

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

September 9, 2019, 8:00 a.m.

The Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

Michael Cropp

Jonathan Dandes

Scott Friedman

June W. Hoeflich

Mike Montoro

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

Charles F. Zukoski, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Attendees:

Mark Alnutt, Director of Athletics

Brice Bible, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Ann Bisantz, Dean of Undergraduate Education

Beth Del Genio, Chief of Staff to the President

John DellaContrada, Interim Vice President for University Communications

Philip Glick, UB Faculty

Venu Govindaraju, Vice President of Research and Economic Development

Robert Granfield, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Rod Grabowski, Vice President for University Advancement

Graham Hammill, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Dean of the Graduate School

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance & Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential Events and Initiatives

James Jarvis, SUNY Counsel

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

Bob Miletich, Chair of the Faculty Senate

Eileen Sherman, Deputy to the Provost

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Despina Stratigakos, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

Tim Tryjankowski, Chair of the Professional Staff Senate

Scott Weber, Vice President for Student Life

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Welcome and Introduction of New Student Member

Chairman Jacobs welcomed the new student representative to the Council, Mr. Mike Montoro who is a PhD student in mathematics and holds bachelor's degrees in math and music from UB.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, and seconded by Mr. Friedman. Voting yes to approve the minutes without correction were Mr. Montoro, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Dandes. None voted to oppose.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs asked Vice President Rod Grabowski to present some details to the Council about two proposed resolutions. The first resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Atif Zafar Applied Science and Technology Innovative Research (ASTIR) Center in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences after UB alumnus Atif Zafar who donated a \$5 million to UB to fund the center. A motion was made by Dr. Cropp and seconded by Mr. Dandes. Voting yes to approve the resolution were Mr. Montoro, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Dandes. None voted to oppose. The resolution must now go to SUNY for final approval at the Board of Trustees meeting in November.

The second resolution called for the Council's approval of the naming of the Kenneth W. Colwell Chair in Accounting and Law within the UB School of Management. This endowment was made possible by a \$1.5 million donation from UB alumnus David Pfeil who gave the gift to UB in honor of his classmate and friend, Kenneth Colwell. A motion was made by Dr. Cropp and seconded by Mr. Dandes. Voting yes to approve the resolution were Mr. Montoro, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Dandes. None voted to oppose. The resolution must now go to SUNY for final approval at the Board of Trustees meeting in November. None voted to oppose.

Report of the Student Representative

Mr. Montoro began his report by thanking and acknowledging his predecessor, Mike Brown, and also wishing Provost Zukoski all the best on his upcoming move to the University of Southern California. Mr. Montoro indicated he would speak about three issues. The first was the PhD Excellence Initiative. Mr. Montoro quoted an excerpt from testimony submitted to the SUNY Board of Trustees by Leslie Nickerson, a UB graduate student about her struggle to afford childcare for her daughter. Citing the Referencing the efforts of the Living Stipend Movement, Mr. Montoro expressed reservations about the PhD Excellence Initiative stating that it must constitute a sustainable reinvestment in the graduate school. Mr. Montoro also raised the concern that the initiative excludes Master's students from the benefits of this initiative adding that he believes it is in direct conflict with New York's Equal Work, Equal Pay laws. Mr. Montoro made several recommendations regarding this issue including that the Provost provide full bridge funding for the increase in graduate student stipends fully for the next five years, including those Master's students on full time assistantships as well. In the meantime, Mr. Montoro added he believed the Living Stipends Solutions Committee should be reinstated under the same equitable governance guidelines previously affirmed by the Faculty Senate in order to find a sustainable plan for assistantship funding, one which does not disrupt departments' basic operating standards.

Mr. Montoro also spoke about the Council's commitment to shared and open governance adding he will introduce a resolution which would amend the Council's bylaws to include a mandatory period during each meeting where members of the public may make comment regarding University decisions. This resolution will be submitted for review at the next meeting.

