

School of Arts and Sciences
SUNY Buffalo State
Minutes

February 2, 2024 ♦ 3:00 pm ♦ BULG 217

- I. Call to order at 3:06pm. Thanks to Dean's Office for providing refreshments.
- II. Presentation of the Agenda
- III. Remarks of the Interim Provost Amitra Wall
 - Not everyone at the Provost's welcome back meeting. Would like to share some of those points and update on activities she's been involved with since then.
 - Would also like to address some of the recent concerns voiced by Buffalo State faculty.
 - Recap of earlier remarks from Provost's Welcome:
 - Decisions made by Dr. Mayrose will stand for now.
 - Remember to follow institutional hierarchy (go through Chair, Dean, etc).
 - We (faculty/staff/provost herself cannot forget our mission—we are here to help our students. Every decision is based on that. We will help our students. Educating students on forefront.
 - Online learning: we are going to focus on Master's level programs first.
 - She is aware of OSQCR discussions in the senate and the concerns revolving around that. But for now the focus will be on developing Master's online programs.
 - We will continue to stick to OSQCR rubrics for courses taught online.
 - Two programs currently being reviewed:
 - **DPS: Doctorate in Professional Studies.** Master plan amendment will be necessary since we have not offered a doctorate degree before.
 - **MFA in Television, Film, and Streaming Media.** Going through the process (gone through Senate Curriculum and the first phase at SUNY. Hope to get on Board of Trustees agenda before the end of the semester as it is a long process.
 - Other activities she's been involved in: SWOT Analysis. Group of Chairs, Group of Chairs, Assoc. Deans and Deans, etc.
 - Some of the analyses: survey went out last Monday – past Friday there were smaller focus groups.
 - Results, Strengths:
 - Expertise / pedigree of our faculty – she has confidence in this. Sees the work we have done. Practice she wants to carry on: look at the Daily Bulletin and saying congrats!
 - Another strength: distinct programs; community engagement a vehicle to respond to the needs of the community. Spoke to Dr. Glenn last Friday for about 10 minutes...
 - Her sense from Dr. Glenn—be prepared for his arrival. Hence the questions she had on the first day of classes: SAS—what does an ideal comprehensive university look like? What does it mean? Etc.

- She got no sense of retrench/slash – more we need to look at what we offer and make some decisions about merging/doing collaborative works.
- Another strength: Diversity of Student population and our urban location
- Results, Weakness:
 - we have comprehensiveness of outdated programs or programs that have not been revised. If there is a program not revised for 5+ years we need to revise; we need to start thinking about our enrollments.
 - Previous leadership decisions. Leadership styles. Leadership changes. Lack of vision. Stifled creativity. Low morale. Feelings of uncertainty, insecurity. Trust.
 - In her role as interim provost her hope is that we can flip some of this... Knows that this has been years ... seen the tide change in terms of morale. (Talking over, not respecting, etc.. each other)
 - Siloed and inconsistent communication.
 - Financial instability—shrinking of resources.
- Results, External Opportunities:
 - Develop programs based on current industry needs. What have we done to meet those needs.
 - Develop programs and create appealing learning environments.
 - New domestic and international recruitment strategies
 - Capitalization of AP program.
 - Optimize abilities of faculty and staff.
- Results, External Threats:
 - Declining number of students.
 - We had the Roar to Success program last semester – a collaboration among academic affairs, enrollment management, student affairs; a lot of work went into it... Data from this past fall semester: among the 343 Roar to Success students the average GPA was 1.83 – much lower GPA than EOP and students who came in with higher High School GPA. How is this possible when we just changed our pass/fail policy to allow for students to take 2 pass/fail in one semester. So deeper dive needs to be done here.
 - Competition from colleges from WNY. And SUNY system. We need to hold on to our education programs.
 - Shrinking of resources. Lack of support from SUNY and NY State
- Last week, also involved with the College Council Strategic Initiative (University Council): They will discuss academic affairs plan to address sustainability and also share info about grant/moneys that could be coming.
- ROAR to success will continue....
- Attended Presidential Advisory Committee: discussion about what is the role of this committee? University Council works with Presidential Advisory Committee: prominent people from community also in this committee. She has reached out to Deans and asked

for lists of industry and workforce partners that the programs have. Bridge what the employers desire with what we can offer our students.

