



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Downstate Assembly of the Faculty & Professional Staff Spring Assembly Meeting Minutes

Date: April 29, 2026

Time: 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Via Zoom

Presiding Officer: Dr. Christopher Roman

Secretary: Ms. Edeline Mitton

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Secretary Mitton at approximately 3:01 PM.

Approval of Previous Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were distributed in advance. No corrections or amendments were raised. A motion was made and approved to accept the minutes as presented.

President's Report – Dr. Wayne J. Riley

Dr. Riley provided updates on several institutional matters, including the New York State budget, hospital operations, ADA accessibility compliance, university finances, capital projects, promotion and tenure reviews, and commencement planning.

Key updates included continued state support for University Hospital at Downstate, including \$100 million in transitional operating support and \$50 million in SUNY hospital capital funding. Dr. Riley noted that hospital structural deficits originated during the COVID-19 pandemic and that efforts continue to improve patient volume, operational efficiency, and financial performance.

The university also continues preparations for ADA Title II digital accessibility compliance through a campus-wide task force, accessibility audits, remediation efforts, and faculty training initiatives.

Dr. Riley reported that the university's financial position remains stable, with strong university receipts despite ongoing hospital operational challenges. He also announced the launch of a \$101 million library renovation project scheduled to begin in Fall 2026, with completion projected for Spring 2031.

Additional updates included:

- Development of a remediation process for overdue promotion and tenure reviews, particularly within the College of Medicine
- Transition of future commencement ceremonies to the Brooklyn Academy of Music following the final Coney Island Amphitheater ceremony in 2026
- Plans to pilot a December commencement ceremony for off-cycle graduates
- Ongoing campus transformation planning, including infrastructure upgrades and future student housing considerations

Question and Answer Session: Faculty discussion focused on several issues, including:

- Challenges related to Elsevier journal access and SUNY-wide publishing contracts
- Attendance projections and logistics for the proposed December commencement ceremony

- Temporary relocation of white coat ceremonies during the library renovation period
- Concerns regarding declining hospital clinical volume and its impact on student training experiences
- Clarification regarding the scope of overdue tenure review remediation efforts across schools and colleges

Dr. Riley and university leadership responded that efforts remain underway to improve hospital productivity, strengthen clinical activity, and address overdue promotion and tenure reviews while maintaining faculty due process protections.

Closing Remarks: Dr. Riley thanked faculty, staff, students, and leadership for their continued commitment to the university's academic and clinical mission. Presiding Officer Roman expressed appreciation for Dr. Riley's leadership, transparency, and ongoing campus modernization efforts.

Presiding Officer (PO) Report

PO Roman provided a brief report summarizing matters brought before the Executive Committee and standing committees. Topics under review included:

- Clarification of school and college governance roles related to CAPQ criteria and procedures
- Sabbatical eligibility criteria and leave processes
- Concerns regarding updates to financial conflict of interest disclosure forms and the extent of personal financial information requested

PO Roman noted that these matters had been referred primarily to the Faculty and Professional Staff Personnel Policies Committee for further review. PO Roman also reviewed the current Faculty Assembly leadership roster and campus representatives.

Highlights included:

- Dr. Mark Stewart identified as Presiding Officer-Elect
- Recognition of Secretary Edeline Mitton for coordinating Faculty Assembly activities
- Recognition of Dr. Alan Norin serving in the Past Presiding Officer role
- Introduction of current SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) senators and alternate senators representing Downstate

PO Roman also acknowledged presiding officers from each school and college and thanked executive committee members and committee chairs for their service. Special recognition was given to student governance representative Dr. Somorin for contributions that support student engagement and advocacy.

SUNY University Faculty Senate Report

Senator Dr. Anika Daniels delivered the UFS report and summarized the resolutions discussed during the April UFS plenary meeting attended by representatives from SUNY campuses statewide. Dr. Daniels reviewed five resolutions, including:

- Advocacy regarding the State Fiscal Year 2027 enacted budget
- Clarification of shared governance expectations across SUNY campuses
- Formalization of governance engagement and governance training initiatives
- Support for faculty and professional staff voting representation on SUNY campus councils

- Proposed revisions to SUNY's sabbatical policies related to time banking

Dr. Anika Daniels encouraged faculty and staff to provide feedback on the resolutions and emphasized the importance of Downstate bringing forward future resolutions to the UFS.

PO Roman commented on the importance of shared governance education and highlighted the critical role governance bodies play in faculty professional life, particularly in tenure and promotion matters. PO Roman also expressed appreciation for Downstate's UFS senators and their advocacy for the campus within the larger SUNY system.

Introduction of New Leadership: PO Roman welcomed Dr. Wendy Williams as the newly elected Presiding Officer-Elect for the School of Public Health.

Nominations, Elections, and Governance Updates

Alethia Alleyne delivered the report on behalf of the Nominations, Ballots, and Elections Committee. Key updates included:

- Ongoing efforts to complete a special election to fill vacant SUNY UFS senator positions
- Financial and vendor-related delays impacting election administration
- Upcoming elections for:
 - o Two senator positions
 - o Two alternate senator positions
 - o One special election vacancy
- Planned ballot inclusion of a bylaw amendment related to election reporting responsibilities

Ms. Alleyne encouraged broader faculty participation in governance and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong representation within the SUNY system.

PO Roman thanked outgoing senators and acknowledged the role governance leaders played in advocating for Downstate during institutional transformation discussions with SUNY leadership.

Bylaw Amendment Presentation

Dr. Katherine Perkins presented a proposed amendment to the Faculty Assembly bylaws clarifying responsibility for reporting election outcomes to the SUNY University Faculty Senate. The proposed amendment specified that:

- The presiding officer is responsible for reporting election results to the UFS
- During leadership transitions, the outgoing presiding officer retains responsibility for the submission of election outcomes

Dr. Perkins noted that the amendment had already been approved by the Executive Committee and would require a two-thirds affirmative vote for adoption.

Election Timeline Discussion: Discussion followed regarding the anticipated timeline for nominations and elections. Projected dates included:

- Nomination period: May 1–15

- Election launch: approximately May 22
- Voting period concluding June 5
- Ratification and seating of new senators by July 1

Accessibility Compliance and Training Update

Dr. Efekona Nuwere provided updates on ADA Title II accessibility compliance efforts and upcoming faculty training initiatives. Dr. Nuwere emphasized:

- The extension of the compliance deadline should not reduce institutional momentum
- Faculty remain responsible for ensuring accessibility of educational materials
- Upcoming training sessions would address remediation of PowerPoints, PDFs, Word documents, and related instructional materials

PO Roman acknowledged that the deadline extension provided some relief while also highlighting the need for ongoing communication and institutional support.

New Business and Closing

No additional old or new business was brought forward. PO Roman thanked attendees for their service, participation, and continued engagement in shared governance.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and the meeting was adjourned by Secretary Mitton.