

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

June 2, 2025, 8:00 a.m.

Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jerry Jacobs, Chairman

Michael Cropp

Scott Friedman

Julie Bargnesi

Brenda McDuffie

Patrick Roche

Alika Turton

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

Kathleen Heckman, Vice President for University Advancement

Kemper Lewis, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Robin Schulze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Attendees:

Tomas Aguirre, Dean of Students

Keith Alford, Dean of the School of Social Work

Marcelo Araujo, Dean of the School of Dental Medicine

Allison Brashear, Vice President for Health Sciences and Dean of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Chris Connor, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

John Della Contrada, Vice President for University Communications

Beth Del Genio, Vice President for Government and Community Relations and Chief of Staff to the President

Venu Govindaraju, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Don Erb, Chair of the Professional Staff Senate

Brian Hamluk, Vice President for Student Life

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

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential and University Events

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

Eileen Sherman, Chief of Staff to the Provost

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Heath Tuttle, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Suzanne Rosenblith, Dean of the Graduate School of Education

Annette Wysocki, Dean of the School of Nursing

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2025, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Roche, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose or abstain.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs began his report by acknowledging the outgoing student representative to the UB Council, Ms. Alika Turton, and wished her well on her future. He also acknowledged the new student representative, Shaurya Jain, who was not in attendance at the meeting.

Chairman Jacobs then asked Vice President Kathleen Heckman to present details to the Council about four naming resolutions under consideration.

The first resolution is for the naming of the Evens Family Scholarship. Ronald Evens has been a deeply engaged alumnus of UB and the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Friedman, seconded by Dr. Cropp and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose or abstain.

A second resolution is for the naming of the Dr. Margaret Ann Tubbert Farrington Fund for Biological Sciences. Dr. Farrington earned her master's and doctoral degrees from UB. This fund was established by Dr. Farrington's husband to honor his late wife and her legacy to support scholarships for students studying biological sciences. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Dr. Cropp, seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose or abstain.

A third resolution is for the naming of the Mrs. Elizabeth A. Guelcher Art Education, Medical Humanities, and Community Room in the UB Art Galleries' Anderson Gallery. Robert T. Guelcher, MD '60, and Elizabeth "Betsy" A. Guelcher were longstanding and generous donors to UB's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and College of Arts and Sciences. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Roche, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose or abstain.

A fourth resolution is for the naming of the Murchie Shore Data Theater in the Jacobs Management Center. This new immersive space is supported by the Murchie family, who have been longtime supporters of UB's Division of Athletics and the School of Management. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Ms. McDuffie, seconded by Mr. Roche and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose or abstain.

Upon approval by the Council, the Evens, Farrington, and Murchie 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. A copy of the resolutions can be found on the [UB Council website](#).

Chairman Jacobs then asked President Tripathi to present a resolution on the Chancellor Charles P. Norton Medal.

President Tripathi stated during the commencement ceremony in May for the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, he had the honor of presenting UB Council Chair Emeritus Jeremy Jacobs Sr. with the Chancellor Charles P. Norton Medal. The UB Council, and UB more broadly, have greatly benefitted from Jacobs Sr.'s exemplary leadership and distinguished service to UB. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Dr. Cropp, seconded by Mr. Roche and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, and Ms. Bargnesi. None voted to oppose. Chairman Jacobs abstained from voting.

Chairman Jacobs then asked President Tripathi to give his university report.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Tripathi began his report by thanking Ms. Turton for her service to the Council and welcoming the new student representative to the Council. Dr. Tripathi then provided an update on the New York State budget and its impact on SUNY and UB. In the enacted budget, SUNY received an increased investment of \$114 million in new direct state tax support for state-operated campuses. In the approved plan, UB will receive an increase of \$16.8 million operating aid. SUNY also received \$550 million in critical maintenance funding, \$60 million in flexible capital funds for SUNY, as well as \$300 million for capital resources in cutting-edge laboratory facilities. An allocation of these funds to campuses has not yet been determined.

UB recognized its graduating class this spring with 18 degree conferral ceremonies and five recognition ceremonies. UB awarded 10,147 undergraduate and graduate degrees during the 2024-2025 academic year. The most popular undergraduate majors were business administration (BS), psychology (BA), computer science (BS), communications (BA), and mechanical engineering (BS). The top five graduate majors were computer science and engineering (MS), engineering science (MS), social work (MSW), data sciences and applications (MPS), and medicine (MD). UB also recognized Jeremy Jacobs Sr. with the aforementioned Norton Medal at the Jacobs School commencement, as well as Bill Maggio, Chistine Wang, and Luis Colón with President's Medals.

