

15 January 2014

I will use this report to update you on System Administration initiatives, initiatives from the Governor's State of the State address and the Chancellor's State of the University address, and provide you a summary of my own activities since we last met.

SUNY Initiatives

1. **Open SUNY**. The Chancellor "officially" launched the Open SUNY initiative at the State of the University address on January 14. She identified 8 programs from 6 campuses as "Open SUNY +" degrees (incorrectly identified as "new" online degree programs in the media) that will pilot centralized 24/7 student (and instructor) support, tutoring, and advising. She announced two virtual groups that will be of particular importance to faculty: Center for Online Teaching Excellence (<http://commons.suny.edu/facultycenter/>) and Open SUNY Scale-Up Lab. The former has already attracted more than 500 faculty interested in sharing expertise in online education. It's not necessarily all rosy, as UUP has been quick to point out. For example, the Chancellor indicated the intent to use Open SUNY to develop a "Gen Ed package"—which, if we don't design and control, could ultimately lead to the "canned curriculum" that our union leadership has warned about. So in my opinion Open SUNY offers opportunity for faculty and students to leverage online education in better ways, but we'll need to be vigilant to maintain control over quality and curriculum for our campuses. As we consider this initiative further, I would point you to the Undergraduate Committee report for some additional points for discussion. I would also encourage you to access the Open SUNY website (<http://open.suny.edu/>) for further information and participate in Open SUNY webinars (on January 28 and February 3) if you haven't already done so.
2. **Seamless Transfer Initiative**. At the end of our last meeting, we passed a Sense of the Senate resolution asking the Executive Committee to produce a resolution that, in essence, endorsed the basic position of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges regarding curricular implications of the seamless transfer paths. The Executive Committee deliberated for some time on the wording of a resolution, and meanwhile a series of discussions among FCCC President Tina Good, Interim Provost Beth Bringsjord, and me resulted in development of a process to move forward. Accordingly, the Executive Committee crafted a resolution endorsing that process. This has been forwarded to the full Senate for endorsement at our Plenary. This effective use of shared governance now is better incorporating faculty concerns about the transfer paths and will allow us to resolve the issue of required versus recommended coursework for transferring into a major. More than 1100 faculty are participating in review and evaluation of the transfer paths that had been originally developed for 38 majors. These faculty, chosen by appropriate departments across the System (both State-Ops and Community Colleges), are using the SUNY Learning Commons as a communication mechanism to determine what (if any) changes are needed to the existing paths. What we hope will emerge is consensus where it is warranted, or broadening or narrowing of the list of transferable courses if that is warranted. This is truly

a faculty-led, faculty-controlled approach to identifying what is in common among majors and what isn't, focused on the typical coursework that would allow a student to be a true junior in a chosen major field. It is very important that we use this opportunity effectively so that our students are best served and our curricular autonomy is also best preserved. I am also hopeful that the establishment of these disciplinary groups might lead to further collaborations across the system; after all, now all of the psychology (and English, and history, etc.) departments are talking to each other!

3. **START UP NY.** This program has received a real heavy push from the Governor's office; I'm sure you've seen the commercials. I remain very concerned about the lack of consideration of SUNY and academic mission in the public discourse. However, I've been pushing to ensure that faculty governance groups are involved in the development or at least review of campus plans, and I continue to seek information on status of campus plans from both System Administration and our CGLs. Jason Lane, Vice Provost, is co-chair of the System working group that evaluates the acceptability of campus plans. His message to is that, as important as review of initial plans is, review of specific business proposals is even more important. Here is some of the guidance that his working group is sending to campuses as they move forward to attract business partners under the START-UP program:

Selection Process and Qualification of Businesses:

Accepting Businesses Applications

Solicit and accept business applications with assistance of local REDC, municipality, county or other clearly defined stakeholders.

START -UP NY Campus Advisory Committee

Establish a START-UP NY Advisory Committee, with membership including appropriate senior administrative officers, faculty, and student representatives. Consider inclusion of external members as well. Describe how members of committee will be chosen. The committee should provide a broad campus perspective, and include representatives who can ensure the business proposal aligns with the campus's academic mission.

Criteria

Define specific criteria for how business will be chosen. The criteria may include some or all of the following:

Academic and Research Alignment

- Is the business in an industry aligned with current and/or developing University research, scholarly, and creative activity?
- Does the business provide experiential learning and workforce opportunities (e.g., internships, fellowships, full-time jobs) for students and graduates?
- Does the business provide areas for partnership and advancement for faculty and students?
- Will the business provide access to research instrumentation, tools, and/or equipment necessary to advance the academic and research mission?
- Will the business fund scholarships, campus facilities or other academic services or amenities?
- Will the business and/or its employees contribute to instruction or provide student mentoring?
- Does the business offer the use of company resources, intellectual property or expertise to support the academic mission?

