



Minutes
University Assembly
Tuesday, February 25, 2014
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
401 Physical Sciences Bldg.

I. Call to order

J. Blair called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: S. Balik, J. Blair, R. Booker, D. Bunck, J. Burns, N. La Celle, M. Lukasiewicz, C. McGrath, G. Mezey, A. Moore, G. Ruizcalderon, U. Smith, R. Wayne

Absent: R. Adessa, M. Dumas, E. Loew, B. Schaffner

Others Present: M. B. Grant, D. Skorton, T. Vosburgh, K. Zoner, G. Giambattista, A. O'Donnell

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the January 28, 2014 meeting of the assembly were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Reports from Assemblies

Student Assembly

U. Smith reported that a TCAT resolution to allow the use of Cornell Card was passed. He announced an upcoming discussion of a divestment resolution at the next SA meeting and indicated a vote is possible. He also announced the Student Academic Services task force and a vote or at least a hearing on collaborative campus climate initiatives.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

D. Bunck reported that the GPSA passed a divestment resolution. They also passed the workers' compensation resolution. Otherwise, they are working on updating the dental insurance policy.

Employee Assembly

G. Mezey reported that the EA has met with HR representatives and are discussing internal versus external hiring and the various bands in which internal promotions are more common.

Faculty Senate

R. Booker reported that the FS has been discussing MOOCs and the new university budget model. He also brought up the issue of final exam scheduling. U. Smith responded by explaining the SA's choice. None of the alternatives presented were especially favorable, but the SA selected the least problematic one. J. Burns agreed with this assessment.

IV. Reports from Committees

Executive Committee

J. Blair stated that the UA would need to meet on March 11. There is a large quantity of business to attend to at the end of the academic year, as usual. He asked that representatives work to generate more comments on the resolution currently open to the public.

J. Blair elected to delay the rest of the reports to the end of the meeting.

V. Business of the Day

CUPD Annual Update (Chief K. Zoner)

K. Zoner delivered the annual report to the UA, outlining various statistics gathered by the department over the last year. These statistics are published in the CUPD Campus Watch 2013 Annual Security Report. She noted a marked increase in call volume. A large portion of this increase is due to the new bridge nets. She also indicated that an increase in traffic infraction enforcement resulted in a commensurate decline in traffic accidents.

A. Moore asked if the false alarms from the bridge nets as a result of weather conditions, animals, leaves, or intentional or accidental human interference consume a large amount of resources. K. Zoner responded that they receive many such false alarms and, therefore, they do constitute a major use of resources, but the costs are worthwhile. The frequency of false alarms has steadily decreased. A. Moore asked if the university is working with the vendors to further fix the false alarm issues. K. Zoner reported that the current implementation maximizes the capabilities of the current technology and that no further improvement without a major change could be expected. She also added that the department is looking into installing cameras for observing bridge approaches.

Judicial Administrator (M. B. Grant)

M. B. Grant gave the annual report from the JA office to the UA. She began by warning that numbers published by the JA office may not match other's numbers that appear to represent the same quantities because of several factors including the choice of calendar. She then focused on the implementation of policy 6.4. One of the major advantages seen under the new guidelines is the involvement of assistant investigators.

M.B. Grant's presentation was interrupted to allow President Skorton to speak.

Discussion with President Skorton

First, President Skorton outlined his thoughts regarding the shared governance system. He assured members that, for each resolution delivered to him, he obtains specialist advice from outside parties before making decisions. Next, he noted that the SA sent a divestment resolution to him last year and that, more recently, he had responded to the FS regarding a divestment resolution of their own. All present agreed to President Skorton sharing this response to the UA.

He noted that the FS resolution had two separate goals. First, the resolution called for an acceleration of the university's work toward carbon neutrality so that this goal is attained

in 2035 as opposed to 2050. This is not especially contentious, considering that the 2050 figure was roughly arbitrary. Skorton reported that the university is about one third of the way to carbon neutrality. Large cost projects including lake source cooling and the combined steam and power plant as well as making aging buildings more efficient have resulted in significant progress. To achieve neutrality, President Skorton outlined three major shifts that would be necessary. These were capital expenditures, new technologies, and a change in habits.

