

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS, EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES, HELD IN THE
LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS, COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING, KINGSTON, NEW YORK, ON
JUNE 1, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

WAYNE HARRIS, Chairman
DAVID B. DONALDSON, Deputy Chairman
CARL BELFIGLIO
JACK HAYES
CATHERINE TERIZZI
DONALD J. GREGORIUS
MICHAEL MADSEN (Not Present)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

DONALD C. KATT, President, Ulster County Community College
MARK KOMDAT, Dean of Administration, Ulster County Community College
ROBERT SUDLOW, Deputy Ulster County Executive
J. J. HANSON, Deputy Ulster County Executive
ELLIOTT AUERBACH, Ulster County Comptroller
ROY HOCHBERG, Ulster County Legislator
LEE REIDY, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
VICTOR MELVILLE, League of Women Voters
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 5:03pm and explained the purpose of this meeting being to have an advance review of the proposed budget for Ulster County Community College for 2010-11. The hope, said Chairman Harris, is that next Tuesday after the public hearing on the budget and at a joint meeting of this committee and the Budget & Finance Committee, we will hopefully adopt the college budget.

Chairman Harris introduced the minutes of the May 4, 2010 meeting of this committee and requested a motion to approve same. Leg. Belfiglio so moved, the motion was seconded by Leg. Hayes and upon voice vote the minutes of May 4, 2010 were unanimously approved. Chairman Harris then introduced Donald Katt, President of Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College

President Katt gave a brief background on the budget and the relationship and apportionment between the county, state and students. He said that the College Board of Trustees had approved the budget at their last meeting and now the County also has to approve it, after which it will be sent to Albany for approval by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

On the State level, the President advised it was his understanding that the Legislature had agreed to a 5% cut for the remainder of this year and all of next year, which will come off the new state budget even though it has not passed yet. He also explained the formula used for computing full time equivalent students (FTEs) and for computing state aid. SUNY has said they don't believe there will be more cuts, but you never know what will happen in the State Legislature. If there were more cuts we could not manage to keep this budget going without negative personnel decisions.

President Katt said that when the state made the mid-year cut the college was able to keep its budget balanced by several cost cutting measures, including not filling several vacant positions. He said the college is not looking for any additional funding from the county, but with the minimal increases in expenses coupled with the state aid cuts, there will be an increase in tuition of \$100 per semester.

Continuing, President Katt said the total budget for 2010-11 is \$28.5 million, up from \$28.2 million, an increase of \$362,000. He said there are five full time faculty retiring who will be replaced by part time faculty. The full-time faculty want full-timers replaced with full-timers but we cannot afford to do that. In addition, there will be no new positions. Departments were asked to cut wherever they could and most came back with reductions of between 2% and 4%. The community college sector has the lowest per pupil cost in New York State; Ulster's is approximately \$10,900 per student while some public schools are approaching \$25,000 or more per student. The President also reviewed the Maintenance of Effort provisions of the State Education Law.

Leg. Terrizzi asked how Ulster's tuition compares to surrounding counties. Dean Komdat said that Orange, Sullivan, Westchester and Rockland had all just raised their tuition but he had not yet received a reply from Dutchess. Asked by Chairman Harris the cost of tuition next year, Dean Komdat responded \$3,820 per year. In reply to another question President Katt said enrollment was approximately 1700 full time students and 1700 part time students. The President added that there has been more movement from part time to full time mainly due to financial aid requirements. He said one of the fortunate things is that New York State does have a very generous Tuition Assistance Program allowing families on the lower end of the income scale to qualify for full tuition grants from the State.

In reply to a question from Leg. Belfiglio, there followed a general discussion of the restricted and unrestricted revenues and expenditures and the fund balance/fund deficit, as well as past and current accounting practices.

Leg. Hochberg requested clarification on the tuition increase and President Katt reiterated that it was \$100 per semester. He also said the majority of the full time students at Ulster qualify for tuition assistance.

Leg. Terrizzi asked about the high cost of textbooks. President Katt agreed and said there are some on-line swap programs and the bookstore does have a buy-back program and students

do post requests but the cost of books is unbelievably high. Unfortunately, the college has no control over that. Faculty try to use as many handouts as possible, but printing costs are also very high.

