

The University Senate meets on Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:30 p.m. in SAC 302.

Tentative Agenda  
University Senate  
November 3, 2003

- I. Approval of Tentative Agenda
- II. Approval of October 13, 2003 minutes
- III. Presidents Report (S. Kenny)
- IV. Provosts report (R. McGrath)
- V. Second presentation of proposed changes to the University Senate Constitution (M. Tumilowicz)
- VI. NCAA Self-Study (G. Meyer)
- VII. Middle States Review (M. Aronoff)
- VIII. Senate Executive Committee approval of on campus Gen Ed course submission procedure (B. Lindquist)
- IX. Oswego SUNY-Wide faculty meeting report (N. Goodman)
- X. Undergraduate Council Resolution – credit limits (W. Collins)
- XI. Old Business
- XII. New Business

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### Minutes of the University Senate October 13, 2003.

At 3:34 PM the University Senate President, Brent Lindquist, called the meeting to order and added item VIII, a proposal for submitting General Education Courses to the State, to the agenda. He then introduced Norman Goodman to bring the Senate up to date on the State Wide Assessment.

**N. Goodman** discussed the latest version of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between System Administration and the two SUNY faculty governance bodies by the Value-Added Assessment Discussion Group (VAADG). Among the aspects of this MOU discussed was that it did not meet the faculty's concern with standardized tests (or its functional equivalent, "common measures"), that State wide general assessment was an unfunded mandate and would not be cheap especially in current stringent budgetary climate. The passing of a resolution by the Board of Trustees, mandating State wide general assessment, undercut the work of this working group (VAADG) on the MOU.

By the end of this past summer, it was reported that governance of 13 campuses had passed resolutions stating that they would not accept this Statewide assessment plan.

Norman offered a resolution that was approved and recommended by the Executive Committee (see below) that was unanimously passed by the University Senate. This resolution was to be sent to the Chancellor, SUNY Provost, the SUNY Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees. Our SUNY Faculty Senators were also instructed to vote to reject the MOU that resulted from the VAADG at the Fall Plenary Session of the SUNY University Faculty Senate.

**President S. Kenny** submitted a written report and made an oral report. She noted that effect of budget cuts on students will be featured on WABC at 6:00 that evening. The current operating budget receives 60% of its funds from the State tax levy and 40% from tuition. This is an increase in the contribution from tuition to our budget. The president emphasized that the cost of utilities is a significant part of our budget. A cold winter and high fuel prices could create budget difficulties.

There is little new on Gyrodyne.

**Provost R. MacGrath** submitted a written report and made an oral report. He commented on the recent Nobel Prize in Medicine and gave a description of the work done by Professor Paul Lauterbur while he was a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry.

Reviews of the 5-year-old self-study MOU indicate we have exceeded most performance measures (primarily in undergraduate education). We need a new MOU. Graduate Programs will be an important part of the next MOU. Because there will be less \$\$\$, discrimination among the graduate programs will be necessary.

The chair of the 10-year middle states accreditation committee was entertained on campus last week and he passed judgment on our documents.

The public draft of our self-study will be put on the Provost's web page. Since the final report is due the end of January, they would like to put it on the agenda of the November University Senate meeting. The final report will be 100 pages and they would like it to develop into a database resource.

**M. Tumilowicz** made the first presentation of the revised Senate Constitution. The Senate only finished Section IV of the Constitution before the time to adjourn arrived. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed.

The Senate adjourned at 5:04 PM. Recorded by F. Fowler.

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## **RESOLUTION ON SYSTEM-WIDE ASSESSMENT**

### **University Senate of Stony Brook University**

**Whereas**, the SUNY System Administration has required campuses to establish programs to assess their General Education curriculum; and

**Whereas**, the SUNY System Administration has worked cooperatively with the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges to establish the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) to oversee this campus-based assessment process; and

**Whereas**, Stony Brook has a long-established high quality General Education program (its Diversified Educational Curriculum, DEC) and has already implemented the first year of a three-year GEAR-approved assessment plan; and

**Whereas**, each SUNY campus is unique, having different missions, admissions standards, student populations, and routes to satisfying the SUNY General Education requirements; and

**Whereas**, accrediting bodies such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education recognize the diversity of campus programs within a state system and assess the performance of the individual campuses and not the state-wide system; and

**Whereas**, most national experts on assessment (e.g., Dr. Barbara Cambridge, former Director of Assessment for the American Association of Higher Education, and Dr. Peter Ewell, Senior Associate of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems) and a recent report of the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy of the California State University have argued that academic assessment is best done at the campus and not system level; and