Finally, Mr. Montoro addressed the Council's charge to review University budgets and finance stating it is the responsibility of the Council, as representatives of UB to the public, to publically review the university's budget. Mr. Montoro stated he will be writing a resolution which makes compulsory a once a year public review and presentation of the University budget, and will submit it to be put on the agenda during the next December meeting.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Satish Tripathi began his report by welcoming Mr. Montoro as the new student representative to the Council. President Tripathi stated the new academic year always carries a sense of great promise, expectation and excitement. He highlighted the visit to campus in August by Associate Justice of the United State Supreme Court, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. UB conferred upon Justice Ginsburg the SUNY Honorary Degree in Laws.

President Tripathi continued his report by wishing Provost Zukoski well on his upcoming move to become Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Southern California. Over the course of his seven years at UB, the president and provost worked very closely together to achieve UB's vision of excellence. In particular, he has helped cultivate and articulate the direction for a robust culture of inter-disciplinarity in both UB's academic programs and research. He led UB's efforts to continually enhance students' educational experience and revamped the general education curriculum and expanding experiential learning opportunities. Dr. A. Scott Weber, Vice President for Student Life and Professor of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, will also serve as Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs until a permanent successor is named. President Tripathi also informed the Council that Mr. John DellaContrada was appointed the Vice President for University Communications.

President Tripathi informed the Council that he directed Vice President Weber to conduct an internal review of Greek Life on our campus. Dedicated members of our university community spent this past summer discussing the future of UB's Greek Life social fraternal organizations. In August, UB's Greek Life Review Committee issued its final report. Under the leadership of Dean Suzanne Rosenblith, the Greek Life Committee recommended practices that are intended to promote good choices among our students and reduce hazing. Recommendations include the following broad categories: university oversight; Greek organizational accountability; and combatting banned/unrecognized organizations. In response to the recommendations of this report, Vice President Weber has assembled an implementation team, comprised of faculty, staff and students whose charge is to operationalize the committee's recommendations. With the commencement of the Fall 2019 semester, the suspension of Greek Life social fraternal organizations, barring [Sigma Pi], has been lifted. [Sigma Pi] will remain suspended while the Buffalo Police continue their hazing investigation and until UB's Office of Student Conduct and Advocacy can initiate and complete its adjudication process. While the suspension of Greek Life social fraternal organizations has been lifted, again, barring [Sigma Pi], they will remain on probation. Specifically, they are prohibited from recruiting new members as they address and fulfill the requirements outlined in the committee's recommendations.

President Tripathi also updated the Council on campus capital improvements. Initial work has begun on our One World Café project. This phase 3 Heart of the Campus project is designed to help fill the growing dining needs on the North Campus. A transformative initiative, One World Café will create a "front door"

to the university around and under the existing overhangs of Capen Hall and the Founders Plaza courtyard between Norton Hall and Capen Hall. In August, UB celebrated the grand opening of the Murchie Family Fieldhouse. Alumnus Tunney Murchie, and the entire Murchie family, have been loyal supporters of UB's Division of Athletics, and the university community, for many years.

President Tripathi continued his report informing the Council about the newly released U.S. News & World Report's rankings of the best colleges and universities, UB has achieved an all-time high ranking among the nation's best public and national universities. For the 6th straight year, UB has been ranked among the "Top 50" public universities in the nation rising to number 31 in this category. That is up 7 spots from last year—and 20 spots over the past 8 years. Among public and private universities, UB has risen to number 79. That is up 10 spots from last year—and 30 spots over the past 8 years. UB's exceptional rise in the rankings reflects the profound impact that UB is having – through the university's scholarship, research and our creative activity – on the region, the nation and the world.