Dean Komdat reviewed the 2010-11 Proposed Budget showing a 1% increase of \$362,244. He reviewed the Tuition Summary, Tuition Rates and FTE Summary. He also discussed the tuition increases which are now \$3,820 per year for full time and \$140 per credit hour for part time. Dean Komdat reviewed the Maintenance of Effort slide and made note of the fact that if the sponsor were to reduce the college's contribution by even \$1, the impact to the college would be that, based on current calculations, we would have to escrow \$840,361 of student revenues, which is the amount above 1/3 of our operating budget.

A general discussion was had regarding the expenditures for the college's contract with Sunguard a/k/a Collegis which is the college's I.T. provider. They require about 11% more and that is more fully explained in the Technology Chargeback section of the budget.

Leg. Hochberg asked about the Chancellor's new Strategic Plan for SUNY, and if that plan was budget neutral. President Katt said it was and one of the big things is that we would love to install a solar field on the fifty-five acres we own down on Cottekill Road. He said we are working with the New York Power Authority and with private industry as to the feasibility and economics of this. That certainly would fit in with the Chancellor's Strategic Plan. On many of the other initiatives, the only investment is in time and we are already working with a lot of the local school districts related to one of the other goals the Chancellor has proposed.

When asked by Leg. Terizzi what "reduction programs" were, the President explained these were programs that were paying reduced tuition such as the Collegiate Program, or the College Scholars Program where tuition is free to the student if the student is in the top 10% of his or her graduating class. While it may be free to the student, a reduced tuition rate is paid for by the Ulster Community College Foundation. We need this reduction in revenue line to compensate for the formula used to project total tuition revenue for all students which does not take into account the reduced tuition from some students.

Leg. Belfiglio asked if, because enrollment was up, we would somehow reach a saturation point where the college would have to be looking for an increase from the County. President Katt said the college has the facilities for increased enrollment but would have to expand class times into the mid and late afternoons. Leg. Hayes asked about audit programs and President Katt explained the audit program for students as well as the audit program for seniors.

Leg. Terizzi asked about contract negotiations and President Katt said we have three separate bargaining units on campus. Teachers' and administrators' contracts have expired or will expire shortly and we have no increases provided for in the budget.

Chairman Harris said a community college is basically a community's college and is at its best during a weakened economy. He asked the President what changes he has seen over the years at Ulster. The President said the biggest changes he had seen in his forty-two years at

Ulster was that almost all credits earned are now completely transferrable to most public and private colleges in the country. That was not the case when he joined the College staff in 1968.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Ms. Reidy discussed the recent warm weather and its effects on agriculture in New England and especially in New York State, which may be a big problem for the tomatoes again this year and maybe for the potatoes as well. The annual agricultural tour will be in August and we hope to be able to visit one of the few dairy farms still operating in the area.

The Healthy Kingston for Kids partnership is still going strong with an assessment event at Forsyth Park on May 15th and several more events planned. Ms. Reidy advised there is a lot of local interest in this program. She would like to bring some of her people to the next meeting of this committee so they can discuss in more detail some of the things are doing both in the Healthy Kids program and in agriculture.

Ms. Reidy reported that when the Ulster County Fair opens on August 3rd there will be no change in the 4-H youth exhibits. Thanks to the donation from their milkshake profits we are able to keep all of the exhibits as they were. There has been some talk of partnering with the Orange County Agricultural Society on some things.

The Master Gardeners will be holding seminars on teaching homeowners on the use and misuse of herbicides and pesticides. Their main premise is that more is not necessarily better.

Leg. Belfiglio and Leg. Hochberg questioned the \$8,000 donation from the 4-H youth and since Ms. Reidy had said they would be alright for this year, they were concerned about what that meant for the future. She said that when her funds are cut it is more difficult to get grant funds for these types of things because many of the grants require matching funds. She does not know about next year yet.

There being no further business, Chairman Harris requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion was made by Leg. Hayes and seconded by Leg. Terizzi and upon voice vote Chairman Harris declared the meeting duly adjourned at 6:15pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder