

**SUNY Downstate Medical Center**  
**EXECUTIVE (Centerwide) COMMITTEE of the Faculty and Professional Staff**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, December 16, 2014**  
**4:00 PM – 5:00PM**

**Attending:**

Presiding Officer	Stephan Rinnert, MD
Secretary & University Faculty Senator	Henry Flax, EdD
Presiding Officer, College of Health Related Professions	Angela Griffin, PT, PhD
Presiding Officer Elect, College of Health Related Professions	Kenneth Martinucci, MS
Presiding Officer, College of Medicine	Allen Norin, PhD
Presiding Officer, School of Graduate Studies	Nicholas Penington, PhD
Presiding Officer, School of Public Health	Beth Helzner for Daniel Ehlke, PhD
University Faculty Senator	Kathleen Powderly, PhD
University Faculty Senator	Helen Durkin, PhD
Alternate University Faculty Senator	Mathew Foley, MD
Alternate University Faculty Senator	Farhad Haeri, DPT

**Unable to Attend:**

Past Presiding Officer & University Faculty Senator	Miriam Vincent, MD, PhD, JD
Presiding Officer Elect, College of Medicine	Clinton Brown, MD
Presiding Officer, College of Nursing	Veronica Arikian, RN
Presiding Officer Elect, College of Nursing	Sandra Maldonado, RN
Presiding Officer Elect, School of Graduate Studies	John Kubie, PhD
Presiding Officer Elect, School of Public Health	Paul Landsbergis, PhD, EdD, MPH
Alternate University Faculty Senator	Virginia Anderson, MD
Alternate University Faculty Senator	Steven Kang, MD
Recording Secretary	Migdalia Gaston

**Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting of December 8, 2014 were distributed to the body; a motion to approve was deferred to a future meeting.

The regular agenda was suspended. It was to be resumed following the meeting with Dr. Phillips.

**Discussion with Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan Phillips** All

Dr. Rinnert introduced Dr. Susan Phillips to the body; all members then introduced themselves to her. Dr. Phillips thanked the body for rescheduling our meeting to accommodate her schedule. She stated that she wants to understand faculty governance at Downstate Medical Center.

Dr. Phillips described her position as Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at the University at Albany. In that role, she is responsible for the new SUNY Polytechnic relationship replacing the College of Nanoscience Technology at Albany, the affiliation discussions underway with Albany Law School and the affiliation of Downstate Medical Center's research and educational programs with U Albany.

As Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs here at Downstate, she has been charged to create an Office of the Provost. As Dr. Williams served as Provost at George Washington University, he has a sense of what this campus needs in that capacity. Dr. Phillips defined a Provost as one who is the "Voice for Academic Affairs" on a campus. That position frequently is responsible for teaching, learning, research and discovery and often includes student affairs and finance responsibilities as well. Dr. Phillips needs to learn the needs at Downstate.

Dr. Rinnert described the revised role of the President in this model as "the external face" of Downstate.

Dr. Phillips noted that the nature of Downstate is that it has more pieces that need critical leadership than “vanilla” universities. The number of people who directly interact with the President is considerably higher than optimal. The Provost is to provide a collective voice for deans with the priority needed for their colleges. It is not to get in the way of the Dean of the College of Medicine and the hospital. She has begun to learn of the relationships between the clinical chairs and the dean. The Provost is not seen as managing the schools.

Dr. Phillips is creating a work plan for Academic Technology and resources (e.g., SIM Center, Email, Educational IT, and Room Scheduling).

There was discussion that the faculty voice is diminished at Downstate. Dr. Rinnert stated that governance has been dormant due to a failure of faculty to be heard in past years. Dr. Penington agreed with that statement on the centerwide level, but noted that individual schools *are* influenced by their faculty. Dr. Powderly agreed with the assessment of dormancy. The College of Medicine’s faculty governance is now more robust than its governance had been.

Dr. Rinnert commented that he has no ability to obtain an accurate list of faculty (from Human Resources or elsewhere). Dr. Norin explained to Dr. Phillips that the Centerwide Committee functions as a faculty senate. The impetus to enhance faculty governance was, in part, due to preparation for an LCME visit several years ago. Dr. Feigelson, then dean of the College of Medicine, promoted enhancement of governance.

Dr. Flax noted that we are now in preparation for a Middle States accreditation site visit in the spring of 2016. Dr. Powderly commented that the description of campus governance in the 2006 Middle States Self-Study report vis a vis what we have in reality now is stark. Dr. Norin noted the problematic issues between the president and the Centerwide leadership which in 2006 led to diminished governance in the late 2000s.

Dr. Phillips asked the group to explain the activities at the schools vs. Centerwide. For the College of Medicine, Dr. Norin shared that it took four years to revamp the medical school curriculum. We began the new curriculum in Fall 2013. The By-laws of the College of Medicine have been revised. The Faculty-Student Relations Committee has hosted sporadic activities. The Executive Committee and the Admissions Committee are very active.

Dr. Rinnert noted that Centerwide committee meetings include reports from each college to determine where common needs exist, e.g., Faculty Development, the SIM Center, use of the space in the New Academic Building, a voice in the selection of the Provost. Global Health initiatives would be an opportunity for collaboration across the colleges.

Dr. Flax shared the issues surrounding the poor communication of Dr. Phillips appointment to her position at Downstate. An announcement of her appointment was made by President Jones to the U Albany campus community in mid-August; Downstate was not informed of the same information until mid-September. University Faculty Senate colleagues shared the Albany news with Downstate colleagues before our own president advised us.