**Whereas**, the use of standardized tests (or its functional equivalent, common measures) across the campuses of SUNY would undermine fundamental principles of academic excellence by discouraging pedagogical creativity and innovation while encouraging standardized education that is narrowly tailored to the standardized tests; and

**Whereas**, General Education occurs over a student's entire academic career, and since students take individually diverse pathways through the available educational programs, including coursework at other institutions of higher education, internships, and study abroad programs, attempting to test this diversity in a standardized manner is an academically inappropriate; and

**Whereas**, the costs of such a standardized program would be considerable and, in an economic environment that already restricts the ability of campuses to carry out their academic missions in a manner that most believe appropriate, any available funds should be used to support the campus-based assessment programs; and

**Whereas**, the Board of Trustees has offered no academically compelling reasons, evidence or problems that warrant a standardized approach to assessment; therefore

**Be it resolved**, that the University Senate of Stony Brook University affirms its commitment to campus-based assessment, will continue to implement its approved campus-based General Education assessment plan, and will not support, embrace or participate in any SUNY-mandated standardized assessment of General Education;

**Be it further resolved**, that in the best interests of the State University of New York the University Senate of Stony Brook University urges the Board of Trustees to rescind its resolution of June 17, 2003 on system-wide assessment and allow the Provost's Office and the faculty governance bodies to continue working together to construct a system of assessing foundational skills in General Education that provides both for campus autonomy and System Administration oversight.

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#### Undergraduate Council Resolution

At its meeting on October 21, 2003, the Undergraduate Council discussed the issue of the number of credits for which a student may register prior to the beginning of the semester. There are a number of problems with the current policy, and immediate action is required.

**Background:** At present, the limit is 19 credits to allow students to utilize the automatic waitlist feature in PeopleSoft. A key issue is that being on a waitlist counts as part of the total credit load for that student. Thus, students cannot put themselves on the waitlist for a course if that course puts them above the credit limit. This was not a significant problem when there was no automatic waitlist feature and the credit limit was 17 credits. However, since most students register for 15 credits, they could not utilize the new automatic waitlist feature unless the limit was raised. For this reason, the limit was raised to 19 credits last year.

Raising the limit to 19 credits created an unanticipated shortfall in the availability of seats in classes. Taking advantage of the higher credit limit, many students registered for 19 credits planning to drop the course(s) they didn't want after the beginning of the semester. This created a temporary unmet demand and made it very difficult for many students to complete their class schedules in a timely manner. Arlene Feldman looked at the number of students registered for 19 credits at the end of the summer 2003 compared to the number students registered for 19 credits at the end of the add/drop period. She determined that over 1000 seats were released during the add/drop period, seats not available to students during summer orientation. The implication is that students are not using the 19-credit limit to get on waitlists. Rather, they are taking advantage of the situation to hedge their bets.

**Recommendations:** The Undergraduate Council recommends that the University / Registrar take the following steps to end the current practice of students registering for "extra" courses and to implement a waitlist policy that is truly effective.

1. The credit limit should be immediately lowered to 17 credits. This credit limit would apply to all students until either the end of orientation or one week before the start of classes (which ever is later). At that point, the limit should be raised to 19 credits and petitions for overloads accepted.
2. The enrollment management feature in People Soft should be modified to allow students to join the waitlist for a course without generating a credit overload. Note, the credit limit would still apply when it comes time to register for a course even if the student has been on the waitlist for the course.
3. Reserve an appropriate number of seats in courses typically taken by freshmen ensuring that seats will be available during summer orientation.

University Faculty Senate  
October 23-25, 2003  
SUNY Oswego

The meeting was called to order and introductions were made for the Campus Senate Chair - Susan Camp, the Host Senator – Luther Peterson, and the President – Deborah F. Stanley. Welcoming remarks followed each introduction.

The Senate President, Joseph Hildreth presented his report detailing the history of the development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning system-wide assessment and the events leading up to the sudden adoption of Chancellor King's resolution of June 17, 2003. He presented the facts in the context of preparing for an informed, thorough, fair and balanced, honest discussion by the UFS.

The history began with the meeting of 12/02 with Robert King during which a resolution declaring opposition to system-wide assessment was presented that evolved into the MOU on value added assessment. President Hildreth subsequently heard that trustee DeRussy was going to present a resolution on system-wide assessment. Chancellor King contacted President Hildreth on 6/16. Joseph Hildreth urged the chancellor not to present his resolution. The chancellor presented his alternative resolution on 6/17. Trustee Stephanie Gross was the only voice heard against the resolution and requested that it be tabled so that more time would be available to work with the Faculty Senate. The trustees passed the chancellor's resolution. The UFS president was not allowed to speak until after the resolution was passed. Since that time 13 SUNY campuses passed resolutions against system-wide assessment. The Faculty Council on Community Colleges expressed the same opposition.

