

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee

SUNY-Downstate College of Medicine

December 2, 2024

Attendees: M. Stewart, H. Siddiqi, C. Kamarajan, L. Harris, S. Agrawal, J. Kubie, . S. Rabinowitz, R. Orman. C. Persaud, R. Viswanathan, A. Maheshwari, L. Martello-Rooney, R. Gupta, N. Penington, R. Kollmar, S. Márquez, C. Brown, R. Barbour

Presiding Officer's Report

Dr. Stewart stated that Dr. Galanter has left Downstate and is no longer a member of the CAPQ, and now CAPQ has a clinical vacancy. Dr. Stewart is looking for suggestions to replace her. Right now, there will be an election for a vote on 4 members of the alternate route committee. The candidates are Lisa Merlin, Nira Goldstein, Clinton Brown, Rauno Joks, Michael Augenbraun, Stanley Fisher, and Ellen Chu. Voters will elect 4 faculty, and Dr. Stewart will appoint two members. All faculty must have tenure.

Gov. Hochul announced eight appointees for the Downstate Community Advisory Board. They are Citizens Budget Commission President Andrew Rein, Pastor Louis Hilton Straker Jr., and Dr. Lesly Kernisant, Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center (retired), to the community advisory board. Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins appointed SUNY Downstate Chair of the Department of Family and Community Health Dr. Enitza George, M.D., MBA, MSAI. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie appointed Dr. Donald Moore, a Former Attending Physician at New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital. United University of Professions President Fred Kowal will serve as a representative on behalf of organized labor. New York State Health Commissioner James V McDonald and New York Chancellor John B. King Jr. will also be on the committee. Dr. Stewart is concerned about the language mentioned regarding the advisory board; "recommendations to develop a reasonable, scalable and fiscally responsible plan for the financial health, viability, and sustainability of SUNY Downstate Hospital and SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University." At this time, Dr. Stewart stated that the timer had started.

Downstate has 5 months, and there is not much to do but wait. Dr. Brown noted that members of the committee should attend the meeting. While Dr. Stewart agreed to that, he also stated who would discuss the revised plan dealing with numbers.

Dr. Marquez stated that Dr. Gupta held a meeting with hospital personnel. Fred Kowal, the UUP President, was invited to give an update. The Hochul administration appeared to have dragged their feet and purposefully slowed down the advisory board. There are no economic or financial planners on that Advisory Board. UUP has decided to hire a firm to give a financial plan because nobody on the board is doing that, and it is actually four months. Gov Hochul has allocated 100 million for improvement but has not been loaded. She has frozen 80 million, which is targeted at the salaries of the hospital. Brown stated that the state has stopped supporting Downstate. Dr. Stewart stated that there is a bigger problem as to why patients are not using Downstate even though we are no longer a COVID hospital and are not closing. When asking the

chancellor what would happen to the medical students regarding clinical if Downstate closed, the answer was the students could go to other schools from clinical. Dr. Stewart stated that all concerns were communicated, but not one had the answer. However, he feels that there is a contingency plan if Downstate closes. He stated that time will tell since there have been different information streams.

CEPC

Dr. Kubie stated that Dr. Granat summarized step one performance at the Dean's Council meeting in the last decade. Step one performance nationally has dropped off radically since the 2020 year of COVID, and when step one went pass/fail. The range is 85%, down from 98%. Downstate used to be above the national average. A disproportionate number of these students can opt to take the exam in the spring, two months after a foundation's ends, or they can take it in the fall, which is counterintuitive. Dr. Kubie explained that nationally, they feel that LCME is to blame for the exam being true/false. The argument for going pass/false was to remove the stress because more people were in danger of failing. Now it is an increase of stress because more people are failing. The Dean's office is very concerned and is taking steps to try to help by changing the exam schedule for unit six. Currently, they are looking for other strategies that help students. The tutoring support must be fixed because there were problems with retaining students. Students were qualified to be tutors but were turned away, and those working were underpaid. Dr. Stewart stated with the passing rate declining; it may look like Downstate is an underperforming school. Dr. Brown stated Downstate may lose faculty because of the cloud of potential closure. Dr. Kollmer stated that since the committee does not understand why this is happening, the committee should invite Dr. Granat.