

**University at Buffalo Council**

Meeting minutes

March 8, 2021, 8:00 a.m.

Meeting held via video conference

**Members present:**

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

Jon Dandes

Michael Cropp

Scott Friedman

June Hoeflich

Mike Montoro

**Other participants:**

Satish K. Tripathi, President

A. Scott Weber, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Rod Grabowski, Vice President for University Advancement

Dr. Jonathan Lovell, SUNY Empire Innovation Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

## **Opening business**

### ***Call to order***

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

### ***Approval of minutes***

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Friedman, seconded by Mr. Dandes and approved unanimously by Mr. Montoro, Mr. Friedman, Ms. Hoeflich, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

## **Topics for discussion or action**

### ***Report of the Chairman***

Chairman Jacobs asked Vice President Rod Grabowski to present details to the Council about three proposed naming resolutions to be voted on by the Council. Drafts of the resolutions can be found on the [UB Council website](#).

The first resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Scott and Coleen Stevens Chair in Engineering Sustainability in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Chairman Jacobs made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Dr. Cropp and approved by Mr. Montoro, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Dandes, Ms. Hoeflich, Dr. Cropp and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

The second resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Carl V. Granger MD SUNY Scholar of Excellence in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. The third resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Carl V. Granger MD SUNY Scholar of Excellence in the School of Public Health and Health Professions. Dr. Granger was a former UB faculty member and an entrepreneur who donated a \$10 million gift to the Boldly Buffalo campaign. Part of this donation will also support the Inclusive Excellence Scholarship and Program Fund and the Presidential Faculty Fund at UB. A motion was made to approve the second and third resolutions by Dr. Cropp and seconded by Ms. Hoeflich and unanimously approved by Mr. Montoro, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Dandes, Ms. Hoeflich, Dr. Cropp and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Upon approval by the Council, these resolutions will be forwarded to the State University of New York System Administration for final review and approval by the SUNY Chancellor and the SUNY Board of Trustees.

### ***University Briefings: Report of the President***

President Tripathi began his report with an update on the state budget proposal which includes provisions for procurement and tuition flexibility and \$550 million in capital funding. Operating aid would be cut by 5%. The proposed budget is contingent on federal relief aid to the state.

UB is currently conducting searches for three leadership positions: Vice President for Student Life, Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Dean of the School of Social Work. Announcements are expected by the end of the spring semester.

President Tripathi also updated the Council on UB's research enterprise which includes securing recent grants such as an \$8.2 million U.S. Department of Transportation grant in the Schools of Engineering and Applied Sciences and Architecture and Planning; a \$2 million National Science Foundation grant in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering; and a \$3.1 million National Institutes of Health grant in the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences. Dr. Tripathi then invited Dr. Jonathan Lovell, SUNY Empire Innovation Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at

the Jacobs School to discuss a very exciting advance in a COVID vaccine technology developed through his UB start-up. (Video of Dr. Lovell's presentation can be viewed [here](#) beginning at eleven minutes into the meeting.)

### ***University Briefings: Report from the Provost***

Provost Weber began his report with an update on the precautions UB is taking to lessen the spread of the COVID-19 virus on campus. UB returned to campus for the spring semester in a modified in-person capacity with 64% of UB courses being held remotely, 29% in person, and 7% hybrid. Per SUNY's spring reopening policy, this semester all faculty, staff and students who come to campus for any reason during a given week are required to be tested for COVID each week. UB has made multiple testing sites available across the three campuses with expanded hours this semester. The final week of February marked the highest one week total of testing to date – with over 9,100 total tests. The current weekly positivity rate is less than 0.6%.

The Provost informed the Council of two new degree programs that will be available to students beginning for the fall 2021 semester. They are a new MA program in Art and Design for Social Impact and a new undergraduate major in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

The Provost continued with an updated on enrollment. UB has approximately 29,000 students—more than 19,000 undergraduates and over 9,000 graduate and professional students. UB has also seen a slight increase in undergraduate applications and a nearly 20% increase in graduate applications.

UB has hired a new Vice Provost for International Education: Professor Nojin Kwak, following an international search. Dr. Kwak will join UB this summer from the University of Michigan.

UB also had two alumni named to *Forbes* 30 under 30 list for education. Rohan Shah and Huy Duc Pham co-founded Classavo, which provides an affordable, all in one platform for interactive, online education.

### ***Report of the Student Representative***

Mr. Montoro began his report expressing relief that potential cuts to the New York State budget are now projected to be significantly less than anticipated and that UB appears to be in excellent position to handle the budget cuts. Beyond the change of the educational model, the largest change from the 2020 spring semester has been the elimination of a spring break from the academic calendar. Faculty have been supportive of students and their potential for burnout as well as student support services being aware of the added stress to students. Faculty and staff continue to adjust to provide the best educational and student life experiences—often in virtual environments.

Mr. Montoro expressed his belief for the need for more robust testing on campus for COVID-19 and thanked the COVID-19 Testing and Tracing committee for its role in planning the on-going operation as well as dean Michael Cain for his leadership. There have been some concerns regarding the speed of getting test results back but believes the new lab set up on UB's South Campus will help alleviate these potential delays. Mr. Montoro also discussed UB's planned return to in-person instruction and regular in-person operations for the fall 2021 semester and expressed the need for everyone on campus to get vaccinated in order for this return to be a success.

Over the past few months, the leadership of the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Senate and the unions on campus—United University Professionals, Graduate Student Employees Union and Civil Service Employees Association—have been working together in the Campus Government's Leadership Group to propose the formation of a standing committee on health and safety at UB.

Mr. Montoro is also looking forward to another commencement season in the spring.

### **Adjournment**

Pursuant to New York State Public Officers' Law, Subsection 105, Chairman Jacobs made a motion to adjourn to executive session for a matter related to the employment history of an individual. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Ms. Hoeflich, and approved unanimously by Dr. Cropp, Mr. Montoro, Mr. Dandes, Chairman Jacobs, Mr. Friedman and Ms. Hoeflich. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 8:44a.m.

*Minutes approved at the June 14, 2021 meeting of the UB Council.*

*An [archived video](#) of this meeting can be found on the UB Council website.*