The other part of the FS resolution addressed divestment. Skorton noted that he has heard many opinions and has researched widely. Still, he could not be certain whether divestment would harm the endowment. He also noted that divestment is not in his power, aside from his ability to recommend it. Further, there is very little margin in the current budget and he is not willing to risk entering a deficit in the case that divestment does hurt the endowment. There is no room to thin the university's staff if faced with a deficit because such cuts already went as far as is feasible in response to the economic downturn.

N. La Celle asked about the status of Start Up NY. President Skorton explained that this is a program that allows new or expanding companies to seek tax abatements if they work in tandem with a university. He noted that Vice President Opperman is the representative for this program and could better address related concerns. J. Burns added that the state can review the Start Up NY submissions for about two months and that this is the current stage of our proposals. Also noted was Ithaca's selection as an innovation related economic development hotspot between Binghamton and Corning.

Judicial Administrator (M. B. Grant), continued

M. B. Grant identified the small number of people originally involved in the investigation process under 6.4 as a specification that caused some concern. In response, the office worked to get more people involved in the process but cannot promise that involvement will remain so high because it consumes a large quantity of resources. The next advantage of the new process is the comfort of the parties involved. Instead of recounting stories to a panel of strangers while face to face with the opposing party, the new system uses a small private meeting in a friendlier environment. Also, deadlines are much more relaxed, allowing decisions to be made when everyone is prepared to make them.

M. B. Grant identified several difficulties with the new system as well, however. She noted that personnel training is a lengthy effort and requires a sustained, long term expenditure of resources to ensure everyone involved is reasonably capable and informed. Also, timing is an issue. Investigations are meant to take no more than sixty days. Investigators are finding this to be a relatively short amount of time to complete all the work pursuant to a thorough investigation. For example, writing the reports has consistently taken more time than originally anticipated.

A further difficulty that has arisen over the course of the transition is related to the expectations of the advisors of complainants. They are prepared for the adversarial

environment the process previously entailed, but quickly find that this is no longer appropriate. Also, identifying advisors for complainants has presented some difficulty.

The JA office also works to ensure that the same levels of support are available for both the complainants and the respondents. However, the office provides judicial codes councilors to assist respondents with legal matters. There is currently no corresponding resource available to complainants.

M. B. Grant also noted that, while many of the difficulties and developments seen with implementing the program were unavoidable or predictable, there was one major surprise. Many cases fit both under rules set out by the code and those in policy 6.4. There was an understanding that such cases would exist, but they are much more ubiquitous than expected.

R. Booker asked if staffing level of the JA office is an underlying issue here. M. B. Grant said that this might be the case. She noted there is not sufficient staff to handle any marked increase in traffic from the current levels. R. Booker also asked about accepted best practices and the procedures of peer institutions. M. B. Grant reported that some institutions utilize a dedicated person for dealing with sexual assault matters. She added that she believes there are both advantages and disadvantages to such a plan. M. B. Grant also mentioned that the scope of her personal work has changed significantly. She is handling far fewer cases than in the past and is instead focusing on strategy development.

VI. New Business

J. Blair asked if the assembly wishes to take up the sustainability issue. R. Wayne affirmed that it should. D. Bunck suggested splitting the issue between divestment and carbon neutrality and discussing the two separately. A. Moore suggested such a strategy would be a waste of time because President Skorton already expressed his support for the carbon neutrality demands. G. Mezey asked if discussing this in any detail at a meeting as soon as March 11 was feasible. J. Blair stated that, in one form or another, the assembly would hear more about these topics at the next meeting.

J. Blair then returned to the committee reports postponed from earlier in the meeting. The Campus Infrastructure Committee has been working on alternatives to satisfy the TCAT issues. The Campus Welfare Committee has forwarded a resolution to the executive committee. Finally, the CJC relayed M. B. Grant's update that the JA office continues to work on checking for inconsistencies between policies, legislation, and the code. An agreement has been reached with the counsel regarding summary decision concerns.

VI. Adjournment

J. Blair adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Noah Wegener,
Assemblies Clerk