



University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

December 10, 2018, 8:00 a.m.

The Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

Mike Brown

Michael Cropp

Scott Friedman

June W. Hoeflich

Christopher Koch

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

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

Craig Abbey, Associate Vice President and Director of Institutional Analysis

Liesl Folks, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Robin Schulze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Attendees:

Mark Alnutt, Director of Athletics

Mike Andrei, Public Affairs Specialist, University Communications

Brice Bible, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Beth Del Genio, Chief of Staff to the President

John DellaContrada, Interim Vice President for University Communications

Venu Govindaraju, Vice President of Research and Economic Development

Rod Grabowski, Vice President for University Advancement

Robert Granfield, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

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

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance & Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential Events and Initiatives

James Jarvis, SUNY Counsel

Max Kalnitz, UB Spectrum

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

Domenic Licata, Chair, Professional Staff Senate

Eileen Sherman, Deputy to the Provost

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Despina Stratigakos, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

Jacklyn Walters, UB Spectrum

Scott Weber, Vice President for Student Life

Sue Wuetcher, Editor, UBNOW
Alyson Bittner, Student
Raymond Jones, Student
Michael Morse, Student
Adam Johnson, Student
Benjamin Blanchet, Student
Barb Ricotta, Senior Associate Vice Presidents for Student Life
Barbara Bono, Associate Professor, English
Jim Holstun, Professor, English
Kristin Stapleton, Professor, History
James Bono, Associate Professor, History
Walter Hakala, Associate Professor, English and Director, Asian Studies Program
Jonathan Makeley, Student
Susan Cahn, Professor, History
Erik Orantes, Student
Novin Mehrabi, Student
Seyedehelaheh Ghiasian, Student
Francesco Franda, Student
Timothy Cerny, Student
Crystal Tomlin, Student
Macy McDonald, Student
Ariana Nash, Student

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2018 meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Koch, seconded by Mr. Friedman, and the minutes were approved without correction.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Consideration of naming resolutions

Chairman Jacobs stated there were two naming resolutions to be considered by the UB Council.

The first resolution called for the Council's approval to name the "The Bio-gen Conference Room" in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences building. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion of approval. The motion was made by Ms. Hoeflich, seconded by Mr. Friedman, and was approved unanimously.

The second resolution called for the Council's approval to honor Ms. Pamela Heilman for her service to the Council. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion of approval. The motion was made by Mr. Cropp, seconded by Mr. Koch, and was approved unanimously.

Chairman Jacobs informed the Council that Mr. Robert Brady is stepping down as a member of the UB Council. Mr. Jacobs expressed the Council's appreciation for his decade of service to the Council and for his leadership in the business community. A resolution in Mr. Brady's honor will be considered by the Council at the March meeting.

Report of the Student Representative

Mr. Brown began his report stating that graduate assistants are responsible for supporting the education of thousands of students at UB. UB Council members have a fiduciary responsibility to the institution as well as a responsibility to advocate for fair compensation that meets the rising cost of living. Mr. Brown stated he believes the Council should affirm the important role graduate assistants play on campus community and formally request that the NYS Assembly and Senate appropriate additional funds in the 2019 fiscal budget to allow for a fair compensation to graduate assistant students. Mr. Brown intends to put forth a resolution to the Council reflecting this at the next meeting. To accommodate those in attendance who wish to speak about graduate student stipends, Mr. Brown requested either time for public comment at the end of today's meeting, or hold a public forum at a separate time and date.

Mr. Brown also expressed hope that the new state legislature in January will support the efforts of student advocate groups to extend state law to cover smoking violations on campus and would like to see the creation of a UBreathe Free ambassadors program to help curb tobacco use on campus. Regarding whether the creation of these ambassadors would give them jurisdiction to report violators on campus, Mr. Brown cited New York State education law, Article 8, Section 356 which he states would empower the Council to "make regulations governing the care, custody and management of lands, grounds, buildings and equipment; to make regulations governing the conduct and behavior of students; and to prescribe for, and exercise supervision, over student housing and safety."

Mr. Brown also discussed a SUNY Board of Trustees resolution concerning addressing sexual harassment and consensual relationships. Mr. Brown noted that UB is already in full compliance with this resolution through existing policy.

Mr. Brown also participated in a meeting of the NFTA Metro Rail expansion stakeholders meeting last week and spoke with the NFTA executive director about expanding Metro pass access for UB students. Mr. Brown added that a metro pass program would provide more transportation choices for students.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Tripathi stated he would like to take this opportunity to address graduate education with the Council and, in particular, graduate student stipends. UB is educating the next generation of scholars – leaders and innovators whose research and creative activities will have a profound impact on society. Over the course of the past two decades, a national conversation has

been taking place about the state and future of graduate education – in particular, PhD programs. The conversation has focused on—among other themes—academic rigor and relevancy, outcomes, and market demand. At UB, deans, department chairs and department faculty engage in this conversation every day. They are continually considering the nature of a PhD education: what it should look like in the 21st century, the outcomes that should be sought, and the professional prospects for 21st century graduates in their chosen discipline. Upon completion of their studies at UB, graduate students go on to very productive, very successful careers in academia, in business and industry, and in public service. President Tripathi stated that financial support packages at UB—which include stipends, merit-based scholarships and fellowships—help departments attract the very best students. Therefore, it is imperative that these packages, including stipend levels, be competitive. President Tripathi then asked Provost Zukoski to provide the Council with a data-driven report on UB graduate student stipends, which includes a national perspective and a local perspective, on this important issue.