James McElwaine presented the Executive Committee report touching on the topics of presidential search and hiring practices, and the source of stipends to augment presidential compensation. A "blue ribbon" panel to examine the relationship of the Board of Trustees, System Administration, and the University Faculty Senate was suggested and discussed by the Executive committee. System-wide assessment and the MOU on Value Added Assessment was discussed exhaustively culminating in two different approaches to the issue. One concept embraced the idea of standing strongly on principle, the second advocated a pragmatic approach.

Candace Young of Truman State University, Missouri treated the UFS to a talk entitled "Lessons Learned from Thirty Years of Assessment." She detailed the assessment events that began in 1973 and slowly evolved over the years to the present day.

The session then broke into sector sessions to discuss shared concerns. Each sector addressed system-wide assessment and the impact on their sector. These concerns were then shared with the entire senate later in the day.

During Lunch, Wayne Locust from System Administration presented the current enrollment status of SUNY and discussed recruitment efforts.

The afternoon session began with Provost Peter Salins presenting a report on the Strategic Academic Agenda providing a comprehensive written report covering topics including Planning and Research, Academic Initiatives, Accountability and Continuous Improvement, each topic with many subdivisions.

Brian Stenson reported on the Budget explaining the techniques used to ensure that no campus received less funding than the previous year.

Susan O'Malley, Chair of CUNY Faculty Senate presented the issues and difficulties of system-wide assessment in CUNY. The ACT test in reading, writing, and mathematics was used as an entrance exam, i.e. if students did not pass they were forced to go to a Community College. It was used for placement and to exit from remediation. There is under consideration a plan to stop the availability of

remediation. The CPE, a rising Junior test was instituted. Community College students must pass it to graduate and senior college students must pass it to start their Junior year, with 3 chances to take the test. This has been termed the “high stakes test.” She did not appear to favor the situation as it exists in CUNY.

A rigorous and frank discussion of the senate’s response to the MOU on value added assessment followed. There were many who voiced the opinion that the motions presented for discussion were too weak and needed to be made more assertive, echoing those who championed standing for principle. There were no suggestions that a weakening of the flavor of the motions was necessary as those in favor of pragmatism had suggested. After dinner, a number of senators and members of the executive committee convened to hammer out a document that was agreeable to the plenary session. This was presented on Saturday morning, and following extensive wordsmithing the motions agreed upon the previous evening by the executive committee were reinstated as resolutions. The UFS then passed the resolution. The executive committee was then charged with the responsibility of re-instating the whereas clauses that had been removed the previous evening. In addition the executive committee was charged with producing a rationale to accompany the resolution. The executive committee met once again and produced two documents concerning assessment, and stressed the use of the term “system wide campus based assessment.”

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October 25, 2003

**Whereas,** The University Faculty Senate has long supported University-wide campus-based assessment of General Education; and

**Whereas,** The SUNY System Administration has worked cooperatively with the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges to establish the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) committee to oversee the campus-based assessment process; and

**Whereas,** SUNY campuses have long-established quality General Education programs and implemented the GEAR-approved assessment plans, which Provost Salins called a “huge success” and a “remarkable accomplishment”; and

**Whereas,** Each SUNY campus is unique, having different missions, admissions standards, student populations, and means of satisfying the SUNY General Education requirements; and

**Whereas,** Accrediting bodies such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education recognize the diversity of campus programs within a state system and assess the performance of the individual campuses and not the state-wide system; and

**Whereas,** National experts on assessment (e.g., Dr. Barbara Cambridge, former Director of Assessment for the American Association of Higher Education, and Dr. Peter Ewell, Senior Associate of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems), and a recent report of the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy of the California State University have argued that academic assessment is best done at the campus and not system level; and

**Whereas,** Dr. Candace Young reported at the 135<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the University Faculty Senate on the nature and success of the nationally recognized campus-based assessment program at Truman State University; and

**Whereas,** The specific requirement in the draft Memorandum of Understanding on Value-Added Assessment (September 26, 2003) for common measures across the campuses of SUNY would undermine fundamental principles of academic excellence by discouraging pedagogical creativity and innovation; and

**Whereas,** General Education occurs over a student’s entire academic career, and since students take individually diverse pathways through the available educational programs, including coursework at other institutions of higher education, internships, and study abroad programs, attempting to test this diversity in the manner proposed in the draft Memorandum of Understanding on Value-Added Assessment (September 26, 2003) is academically unwise and unsound; and

