Report on SUNY Voices Conference and on SUNY Plenary
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SUNY Voices Conference held on April 23 – 24, Albany, NY
The SUNY Voices conference on Shared Governance brought together faculty, students, administrators, professionals, and council members to discuss how systems of shared governance can work toward achieving sustainable and innovative colleges and universities. The group heard comments from both Board of Trustee’s Chairman Carl McCall and Chancellor, Nancy Zimpher. Both SUNY leaders said they are committed to Shared Governance at the SUNY level, as well at each of the 64 campuses.

The Chancellor asked some question in her remarks that set the stage for the conference:
• How do you know shared governance when you see it?
• Is anyone missing from the conversation? Think beyond the established “acceptable” group.
• What are the recognizable attributes over time that can be measured that will tell us we are making progress?
• Is the traditional business model that Higher Education has followed the best model, given the changes in public support for education, technology, increased minorities, and increased accountability?

Ideas and Questions that Came Out of the Conference
Remember we are being driven by organizations that are better organized and tooled to communicate to the public. How do we gain the advantage?

Do you view Higher Education as a natural resource? We should because it is and we shouldn’t take it for granted.

There were a number of sessions presented, the sessions I attended seemed to be based on real case studies such as shared governance through use of taskforces, as well as a session on Open SUNY that reflected on what was done well and what was done wrong. Although the taskforce one seemed like an interesting method to get at shared governance, the measurement of successes were incomplete. OPEN SUNY on the other hand involved a great deal of faculty, professionals, administrators, and SUNY administrators. Although this is still evolving day by day, it has already yielded enrollments of 88,000 students taking classes for a degree.

There were two keynote speakers for the conference. The first, Rick Legon, President of the Association of Governing Boards, who talked about the need for shared governance in higher education. The second speaker, Benjamin Ginsberg, Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, talked about how faculty, and faculty alone have been marginalized at the university by administrators. He points out that the grown in ranks of administrators and their
armies have increased 240% while the increase in faculty is at 51%. An example of his writing can be found at:

Finally, I would like to mention the Diversity session held as I think many of the questions in this session will help guide future shared governance discussions. This session talked about the need to integrate more diverse thoughts and people into a decision making process. Questions they asked were:

- Are you making shared governance an important part of tenure, permanent appointment, and promotion at your institution?
- What are the barriers to diversity at your institution?
  - Are there individual and/or systemic barriers?
  - Are you taking time to identify barriers?
  - Are you asking those who have refused an invitation to join or have left your governance bodies?
  - Can we promote collaboration?
  - How do we make room for new people?
- Are you hosting more than just meetings?
- Are you talking about the opportunities that come out of shared governance – statewide exposure for example?
- Are you challenging myths about why people of color and others do not participate in shared governance?
- What are you doing to retain new members recruited as diversity candidates?
- How are you identifying “diversity candidates” in your institution?
- Is your shared governance body reflective of your current and future student/staff/faculty population?
- Are there issues of access and equity – are people expected to “come up through the ranks”?
- Are there hidden traditions and expectations?
- Is there stagnation?
- Is your next leader always the heir apparent?
- Can you articulate what are the barriers to leadership?
- How do you know your job is done?
  - What kinds of measurement and metrics have you established?
SUNY Plenary Conference – May 1 – 3, 2014
This plenary had been concerned mostly with topics that have prevailed the last several years. The Chancellor is working on no new initiatives, but instead is updating the 5 year strategic plan. In her discussion, she stressed the importance of individuals, units, campuses, and SUNY to be very good at metrics. As the public is wanting greater accountability and explanation of why the cost of higher education continues to increase, we need to be more vigilant in answering their questions, as well as projecting the value of higher education.

Seamless Transfer
Beth Bringsjord reported that we are now ready to implement Seamless Transfer in the Fall 2014 semester. More than 800 faculty participated in the review and evaluation of more than 30 transfer paths. I will put a copy of the Transfer Paths Summary on the PSS website.

Open SUNY
The call for proposal for the second “wave” of Open SUNY online degree programs and courses was sent to the campuses on April 11. This time SUNY is seeking both existing degree programs in high-needs areas and courses that can be shared across/between campuses to satisfy or complete offerings to meet the goals of the revised Transfer Paths. Accepted proposals will be announced in early fall semester. SUNY System Administration continues to explore how best to offer support services to students and faculty at a scale that can meet the Chancellor’s ambitious goal of adding 100,000 new students to the SUNY system.

Teacher Education
The Faculty Senate has allowed UUP to take the lead on edTPA, however the senate did pass a resolution on edTPA that will be forwarded to the Chancellor. This resolution addressed the concerns that teacher education programs that both faculty and students have regarding the state’s implementation of new requirements for teacher certification. These concerns included the lack of collaboration with colleges, schools, and other stakeholders in the implementation of these new requirements, the lack of time (14 months) to change curriculum so that students were prepared for certification requirements, lack of preparation of edTPA to provide information about the test and its contents to faculty members, and finally the cost of the certification will be $300 and it is anticipated that 40% of the students taking the edTPA are not prepared and thus will fail the assessment. In these latter cases, there is not ample opportunity for the students to retake the exam without additional costs and opportunity to comply with the requirements of portfolio submission and taped classroom teaching sessions.

SUNY Budget
The 2014-15 budget for SUNY doesn’t provide everything we need to cover mandated costs, including negotiated salary increases and inflationary costs. However, at least SUNY ended up with a better financial situation than the last couple of years—a small increase in State operating aid, an increase in EOP funding, an increase in the maximum TAP award (which could be beneficial to SUNY), and a substantial increase in capital funds.
Resolutions Passed
Besides the edTPA resolution being passed by the Senate an additional resolution calling for SUNY Administration to stop the practice of appointing Chief Academic Officers and stepping around the title of President. The Senate called for the Board of Trustees to follow the guidelines they themselves wrote in the 2013 State University of New York Guide to Presidential Searches at State-Operated Institutions.

SFS Vice Chair Election
Gwen Kay of Oswego has won the election for Vice Chair of the SFS. Her opponents were Joe Morran of Buffalo State, Ed Warsala of Empire State College, Ron Sarner of SUNY IT.