- SUNY comprehensive meeting March 4-5: no agenda yet.
 - Discussed the announcement in the DAILY (<https://dailybulletin.buffalostate.edu/interim-provost-and-vice-president-academic-affairs/changes-academic-affairs-buffalo-state?month=2024-02&var=2024-02-01>) about the changes in academic affairs: Julian Cole and Scott Goodman and their new responsibilities.
 - Updated about the recent altercation at basketball game: individual who started the altercation was not one of our students...
 - Retrenchment at Potsdam. Fred Floss provided input: take it with a grain of salt...: they did not do it the right way there... Picked people who were going to retire... grievances being filed in Albany... One thing to realize: we are not there yet... If we work together with Provost and President we will not be where they are at. He is working on a number of things to bring additional money to Buffalo State. Might hear more in the next couple of weeks.
 - Emerging needs process: CSEA needs... HR has a hold on all the CSEA decisions. Thorough review.... Is it possible to do a temp CSEA without using emerging needs process. Must use emerging needs. Temporary hires on hold.
- Questions from faculty:
 - What is the relationship of our tenure? Are we tenured to Buff State or to SUNY? If retrenched do we go somewhere else in SUNY? FRED FLOSS answered: we are employees of SUNY. Retrenchment: first step, is there another position on campus—retrenched faculty given first option to be interviewed. No position? SUNY wide list that has people positions must interview inside candidates. Pressure to make sure everybody is taken care of. In 1978-79 18 individuals were retrenched at Buffalo State. None lost their jobs. Jobs found for everyone. If anyone gets a letter of non-renewal / denial the first step one should take: email Fred. Fred Floss will work with us to make sure we know all of our options: contract, NY state law....

IV. Presentation of minutes from last SAS meeting.

V. Remarks of the Speaker:

- Try to do Less! Paperwork/Forms/trying to get forms filled correctly/bureaucracy. If you have any ideas on how we can work smarter would appreciate sharing them with her or the SAS Council.

VI. Remarks of Interim Dean

- Staff Updates
 - Atta: Associate Dean Academic standards and success
 - Cole: Interim associate dean for Curriculum and Assessment
 - Chase: Assistant Dean

- Carolyn Fusco: Executive assistant
- Kathy Fortune: Admin 2
- Teresa LoGalbo, Admin 2 (Jean Salisbury has retired)
- Vacant Admin 1 position.
Admins pulling more weight than usual because of vacant admin position. Vacant position stuck in HR.

- Sabbaticals

- AD Annas TFA
- Lisa Berglund English
- Naomi McKay Psychology

7 overall at Buff State

- Personnel updates

- Associate Prof
 - Natalie Szymanski (CWP/English)
 - Fiona Beckett (Art Conservation)
- Full prof:
 - Emily Boyce Music
 - Julian Cole, Philosophy

- Curriculum

- Academic Optimization:
 - Interested in this. We will be better off if we make decisions now and identify synergies and possible merged departments.
 - Received ideas for new departments/mergers. But perhaps come up with better department names! Be bold. What should we be as an institution? What should we be as SAS?

- Eclipse

- Events on campus
- No classes that day: no classes; no modalities. Go outside. Get your glasses. Look at eclipse.

VII. Standing Committee Reports

a. Steering Council, Lisa Berglund, Speaker

1) Several council members have reported complaints about slow or non-working campus wifi in Student dorms... Should this be raised as a constituent question... Sue Maguire (senate liaison): reached out to student welfare committee. Multiple concerns about this... in residence halls. Internet is slow/unstable. Impacted ability to access course materials. Dorms have a different internet provider make. Concerns will be followed up in Senate.

2) New student course surveys.... Will wait until next fall to do a review (so we have 2 semesters of data before proceeding with review).

b. Bylaws and Elections Committee, Barish Ali, Chair

- Still working on updating the bylaws given the flux in terminology.
 - By next meeting will send out call of nominations for open committee positions.
- c. Personnel Committee, Jennifer Ryan-Bryant, Chair
- Personnel committee completed several reports on applications for promotion to associate and full professor last semester. This semester there are three applications for promotion to associate so far which are due to the dean's office by February 5. The committee will submit their reports by February 26.
- d. Curriculum Committee, Ann Liao, Chair
- Updates on CIM (provided by J Cole): The plan is for CIM to be rolled out within the next two weeks. There was training on it earlier this week. SAS Chairs will be trained on it at the next School Leadership team meeting.
 - It should not impact the work of the SASCC since curriculum proposals have to be approved by departments and the SASCC prior to being submitted in CIM. The newest CSCC templates are designed so that all that someone will need to do is copy and paste from the template into the appropriate field in CIM.
- e. Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee, Roy Bakos, Chair

Lisa Berglund shared Roy's Report, below:

Greetings Everyone,

My apologies for not being able to attend the meeting today and for the inability of the rest of our elected committee to attend the meeting today. As you all know, the life and economic situations of contingent faculty demand that the majority of us work one to two additional jobs beyond our commitments at Buffalo State. Currently, those other jobs prevent us from regularly coming to a meeting on Friday at 3pm. We are still meeting and I have been attending the Steering Council Meetings so, for now, we have decided to present our thoughts like this.

The first item on our report involves scheduling one or two of these meetings per semester on a Thursday during Bengal Pause so more full-time faculty, professional staff, and contingent faculty across SAS can attend and have their voices heard and concerns addressed. I brought this up for a discussion during the Steering Council meeting with the hope that that discussion continues today. The main reason for doing this is rooted in the SAS bedrock ideals of equity, fairness, and shared governance. It is hard for a majority of contingents to attend on a Friday at 3pm (we are the rare college in WNY that ends our day on Fridays at 2:50; for example, UB has classes scheduled through Friday evening). I also know that it is difficult for many full-time faculty who teach a Tuesday-Thursday load to make it as well. During this time of transition at Buffalo State, I believe that it is incredibly important to have as many voices heard as possible, especially considering the looming uncertainty created by budget cuts, proposed program cuts, cuts in the number of classes offered, and cuts to the number of faculty on campus.

