

DRAFT
Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2017
567 Capen Hall

Attendance: Attached at end.

All proceedings of the meeting recorded are on the UB FSEC Box once the minutes is approved.

Meeting called to order by Chair & Presiding Officer, Dr Phil Glick at 3.00pm

Agenda: Strategic planning moved to executive session, where there will be no recording and will be confidential. Motion to approve was passed with one opposition. Agenda for 12/12/2017 was accepted with the change.

Minutes for 11/29/2017 was accepted with one change – No 6 of Chairs report was changed from should be to should not be.

Chair's report.

- a. Emeritus Professor Shinpei Ohki. Professor emeritus of Physiology and Biophysics at the University at Buffalo, died Nov. 16 in Burlington, Mass. He was 84. A memorial service will be held in Buffalo next spring.
- b. Through the UB Office of Community Relations **Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program**, the Office of University Shared Governance: Faculty & Professional Staff Senates has received the holiday wish lists from a family in our community in need of our help. Please consider fulfilling the wish lists of Nikki and her 3 sons. If you are able to contribute, please Drop off your gifts at **543 Capen Hall** by **Monday, December 18, 2017**. Also to note: on Wednesday, December 20th, we will be able to meet with the family. If you would like to attend, please do!
- c. In response to a request, the Office of Shared Governance has begun to make orientation videos for its members. The second video is now posted on the website and todays box: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v09AdrLtTU8> It explains how to

use the FS UBBox to maximize your productivity and help UB's sustainability quests,

- d. The FSEC and FS passed a resolution last year supporting the students' fossil free investment strategy efforts. This resolution is in today's box and on our website. Last week a meeting was held with Phil Glick, Ed Schneider, Ryan McPherson and Christian Tiu present. The same week, the Chair of the PSS and Phil Glick met with Greg Bauer, a UBF Trustee and the new chair of the UBF, to acquaint Bauer of the FS and PSS concerns regarding UBF transparency. Subsequently, the investigative post published a report regarding a leak of documents from an offshore law firm. In it, the UBF is named as a shareholder in a fund based in the Cayman Islands. The fund is run by a private equity company, EnCap Flatrock Midstream, whose "singular focus" is investing in the North American natural gas and oil industries. On enquiry, Ed Schneider responded that UBF needs time to develop a proper response.
- e. *A SUNY Office of Academic Ombudsperson Services* is being considered at the SUNY-wide level and will be considered at the Plenary session in January.
- f. The house and senate have passed separate Tax cuts and jobs bills. Matters of concern to the FSEC might include: elimination of some individuals from deducting student loan debt, graduate students who get a tuition waiver, will now have to pay income tax on this waiver, The American opportunity tax credit (AOTC) and Hope credits are for qualified education expenses paid for an eligible student for the first four years of higher education. You can get a maximum annual credit of \$2,500 per eligible student.
- g. The graduate students held another demonstration regarding their request for higher wages. The Teaching and Learning committee has added this matter to their December 18th meeting agenda. VP Hammill, Dean Schulze and representatives from the graduate students have been asked to attend this meeting. The reason for

this is (a) if graduate students salary is raised, units may be able to hire fewer graduate students, (b) if graduate student do not get more wages, graduate applicants to UB will be reduced. In both cases, fewer graduate students will mean fewer graduate instructors.

Provost report: Semester is rolling to an end.

Students had a second March regarding stipends. A statement prepared by Robin Schulze for the students was distributed to the FSEC (also on Box) and a statement by the President on Federal tax reform. Conversations are ongoing largely in the College of Arts and Sciences, towards stipend practices which is set by the units, by the department within the disciplines, practices and customs being different in different disciplines. The center remains as a facilitator/coordinator rather than as a director. In response to discussions the Provost responded that there is no central money as the money is given to the units and spending it depended on the priorities of the college. The government relations people along with the President, make sure the university message goes out to the right places and they contact the electives. It was also brought to the FSEC attention that the UUP is involved. They have a lobbyist in Albany and working with American Federation of teachers lobbyists in DC.

FS Agenda for Dec 12th: potential changes based on what is accomplished at the current meeting, include UB GSA Tax cut resolution, Breathe Free UB policy draft and committee report and SUNY resolutions representation which was unanimously accepted.

Prof Dauber sponsored this and Chris Rupert, graduate student from Biological Sciences presented the GSA tax cut resolution. It will impose financial barriers and make graduate school unsustainable.

The graduate tax cut report was accepted.

The resolution was presented, which was accepted unanimously for discussion.

It was suggested that 2 resolutions be made: one to congress and one to University President.

A UB FSEC resolution and statement on congressional tax bill (Fall 2017) was written/drawn:

Whereas, we the FSEC strongly believe that the proposed changes to the tax bill HR1: the tax law related to taxation of the graduate student stipends and tuition waiver will decrease the quality of, and access to higher education, future innovation and economic impact in the USA.

Therefore, be it resolved that we strongly oppose the passage of this bill.

Pursuant to further discussion, it was unanimously decided to table the resolution until after the GSA met at 6 pm on December 6th.

Breathe-Free UB policy: Phil Glick reported to the FSEC that the UB free report was accepted with four abstaining. Motion to receive the documents was passed unanimously.

After discussion, the question was called to accept the resolution to be sent to FS. It passed with 11 in favor and 3 against.

The SUNY UFS Resolutions Endorsement was tabled to next Wednesday.

The meeting adjourned at 4.25 pm.



