Shared governance conference a first for SUNY

By Leanne Warshauer, Ph.D.
Press Officer, FCCC

With shared governance threatened by legislatures in other parts of the country (see Inside Higher Ed’s Sept. 9 article “New Threat to Shared Governance”), SUNY’s commitment to strengthening shared governance bodes well for our state’s future.

From April 23 to 24 in Albany, N.Y., the SUNY Voices first annual conference, “Shared Governance for Institutions of Higher Education in the 21st Century: Beyond Stereotypes,” will be held.

“The conference represents a close collaboration among the two faculty governance bodies in SUNY — the Faculty Council and the University Faculty Senate (UFS), together with the Student Assembly and SUNY System Administration — and thus the very fact of the conference is a testament to the centrality of shared governance in public higher education in New York,” said Peter Knuepfer, president of the UFS. The two-day event is sponsored by SUNY’s Strategic Planning Initiative for strengthening shared governance, known as SUNY Voices. Co-sponsoring Friday’s luncheon is SUNY’s Association of Council Members and College Trustees.

Keynote speakers include Dr. Benjamin Ginsberg, author of “The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters” and Rick Legon, president of the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities.

SUNY Press will be publishing an edited volume of conference papers. Faculty, students, administrators, trustees, and council members are invited to attend.

Additional information about the conference can be found on the Faculty Council website.

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Letter from the president

This issue of Faculty Council Matters is a celebration of shared governance. We recognize the works of our delegate, Catherine Ianello from Jamestown Community College, the transfer path working groups, and our very special Distinguished Service Award Winner of 2014, Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline, Johanna Duncan-Poitier.

Our dear friend, Jim Schofield, who passed away last December, is also featured in this issue. Those of us on the Council who knew Jim when he was a delegate know how his contributions have contributed to the very identity of the Faculty Council. I am so proud that we can honor him here.

And, of course, we celebrate the many efforts of the Faculty Council, SUNY, SUNY’s University Faculty Senate, CUNY’s University Faculty Senate and the SUNY Student Assembly to strengthen shared governance across the state.

What we recognize through our celebrations is not only the incredible people we have in the Faculty Council, in SUNY, and at our campuses, but also our inherent values of shared governance, collegiality, and leadership. In my time on the Faculty Council, I have seen many great leaders, and each had his or her own leadership style. I know that leadership academies have different categories for various styles of leadership, but what I find to be missing most often in the leadership literature, even in leadership literature directed toward colleges and universities, is a focus on the complexities of what it means to be a faculty leader. Most research focuses on administrative leadership, perhaps because of the transformation of leadership traditions at our country’s colleges and universities over the past few decades.

However, faculty leadership is really a very different thing. First, of course, we are leaders in our classrooms and our labs. This seems obvious, given the power structure of those situations. But faculty leaders are often leaders in their disciplines, their unions, and/or their senates. They are, in other words, leaders among peers who very likely are also leaders. Faculty are often zealots within their disciplines and at the same time fierce advocates of academic freedom, even though sometimes the two concepts seem to be in conflict with each other.

So what have I learned about faculty leadership from the Faculty Council? I have learned that leadership is not about power, at least for an individual; it is not about loyalty; it is not about persuasion or manipulation; it is not about rhetorical skill or backroom deals (sorry, I have watched a little too much “House of Cards”). It is, instead, the ability to believe in your colleagues’ best selves and facilitate collaboration and consultation through deliberate, sometimes painstaking, formal and informal communication structures, to enact sound and egalitarian decision-making processes, to refuse to pervert those processes even if it is “for the greater good.” Faculty leadership is about support. This is what we do well on the Faculty Council. This is what so many of our campus governance leaders do well, and quite frankly, this is what allows our colleges and universities to do what they are supposed to do — create, interrogate, distribute and transform knowledge.

Tina Good, Ph.D.
President
Faculty Council of Community Colleges
Transfer path discussions are a good first step

By Renee Lathrop
Chair, Governance Committee, FCCC

In December, faculty at all of the SUNY campuses were encouraged to put forward their names to be part of an epic discipline discussion. This discussion would include both community college faculty and four-year faculty and would take place over several weeks in the spring semester. Governance officers and chief academic officers from each campus scrambled to connect a faculty name to each of the pathways outlined by the provost’s office.

