

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

March 9, 2020, 8:00 a.m.

The Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

Michael Cropp

June W. Hoeflich

Brenda McDuffie

Mike Montoro – via phone conference

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

A. Scott Weber, 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, Vice President for University Communications

Rod Grabowski, Vice President for University Advancement

Robert Granfield, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

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

Christina Hernandez, Interim Vice President for Student Life

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance & Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential Events and Initiatives

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

Bob Miletich, Chair of the Faculty Senate

Sharon Mitchell, Senior Director of Student Wellness

Barbara Ricotta, Senior Associate Vice President, Student Life

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

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. To begin the meeting, Mr. Jacobs thanked President Tripathi for his recent email to the Council regarding UB's preparedness related to the COVID-19 virus and asked President Tripathi to provide an additional update to the Council.

President Tripathi stated the university is taking this issue very seriously and that the health and safety of UB's students, faculty, staff and visitors are of paramount importance. UB is actively monitoring the situation and is following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the state and county health departments. Taking proactive measures to protect the campus community, President Tripathi created a comprehensive structure to respond to any contingency including creating a COVID-19 Advisory Committee, COVID-19 Task Force, as well as academic, research, student life and operations continuity working groups and an incident management group. UB has suspended all study abroad programs for the spring 2020 semester in impacted countries—China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan—and is working with SUNY and Governor Cuomo to recall students studying abroad in impacted countries. UB is also suspending all study abroad programs and international experiential learning programs planned for the spring 2020 semester. The university is keeping its community updated via UB's COVID-19 [website](#). President Tripathi asked Provost Weber to provide further information on the university operations working groups.

Provost Weber stated Academic Continuity Planning Committee is ensuring any academic changes are in accordance with SUNY and accrediting policies; meeting students' academic needs should there be a disruption; find options for students unable to attend class; and develop plans for online courses. The Research Working Group is well-positioned to function remotely and is working to ensure laptops are available, Principal Investigators and staff have the access and resources needed to continue working. The Operations Continuity Working Group is working to ensure campus safety, define essential employees, meet transportation needs and procure critical supplies. The Student Life Working Group is working to ensure that Student Health Services, Counseling Services, Campus Living, Campus Dining, and other student and campus services are prepared to respond to possible on-campus scenarios and maintain student health and wellness on campus.

Report of the Student Representative

Mr. Montoro began his report by commenting on the COVID-19 virus and applauded Dr. Tripathi's quick work to bring together six different task forces to deal with this serious issue. Mr. Montoro congratulated Dr. Weber on his appointment as Provost.

Mr. Montoro stated one of his goals as the student representative is to bring a more transparent budgetary process through the Council and shared a report with an analysis of UB's financial health recently completed by Howard Bunsis, a professor of finance at Eastern Michigan University. Expressing concern about the availability of financial information at UB, Mr. Montoro stated the report found revenue streams for the university have been gradually going up for the past six years. Enrollment has increased in total by 14%, and funding from SUNY has increased by 15% from 2013 to 2019. In terms of university salary expenditures per the report, Mr. Montoro noted UB spends 13% of these expenditures on "institutional support" upper-level administrative employees compared to peer institutions which spend 8% in the same category. Mr. Montoro also noted that, per the report, the number of assistant professors hired by UB has declined by 22% over 6 years. Mr. Montoro also noted that, per the report, the UB Foundation securities investments underperformed compared to S&P averages.

President Tripathi stated that the report Mr. Montoro referenced does not reflect an informed or cogent understanding of SUNY, the university, or university's finances. As a public university, UB has its

financial statements publicly available on its website. UB follows state and federal laws and regulations and best practices of the National Association of College and University Business Officers. UB always exercises prudence in managing financial resources to promote resilience, maintain appropriate reserves and operate effectively and efficiently.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Satish Tripathi began his report by stating he announced Dr. A. Scott Weber's appointment as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs in January. Christina Hernandez has been serving as interim vice president for student life. A national search for that position will begin shortly. A national search for the dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences is well underway. There have been on campus visits with five finalists and expect the search to conclude this semester. Rajan Batta, SUNY Distinguished Professor of Industrial and Systems engineering, has been serving as interim dean.

UB continues to make progress toward its Top 25 Ambition. One significant example, the National Institutes of Health awarded UB a 5-year, \$21.7 million Clinical and Translational Science Award in February. This is a renewal of the original \$15 million CTSA UB received in 2015. Overall research growth is another factor that will help UB move into the Top 25. In the past five years, UB's sponsored research has increased nearly \$30 million—from \$151 million in 2014 to \$178 million in 2019. UB has received several major grants over the past several months, including \$3.4 million to the School of Nursing to improve services to under-served populations, \$3.2 million from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the College of Arts and Sciences in support of Indigenous Studies, and \$2 million to the Department of Chemistry for enzyme studies that form the foundation for translational research in the health sciences.

SUNY recently approved two Honorary Degrees that will be conferred during commencement season. They are Dr. Donnica Moore and Dr. Richard Schatz. Dr. Moore—a 1986 alumna of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences—is an internationally recognized expert and advocate in women's health. Dr. Schatz, who attended UB, is the co-creator of the first coronary stent.

President Tripathi then asked Dr. Sharon Mitchell, Senior Director of Student Wellness at UB and president of the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors, to speak to the Council about the university's programming and outreach to students regarding mental health and the services UB provides.

Presentation: Dr. Sharon Mitchell

Dr. Mitchell thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak about UB's services as well as the national trends in this area. The mission of UB's Counseling Services is to promote the personal well-being and academic success of students by providing brief mental health services, educational programs, crisis intervention, and campus community consultation. UB takes a public health approach to student mental health which includes programming and services for the entire campus including suicide prevention and eating disorder awareness weeks. UB also provides resources online, same-day needs assessment, walk-in crisis appointments and after-hours crisis interventions.

In terms of trends, there has been a 30% increase in students seeking services nationally, and a 70% increase at UB over a five year period. Anxiety and depression are the primary reasons student seek counseling services at UB. As a result of the increased demand, there has been an increase in wait times for students seeking on-going services. To address this, UB increased the number of same-day assessments to serve more students. UB has also adopted a stepped care model, embedded counselors within units on campus and offered more therapy groups.

For further details on this presentation, please watch the [archived video](#) of this meeting.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs asked Vice President Rod Grabowski to present some details to the Council about four proposed resolutions. Drafts of each resolution can be found on the [UB Council website](#).

The first resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Albert and Loraine Boehlecke Memorial Medical Scholarship in memory of Dr. Brian Boehlecke's parents. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Ms. Hoeflich, seconded by Dr. Cropp and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose.

The second resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Donald A. and Patricia A. Coates Professor in Innovation Science in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Dr. Cropp, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose.

The third resolution calls for the Council's approval to changing the name of the Buffalo Law Review Suite in John Lord O'Brian Hall on UB's North Campus to the Colucci Law Review Suite to more accurately reflect the entirety of the Colucci family's contributions. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Ms. McDuffie, seconded by Dr. Cropp and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose.

The fourth resolution calls for the Council's approval to name the Experiential Learning Center in the College of Arts and Sciences the Paul and Christine Nussbaum Experiential Learning Center. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Ms. Hoeflich, seconded by Dr. Cropp and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. McDuffie, seconded by Ms. Hoeflich and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Hoeflich, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 a.m.

Minutes approved at the June 2, 2020 meeting of the UB Council.