Faculty across disciplines continue to be recognized at a national level for contributing meaningfully to society with their research, scholarship and innovations. In January, Margarita Dubocovich, SUNY Distinguished Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, received the Presidential Award for STEM mentoring from President Biden. Qing Lin, Professor in the Department of Chemistry, was elected as a fellow to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Leslie Ying, Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, was elected a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Rita Alevriadou, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, was named a fellow of the Biomedical Engineering Society. And Elizabeth Otto, Professor of Art History, was named to the Guggenheim Foundation's 100th class of fellows. Eight UB faculty have also been promoted to the SUNY Distinguished Professor ranks. They are Iru Braverman, Jian Feng, Siwei Lyu, Samina Raja, Jennifer Read, Despina Stratigakos, Nallan Suresh, and Michael Cain.

Faculty have also received numerous prestigious research grants from organizations including the National Institutes of Health, the Mellon Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

UB students are also being recognized for their research, creativity and academic excellence. Two UB students, Fiona Serrano and Anna Givens, received the Critical Language Scholarship. Nicholas Pratt and Nicholas Reilly received Goldwater Scholarships. Jeronimo Silva Lugo received a Boren Scholarship. And Margaret Azu received a National Science Foundation graduate research fellowship.

UB also continues to reimagine and improve its living-learning landscape. The School of Nursing is creating a \$34 million nursing simulation center. It will be named SUNY's first Nursing Simulation Center of Excellence.

UB is also launching a new academic department in the fall—the Department of AI and Society, an interdisciplinary department in both the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences. President Tripathi then asked Kemper Lewis, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Robin Schulze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to provide a presentation on the newly formed department.

University Briefings: Presentation by Kemper Lewis and Robin Schulze

Dean Lewis began by reviewing the origins of the department, known as AIS, which comes out of the SUNY STRIVE (Strategic Research Investment) task force on artificial intelligence and advances UB's position as a national leader in AI. Dean Lewis added it will leverage significant investments from New York State and the National Science Foundation, as well as support new degree programs that will distinguish UB and attract students and faculty to campus. Lewis also noted AIS has had overwhelming support at UB, receiving approval from 83% of the faculty in both SEAS and CAS, and approval by the Faculty Senate.

Lewis stated that SUNY and New York State have committed \$5 million to support the new department, and the Provost's Office will provide recurring funds. Initial space for the department is being identified but eventually the unit will be housed in a new AI and Society Shared Research Building on the North Campus. Atri Rudra, the Katherine Johnson Chair in Artificial Intelligence and a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, will serve as inaugural chair; an associate chair will be named from among faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences.

SUNY funding will support the expected hiring of 10 new faculty members in the next two years and current UB faculty members can join the department either by shifting their full appointments to the department, transitioning to a joint appointment, or becoming a department affiliate. In addition, an open search is being conducted for the department's first staff member, a director of administration.

Dean Schulze stated the new AIS department will oversee "unique degree programs," starting with undergraduate "AIX" degrees. AIS will provide the core AI curricula, with other departments at UB contributing their relevant expertise — the "X" to the AI core.

Schulze said CAS departments already have proposed a number of new AIX degree programs, all of which have been approved by SUNY and are currently awaiting approval by the state education department. Among them: AI and Geospatial Analytics, Geography; AI and Policy Analysis, Political Science; AI and Logic and Ontology, Philosophy; AI and Language Technology, Linguistics; AI and Responsible Communication, Communication; AI and Quantitative Economics, Economics; and AI and Intercultural Competence, Linguistics and Romance Languages and Literatures.

Schulze noted that plans are underway to develop master's and doctoral programs as well.

President Tripathi thanked deans Lewis and Schulze for their presentation and concluded his report.

Report of the Student Representative

Ms. Turton began her report by discussing the excitement of students who finished their spring semester and acknowledged the student members who served on the Council on Advocacy and Leadership (COAL) board for 2024-2025, as well as introduce the members of the 2025-2026 COAL board. Ms. Turton also reviewed the activities of various student groups including the Dental Student Association, Graduate Management Association, Medical School Polity, Student Bar Association, Graduate Student Association, and School of Pharmacy Student Association. Ms. Turton also highlighted some of the major accomplishments of the Council during her tenure, including passing 15 naming resolutions and participating in the Middle States reaccreditation process. Ms. Turton thanked the Council for its continued support of students and UB.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to adjourn the meeting to executive session. A motion was made by Ms. McDuffie, seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Friedman, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Ms. Bargnesi, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 a.m.

A video recording of the meeting, including all presentations, can be found at this [link](#) on the UB Council website.

Minutes approved at the September 15, 2025, meeting of the UB Council