Soon after the State of the University address in January, faculty who volunteered their time were contacted through an e-mail letting them know how to access the platform where these discussions would take place and their passwords for the platform. Each pathway group was told they have until March 14 to offer up a revised pathway which would outline the required and/or recommended courses a student would need to take so that the student would only have two more years left to complete a bachelor’s degree.

While that gives a brief outline of the timeline of discussions for the pathway courses, being part of the discussions is a separate and interesting story. I am sure that each group had its own dynamic, so I can only discuss my experiences in the physics group as the moderator and representative from Dutchess Community College. In our group, I found the four-year faculty to be supportive and interested in the thoughts and ideas of the two-year faculty. While each faculty member had a different point of view, we were connected under a common goal.

As a Faculty Council delegate I also worked hard to make sure that all of the faculty who had expressed a wish to be part of the pathway discussions on my campus were involved in the process. Additionally there was a little bit of a learning curve to understanding how the platform worked. SUNY decided to use a “Learning Commons” to keep track and organize the discussions. I was not familiar with this platform before this experience and know that several faculty on my campus had a difficult time learning how to use this platform to make comments.

In our group we did not have 100 percent participation in the discussion from every SUNY school, but we did have a significant number of faculty participating in the discussion. There were also nearly equal numbers of two-year and four-year faculty posting comments to the Learning Commons. Overall I believe this process would not be as useful of a process if it did not have the participation of the four-year and two-year faculty.

The pathway discussions were supposed to be semi-open discussions that involved faculty who are experts in preparing their students for a specific field. The experience was enriching and one I think will be useful to students. Sadly, one of the things missing from this discussion is while these pathways are an excellent resource for focused and motivated students, a lot of students come to community colleges unsure and unprepared.

These conversations are a good first step and I know others are eager to see the final recommendations of these faculty groups. Hopefully the recommended changes will be accepted by the Provost and posted on the web so that students can be prepared as they transfer between the two-year and four-year institutions in SUNY.
On Jan. 10, 2014 CUNY’s University Faculty Senate hosted a meeting of the three executive committees from CUNY’s UFS, SUNY’s UFS and the Faculty Council. Through the snow, the slush and the cold, executive committee members from all over the state descended into a conference room at CUNY’s John Jay College to discuss the state of shared governance within our two systems. For those who came in the night before, Professor Katherine Conway hosted a reception in her home where the food was superb, the ambience was warm, and the conversation was, well, very lively!

The reception set the stage for our meeting early Friday morning chaired by Professor Terrence Martell, the president of CUNY’s UFS, and assisted by Professors Peter Knuepfer and Tina Good, presidents of SUNY’s UFS and Faculty Council, respectively. Well over 30 people met for several hours to discuss important
Working locally to strengthen shared governance

By Leanne Warshauer, Ph.D.
Press Officer, FCCC

As part of its ongoing mission to strengthen shared governance across the SUNY system, the Faculty Council now offers regular “drive-in workshops” for community college faculty.

The workshops are organized by the Faculty Council’s Communication and Professional Development Committee, which is chaired by Michael Delaney.

“I think the workshops are a great opportunity for faculty on the campuses to get together and discuss, not just hear about, shared governance and the various SUNY initiatives,” Delaney said. “Many of the attendees have told me they find that being able to raise their own questions and concerns in a group of their peers and to hear other’s viewpoints has vastly improved their understanding of the issues.”

Debbie Sorrentino of Niagara County Community College said she attended a recent drive-in at Niagara to keep up with the many changes at SUNY such as Seamless Transfer and Open SUNY. “Our campus gets frequent updates but I thought it would be helpful to have someone explain latest initiatives and have the ability to ask questions where I could receive immediate feedback,” Sorrentino said. “The workshop gave me a better understanding of the new SUNY initiatives and what we need to do on our campus to ensure compliance.”