**Whereas,** The costs of such a program would be considerable and would have to come from SUNY’s zero-sum budget in an economic environment that already restricts the ability of campuses to carry out their academic missions; and

**Whereas,** The June 17 Resolution on Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes of the Board of Trustees has offered no academically compelling reasons, evidence or problems that warrant its approach to assessment; therefore

**Be it resolved** that the University Faculty Senate respectfully requests that the Board of Trustees suspend implementation of its June 17 Resolution on Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in order to engage in a substantial dialog among representatives of the Provost’s Office, the Board of Trustees, and faculty governance regarding University-wide campus-based assessment;

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**Be it further resolved** that the University Faculty Senate cannot support the proposed Memorandum of Understanding on Value-Added Assessment dated September 26, 2003 but does support an ongoing discussion which will produce a mutually acceptable process of University-wide campus-based assessment;

**Be it further resolved** that the University Faculty Senate reaffirms its long-standing commitment to University-wide campus-based assessment, and will urge campuses to continue to implement their GEAR-approved General Education assessment plans; and

**Be it further resolved** that in the best interests of the education of our students, and the State University of New York, the University Faculty Senate invites the Board of Trustees and SUNY System Administration to continue to discuss the assessment of foundational skills in General Education. This may include externally referenced measures of the campus’s choice that provides for campus responsibility and System Administration oversight.

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### Sense of the Senate in Regard to Assessment and Accountability

The faculty of the State University of New York has always supported both assessment and accountability. Both are a routine part of academic life and faculty responsibilities. In fact, the faculty has participated through the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges with System Administration (specifically, with the Office of the Provost) to set up system-wide programs of assessment (GEAR—General Education Assessment Review) and accountability (Campus MOU—Memorandums of Understanding). These have been among the most recent successful examples of how the faculty and administration can cooperate to the benefit of SUNY.

The primary focus of the faculty has always been the quality of its academic programs. This campus-based responsibility for academic programs has been consistently understood and accepted by the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, System Administration, and the Board of Trustees, most evident recently in the programs of General Education. While there are system-wide learning objectives for ten categories of general education programs, the actual academic programs that serve to meet the requirements for general education as specified by the Board of Trustees Resolution 98-241 vary by campus. In fact, it is this very diversity of programs (general education and others—e.g., majors and various professional programs) that is the great strength of the SUNY system.

Consequently, it seems clear that in the six or more years in which this discussion about system-wide testing (now called “value-added assessment”) has occurred, the faculty has consistently argued that since

academic programs are determined by the individual campuses, any assessment of these programs must be similarly campus-based. It seemed evident that System Administration agreed with that view when it worked with the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges to establish GEAR to provide system-wide review of campus-based programs assessing general education. All current evidence suggests that the results of this process have been quite successful. Similarly, the campus MOUs were conceived within the context of perhaps the single most important contribution of the Provost: Mission Review. Mission Review is an explicit statement of the differences that do and should exist among the campuses of SUNY. Each campus is encouraged to find its own academic niche within SUNY and to provide programs relevant to its uniqueness. The campus MOU asks the campus to spell out precisely what its specific educational mission is and then requires it to demonstrate how well it has carried out that responsibility.

Looked at from this perspective, it is evident that there already exists within SUNY several mechanisms that speak to the issues of assessment and accountability: GEAR and the Campus MOU. These mechanisms provide for system-wide oversight of campus-based responsibilities. In addition, professional accreditation (as specific as those required by disciplinary professional societies or as general as required by the Middle States Higher Education Commission) also provides a mode of assessment and accountability, though again either at the department/college/school level (disciplinary accreditation) or at the campus but not the system level (Middle States).

Thus, if the intent of the present initiative on system-wide (or value-added) assessment is to serve primarily as a way of enhancing the quality of academic programs, the mechanisms to do so currently exist (GEAR, MOU, and professional accreditation). It would certainly be appropriate, and in keeping with the concept of "value added," to assess the degree to which campuses continually improve their academic programs over time. In that way, campuses are compared against themselves rather than against other campuses that have a different mix of students, clearly different academic programs, and different goals for their students. If the current GEAR process and the MOUs are perceived to be inadequate to the task of value-added assessment, though we do not see why that should be, the faculty governance bodies will gladly work with System Administration to modify these two existing processes that have already been accepted by both the faculty and System Administration to ensure the necessary campus-based responsibility for assessing its academic programs and system-wide need for accountability without creating a new set of mechanisms that the faculty opposes on academic, pragmatic, and fiscal grounds.

Adopted by the SUNY University Faculty Senate, October 25, 2003 at the 135<sup>th</sup> Plenary session at the State University College at Oswego.