President Tripathi also shared some data on sponsored research activity that reflect the significant positive impact university faculty are having on UB's research enterprise. For the fiscal year ending June 30, sponsored research expenditures totaled \$178.4M – an increase of about \$8M from the year before. The number of individual awards also increased from 1,666 to 1,751. The individual awards also include a record number of 11 NSF CAREER Awards to support the research of our early-career faculty. President Tripathi also highlighted UB faculty expertise in the form of media interviews, nationally and globally. In the 2018 calendar year, 407 faculty were quoted in 11,039 news stories –including stories carried over the wires to news outlets worldwide. This represents a 154% increase from 2017.

Finally, President Tripathi invited members of the Council to attend his annual State of the University address on October 4th.

President Tripathi then asked Provost Charles Zukoski to provide his report to the Council.

University Briefings: Report of the Provost

Provost Zukoski began his report by stating more than 85 new full-time faculty joined UB. The largest clusters of ladder faculty hires were in the College of Arts and Sciences and Engineering. UB's preliminary total enrollment for Fall 2019 is a record more than 30,000 students in Buffalo, including a record nearly 4,200 new freshmen. UB is increasingly becoming a more diverse campus. Currently, underrepresented minority students account for 17% of all UB students, compared to 16% last year and 13% in 2014.

Continuing his report, Provost Zukoski stated graduate students, and in particular doctoral students, are critical to UB's success as a public research university. Central to UB's mission is creating knowledge and preparing the next generation of scholars and researchers, these PhDs are very important to UB's enterprise. As with students at all levels, UB is dedicated to bringing in the very best doctoral students, and providing them with transformative academic programs that prepare them for rewarding careers. The deans and provost have launched a university-wide PhD Excellence Initiative focused on enhancing education and student success that will examine issues related to PhD programs at UB – including, program outcomes, time-to-degree, student recruitment, and program sustainability. With UB's ongoing goal of having our PhD programs be recognized amongst the strongest in the world, attracting the strongest students is key to what UB does. As part of this initiative, this summer, the deans unanimously agreed to establish a floor for academic year stipends of \$20,000 for all full-time funded PhD students on 10-month academic appointments for the 2019-20 academic year. This places UB well above the national average among public institutions in the Association of American Universities. The Provost has asked that the Graduate School Executive Committee, made up of faculty, staff and students, to come together to make suggestions on how to sustain competitive stipends going into the future. Provost Zukoski also

noted that, while there is a floor of \$20,000 for stipends for 10-month academic appointments, many programs are already offering stipends that are well above that level. UB is launching this initiative at a time when higher education is facing national challenges to how research is undertaken, how education at all levels is delivered and what career opportunities are available to those who hold PhD degrees. This initiative provides UB an opportunity to take a proactive stance and be a national leader in designing programs that prepare students for the specific opportunities and challenges they will face as 21st century scholars.

Provost Zukoski informed the Council that he appointed SUNY Distinguished Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Rajan Batta as Interim Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. This year, UB will launch an international search for the next Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Provost Zukoski also highlighted several recent faculty awards including Ndubueze Mbah, Assistant Professor of History, has received a highly prestigious American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Centennial Fellowship in the Dynamics of Place; Blair Johnson, Assistant Professor of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, has received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers beginning their independent careers; Both David Engel, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, and Lynn Mather, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita, in the School of Law received Legacy Awards from the Law and Society Association, a lifetime achievement award honoring individuals' intellectual vision and service efforts; and Jessy Alexander, Research Professor of Medicine, has received a Fulbright Award to travel to India to study how the microbiome may impact specific diseases based on ethnicity and location.

Provost Zukoski concluded his report stating UB is advancing with great momentum on achieving its mission and goals. He added that he is proud of the work that that has been done at UB over the last 7 years under the leadership of President Tripathi, and thanked the Council for everything the members do in support of the university.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes and seconded by Ms. Hoeflich. Voting yes to approve adjournment were Mr. Montoro, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Ms. Hoeflich, and Mr. Dandes. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

Minutes approved at the December 16, 2019 meeting of the UB Council.