Drs. Rinnert and Powderly noted that administrative support for centerwide governance has not been forthcoming. The lack of a budget and long-standing reimbursement issues are still unresolved. Dr. Griffin noted that she is not clear on funds available for CHRP faculty governance meetings. To whom should this need be addressed?

Dr. Norin questioned whether we have a standing meeting with President Williams. Dr. Rinnert replied that we do not have a standing meeting with the president but try to meet prior to each month’s Centerwide Committee meeting.

Dr. Norin asked Dr. Phillips if she has met with all the deans. If so, what is their reaction to reporting to the Provost rather than the President? Dr. Phillips stated that there was no expression of opinion, one way or

another. The deans are pleased to be included in the design of the Provost's Office. Dr. Phillips stated that she is not accustomed to the hierarchy here. She is more accustomed to folks who understand the institution and areas of expertise. Dr. Norin suggested that she include both deans and centerwide governance leaders at the same table. Dr. Phillips explained that, in her experience with Deans' Councils, these groups include deans and heads of major units and faculty consultation on specific areas. She does not yet understand Downstate. Dr. Powderly stated that the issue may not be hierarchy, but a battered campus, as much by poor communication, as everything else that has occurred over recent years. This is a trust issue.

Dr. Flax advised Dr. Phillips of the need to include the Centerwide leadership as much for its institutional memory as any other reason. With three years of leadership turn-over without standard selection processes, and a bevy of consultants who will leave when their contract expires, there is serious concern for the future of the institution.

Dr. Phillips stated that she plans to meet with students and residents in the future. Dr. Norin questioned her statement regarding hierarchy. Dr. Phillips explained that she finds that information is received but that faculty is not engaged in problem-solving. Dr. Penington noted that the "bottom up" process works well in several schools. Dr. Phillips acknowledged that she does not have a vista on the relationships between faculty and deans in the schools.

Dr. Norin noted that the issues in the hospital stem from the fact that it is run by administrators and not academics. The conflicts between the administration and the chairs of the academic departments have been heard by Dr. Phillips. Dr. Phillips acknowledged the administration's failure to ask about the ramifications of actions on the educational mission of the hospital. The President is the overseer of the hospital in the current administrative structure. Dr. Rinnert noted that financial concerns are the be-all and end-all of decision-making.

Dr. Phillips questioned the role of Melanie Gehen as the Academic Fiscal Officer vis a vis the academic budget. Dr. Phillips asked how the budgets are created. She is not sure of whom she has already asked about this topic. She noted that Dr. Williams is trying to develop financial order but she doubts the transparency of the process at this stage. She has a sense that Downstate is still bleeding "red ink". Dr. Foley shared that a financial report is given by the UHB CFO to the hospital heads periodically. Dr. Phillips shared that UHB is moving into the black with one-time money and grant funding. The impact of LICH is huge and still unclear for our campus.

Dr. Durkin asked Dr. Phillips about the return of the 2.5% taken as part of the UUP contract negotiated by the Governor's Office. Dr. Phillips advised her that it will be recouped when employees leave state service. Dr. Foley noted that part of the money will be returned in 2016.

Dr. Phillips asked about the relationship between the Centerwide Committee and UUP. Dr. Flax noted that there is overlap among participants, but that there is no formal relationship on this campus. Dr. Rinnert emphasized that these are two separate bodies at Downstate.

Dr. Phillips asked if Research Development comes to the Centerwide committee. Dr. Flax replied No. Dr. Rinnert noted that it should or could come here, especially for centerwide initiatives, e.g., Global Health. Dr. Phillips noted that there is overlap among basic science research efforts in CHRP and Nursing, Public Health. There seems to be no easy communication mechanism for research development. Dr. Rinnert noted that it comes down to communication. We are used to having a weekly announcements newsletter that advertised such information. Dr. Phillips asked where that was housed; Dr. Flax advised her that Institutional Advancement was responsible for that communications vehicle. A collective discussion followed about the loss of the announcements publication. Dr. Flax noted that there is a new philosophy in Institutional Advancement to drive folks to the website rather than to reach out to the campus through vehicles like the announcements newsletter. Dr. Durkin cited specific examples of U Albany speakers coming to campus and there is little to no publicity for these events. Dr. Phillips shared that Dr. Mark Stewart, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and the dean at U Albany are looking to convene meetings in Albany and Brooklyn.

Dr. Phillips and Durkin discussed the SUNY Networks of Excellence program. Dr. Durkin shared her concern that significant money is available for research in areas of strength at Downstate, yet that availability has not been communicated with the Downstate community, despite Mark Stewart's participation on the state-wide coordinating committee.

Dr. Phillips noted that Presidents Jones and Williams had just approved an "Asset Survey" RFP to catalog the expertise of colleagues across campuses.

Dr. Rinnert asked Dr. Phillips to share the timeline for the establishment of the Provost's Office. Dr. Phillips responded that there is no deadline; she estimates that it will take one year and she began the process in September 2014. She has been convening meetings of the deans every 2-3 weeks to develop a strategic plan. Dr. Rinnert asked how we, as a centerwide governance body, can assist her. What role can we play? Dr. Foley asked about our ability to be on the Search Committee for the Provost.

Dr. Phillip concluded by stating her desire to return to the Centerwide Committee to "bounce ideas off the group."

The group continued meeting to discuss future speakers. Dr. Durkin asked that Dr. Mark Stewart be invited to the next Centerwide meeting.

As the hour was past 5:00 PM, the committee adjourned without returning to its original agenda. The agenda will be resumed at its January meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry S. Flax, Ed.D.

Secretary, Executive Committee of the Faculty & Professional Staff