A Statement from the University to our Graduate Students (December 4, 2017)

The purpose of this statement is to give you an overview of the progress we've made in our efforts to ensure our Graduate Student funding packages remain competitive so we can recruit and retain the best doctoral students to UB.

Beginning last year and continuing this fall, the university and, in particular, the College of Arts and Sciences, has been engaged in a comprehensive review of UB's PhD programs. This review has enabled us to further improve the academic excellence of our PhD programs and raise stipends in academic departments where stipend levels are below national benchmarks.

As you may know, representatives from university administration, the Graduate School, and the College of Arts and Sciences have met several times this fall with students to understand their concerns, share data on stipend levels across campus and set attainable goals.

Under the leadership of Dean Robin Schulze and with the collaboration of the faculty, the College of Arts and Sciences is currently engaged in an analysis of teaching assistant stipend levels in academic departments that are below national benchmarks as part of a comprehensive effort to strengthen all graduate programs at UB and improve the outcomes of students enrolled in these programs.

This process, coupled with departmental analysis in conjunction with departmental initiatives, resulted in increased stipend levels in the Departments of Communication, Biological Sciences and Chemistry. Of note, since 2012-13, the university has increased investments in tuition and stipends for doctoral students by \$7.5 million. This has resulted in an increase in UB's average teaching assistant stipend support from \$13,183 in 2012 to \$17,343 in the fall of 2016, which ranks UB 12th among 23 public universities in the Association of American Universities. This reflects a total university investment of more than \$48.5 million in 2016-17.

Today, doctoral assistants at UB receive a total funding package of about \$38,000, inclusive of a tuition scholarship, academic year stipend and health benefits. We believe this represents a significant investment in our doctoral students and has enabled many of our academic departments to offer stipends that are competitive with national benchmarks.

The College of Arts and Sciences and its faculty are in the process of determining whether departments, such as the English Department, have the financial capacity to increase stipends to national benchmarks, as part of the College's ongoing resource planning process. Furthermore, the university is committed to continuing to actively advocate for the removal of the part of the Tax Reform Bill that taxes graduate student tuition.

As our efforts go forward, the Graduate School, in consultation with the deans, will continue to share information with students and faculty regarding the TA/GA stipend process and our university's efforts to improve upon the excellence of doctoral education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Robin Schulze'.

Robin Schulze
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Graham Hammill'.

Graham Hammill
Vice Provost for Educational Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT: FEDERAL TAX REFORM LEGISLATION

As a premier public research university, the University at Buffalo strives to cultivate an educated citizenry that is prepared to contribute thoughtfully and meaningfully for the betterment of society.

Unfortunately, the proposed versions of the federal tax reform legislation that were approved in Congress last week drastically undercut the ability of these future leaders to both pursue an affordable quality postsecondary education and realize their dreams.

Last month, I called members of our Western New York federal delegation to convey our opposition to a provision that would repeal the tax-exempt status of tuition waivers for graduate students serving as teaching and research assistants.

This provision reverses decades of progress in making education accessible to students of all economic backgrounds. It would put a financial strain on our current graduate students while curtailing the prospects of future graduate students.

At a time when the demand for a highly educated workforce is greater than ever, counting tuition waivers as taxable income would impede access to the very educational opportunities that produce the leaders on which our state, nation and world depend.

As president, I am deeply concerned about this proposal, which would detrimentally impact UB's hard-working, ambitious and talented graduate students. I will continue to advocate for removal of the graduate student tuition tax from the tax reform bill with my colleagues in SUNY, in the American Association of Universities and in the Council of Graduate Schools.



University at Buffalo
OFFICE OF SHARED GOVERNANCE
FACULTY SENATE

Executive Committee Meeting

December 6th, 2017

3:00pm - 4:30pm, 567 Capen Hall

CHAIR:

Philip Glick *PRESENT*

SECRETARY:

Jessy Alexander *[Signature]*

PARLIAMENTARIAN:

James Hassett

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING:

Beth Tauke *EXCUSED*

ARTS & SCIENCES:

Sampson Blair *EXCUSED*

Michael Cowen

Kenneth Dauber *K. Dauber*

Jean-Jacques Thomas

DENTAL MEDICINE:

Michael Hatton *EXCUSED*

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER:

Chris Yuen *[Signature]*

ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCES:

Deborah Chung *Deborah Chung*

Marina Tsianou *Manna Tsianou*

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

Samuel Abramovich *[Signature]*

LAW:

James Milles

MANAGEMENT:

Jurriaan de Jong *[Signature]*

MEDICINE & BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES:

Peter Elkin *[Signature]*

Robert Miletich *EXCUSED*

NURSING:

Laura Anderson EXCUSED

PHARMACY:

Fred Doloresco EXCUSED

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS:

Jim Lenker *Jim Lenker*

SOCIAL WORK:

Diane Elze *Diane Elze*

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES:

Susan Dow *Susan Dow*

SUNY SENATORS:

Cemal Basaran *Cemal Basaran*

Philip Glick PRESENT

Kathleen Kielar

Ezra Zubrow *Ezra Zubrow*

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO:

Satish Tripathi EXCUSED

PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO:

Charles Zukoski PRESENT

PROFESSIONAL STAFF SENATE:

Domenic Licata PRESENT *Domenic Licata*

COUNCIL OF ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP (COAL):

Mike Brown

INVITED GUESTS:

CHRISTOPHER RUPERT, GSA

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lindsay Allen *Lindsay Allen*