

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

October 3, 2022, 8:00 a.m.

Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

A.J. Franklin

Scott E. Freidman

René Jones

Brenda W. McDuffie

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

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

Diana Aga, Henry M. Woodburn Professor of Chemistry and Director of the RENEW Institute

Attendees:

Grant Ashley, UB Spectrum

Ann Bisantz, Dean for Undergraduate Education

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

Beth Del Genio, Chief of Staff to the President

John Della Contrada, Vice President for University Communications

Jason Diffenderfer, Interim Vice President for University Advancement

Venu Govindaraju, Vice President of Research and Economic Development

Brian Hamluk, Vice President for Student Life

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

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential and University Events

Allison Korta, Assistant Director of Presidential Events

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

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

Elizabeth Lidano, Interim Dean of Students

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Timothy Tryjankowski, Chair of the Professional Staff Senate

George Zimmerman, SUNY Counsel

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2022 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Friedman, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously by Mr. Friedman, Mr. Franklin, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Jones, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs began his report by welcoming the new student representative, Mr. A.J. Franklin.

The Chairman then made a motion to approve a [resolution](#) regarding the open meetings law. A motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Friedman. and approved unanimously by Mr. Friedman, Mr. Franklin, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Jones, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Chairman Jacobs also noted a UB student has been named a SUNY ACT scholar and asked President Tripathi to give further details of this along with his university report.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Tripathi began his report by welcoming Mr. Franklin to the Council. Dr. Tripathi informed the Council of UB's new SUNY ACT scholar, Ms. Alexis Harrell, who is an undergraduate student and presidential scholar studying art and racial justice research.

President Tripathi stated with the fall semester and academic year underway, there is a lot of excitement with students back on campus. UB's enrollment stands at approximately 30,450. UB has also welcomed 130 new fulltime faculty this year. UB plans to build upon its faculty ranks with the support of a New York State investment in SUNY. UB will receive \$12.1 million to hire approximately 70 to 100 new faculty. UB will also receive \$1.7 million in one-time funding from the state to enhance student success through new program initiatives.

UB's research expenditures are 7% higher than the previous year and faculty have received numerous recent major grants including a \$12.8 million National Institutes of Health grant to continue leading a clinical program in the U.S., Africa and Asia to improve the quality of pharmacology data about H.I.V. and other infectious diseases; a \$4 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to study the mechanisms underlying antibiotic-resistant bacteria; a \$2.9 million National Science Foundation grant to study the impacts of prehistoric climate change on present-day ecosystems in Southeast Alaska; and a \$250,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct research about Niagara Falls' Cataract House hotel—an important stop on the Underground Railroad.

President Tripathi also informed the Council about several university leadership changes including the appointment of a new interim vice president for University Advancement, and interim vice provost for Inclusive Excellence, as well as the search for a new dean of the School of Dental Medicine which is underway.

President Tripathi also provided details about Vice President Kamala Harris' historic visit to UB in September. Vice President Harris came to campus to discuss the Biden administration's investments in climate solutions. She described UB's climate science research and sustainability practices as "a model"

for the country. During her visit, she toured UB's Solar Strand and GROW home and also met with students. The White House selected UB for the vice president's visit in recognition of the cutting-edge scholarship of UB faculty in areas including clean energy, water pollution, carbon emissions and glacial ice sheets.

President Tripathi then asked Dr. Diana Aga, Henry M. Woodburn Professor of Chemistry and Director of the RENEW Institute, to provide a presentation to the Council on her research.

University Briefings: Presentation by Professor Aga

Dr. Aga began her presentation by providing a background on the RENEW Institute, which stands for Research and Education in Energy, Environment and Water. RENEW is a university-wide, multidisciplinary research institute that focuses on complex energy and environmental issues, and their social and economic implications. When Dr. Aga became the director, she established four focus areas including sustainable water and engineering systems; climate change and socioeconomic impacts; renewable energy and sustainable communities; and environmental pollution and human health implications. Dr. Aga highlighted several recent research projects by UB faculty through RENEW including turning greenhouse gases into useful chemicals and developing eco-friendly insulation. UB faculty are also conducting research in Antarctica and investigating wastewater to determine trends in COVID-19 outbreaks. Dr. Aga informed the Council that RENEW is also researching health inequities in communities because of climate change. Dr. Aga also discussed RENEW's research on "forever chemicals" and their impact on people and the environment.

Dr. Aga continued stating RENEW also incorporates many students and international institutions in its research. Professor Aga added that RENEW's focus on multidisciplinary research that includes community engagement has also contributed to its success in receiving federal grants. This includes research regarding fertilization of soil as well as sustainable housing that conserves and recycles water.

University Briefings: Report of the Provost

Provost Weber began his report by providing further details about UB's fall 2022 semester enrollment. Undergraduate enrollment is down 3.5%. This is largely due to the declining numbers of high school graduates in the northeast and Midwest. Anticipating this trend, UB adjusted its enrollment strategy and as a result enrolled a record number of master's students with enrollment up 1,500 from Fall 2020, mainly in engineering, management and the graduate school of education.

UB also continues to improve and enhance its learning landscape. Following two years of renovations, UB debuted its fully renovated lecture halls in the Natural Sciences Complex this semester. Over the next three years, the university plans to renovate additional classrooms on both the North and South campuses.

UB welcomed more than 130 new faculty members to UB, including more than 80 tenured and tenure-track faculty with the largest clusters in the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Graduate School of Education. One of UB's top priorities has been to increase the diversity of faculty and the university is committed to doubling the number of faculty from historically underrepresented minority backgrounds between 2020 and 2025. UB is making significant progress on this goal as the percentage of URM faculty hires has increased from under 10% in 2019 to over 25% this year. An innovative UB program that is helping diversify faculty is the Visiting Future Faculty or VITAL program. The program has grown to 34 outstanding PhD students participating in the fall program.

Report of the Student Representative

Mr. Franklin began his report by introducing himself and expressed his support for UB's efforts in the areas of sustainability and climate research. Mr. Franklin discussed his activities during the fall semester,

including attending the recent renaming event for the Evans Quadrangle. He also expressed his support for UB's work to further diversify its faculty and is advocating for UB to adopt a two-day break period for students during the fall semester. Mr. Franklin made several suggestions for ways to improve the student experience including improving parking, increasing shuttle services, and offering more diverse food options. Mr. Franklin also suggested UB improve or simplify outreach communications to students, particularly regarding the numerous opportunities for students offered at UB.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Friedman seconded by Mr. Jones and approved unanimously by Mr. Friedman, Mr. Franklin, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Jones, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

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

Minutes approved at the December 5, 2022 meeting of the UB Council