University Briefings: Report of the Provost

Provost Zukoski stated faculty have the responsibility and authority to define the content, standards and learning outcomes of UB's educational programs at all levels. At the PhD level, students are educated through a mentorship model, working closely with faculty members to gain research, scholarship and teaching skills. Most of UB's PhD students serve as Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants (serving in a variety of administrative and non-teaching roles), or Research Assistants. There is global competition for the brightest, most creative, and capable PhD students. As a result, UB – like universities around the world – offers merit-based tuition scholarships, stipends, and fellowships to PhD students who have assistantships. Stipends are intended to offset the expense of pursuing a doctoral degree, not fully cover the cost of attendance. At UB, there is a process for continually assessing and improving academic programs including PhD programs. In this review process, faculty and department chairs and their Deans review graduate stipends and fellowships to ensure that their programs are competitive. While PhD education is important, UB must balance many competing priorities for increasingly limited funds. Faculty and deans are empowered to manage their graduate programs and recruitment packages. As part of the Provost's report, Craig Abbey, Director of Institutional Analysis, will share institutional data regarding UB's investment in graduate education and how these investments compare with AAU peers. Following Mr. Abbey's presentation, Liesl Folks, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Robin Schulze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, will briefly discuss how their schools set stipend levels in their respective areas.

Mr. Abbey provided an overview on numerous forms of financial support such as a stipend, scholarship or fellowship, and the different types of educational fees for students including tuition and other required fees. The Graduate Student Employees Union or GSEU is the collective bargaining unit for teaching assistants and graduate assistants at UB, which is a SUNY-wide organization that negotiates with the NY governor's office of employee relations and sets the contract for all GA's and TA's at SUNY institutions.

At UB, most PhD students receive full tuition scholarships paid by UB. The university spends at least \$9.8 million annually on graduate scholarships per year which are funded by tuition. UB

spends an additional \$6.2 million annually on graduate tuition and scholarships. Stipends are funding meant to offset the cost of education beyond tuition. Stipends are negotiated by the governor's office—UB has no role in these negotiations. The current minimum amount for a full assistantship (up to 20 hours per week) is set by the GSEU contract and is at \$9,959 per academic year or \$12.45 per hour. All UB stipends exceed this amount. Potential additional sources of funding for graduate students includes university fellowships, research and conference funding, and external funding from private foundations or other government sources.

UB's stipends average \$18,006 compared to other AAU public universities which average \$18,004. A comparison by discipline at UB shows chemistry pays an average of \$24,249, English pays \$15,808 per student and electrical engineering pays \$19,392 on average. The amount funded per student is determined at the decanal or departmental level. Overall, UB invested \$39.5 million on its PhD students in the 2017-2018 academic year. This includes \$16 million in scholarships and \$23.5 million in stipends. 61% of PhD students at UB receive both a scholarship and stipend and 26% of PhD at UB students receive no stipend or scholarship.

Dean Folks informed the Council that the minimum level for a PhD stipend at the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) is currently \$18,200. Within SEAS, 81% of PhD students receive both a stipend and scholarship and 12% receive neither. Faculty within each department at SEAS determine the level of spending on stipends above the minimum set by the school. Students are funded for the first 2-3 semesters at UB using tuition generated resources. Faculty are required find external funding for the remainder of each student's time at UB. Students are also encouraged to find paid internships or other relevant work to supplement their funding.

Dean Schulze stated the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has no set minimum stipend beyond the mandated UB or state minimum. CAS assigns graduate support budgets to departments and allows the departments to determine how to spend the funding. Some departments have chosen to shrink the size of their graduate cohorts and raise stipend levels. Departments also seek external funding to supplement graduate student support. CAS is facing numerous financial pressures, including a \$12 million structural deficit as a result of pay increases for faculty and staff due to recent collective bargaining agreements.

Provost Zukoski concluded his reports stating the university is a large organization with a diversity of academic programs, but within that diversity there is a constant across our campus: the deans and department chairs are working every day to attract the very best students. With that, UB has developed a budget model that encourages flexibility and priority setting at the decanal and departmental levels so the schools and the college can achieve their goals. Most of our university's resources are in existing decanal base budgets, and the academic units align these resources with their academic support and research priorities.

Ms. Hoeflich acknowledged the students in attendance regarding the issue of graduate student stipends. Ms. Hoeflich stated the role of the Council is not to manage specific university finances or operation, but rather leave these decisions to the departmental and decanal level. The role of the Council is an advisory role for the president and senior officers and not to be involved in operational or financial matters.

Mr. Brown stated he agreed that the Council's role is an advisory one. Mr. Brown continued that it is within the power of the Council, within the education law, to recommend to the administration, the SUNY Board of Trustees and the state legislature, for more support for stipends. Mr. Brown stated he recognizes that, although it may depend on the discipline and UB is competitive with other colleges, the issue is the stipends are not paying enough to cover the cost of living for students.

Ms. Hoeflich reiterated that this issue does not fall within the Council's role and responsibility. Responding to audible requests within the audience for an opportunity to speak, SUNY Counsel James Jarvis stated there is a right within the opening meetings law to attend and observe a public meeting, but not the right to public comment.

Mr. Jacobs stated this is a public meeting and not a public hearing and that the Council has not allocated time on the agenda for public comment but it will be taken into consideration if that is what is being requested. Mr. Brown reiterated he would like to follow the example of the SUNY Board of Trustees and hold a public forum in the future. Mr. Jacobs stated it would be considered.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Friedman and seconded by Ms. Hoeflich. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 a.m.

Approved at the March 4, 2019 meeting of the UB Council.