Our proposal is to either move the second meeting to the Thursday before it was originally scheduled and hold it during Bengal Pause or to schedule a meeting to take

place between our now scheduled 2nd and 3rd meetings. We would like this to happen this semester. Consider this a motion to do that as soon as new business comes up for discussion.

The second item in my report involves the swirl of rumors regarding even deeper cuts to all faculty and classes with the majority of that burden once again falling upon the backs of contingents. I have heard all sorts of rumors floating around regarding these proposed cuts with this (which came from another contingent faculty member but was echoed by others across SAS and BSU as a whole), "...trimming contingent faculty-- that it is actually more drastic, started this semester, is and more draconian and for fall 2024 could significantly reduce contingent numbers. This is gossip at this point but apparently the new axe-swing is powered by an incoming provost (?) who gossip says is a hatchet-person doing it all as triage based on the college's self-inflicted financial wounds (which of course are never called that)." This is, rightfully so, pretty dire stuff.

The Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee asks the whole of SAS to ask the Dean, Provost, Interim President, and Incoming President to address these concerns and give us some idea of what is coming down the pipeline. Our employment, our health insurance, our retirement plans- all of the core economic things that have an immediate impact on our lives -are at stake here and it would be nice to know if we will be able to continue to serve our students and continue to do the work with the most vulnerable student populations at BSU in both the immediate and long-term future. We also want to remind all of our full-time Brothers and Sisters that if the cuts come for us, retrenchment in the full-time ranks is coming next and the idea of moving to 4/3, 4/4, or even 5/4 teaching loads for full-time faculty will become, UUP Contract or not, a distinct reality.

If a motion is needed to send this question to the Interim Dean, the Interim Provost, The Interim President, and the incoming President, consider this to be that motion.

Thank you all for taking the time to listen to this. I ask that this report be entered into the official minutes of this meeting.

In Solidarity.

Best,

Roy

(Concern about scheduling SAS meetings on agenda below, under New Business)

VIII. Report from the College Senators
Susan Maguire, Senate Liaison

Senate Report attached in email.

Questions/Discussion:

Request to elaborate on discussion on OSQCR: a lot of confusion about how it was being implemented. Confusion about role of OSCQR at different levels being treated differently. There are different ideas about what it was and how it should work. We need more clarification.

Andrew Nicholls raised 2 concerns: applicability of OSQCR to online synchronous courses. Extent to which OSQCR had to be applied fully for hybrid courses.

Greg Wadsworth: we should encourage senate and administration to go back to DOPS. Feedback to approve their courses. But not take away their primacy in designing their courses. OSQCR is not feedback, but instead requiring certain pedagogies. DOPS: simply meant to be feedback. Do we need to clarify DOPS? Invite faculty who have gone through it to talk about it...

IX. New Business

- Course scheduling. Lisa: There are concerns about the admin's push to increase course sizes and concurrent decrease in the number of classes being offered.
 - There remains the Desire to offer courses at multiple times on multiple days... There is a potential impact on pedagogy. Many courses benefit from smaller sizes (i.e. CWP and writing courses).
 - Reduction of course offering can impact progress towards degree.

Any thoughts?

-- Faculty: We just heard from the Interim Provost about the low GPAs of our students. Increase class sizes lower the GPAs? And graduation rates?

--Art History example from Frances Gage: number of courses reduced. Hard to find courses for the students.

* Numerous implications from suddenly doubling class sizes. Absenteeism, other problems... like faculty can only use multiple choice exams. Multiple choice disfavor female students...? In sciences this is documented in research... Women tend not to do as well. They do better in written exams.... Women who are drawn to art history are doing less well than male students. Discouraging... These students are coming to class with interest in subject and then being discouraged from doing it.

* Mary Beth Sullivan: Go back to best practices for our disciplines. Cap supposed to be 15 in writing courses. Our cap is higher.... We need to be paying attention to these best practices and not sacrifice an entire group of freshmen.

- Lisa: this is an area of concern please reach out to Council.... Do something concrete about it... higher enrollments 20 years ago but those students were a hardier bunch than the students we have today.
- Bengal Pause for SAS meetings? If it is disenfranchising a group of faculty maybe that should be reconsidered. Not a one size fits all requirements. People are here now (around 50 out of 250 full time SAS faculty)... Who would be here if we had a meeting on Tuesday at 12:15...

Meg Knowles: We do little enough... Maybe this is one thing we can do for free?

Procedural concerns from faculty: Schools are given dedicated times... part of a three-year projection on the University calendar. More than just a random thing we generate. Something we file with SUNY.

Lisa: maybe we should not just keep doing what've been doing? Be open to the possibility?

More concerns: One hour 15 minutes enough? What would be the process???

Carolyn Fusco: We have two meetings at least a semester. A third at an alternate location not a big deal....

Two possibilities: Call a fourth meeting or move the march meeting?

--Faculty voted to cancel March 2 meeting and move it to a Thursday date. New date TBA.

X. Announcements and Adjournment