

**University at Buffalo Council**

Meeting minutes

March 24, 2025, 8:00 a.m.

Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

**Members present:**

Jerry Jacobs Jr., Chairman

Michael Cropp

Jonathan Dandes

Scott Friedman

Brenda McDuffie

Patrick Roche

Alika Turton

**Other participants:**

Satish K. Tripathi, President

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

Kathleen Heckman, Vice President for University Advancement

Jeremy M. Jacobs Sr., Chairman Emeritus

**Attendees:**

Mark Alnutt, Vice President and Director of Athletics

Ann Bisantz, Dean of Undergraduate Education

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

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

Katie Gorman, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility and Strategic Initiatives for Delaware North

Brian Hamluk, Vice President for Student Life

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

Kelly Hengesbach, Communications and Media Associate, Office of the President

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential and University Events

Allison Korta, Assistant Director of Presidential Events

Suzanne Laychock, Chair of the Faculty Senate

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

Nancy Parisi, Photographer

Eileen Sherman, Chief of Staff to the Provost

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Kristin Stapleton, Chair of the Department of History

Heath Tuttle, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Suzanne Rosenblith, Dean of the Graduate School of Education

Seval Yildirim, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

George Zimmerman, Senior Campus Counsel for Labor and Employment

## **Opening business**

### ***Introduction***

Chairman Jacobs introduced himself as the new chairman of the UB Council.

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

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

### ***Welcome to Chairman Jacobs***

President Tripathi welcomed Chairman Jacobs to the UB Council.

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

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2024, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved by Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Roche and Ms. Turton. Chairman Jacobs abstained. None voted to oppose.

## **Topics for discussion or action**

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

Chairman Jacobs began his report by asking President Tripathi to introduce the first resolution under consideration.

The first resolution is for designating Jeremy M. Jacobs Sr. chair emeritus of the UB Council. Dedicated chairman of the UB Council for 27 years, Mr. Jacobs has contributed greatly to UB in both service and philanthropy, profoundly impacting UB's students, faculty and mission. UB is deeply grateful for Mr. Jacobs' commitment to the university. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved by Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Roche and Ms. Turton. Chairman Jacobs abstained. None voted to oppose.

President Tripathi presented Mr. Jacobs with a framed resolution, brass buffalo and plaque. Mr. Jacobs thanked President Tripathi for his partnership and praised UB's relationships with business and community leaders in the region.

Chairman Jacobs invited Kathleen Heckman to present details to the Council about second resolution.

This resolution is for the naming of the Gerald Friedman, MD '57, and Wendi Friedman Tush Professorship in Nutrition and Health. Mr. Friedman is a longstanding supporter of UB, who also established the Gerald Friedman, MD '57, and Roberta Friedman Medical School Curriculum Research and Education Fund in 2018. In support of the Jacobs School's Well Beyond Curriculum, Mr. Friedman seeks to establish this professorship to recruit and retain faculty who are focused on educational research efforts in nutrition and who will enhance medical curriculum. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved by Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Upon approval by the Council, the Gerald Friedman, MD '57, and Wendi Friedman Tush Professorship in Nutrition and Health resolution 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 give his university report.

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

President Tripathi began his report by congratulating Ms. Turton on being one of 15 UB students to receive a 2025 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. He continued, discussing the rapidly changing federal landscape and its impact on higher education. UB is working with UB General Counsel and SUNY General Counsel to fully understand the implications of these federal actions on UB. Despite these unsettling changes, the university community continues to remain focused on UB's mission of excellence and remaining a bastion of intellectual inquiry.

President Tripathi discussed New York State's budget plans, including the executive budget which incorporates \$114 million for continuing and additional support for faculty hires and student success for SUNY-operated campuses. The executive budget also includes \$550 million for critical maintenance funding and \$200 million for the New York State Innovation Fund to be used for laboratory facilities and research activities at SUNY's research-intensive universities. The Assembly and Senate one-house bills largely mirror the executive budget but with additional capital funding proposals in the Assembly and a multi-year capital plan in the Senate. President Tripathi shared his gratitude to Governor Hochul and the Western New York state delegation for their support of UB.

