

The University Senate will meet on Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. in SAC 302.

University Senate  
Tentative Agenda  
October 13, 2003

- I. Approval of tentative agenda
- II. Approval of minutes of September 9, 2003
- III. University President's report (S. Kenny)
- IV. Provost's report (R. McGrath)
- V. Update on System Wide Assessment (N. Goodman)
- VI. Resolution on System Wide Assessment (N. Goodman)
- VII. First presentation of Revised University Senate Constitution
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business

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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 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 campuses ability 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.

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University Senate Meeting  
September 8, 2003

At 3:35 PM the University Senate President, Brent Lindquist, called the meeting to order and made his report (see below).

**Brent Lindquist** suggested that President Kenny's report be made when she arrived. The governance group has been active through the summer. They are on schedule. An attempt is being made to place all of the motions that have been introduced on the Senate web site. It was noted that a serious violation of a 1996 Senate policy has occurred. This policy was concerned with the issue that the University Bookstore should be informed of all books that are to be used in a course. The Senate Executive Committee will rewrite a proposal concerned with this issue. It was suggested that the faculty be informed of the current policy.

Senators were reminded that they should inform their constituency of Senate activities such as proposed resolutions.

There is a plan to put a Senate Policy Handbook on the Senate Web site.

**Mark Aronoff** agreed to answer questions concerning the Provost's written report. The high average of SAT scores was discussed. L. Martin responded that similar information on graduate student GRE scores was available if needed. The Budget for the College Program is about \$200K.

**C. Peabody** from the school of Social Welfare reported on a survey that is planned to determine the atmosphere and attitudes regarding a number related to diversity on campus. She wanted to address the Senate to give them information about the survey and to receive feed-back on how to make the survey successful. Some comments were made with respect to participation in this survey in light of the Patriot Act, IRB approval, distribution of the report and that the survey should be kept short for maximum participation and the Senate offered its assistance.

**S. Kenny** presented a written report. In her oral report she stated that the SAT scores are not up because we took fewer students but they are up because of our improved reputation.

Nothing is new on the Budget. We need long-term methods for raising non-State funds. The goal next year is \$25M. The Capital campaign is delayed because of personal problems. The Departments need to get lists of alumni. They are a good participants in fund raising.

Gyrodyne plans are being discussed in civic groups.

The President also stated that this is a good time to discuss the next phase for the University. In response to questions the President stated that the \$25M fund raising goal is mainly personal not corporate funds and the funding database needs to be better. In State funding this year the State Colleges did better than the University Centers. There are some problems with the State funding the capital plan. The emergency planning (set up after 9/11) responded well but not perfectly to the blackout. A process is underway to improving our response to emergencies.

**Norman Goodman** made a report on the status of Assessment. A historical summary was presented that led up to the July (2003) resolution by the Board of Trustees to set up system wide assessment. Because of the importance of this issue to the University Community, Professor Goodman's presentation is attached at the end of the minutes.

The Senate adjourned at 5:04 PM. The University Senate minutes were recorded by F. Fowler.

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## **Analysis of the SUNY Wide Assessment presented by Norman Goodman**

### **I. History**

A. 1996—UFS Symposium on General Education (University at Albany).

B. 1997—Joint UFS/FCCC Task Force on General Education recommends that each campus develop an assessment plan for its General Education program and file that plan with System Administration for sharing with all other campuses.

1997—Newly appointed SUNY Provost Peter Salins outlines his ideas for a “rising junior standardized test across the SUNY system. There was general faculty dissatisfaction with this idea.

C. 1998—Plenary Session of UFS at Stony Brook (February) focused around “assessment” includes Dr. Barbara Cambridge, then Director of Assessment of the American Association for Higher Education, and representatives of 3 SUNY campuses to present and discuss their campus assessment programs. There was general agreement that campus-based assessment is more academically appropriate and less costly than system-wide assessment using a standardized test.

D. 2000 (April)—Report of SUNY Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes is discussed and approved by the UFS; it includes reference to both campus-based and system-wide assessment, for general education and the “major.”

E. 1999-2003—Issue of system-wide assessment is put on the back burner until raised by the SUNY Provost in Spring 2003.

F. 2003 (April)—The UFS and the FCCC appoint a group to work with Associate Provost Donald Steven to see if there is any possible agreement between the faculty and System Administration on how to assess the results of the general education program mandated by the Board of Trustees in 1998.

May 21 and June 11—This group, now designated the “Value-added Assessment Discussion Group (VAADG), meets and Associate Provost Steven drafts an MOU, which the faculty members have not yet agreed represents their interests. Trustee Candace de Russy, against the advice of the SUNY Chancellor and Provost, attends the June 11 meeting; she does not participate in the discussion, but she takes assiduous notes.

June 16—The Chancellor informs the Presidents of the UFS and the FCCC that Trustee de Russy has proposed a resolution for the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the BOT and that he has prepared an alternative resolution that Trustee de Russy has agreed to let go forward instead of her own resolution. The two presidents asked the chancellor to offer a different resolution, to the effect that the process provided through the VAADG be allowed to continue without any pre-determined outcome being specified. He rejects this request and indicates that he will offer the resolution he has shown them. At this time, the

chancellor informs the campus presidents for the first time that he will propose a resolution on system-wide assessment and faxes them a copy of the resolution.

June 17—The chancellor’s resolution is approved by the BOT, who refuse permission to allow the presidents of the UFS and the FCCC to address the issue until after the vote is taken.

June 20—In the course of a joint meeting of the UFS and FCCC Executive Committees, the chancellor discusses his resolution as a way of heading off the de Russy resolution. The faculty evidences strong disapproval of his actions since the crux of his resolution commits the process to a predetermined outcome, namely a “common measures” (instead of “standardized”) test across the system.

July 1—The VAADG meets to discuss the issue, and is joined by the chancellor. The VAADG is ambivalent about returning to discussions with system administration given the pre-determined outcome specified in the chancellor’s resolution. No change in the chancellor’s position is evident.

July 24—The chancellor sends a letter to Joe Hildreth, President of the UFS, indicating that some negotiation is possible over details of his resolution, but does not indicate any change in the basic elements of his resolution.

September 3—The VAADG meets again and continues the process of discussion, though the latest draft of the proposed MOU is not substantially different from earlier drafts.

October 23-25—UFS Plenary Session reviewed and voted on the MOU from the VAADG.

## **II. Possible Actions**

- A. The UFS is drafting a “white paper” arguing that campus-based assessment is more educationally appropriate and less costly than system-wide assessment.
- B. The UFS will use the “white paper” as a basis of discussion with key constituencies within SUNY (e.g., campus academic administrators, campus governance bodies, student governance bodies, elements within the BOT) and outside of SUNY (e.g., key members of the state legislature, higher education organizations) to gain support for a campus-based rather than system-wide assessment process.
- C. The UFS will put out a special issue of the *UFS Bulletin* to inform the faculty and professional staff throughout SUNY of this issue.
- D. The SBU University Senate, after discussion, may wish to join the other 10 campuses that have already done so and pass a resolution against system-wide assessment and for campus-based assessment of general education.