In June of this year, Mohawk Valley Community College received the SUNY Shared Governance Award. This is the fourth time a campus has been honored since the creation of the award in 2013, and the second time a community college has won.

Alexander Haines-Stephan, Mohawk’s college senate chair, said strong communication practices were a key part of Mohawk’s successful governance structure. “We have student congress representatives on the college senate, the president and a rotating vice president have standing reports at our monthly senate meetings, we have a robust faculty caucus that gives all of our faculty a chance to be heard, the senate chair has a standing report to the board of trustees, and the senate advisory committee and the president’s cabinet meet on an annual basis to evaluate progress on our annual goals and set new ones for the coming year,” Haines-Stephan said.

Faculty Council President Nina Tamrowski described Mohawk’s model as “particularly inclusive to student leaders.” “The college is very intentional about including students in most, if not all decision-making bodies on campus,” Tamrowski said. “The faculty are actively engaged in a Faculty Caucus as a sub-group of the Senate, which allows them to

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A review of SUNY General Education is well past due. The original program, approved by the SUNY board of trustees in 1999, skipped the use of faculty governance leadership and collaboration. Faculty at 64 campuses were plugging away on their own general education templates when the SUNY board usurped that academic work and mandated its own version. While we have all, 20 years later, adapted to the current model, it took years to grow faculty ‘buy in’ for the current program (‘buy in’ being a despised practice in governance circles).

As the seamless transfer work was unfolding (pre 2015 passage of the latest SUNY board resolution), the Faculty Council discussed the necessity of a general education review. But we couldn’t get both SUNY and the UFS on board this effort unless the work could be completed in one academic year, prior to the passage of the seamless transfer resolution. So, it never happened.

In fall of 2017, a general education working group formed and was made up of faculty from the Faculty Council and the University Faculty Senate. The group produced a white paper which will be shared with the community college and state op faculty this fall. The research that we conducted to inform our work included: the general education required at other accrediting bodies and state systems of higher ed; how some of our 64 campuses have adopted local general education requirements beyond the 30 mandated credits of SUNY General Education; and the philosophy and purpose of general education at SUNY.

Among the least surprising things we learned is the high degree of compatibility among all higher education institutions’ general education requirements. Some are more broad than others. All, if not most institutions of higher education include substantive requirements in areas with which we are familiar: math/science/writing/social sciences/humanities while required skills in critical thinking and intercultural communication are also common.

AAC&U’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) is a “national public advocacy and campus action initiative that champions the importance of a liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality.”

One 2016 survey of chief academic officers at LEAP institutions revealed some interesting results that I will share here: 76 percent of the member institutions who responded to the survey use a “distribution model” for their gen ed program, not unlike what we have adopted at SUNY. But they are typically employed with another feature, such as a distribution model used in combination with a capstone model or a culminating experience in the major. Forty-six percent have upper level gen ed requirements, and 44 percent require a core curriculum. Several are experimenting with competency-based outcomes.

Changes since 2008 in general education at LEAP institutions in the survey noted above include: fewer institutions require oral communications (down from 88 percent to 82 percent in 2015) and technology (down from 61 percent in 2008 to 49 percent in 2015). A requirement for research skills has increased since 2008 from 65 percent to 75 percent today. There was a consensus among these LEAP institutions that general education programs could be better linked with majors.

As the SUNY general education white paper reaches its final stage and the impetus toward a ‘green’ paper that may make recommendations to the SUNY provost moves ahead, we have a lot to consider. There is one clear consensus in our work and that is that the 30 credit mandate has created a burden for community

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How well is shared governance working at your college?

By Jeffrey Steele  
Governance Committee Chair, FCCC

The Faculty Council of Community College’s Governance Committee is proud to announce that it has completed work on a shared governance rubric that will serve as a diagnostic tool for campuses to use and adapt when conducting a self-assessment of the effectiveness of their shared governance processes. The rubric is the result of several years of research and collaboration conducted by the committee and is based primarily on established, published and widely accepted literature, as well as the experiences of Council and committee members. It does not nor is it meant to represent or address any one campus, governance system, or individual opinion about shared governance, but, rather, represents well-documented best practices in shared campus governance.

The rubric is rooted primarily in the criteria set forth by the Association of American University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). However, the Governance Committee added two significant considerations to the rubric not fully covered by either organization.

In keeping with SUNY’s philosophy that insists on the inclusion of student governance within the shared governance system, the Governance Committee included criteria related to the students' role. In addition, the Governance Committee thought it was important to consider the complexity of the authority of the local boards of trustees in relation to that of the SUNY board of trustees, which is a structure unique to our community colleges within the SUNY System.

