

Minutes of the 34th Plenary Session
Of the University Senate of the City University of New York
December 16, 2008

UFS Chair Manfred Philipp called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. in Room 9204/05 at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center.

I. Approval of the Agenda for December 9, 2008

The agenda was approved by voice vote.

II. Approval of the Minutes of November 25, 2008

The minutes were approved as distributed by voice vote

III. Approval of Rules of Procedures

The Rules of Procedure were approved by voice vote

IV. Reports

A. Chair (Oral & Written)

The report of UFS Chair Manfred Philipp was posted on the UFS website.

B. Chancellor Matthew Goldstein: 6:30 pm

Chancellor Goldstein made the following comments regarding the current financial climate and how it affects CUNY. Chancellor Goldstein indicated that the next two fiscal years will be hard on the university, but that this crisis will be managed. Chancellor Goldstein indicated that the university will start a new fund raising campaign.

The New York State Budget: Chancellor Goldstein assured the UFS that CUNY will have stability next year barring a worsening of the current financial climate. He stated that CUNY plans to continue its investment program targeted to building full-time faculty. He also said that his goal was to limit proposed tuition increases to no more than \$600. In addition, he stated that in the future, tuition increases should be more modest if they were done on a more regular basis. The Chancellor also indicated that Governor Patterson proposed a 10 percent reduction in state aid to community colleges, and that there are proposals, which the university has successfully resisted in the past, for a 10 percent tithing on research grants.

The New York City Budget: The Chancellor stated that New York City provides 38 percent of the budget for senior colleges. The mayor is seeking a 7 percent reduction for 2009-10 as well as a mid-year cut of \$4 million for community colleges. The Chancellor indicated that this reduction in support would be managed, and that the university would protect the “core”—students, support services, labs, etc. Chancellor Goldstein also indicated that even in this environment the university’s intends to make “serious” investments in science programs, build the new school for Public Health, and establish a new community college in Manhattan.

Background to the Obama Ad: Chancellor Goldstein had the following statement about the ad in the December 16, 2008 *New York Times*. This ad appeared under the headline: “Higher Education Investment Act: An Open Letter to President-Elect Obama and His Administration.” The ad calls for a greater investment in public higher education as part of the incoming administration’s economic stimulus package. The effort behind this ad is based to two facts:

- Public universities are at growing disadvantage vis-à-vis well-endowed private universities.
- The implosion of the financial markets will make this situation even worse.

Chancellor Goldstein indicated that this initiative for this ad started at CUNY, and there has been support from governors and some people on President-Elect Obama's transition team. But, Chancellor Goldstein does not know if President-Elect Obama will follow the suggestions recommended in this ad.

During the Q&A session, Chancellor Goldstein said that the university recognized that community college enrollment will grow significantly and that he is concerned about the community colleges' ability to handle increase enrollment. Chancellor Goldstein did not indicate how the university will manage this issue.

C. Prof. Michael Barnhart on Current Status of Enrollment

Enrollments for all schools are expected to increase. For Spring 2009, there has been a 23 percent increase in processed freshman applications, and an 8.7 percent increase in applications from transfer students. This increase follows historical trends of increased CUNY enrollments during economic downturns. The chief unanswered question: How do we accommodate the new students? At present, caps on enrollments are not being considered.

D. Discussion of CUNY Public Health Programs

A panel of three speakers discussed CUNY's new School of Public Health. [The three panelists: Jane Levine (Lehman), Barbara Weinstein (CUNY Graduate Center), and Nick Freudenberg (Hunter College).

The school started in Fall 2007. It is built on a collaborative or shared model. The school will focus on urban health. In addition to its new campus in Harlem, courses will be offered at the Graduate Center, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, and Lehman College. Kenneth Olden received an appointment as the founding dean. It is anticipated that the School of Public Health will strengthen other programs at CUNY notably Law, Public Affairs, and Criminal Justice.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm