

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

December 18, 2023, 8:00 a.m.

Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

Julie Bargnesi

Michael Cropp

Jonathan Dandes

Scott Friedman

Brenda McDuffie

Alika Turton

Patrick Roche

Other participants:

Satish K. Tripathi, President

Scott Weber, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Jason Diffenderfer, Vice President for University Advancement

Suzanne Rosenblith, Dean of the Graduate School of Education

Attendees:

Tomas Aguirre, Dean of Students

Keith Alford, Dean of the School of Social Work

Brice Bible, Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Ann Bisantz, Dean of Undergraduate Education

Allison Brashear, Vice President of Health Sciences and Dean of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Chris Connor, Interim Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

Beth Del Genio, Vice President for Government and Community Relations and Chief of Staff to the President

John Della Contrada, Vice President for Communications

Don Erb, Chair of the Professional Staff Senate

Phyllis Floro, Director of UB's Office of Student Engagement

Brian Hamluk, Vice President for Student Life

Graham Hammill, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School

Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Jocelyn Jakubus, Director of Presidential and University Events

Allison Korta, Assistant Director of Presidential Events

Stacy Knapper, UB Foundation Chief Executive Officer

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

Kemper Lewis, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Eileen Sherman, Deputy to the Provost

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Annette Wysocki, Dean of the School of Nursing

Sevel Yildirim, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

Opening business

Call to order

Chairman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Ms. Bargnesi and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Ms. Bargnesi, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs began his report by welcoming Mr. Patrick Roche to the council. Chairman Jacobs then asked Vice President Jason Diffenderfer to present details to the Council about two naming resolutions.

The first resolution is for the Eileen Silvers, BA '70, and Richard Bronstein Student Lounge. Ms. Silvers has a long history of sharing her time with the university through her generous work as a trustee of the UB Foundation and member of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advisory Council. Mr. Bronstein is a leading tax attorney in the U.S who has also provided support to UB students. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Ms. Turton, seconded by Ms. McDuffie and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Ms. Bargnesi, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

The second resolution is for the naming of the Shepsman Family Professorship in the School of Management. Debra and Steven Shepsman are both graduates of UB. Mr. Shepsman has served in numerous volunteer roles at UB including on the School of Management's Dean's Advisory Council and as a member of the UB Foundation. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Ms. Bargnesi, seconded by Mr. Roche and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Ms. Bargnesi, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose. Drafts of the resolutions will be sent to the SUNY Board of Trustees for approval. Copies of the resolutions can be found on the [UB Council website](#).

Chairman Jacobs then asked President Tripathi to give his university report.

University Briefings: Report of the President

President Tripathi began his report by welcoming Mr. Roche to the UB Council. Dr. Tripathi informed the Council about UB's third cohort of VITAL Scholars. Through this program, approximately 30 scholars from historically underrepresented backgrounds visit UB for four days. Since the program launched in 2022, 5 VITAL scholars have been hired at UB. President Tripathi also updated the Council on a recent town hall held by the President's Advisory Council on Race. The meeting provided an update on the progress UB is making to achieve its goals of equity, inclusion and social justice. UB has also hired a new Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence. Sevel Yildirim has joined UB from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she served as vice president for diversity initiatives and chief diversity officer. During President Tripathi's State of the University address in October, he formally announced the naming of a new engineering building in honor of Russell Agrusa and also shared that UB has exceeded its \$1 billion goal for its Boldly Buffalo campaign.

Also in the fall, Senate Majority Leader Schumer named the Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse region a federal "tech hub" under the Chips and Science Act. Known as the NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub--UB will

help transform the region into a global hub for workforce training, innovation, and manufacturing of semiconductor technology. President Tripathi also updated the Council on UB's leadership in Artificial Intelligence (AI). UB experts have been called to Capitol Hill to testify about the dangers of deepfake videos. UB also recently launched its UB AI Chat Series with recent events including a panel discussion at Grand Island High School.

UB faculty have also received numerous recent prestigious grant awards including a Mellon Grant, a US Air Force grant, and a National Cancer Institute grant. Six faculty from the Graduate School of Education have recently received grants from the National Science Foundation for their research. Tripathi asked Suzanne Rosenblith, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, to update the Council about the school.

University Briefings: Presentation by Suzanne Rosenblith

Dean Rosenblith began her presentation with an overview of the Graduate School of Education (GSE). There are 84 faculty and 62 staff. GSE's strategic goals include cultivating a diverse and inclusive community, fostering community partnerships, creating a supportive culture of research and ensuing student-centered academic programs. To make progress in these areas, GSE has changed its hiring practices as well as worked to ensure improved diversity and inclusion among its students. Two examples of fostering community partnerships include the success of UB's Teacher Residency Program and the 'Brainy Bulls Tutoring' program. GSE has worked to better support a culture of research by creating an Office of Research and has already seen an increase in the rate of grant submissions and awards. In the area of student-centered academic programs, GSE has implemented the PhD Excellence and UB Teach programs. GSE's enrollment has increased by more than 600 students since 2013 with a focus on more master's and certificate /non-degree students and limiting the number of doctoral students enrolled.

President Tripathi thanked dean Rosenblith for her presentation and thanked the Council members for their continued support and advocacy of UB.

Report of the Student Representative

Ms. Turton began her report discussing the end of the fall semester. Ms. Turton acknowledged UB student governments support and success to improve the UB student experience. Ms. Turton updated the Council with a student government semester recap which included updates on the Dental Student Association, the Graduate Management Association, the School of Pharmacy Student Association, and the Residence Hall Association. Through her work with the Council on Advocacy and Leadership (COAL), a new student leader position was created—a recording secretary position. Ms. Turton is also seeking to improve communications to students, address student health insurance issues, and resolve student issues with meal plans among other topics of concern. Ms. Turton is planning an equity, diversity, and inclusion celebration week for the spring semester, wants to create more student leadership positions on COAL, and host a UB student town hall.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Ms. Bargnesi, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 a.m.

A video recording of the meeting, including all presentations, can be found at this [link](#) on the UB Council website.

Minutes approved at the March 11, 2024, meeting of the UB Council