While these aren't requirements to campuses, they are recommendations, and I urge all of us to press that they be followed.

4. **Teacher Education.** Although we have made it clear that neither the process nor the content of the Board of Trustees resolution on admissions standards for teacher education programs are acceptable to the Faculty Senate, it is equally clear to me that there is not going to be any movement away from this. I have been assured by the Interim Provost that a data-driven examination of the relationship between grades and teacher effectiveness will be on the agenda of a Provost's Advisory Committee on Teacher Education, that group has yet to be reconstituted. A second issue regarding teacher education should be of importance to us as well—the implications of the edTPA initiative on our students and on demands for changes to our curriculum. Our union has been far more engaged in this issue than we have been, and I recommend you consult the latest issue of the UUP Voice for much more information (<http://uupinfo.org/voice/jan/1314/0114Voice4Web.pdf>). This is a topic with which we will be more engaged in coming months.
5. **LICH and SUNY Downstate.** This continues to be a topic that dominates discussion by the Board of Trustees. It is also a fast-moving issue, so I will update this during my remarks at the Plenary rather than attempt to do so here. However, there is one element about which you should be particularly concerned: the potential financial impact on the SUNY System as a whole. At present, even if SUNY were to exit the operation of the Long Island College Hospital within 60 days, the potential liabilities exceed \$500 million. Somewhat less than half of this can be offset by a sale of the LICH properties, but SUNY would still be left with potential liabilities of at least \$300 million. Some of this could “go away”, but some percentage of it will have to be covered somehow. That “somehow” could be a “tax” on campus budgets, on available IFR funds, or even through a student fee.
6. **Governor's Initiatives.** Governor Cuomo announced several SUNY-based initiatives in his State of the State address on January 8. Most prominent is the call to establish a SUNY College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity. Where and what this would be are not clear from the Governor's speech nor from his accompanying policy brief. However, suitors are lining up (political suitors, that is; nothing public from SUNY at this point). He also announced the intention to offer full scholarships to SUNY to students who have graduated in the top 10% of their class, major in a STEM field, and agree to work in New York for at least 5 years after graduation (paid by ???). He requested a new round of NY SUNY2020 funding, but tied explicitly to START-UP NY initiatives. Some things were notable by their absence: he introduced Chairman Carl McCall as former Comptroller, not current SUNY Board chair; he said nothing about SUNY hospitals; and even in talking about initiatives related to SUNY (like START-UP), he hardly ever mentioned SUNY by name! Doesn't seem to bode well...
7. **State of the University.** The Chancellor delivered her fourth State of the University address on January 14. But aside from the official launch of Open SUNY, she did not announce a

laundry list of new initiatives, unlike in previous years—presumably recognizing that it's time to move some initiatives to completion, perhaps recognizing that the campuses are feeling "initiated out". She did, however, emphasize some of the ongoing initiatives and how she wishes them to move forward, including SUNY Works and the RF Networks of Excellence (particularly highlighting the nascent one on the Arts and Humanities), both of which you'll hear more about at the Plenary meeting.

8. **Board of Trustees.** Although as a Board we have been consumed by concerns about the entire range of issues around LICH, we have done other things as well. I want to bring a couple to your attention. First, the Board has approved requesting a change of degree authorization so that SUNY Delhi can move forward to offer an online MS degree in nursing education—the first such authorization to a campus in our Tech sector. Second, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board received a very detailed and insightful report from the Provost's staff on graduate education in SUNY. This is a topic that has been commonly overlooked by the Board, and I was quite pleased to see not only the material presented, but a substantive discussion recognizing the importance of graduate education to SUNY's mission.
9. **Additional Activities.** One of the pledges I made when I took this office was that I would attempt to visit each campus so that I could talk with faculty governance groups about SUNY-wide initiatives and, more importantly, learn more about the issues of concern on our campuses. This provides me a far better basis for discussion with senior SUNY leadership. Thus far, I have visited nearly half of the campuses, and we are working on plans for visits to the rest over the next couple of months. We coordinate these visits with the CGLs and try, to the best of our ability, to schedule them at times when governance groups would already be scheduled to meet. So, if you haven't seen me on your campus yet, expect to hear soon from Carol Donato so we can set up a visit.

We had a joint meeting of the Executive Committees of SUNY UFS, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and CUNY UFS on January 10 in New York City. This provided us not only an opportunity to get to know what initiatives and issues our respective groups are examining, but also led to a very fruitful discussion on the role of the faculty in governing curriculum. The three leaders are working on a joint statement on faculty control of curriculum for presentation to our bodies for endorsement.

Finally, I want to invite all of you to the First Annual SUNY Voices Conference on Shared Governance, entitled Shared Governance for Institutions of Higher Education in the 21st Century: Beyond Stereotypes (nice, concise title...), to be held in Albany April 23-24. You'll have an announcement in your packet at the Plenary, and additional information is linked (or will be shortly) from the UFS website.