The best application of the rubric will likely come from those who have already had experience with the day to day functioning of shared governance and are familiar with the literature related to standards and best practices in shared governance. The rubric is NOT a checklist for shared governance. Instead it works as an indicator model through which those with appropriate awareness and experience can infer the degree to which shared governance is working on the campus.

We hope that a campus's president, faculty governance leaders, students and trustees will come together in a spirit of collegial cooperation to best apply this rubric and that it might become an integral part of a system of continuous self-improvement for a campus, building upon areas of strength while also identifying areas of concern and opportunities for growth and improvement.

Faculty governance leaders have a new resource

By Leanne Warshauer, Editor

“Beware of ‘committee creep’” is among the practical advice contained in the Faculty Council’s newly developed Campus Governance Leader’s Handbook.

The handbook is intended as a resource for new and continuing faculty governance leaders. It is both philosophical and practical: the handbook explains what shared governance is and what it is not, while also offering suggestions on running effective meetings and using parliamentary procedure. Other sections include: The Duties and Roles of Campus Governance Leaders; Committee Structures; Bylaws; and The Differences Between Campus Governance and Faculty Union Activities.

The information contained within the handbook draws on position and policy statements developed by SUNY, the American Associated of University Professors, New York State education law, the Faculty Council, the Association of Governing Boards, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Created by the Faculty Council’s Communication and Professional Development Committee in consultation with the Faculty Council Executive Committee, a hard copy and electronic copy of the handbook was sent to governance leaders in September. For additional copies, contact Lori Nunziato <lori.nunziato@suny.edu>.
State funding model for CCs must change

By Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, SUNY Chancellor

New York’s 2019-20 budget process is about to begin, and more than ever, our legislators need to hear from you about the importance of The State University of New York’s 30 community colleges and the need to update the state’s funding formula for these campuses.

In addition to being strong academic institutions where students can get a significant head start, SUNY’s community colleges are critical components of their local economies and provide an accessible education option to broad segments of the population. In today’s evolving economic climate, community colleges have an even bigger role in shaping the workforce of the future.

According to a recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 37 percent of the good jobs in New York State, as defined by income, are held by those without bachelor’s degrees. However, these jobs increasingly require more than a high school diploma. For many people, the solution rests with community colleges.

Community colleges are the perfect blend of academic rigor that prepare students for the demands of the digital age and on-the-job training they need to find and keep quality jobs. In addition, community colleges are nimble in anticipating the good jobs of the future. Local businesses often turn to their community colleges to help train existing employees or prepare new ones. Community colleges are readily able to move from creating non-credit or certificate programs that answer immediate business needs to creating degree programs in fields that are poised to grow.

Perhaps most important, the flexibility of community colleges means that students of all ages can advance their education and careers while holding down jobs, caring for children, or both. Given the rapidly growing advances in technology, the need for lifelong learning is only going to grow as artificial intelligence, robotics, and machine learning change the nature of work.

The ability for community colleges to continue doing what they do hinges on receiving stable and predictable state support to ensure the programs we offer remain robust and relevant. We strongly believe the current state funding model is in need of change, and we need our elected leaders to agree. We intend to collaborate with our partners, which includes CUNY, NYCCT, NYSUT and NYCCAP, in making our voices heard, but we’ll need your help, too.

To assist you, we will have a letter template available in the winter that you can modify when you contact your legislators.

We urge you to become active in this year’s advocacy efforts. In this current economic climate, our community colleges are more important than ever.

Let’s work together to ensure the success of our community colleges. New York’s future depends on it.

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SUNY Voices Conference

**SUNY at 70: Shared Governance- Past, Present, and Future**

Keynote Speakers: Risa Lieberwitz, AAUP General Counsel, Professor of Labor and Employment Law at Cornell University

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For more information or to register visit: https://www.suny.edu/about/shared-governance/sunyvoices/
A letter to the Faculty Council from the new SUNY Provost

By Dr. Tod A. Laursen, SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor and Provost

It is my great honor and pleasure to have joined SUNY in September as the Senior Vice Chancellor and Provost. I have arrived here from Khalifa University (KU) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, where I served as the founding president and led since 2010.

KU as it exists today was formed by the merger of three Abu Dhabi higher education institutions: Khalifa University of Science, Technology and Research (KUSTAR), the Masdar Institute, and the Petroleum Institute in early 2017. I served as the president of KUSTAR for the first seven years of my tenure in Abu Dhabi, and was named leader of the merged institution subsequently.

Prior to becoming president of Khalifa University, I was a member of the faculty of Duke University (USA), between the years of 1992 and 2010, and during this time I held appointments in civil engineering, biomedical engineering, and mechanical engineering.