In addition to attending the workshops, colleges can also invite Faculty Council leaders to speak to their governance bodies. President Tina Good recently gave a presentation to North Country Community College faculty titled “How and Why to Share Governance at a College.”

Drive-in workshops have already been held at Westchester Community College, Finger Lakes Community College, Onandaga Community College, and Niagara County Community College.

The next drive-in workshop will be held on Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Regional Higher Education Center at Adirondack Community College.

Faculty Council President Tina Good will present on "Living in Interesting Times: Opportunities for Enhancing Shared Governance on Campus and throughout SUNY."

Joint Exec

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issues such as seamless transfer, funding of higher education, online learning, and more. The discussion that took center stage focused on what appears to be the erosion of the long-held tenet: faculty should and must have purview over curriculum and standards if American public institutions of higher education are to remain rigorous, innovative, and ethical. Conversations about next steps followed, and it was unanimously agreed that the three groups should continue to meet and support each other. We do, after all, represent the faculty of the two public higher education systems of the state of New York. That’s something worth talking about.
At last, something to strike joy into every heart: new draft Middle States Accreditation Standards! Now, don’t pretend you’re not excited; I know you’ve been anxiously awaiting these.

There are some interesting changes from the old standards (“Characteristics of Excellence” for the uninitiated). Middle States is looking for widespread feedback on the standards and will be conducting a series of Town Hall Meetings to gather feedback from member institutions. Information about providing feedback, and about the timeline for adoption and the dates and locations for Town Hall Meetings, may be found at www.msche.org

Some feedback has already been offered through the Middle States Annual Meeting and various other venues. Feedback which I have heard relevant to the FCCC has centered around the text regarding the role of faculty in the student experience. There is less attention to the role of faculty in the new standards than in the current ones. This has been noted, and I would expect to see it changed in the next draft with more attention paid to the prominence of the faculty role in student learning and retention.

The standards on governance are also very vague on the topic of shared governance, focusing more on the role of governing boards. This latter point is not a departure from the current standards, but may be regarded as an issue worthy of comment.

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New Draft Middle States Accreditation Standards

1. There is a preamble to this version, and a statement of values which guided the development of the new standards.
2. There are seven standards instead of fourteen. (Don’t worry, content seems to be mostly condensed and reordered for different emphasis. Remember, most of this is required by federal regulation. Interesting also that the last revision in 2002 went from around seven standards to the current fourteen.)
3. These standards put more emphasis on the student experience in and out of the classroom than the previous standards.
4. Much of the content is broadly supportive of elements found in the SUNY strategic plan, including references to applied learning (such as internships, co-ops, service learning, undergraduate research) and general education expectations such as global understanding and diverse perspectives.
5. The expectations for the new Standard IV “Support of the Student Experience” are consistent with the SUNY GAP plan initiatives, Access to Success, DegreeWorks, the SUNY completion and success agenda, etc. and provide validation for the smart track financial aid and “shopping sheet” initiatives.
6. The new Standard IV also supports Open SUNY, seamless transfer, and DegreeWorks initiatives by requiring “policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.”
7. Additionally, the new Standards make several references to the need to assess third party providers of academic content, prior learning assessment, and student services. This is an effort to insist that institutions control the quality of the innovations they may adopt.
Delegates Matter

By Michael Delaney
Chair, Communication and Professional Development Committee, FCCC

Catherine Iannello teaches in the Human Services Program at Jamestown Community College, and she is Director of that program; at Jamestown, directors are like department chairs. She is the longest standing member of the Academic Standing Committee and co-advisor to Phi Theta Kappa for ten years. This is her second year as a Faculty Council delegate.

Iannello began her career as a legislative analyst working on social welfare policy issues for the Health and Welfare Committee of the Kentucky State Legislature. She says being a delegate has allowed her to return to her first passion: policy.

“The Faculty Council has given me an opportunity to be involved with policy on the state and campus level, and to interact with people from other SUNY institutions,” Iannello said.

