on the campus and used in support of education. If

anything, it constitutes a fee for services. But it is more; tuition represents the investments that students and their families are making in the future. The community college system, which came late to New York State, was modeled on such a funding plan, with the state paying a share, localities paying a share and the students themselves paying a share – each share representing an investment in increasing the human capital necessary for productive, fruitful lives.

Today, we know that some believe that current economic realities dictate continued cuts our public and private support for public higher education, but that view is really being penny-wise and pound-foolish. Education pays dividends, monetary benefits to the individuals who attain it and to countless others to the larger community, through the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary for the full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. SUNY committed itself to provide that education to millions of our citizens when it adopted the motto, “to learn, to search, to serve” almost forty years ago, and our commitment to education as public service was renewed last year through our strategic planning process. Today, SUNY is willing and able to continue meeting the complex educational needs of our fellow citizens for higher education, but to succeed, it needs much more reliable funding. And, it needs it now. The place to begin is the Governor’s call for a summit in early May and an agreement on a rational fiscal policy for the State University of New York.

**University Faculty Senate  
Executive Committee  
158th Plenary  
SUNY Fredonia  
April 16, 2011**

## **Resolution on Governor's May 2011 SUNY "Summit"**

**Whereas**, the ability of SUNY's thirty four State-operated campuses to respond effectively to these reductions in State support has been greatly limited by legislative constraints on the tuition policy, and

**Whereas**, funding for the State University of New York has been reduced by more than \$1.4 billion during the last four years, and

**Whereas**, SUNY's structural fiscal issues will only be solved by providing flexibilities to the System,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the University Faculty Senate requests the Governor and political leadership of New York State to work closely with Chancellor Zimpher to expand the scope of the planned May "summit" to include the Board of Trustees' proposed five-year tuition policy and additional flexibilities for all campuses of the State University of New York.

**158-02-1**

**Resolution on Governor's May 2011 SUNY "Summit"**

**Passed without Dissent**

**April 16, 2010**

**University Faculty Senate**

**Operations Committee**

**158th Plenary**

**SUNY Fredonia**

**April 16, 2011**

## **Resolution on Appropriate Use of System-Wide Data**

**Whereas** the information collected through SIRIS provides SUNY with data that can be used to better inform our understanding of higher education issues including, but not limited to, student success, transfer and articulation, and remediation, and

**Whereas** the information collected through SIRIS will be valuable in supporting the SUNY Strategic Plan, and

**Whereas** the collection of data and use of data is essential to participatory decision making in shared governance,

**Resolved** that the University Faculty Senate requests that the Chancellor establish an advisory committee to develop and recommend system-wide policies and practices for gathering data from campuses throughout the system, and to make recommendations with respect to appropriate use of that data, and be it further

**Resolved** that the advisory committee have broad representation including representatives from the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges.

**158-03-1**

**Resolution on Appropriate Use of System-Wide Data**

**Passed without Dissent**

**April 16, 2010 University Faculty Senate**

**Ad Hoc Committee on Grading**

**158th Plenary**

**SUNY Fredonia**

**April 16, 2011**

**University Faculty Senate**

**158th Plenary**

**SUNY Fredonia**

**April 16, 2011**

## Resolution on Grade Change Authority

**Whereas**, the authority to assign grades rests with the faculty member who is instructor of record, due to that individual's unique position to evaluate the performance of a student in a course, and

**Whereas**, any change to an initial grade normally is the responsibility of the instructor of record, and

Whereas, under extraordinary circumstances such as a grade having been demonstrably based on impermissible factors such as discrimination, bias, or retaliation, or when the instructor of record is no longer available for a grade change appeal, it may be necessary for someone other than the instructor to assign a different grade, and

**Whereas**, the assignment of a grade by someone other than the instructor of record remains a faculty responsibility,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the University Faculty Senate urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process procedures by which a student can appeal or grieve a grade, which are clearly publicized to students, and

**Be it further resolved** that the University Faculty Senate urges each campus governance body to ensure that the campus has robust due process policies that address circumstances and procedures under which a grade change can be made by someone other than the instructor of record, consistent with the principles outlined below.

### Principles for consideration for a grade change made by someone other than the instructor of record

- Grading is at the heart of an educational institution's integrity
- Each campus should develop its own policies consistent with the Policies of the Board of Trustees, Article XI, Title I, to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of faculty inquiry, teaching and research, as well as a requirement for a corresponding principle of faculty responsibility.
- Grades awarded by an instructor of record should not be changed except in accordance with published campus policies. The policies should clarify the circumstances and procedures for faculty peer review and faculty involvement in the extraordinary circumstances when administrative review is necessary. Such changes of grade should occur as the result of the recommendation of faculty peers. Campus policies may include consultation with outside faculty experts if no local faculty experts are available.
- All changes of grades should be documented to include reasons for the change and personnel involved in the change. Such documents should be available to all parties for a time period consistent with the campus records retention policy.

- Change of grade by someone other than the instructor of record should be in response to exceptional circumstances such as temporary or permanent incapacity of the instructor, unavailability or unwillingness of the instructor to review submitted materials for reasons such as but not limited to sabbatical or other leave, termination of employment or death.
- It is good practice for a campus to periodically review or assess its grade change practices. Such reviews can provide the campus with valuable feedback on whether the campus procedures and policies are followed, and whether they are effective and sufficient.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE REASONS FOR GRADE CHANGES (the list is not comprehensive)

- Demonstrable arithmetical, editing, or factual error in calculating the grade
- Omission of assignments or parts of assignments in calculating the grade
- Grade demonstrably based on impermissible factors such as discrimination, bias, retaliation or retribution

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE REASONS FOR GRADE CHANGES (the list is not comprehensive)

- Save a student from some academic penalty: dismissal, probation, warning, academic integrity issue, etc.
- Allow a student to graduate
- Allow a student to graduate with academic honors, or meet some other established minima
- Personal issues unrelated to academics
- Allow a student to maintain academic eligibility for athletics or any other co-curricular activity
- Manage enrollment levels in order to preserve programs

**158-04-1**

**Resolution on Grade Change Authority**

**Passed without Dissent**

**April 16, 2010**