On April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, UB will be hosting this year's SUNY AI Symposium which will bring together students, faculty researchers and educators, and industry professionals to explore the ways AI can positively impact society.

President Tripathi then asked Provost Weber to speak to the Council about UB's academic enterprise.

### ***University Briefings: Presentation by Provost A. Scott Weber***

Provost Weber provided an overview of UB's scope with nearly 32,000 students, more than 300,000 alumni, over 8,000 employees and more than 2,800 faculty. UB's 11 schools and College of Arts and Sciences offer more than 110 undergraduate degrees and 390 graduate, professional and certificate programs. UB has more than 5,000 international students, approximately 700 students studying abroad each year and numerous international partnerships with institutions of higher education.

Provost Weber highlighted UB's world class faculty who are consistently being inducted into the national academies and receiving prestigious awards. With New York State investment, UB has added 183 new full-time faculty. UB's total research expenditures have reached \$542 million for the 2024 fiscal year and the university has received notable grants from the NIH, NSF and the Mellon Foundation.

UB continues to grow its entrepreneurship efforts, collaborating with 1,528 industry partner companies and supporting 375 startups. As a result of these efforts, 1,945 new jobs have been created in Western New York by partners and more than 30,000 students have been involved in entrepreneurial programming. Work regarding Empire AI continues to develop with Empire AI Alpha located at the Downtown Campus and the upcoming Empire AI Beta which will be located on the North Campus. Faculty have already begun research. UB is also developing a new Department of AI and Society which will be administered by the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences and is planned to be in place for Fall 2025. Additionally, the Hauptman-Woodward Research Institute officially joined UB in January.

UB's students continue to win national awards such as Fulbright Awards, NSF Graduate Research Fellowships and Barry Goldwater Scholarships. Enrollment trends are in line with other large public universities in the northeast with a drop in undergraduate enrollment and a notable increase in graduate enrollment. However, UB's new undergraduate programs are highly successful, accounting for nearly 12% of all undergraduate enrollment. Student success programs such as Student Success Coaches, the CoLab and Career Design Center continue to support the engagement, retention and graduation of

students. UB also continues to enhance graduate programs.

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

President Tripathi resumed his report, highlighting the recently completed renovation of the Student Union, which created comfortable spaces for students and greater visibility of spaces for clubs and activities. The Fargo Quad in the Ellicott Complex was recently redesigned as “The Landing at Ellicott,” creating a front door to UB’s largest residential complex as well as an inviting central area for studying and gathering. UB has hired an architectural firm for the James Joyce Museum. This museum will be located on the South Campus and will make UB’s world-class collection of Joyce materials more accessible and visible. The conceptual design is expected to be completed this year.

President Tripathi also noted two high-profile appointments made this year, including longtime UB employee Kathleen Heckman as the vice president for university advancement and Dr. Jeffrey Grabill as the incoming dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Ms. Heckman was appointed to this role in January after serving in an interim capacity since February of 2024 and Dr. Grabill will join UB on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chairman Jacobs then invited Ms. Turton to give her report.

***Report of the Student Representative***

Ms. Turton began her report updating the Council on the activities of several UB student groups including the Dental Student Association, Graduate Management Association, Medical Student Polity, Student Bar Association, Graduate Student Association, School of Pharmacy Student Association and Residence Hall Association. In preparation for next year’s student representative, Ms. Turton has been working to establish a guidebook for the UB Council Student Representative and Council of Advocacy and Leadership (COAL) Chair. She also served as a student speaker at UB Shared Governance Day. For the remainder of the semester, Ms. Turton will also be working on raising money for the COAL Grant Fund and updating the COAL bylaws.

**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. The motion was seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Dr. Cropp, Mr. Dandes, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Roche and Ms. Turton. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 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 June 2, 2025, semester meeting of the UB Council*