When she first got involved, she had no idea what the Faculty Council was or what it did. Today, she is an active member, participating in the transfer pathways discussions and encouraging her faculty to get involved. “Given all the things that have come out of SUNY in the past year, I feel I have been able to put them in context for the people on my campus,” Iannello said. “I feel the faculty at Jamestown are becoming more invested and informed. One of my goals is to raise the profile of the Faculty Council on my campus. I have enjoyed being a bridge, a voice for faculty in working with our administration. It has given me a newfound enthusiasm for my job.”

What many people don’t know about her: “I have an international family. My husband is a Russian citizen. I met him while I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Russia. Our two girls have dual citizenship.” They have two daughters, Sofia, 5, and Francesca, 2.

“What people perceive as my quirky sense of humor is due to the fact that I haven’t had a full eight hours of sleep since 2009,” Iannello said. “When I’m at the Faculty Council plenaries, I am torn between my desire to network with my colleagues in the evening and the siren song of the empty king-sized hotel bed.”

Meet Catherine Iannello, Jamestown Community College

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Duncan-Poitier
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Duncan-Poitier was proud to be recognized. “There are no words to describe how much I appreciate this honor and what it means to me,” she said. “The Faculty Council is such an important group of friends and colleagues who make such a difference in the lives of our students. I am humbled to think that I could contribute, in even the smallest way, to this important work.”
Raising a glass to FCCC delegate Jim Schofield

By Leanne Warshauer, Ph.D. Press Officer, FCCC

Jim Schofield, a long-time Faculty Council delegate and “Renaissance man” from Onondaga Community College, died this past December at the home he called “Peaceful Acres.” He was 70.

Schofield was a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. and received his J.D. from Syracuse University Law School. He taught philosophy at Onondaga Community College for 43 years and at one time chaired the social sciences department. He retired from Onondaga in 2008.

“Jim was a faculty advocate and always demonstrated enthusiastic commitment to his many roles on Onondaga’s campus,” said Nina Tamrowski, Faculty Council vice president and Schofield’s colleague at Onondaga.

In recent years Schofield turned farmer and grew vegetables on the small organic farm where he lived.

Schofield served as Faculty Council delegate from 1995-2008 and was at one time chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, co-chair of the Technologies Committee, and a liaison to the UFS Undergraduate Committee. He surprised his Faculty Council friends in 2012 by attending the Spring plenary in Syracuse and dancing with the next generation of delegates at the Dinosaur Bar-B-Cue.

“Jim was a faculty advocate and always demonstrated enthusiastic commitment to his many roles on Onondaga’s campus,” said Nina Tamrowski, Faculty Council vice president and Schofield’s colleague at Onondaga.

Jim Schofield living the good life at the Dinosaur Bar-B-Cue in Syracuse.

“For those Council members who were fortunate enough to share in Jim’s life, we honor not only his service, but more so his friendship, zeal, wit, and counsel,” said Art Lundahl, chair of the Faculty Council Academic and Student Affairs Committee. “Always one to make a plenary more than just a meeting, I trust his legacy will long be remembered. Jim was grounded by his scholarship and farm, lived huge as both Renaissance man and father, and with a boat named Forever Young, I can only speculate on his impact in an afterlife.”

“Jim spent a lifetime pursuing the Aristotelian ‘good life’ in his many hobbies and pastimes,” Tamrowski said. “Whether taking his boat up the Atlantic coast, growing organic produce at his farm called Peaceful Acres, or working toward the legalization of marijuana, Jim lived life fully and with gusto.”

Duncan-Poitier recognized for “unparalled leadership”

By Leanne Warshauer, Ph.D. Press Officer, FCCC

The Faculty Council is thrilled to honor Johanna Duncan-Poitier, SUNY’s senior vice chancellor for community colleges and the education pipeline, with its coveted Distinguished Service Award.

Duncan-Poitier “has provided unparalleled leadership to all of our community colleges,” states the resolution written in her honor.

As vice chancellor for community colleges, Duncan-Poitier is responsible for the oversight and coordination of SUNY’s 30 community colleges. She is also the liaison to the New York Community Colleges Association of Presidents (NYCCAP), the Faculty Council, and other state organizations.

“Perhaps one day, Johanna will promote to governance leader. She would be a good one,”

Johanna Duncan-Poitier is a regular and welcome guest at Faculty Council plenaries.

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