I join you in having a deep commitment to shared governance, and I still think of myself as a faculty member first and foremost. I was elected multiple times to the Engineering Faculty Council at Duke University as a departmental representative, as well as multiple times to Duke’s primary faculty governance entity, its academic council.

Since these experiences came during my formative years as a faculty member, they became very much the norm in my way of thinking, and so when I took up my post in the UAE I prioritized the establishment a similar type of governance structure in a very different cultural context. We were indeed successful in making sure that Khalifa University established its own academic council, which was broadly representative of all its academic units. This probably seems relatively unremarkable in an American higher education landscape, but such bodies are comparatively rare in the UAE and the Middle East/North Africa region. I look forward to learning more from you all about how I can facilitate and support your governance efforts within SUNY.

From my academic appointments you would correctly infer that I am an engineer by training. I earned my doctorate and master of science postgraduate degrees in mechanical engineering from Stanford University and a bachelor of science in the same subject from Oregon State University. Oregon State is the public land grant university in the state of Oregon, and shares many attributes common to SUNY institutions: it provides high quality and accessible programs to citizens not only of Oregon but to neighboring states as well; it is committed to affordability; it enjoys a high level of distinction in several fields; and it depends critically on effective articulation with the state’s community colleges for a significant portion of its enrollment.

My wife (who is a biologist by training) taught for many years in the community college systems of California and North Carolina. So again, based on my life experiences, you’ll find in me a real advocate for the importance of community colleges, and I can’t wait to work with all of you and learn more about your distinctive missions.
Program review and registration shifts into high gear

By Fred Hildebrand
SUNY Associate Provost

Average time to register new programs and revisions to currently registered programs has dramatically improved in the last two years. This is critically important because by NYS regulation these must be registered before the programs or changes can be offered or advertised. The shift into high gear results from a dynamic partnership of SUNY, the NYS Education Department (SED), and the NYS governor’s office.

Over the last few years the SUNY assistant provosts who review program proposals in the system provost’s office focused their efforts on reducing SUNY’s review time and steadily moving toward meeting shorter deadlines (two months for new programs, one month for revisions, and the expedited review of most certificate programs in 20 days). With our IT folks we have been developing more detailed computer reports to track the progress of campus proposals, so we were able to show SUNY’s improvements, and we became better able to identify the bottlenecks in the processes. These accomplishments set the stage for broader engagement.

In the fall of 2017 representatives from SUNY, SED, and the governor’s office began a series of meetings focused specifically on streamlining processes to decrease time to registration. The SUNY team’s ideas for desired changes in large part duplicated the lists of the other parties, which resulted in congenial and cooperative meetings. We also shared the SUNY tracking reports with SED, which identified proposals in chronological order and helped find anything that might have fallen between the cracks. Progress was immediate.

Leslie Templeman, director, Office of College and University Evaluation, which reviews about four-fifths of SUNY’s proposals, took the SED lead on finding solutions. She and her team cut their review time in half, including returning to the 10-day expedited review of most certificate programs. Templeman also suggested innovations, such as observing that most jointly registered programs are really articulation agreements and with some exceptions don’t need to be registered. Consequently, only programs that depend on each other in substantive ways are now accepted for review and joint registration by SUNY and SED.

William Murphy, director, Office of the Professions, has a more complicated procedure because programs in the licensed professions undergo an additional layer of scrutiny by the professional board in the discipline, which advises on public protection and quality professional preparation and conduct. With the same combination of dedication to serving the campuses and hard work, Murphy’s team has also cut its review time in half.

The governor’s office is the third partner in this streamlining effort because Master Plan amendments must be signed by the governor. This team and I are in close communication and soon expect to describe faster procedures for Master Plan amendments.

Finally, the campuses constitute the fourth – and most important – partner in the process. You provide the ideas and prepare the proposals. Your hard work is critical to speedy registration. If you have questions about the development of a specific proposal or the process, contact the assistant provost assigned to review program proposals for your campus.

All parties are dedicated to a deep, comprehensive exploration of streamlining possibilities. The progress to date is exciting, and I look forward to sharing more accomplishments in the future. I urge you to contact me with suggestions about additional ways to expedite the process.

Letter

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colleges whereby we had to accommodate those credits in the first two years of a student’s SUNY experience. Students who enter SUNY state-ops, while offered the opportunity to take 30 credits of general education in the first two years, did not have the same burden to complete the requirement as did the community college students; a situation with which we are all very familiar.

