

University at Buffalo Council

Meeting minutes

March 11, 2024, 8:00 a.m.

Buffalo Room, 10 Capen Hall

Members present:

Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman

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

Kathleen Heckman, Interim Vice President for University Advancement

Attendees:

Tomas Aguirre, Dean of Students

Mark Alnutt, Vice President and Director of Athletics

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

Julia Czerniak, Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning

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

John Della Contrada, Vice President for Communications

Venu Govindaraju, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

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

James Jarvis, Chief Campus Counsel

Allison Korta, Assistant Director of Presidential Events

Stacy Knapper, UB Foundation Chief Executive Officer

Nojin Kawk, Vice Provost for International Education

Dan LaDelfa, Assistant Director for Presidential Communications

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

David Shurtleff, Instructional Support Specialist, UBIT

Evviva Weinraub Lajoie, Vice Provost for University Libraries

Seval Yildirim, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

Sol Hauser, UB Spectrum

AJ Franklin, UB Alumnus

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 December 18, 2023, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

Topics for discussion or action

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Jacobs began his report by asking President Tripathi to address the Council. President Tripathi informed the Council that Jason Diffenderfer is left UB to join Baylor University. Tripathi has named Kathleen Heckman as the interim vice president for Advancement. Chairman Jacobs then asked interim vice president Heckman to present details to the Council about two naming resolutions¹.

The first resolution is for the Gibbons Family Chair in Neurosurgical Education. Kevin Gibbons, MD, Janet Gibbons, and UB Neurosurgery, Inc., are active supporters and donors to the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Gibbons is considered an expert lecturer in neurosurgical education and patient management for residents and surgeons at the national level. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Friedman, seconded by Mr. Roche and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose.

The second resolution is for the naming of the Korean Foundation Professorship in Korean Studies. To create awareness and understanding of Korea, and as an opportunity to enhance goodwill and friendship across the international community, the Korea Foundation is supporting the creation of this professorship. Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Dandes, seconded by Mr. Friedman and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, 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 providing an update on areas of interest related to Governor Hochul's proposed budget. This includes \$54 million in direct state tax support increases for SUNY campuses, \$53 million in continued support for new, fulltime faculty salary and benefit costs, and a reappropriation of the remaining value of the 2023-24 University Center endowment match. In terms of capital funding, the proposed budget includes \$100 million in new flexible funding that can be used for new construction, programmatic or critical maintenance projects and \$550 million in critical maintenance funding. The governor is also proposing a requirement that all high school students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and eliminating the lag payroll and salary withholding program for new state workers.

¹ Council Member McDuffie arrived at the meeting shortly after the votes for the two resolutions took place and, therefore, did not participate during the voting of the resolutions or the meeting minutes.

Governor Hochul also invited UB student, Holliday Sims, to her State of the State address in January. The governor highlighted Ms. Sims, who is a computer science major, as the ‘future of AI’ for her research which involves reducing inequities in computer science education. Hochul also proposed Empire AI, a \$400 million consortium that aims to put New York State at the forefront of the AI revolution. Shortly after her State of the State address, Governor Hochul visited campus and announced the exciting news that UB would be the home of Empire AI. Empire AI will include, SUNY, CUNY and private research universities, as well as private foundations. It will spur transformative research and attract federal funding while expanding 21st-century business and industry in Western New York and across the state. UB is a national and international leader in AI going back four decades. UB’s AI Institutes for Exceptional Education is funded by a \$20 million National Science Foundation grant. More recently, UB was chosen to participate in the federal government’s first-ever consortium dedicated to ensuring that AI systems are safe and trustworthy.

President Tripathi also informed the Council that members of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education team of evaluators are on campus as part of UB’s accreditation process. Based on their visit, the team will provide a thorough assessment of UB within the framework of Middle State’s seven standards: Mission and Goals; Ethics and Integrity; Design and Delivery of the Student Experience; Support of the Student Experience; Educational Effectiveness Assessment; Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement; and Governance, Leadership and Administration. UB’s self-study report, which UB prepared and submitted to Middle States in advance the visit, explains how the university is meeting these seven standards. It shows how UB is building on a foundation of academic and research excellence to situate UB among the Top 25 public research universities in the nation. UB’s self-study report is [published](#) on the Office of the Provost website. President Tripathi acknowledged the UB community for upholding standards of excellence throughout the accreditation process.

President Tripathi thanked the Council members for their support of UB’s institutional mission and goals.

Report of the Student Representative

Ms. Turton began her report updating the Council on the work of student government associations on campus. This includes events and activities being held by the Dental Student Association, Graduate Management Association, Graduate Student Association, the School of Pharmacy Student Association and the Residence Hall Association. Through her work with the Council on Advocacy and Leadership (COAL), the organization created and hired its first recording secretary position. She also met with students to discuss their experiences with campus accessibility and transportation and is working on how to better communicate with UB students regarding updates from her work as the UB Council Student Representative.

Adjournment

Chairman Jacobs called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. McDuffie, seconded by Mr. Roche and approved unanimously by Mr. Roche, Ms. Turton, Ms. McDuffie, Mr. Dandes, Dr. Cropp, Mr. Friedman, and Chairman Jacobs. None voted to oppose. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 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 June 3, 2024, meeting of the UB Council