



Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Downstate Assembly of Faculty and Professional Staff

January 7, 2025

Via Zoom

Agenda

- Presiding Officer's welcome remarks
- Committee Reports
- Old Business
- New Business.
- Good and Welfare
- Adjourn

Present:

Allen Norin Edeline Mitton Cristopher Roman Mark Stewart Alithia Alleyne Daniel Ehlke	Richard Kollmar Nicholas Penington Katherine Perkins Joan Ritter-Teitel Chella Kamarajan
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PO Norin called the meeting to order 4:08 pm.

Approval of the previous meeting minutes was discussed, with minor edits noted, including a correction to Joanne Ritter-Teitel's name.

Committee reports

Member Perkins reported on the Bylaws Committee, which met in December.

- Member Perkins was elected as the Chair.
- The committee discussed two charges from the Executive Committee:
 - Write some language to have the immediate past presiding officer be part of the Executive Committee
 - Drafting rules for special elections.
- The committee had gone through all the negotiations prior to the 2023 Bylaws vote to try to work on the balance of how many folks from the College of Medicine were on the executive committee compared to representatives from the other schools and colleges.
- A voting position would change the balance, and the By-laws Committee did not think having a vote was necessary for the position of the past providing officer. So, it seems the Bylaws Committee is leaning toward making the past presiding officer a nonvoting position on the Executive Committee.

- The second thing discussed regarding the past presiding officer was whether language should be added that the past presiding officer could lead the meeting if the presiding officer, presiding officer-elect, and secretary were all absent. The committee didn't seem to feel as strongly about that, which is still under discussion.
- Then, the committee discussed the special elections a little bit, but Joanne Ritter-Teitel, the chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, was unable to be there. We value her input and experience from the last special election.
- The committee will revisit the rules for special elections at the January meeting, which is currently being scheduled.
- Faculty members were encouraged to email input, particularly regarding special elections.

Member Ritter-Teitel reported on the Nominations Committee process.

- The committee had minimal activity in the past year due to no elections being required.
- This year, multiple positions will be open, requiring an active nomination process.
- The committee is working to confirm members and set a meeting schedule.
- The target date for finalizing nominations is May 15, allowing new members to assume roles by July 1.
- Emphasis on ensuring a transparent and error-free nomination process.
- A call for nominations will be announced soon, and members are encouraged to participate.

Member Stewart noted challenges in finding candidates due to a limited pool of available faculty. Similar issues have arisen before, particularly with the College of Medicine, in seeking candidates to fill positions.

PO Norin remarked that we'd had trouble filling all positions in past years, including center-wide and presiding officers. More specifically, with the senators and the alternate senators, because there are 4 of each.

Member Stewart: The College of Medicine instituted a college-wide alternate route Committee. And used everybody who could potentially serve on that committee.

PO Norin presented the Chair's report.

- The Advisory Board has held two meetings.
- Initial focus was on assessing problems rather than discussing solutions.
- Dr. George (Family & Community Medicine) was appointed as a faculty representative on the Advisory Board.
- The Board toured campus facilities, led by the Facilities Management & Development (FM&D) head, to review infrastructure issues.
- The Chairs' Committee submitted a letter outlining recommendations for hospital rejuvenation, but the Advisory Board has not formally discussed it yet.
- The Chancellor's Office acknowledged the letter but did not explicitly endorse the plan.
- Public hearings were initially scheduled for January but have been postponed; new dates are pending.
- The Chancellor's Office has abandoned the initial proposal to close the hospital, partly due to an increased budget of \$750 million (up from \$300 million).

- The importance of continued faculty and community advocacy at public hearings was emphasized.

Member Roman noted that the Advisory Board has not dug into the work. The first public hearing has not been scheduled yet because we were initially made to understand that it would be in mid-January, and we're halfway to mid-January.

Alithia Alleyne stated that the Advisory Board is meeting downstate on the 9th, their second or third meeting here on the premises. The public hearing is scheduled for January 22nd.

Old Business - Elsevier Contract Issues

- PO Norin reminds members of the ongoing contract negotiations affecting faculty and students.
- SUNY-wide negotiations have been delayed, possibly due to personnel changes and vacation schedules.
- Concerns were raised about the impact on research and education.
- A proposal was made to escalate the issue to the SUNY Senate for broader advocacy.
- A follow-up update is expected soon from Dr. Imperato

Member Penington suggested that perhaps the matter should be raised with the SUNY Senate, which would offer a more level playing field, as did the Univ. of CA system.

New Business- SUNY Empire Innovation Scholars Program

- Alithia Alleyne: Does anyone know of SUNY's announced funding opportunities for recruiting top researchers?
- Member Stewart noted that previous Downstate beneficiaries included John Danias (Ophthalmology) and Steven Macnick. However, Downstate's research activity has declined, making it less competitive for such programs.
- PO Roman remarked that he was unfamiliar with the Empire Program's eligibility requirements. If there are other known sources of research support, such as funding for major equipment purchases or improving research spaces. And if the program is intended to go beyond a more localized level of research support.
- Member Stewart states that Downstate was among the first campuses to participate in the Inter SUNY program through project grants, with leaders like Jack Aranda (A.U. 54) and Steve Levine (A.U. 10) building on existing resources to drive growth. Programs like the Empire Innovation Program aim to attract top talent to SUNY, while initiatives like Prodigy focus on increasing diversity in science by supporting underrepresented and women investigators. Securing grants requires strategic strength, as competitiveness often depends on demonstrating institutional capacity, such as having multiple NIH-funded researchers to qualify for large equipment grants.

Good and Welfare

- No additional items were raised.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 4:54
- Next meeting scheduled for February (virtual), with an in-person meeting considered for the spring.