I will be chairing this next iteration of the gen ed working group’s efforts in the year ahead. We will review what we’ve learned and consider how we move ahead in a way that provides students with a 21st century liberal education while hopefully reducing the general education credit mandate in the first 60 credits of a SUNY student’s academic experience.
Meet Bruce Rowe,
North Country Community College

By Cynthia Lonsbary
Alternate Delegate, FCCC

Bruce Rowe is an educator at heart, as a high school teacher, adjunct, and full-time faculty member.

The son of a Methodist minister, Rowe said his family moved frequently around central N.Y. He attended five different school systems and graduated from Addison Central School, near Corning. He earned a BA in government from Hamilton College, followed by his NYS teaching certificate. He spent 22 years teaching high school English and social studies in Hartford, N.Y., while earning his MA from Middlebury College. Later, Rowe taught at Emma Williard School, an all-girls private school in Troy, N.Y., where his wife, Susan Hoffer, taught art.

Eventually, Rowe became an adjunct at Clinton Community College, and both he and his wife became adjuncts at North Country Community College (NCCC). In 2013, he joined the NCCC Humanities Department full-time, eventually becoming department chair. Rowe said he mostly teaches English composition, creative writing, and world mythology, but occasionally gets to return to his “first love” by teaching government courses.

Rowe became involved in shared governance as an adjunct representative to the newly formed senate, and then as a faculty representative. He became senate chair, worked on several senate committees, and chaired the Long Range Planning and Budget Committee. Rowe says he kept hearing about “the plenary,” which, he joked, sounded like “some kind of exotic bird!” He learned more about the Faculty Council from former delegates Don Paulson and Lee Susice, and decided to get involved.

As a campus governance leader, Rowe attended his first plenary at Finger Lakes Community College and has since become NCCC’s delegate, and the new chair of the Communication and Professional Development Committee.

Rowe values his role as delegate as much as he values teaching. “I get to involve myself in issues that really matter for our colleges, our students, and our state,” he said. “What we do is incredibly important. I have worked many places where shared decision-making is as the old joke: ‘I just made a decision and now I’ll share it with you!’ I can’t stand that…it goes completely against my nature not to open my big mouth and contribute.”

Former delegate Don Paulson appreciates Rowe’s contributions. “As one of the founding members of North Country’s shared governance efforts, I would count Bruce Rowe as a superior colleague whose wit, kindness, and intelligence has made a real difference to everyone at North Country. As chair of the College Senate, serving during a particularly tumultuous time for our college, Bruce’s level-headed leadership helped us keep our balance.”

Rowe and his wife share their home in Upper Jay with her parents and have two grown sons, Matthew and Steve. He and his wife are “46ers,” attempting to hike all 46 mountains in the Adirondacks that were originally measured at over 4,000 feet, and like to garden, kayak and travel. Rowe says he has four novels started and none finished so he has “something to do in retirement!”

Ever the educator, he shared his favorite quotation: “Maybe my best years are gone…but I wouldn’t want them back. Not with the fire in me now” (from Krapp’s Last Tape, Samuel Beckett).
“We are the faculty!” says this year’s honoree

By Leanne Warshauer, Editor

Tina Good of Suffolk County Community College was honored with the Faculty Council’s Distinguished Service Award this April. Good is past president of the Faculty Council, serving from 2009 to 2015.

Good was presented with the award at reception held during the Faculty Council’s spring plenary meeting at Mohawk Valley Community College.

Much of Good’s acceptance remarks centered around the problems faculty face in higher education today. Citing external mandates that threaten the integrity of our programs, pressure from politicians, and the challenge of negotiating change through collegial practices instead of factionalizing, Good said, “We are cast as disgruntled employees, but we are not employees. We are the faculty.”

The declaration “We are the faculty” was repeated several times to an increasingly enthusiastic audience who could not contain their appreciation for Good’s message, interrupting her speech with frequent applause.

Good implored the faculty in attendance to “take time to celebrate who we are” and “take time to recognize that without a public higher education system with a tenured faculty whose expertise is recognized and nurtured, without academic freedom, we do not have a democracy.”

“What we do as faculty is important,” Good said. “This award is a symbol of that importance and I am humbled and forever grateful to have been a part of this phenomenal organization and receive its highest award.”

“Tina’s leadership elevated the role of the Faculty Council among our SUNY colleagues and among community college presidents,” said Nina Tamrowski, president of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. “Tina continues to be a great friend and resource for the Faculty Council. We can think of no one more deserving of this year’s Distinguished Service Award.”

Mohawk
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bring their academic concerns to a consensus. All-in-all, Mohawk Valley Community College has done a unique and commendable job of integrating faculty and student voices into their shared governance structure.”