Meeting of the Provost’s Open SUNY Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 07, 2013
Multiple Locations by Video
Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, NYC

Attendees:

I. We began with introductions and approval of the 08/29/13 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved with no revisions.

II. A member from the SUNY team provided a quick update on the Open SUNY effort. Regional meetings, BOT, Business Case team, and Presidents meeting were discussed. We are currently putting together plans for a January launch with input from what we heard in the Regional Engagement Sessions—this feedback included administrators, faculty, and students.

Campuses were asked to nominate programs to be part of the launch of Open SUNY. One member asked how many degrees we planned to accept. The answer was that we want to be strategic and scale with quality. So, launch will probably only have a select number of degree
offerings. The Provost’s Open SUNY Advisory Committee’s role in selecting degree programs is still to be determined. The academic review and approval process was raised as a question by one of the members. Degree programs offered at launch are likely to be existing degree programs that have already gone through System Admin and State Ed. approval processes, so no additional approval should be required being that these degree programs have already passed through the appropriate governance structures. Another member was still concerned about the inclusion of these degree programs in the larger Open SUNY effort without input from an oversight group since their representation as being part of Open SUNY suggests larger system acceptance (beyond the approval of said program to be offered at/through the degree granting institution). It was explained that existing programs that would be part of the Open SUNY launch could be taken online at the home campus at this time, however they may or may not have the unique Open SUNY support services that we are looking to offer through Open SUNY. It was mentioned that the University Faculty Senate is likely not aware that Open SUNY will consist of existing programs to start. At this point, SUNY is looking at this as an opportunity to leverage our existing environment in new ways.

Regional engagement sessions were discussed and one major theme was that many participants seemed to recognize the value of collaboration through Open SUNY. Insight into what peer organizations were working on was another opportunity that the regional sessions provided. Questions about the business model were heard frequently in the sessions, so the business case is certainly a major priority. Student outcomes and strong faculty support were
identified as necessary and key components of Open SUNY in the regional sessions. The large number of program nominations appears to demonstrate that many campuses are excited about the possibilities in Open SUNY. Three common types of questions were heard in the regional sessions: question type 1, general questions about how this will all work; question 2, more specific questions about detailed design of Open SUNY; and question 3, concerns that went well-beyond Open SUNY, but were articulated in these sessions because it was viewed as an opportunity to express major concerns that are not specifically related to Open SUNY.

Short and long term goals and offerings for students and faculty are being considered through Open SUNY. What we don’t want to do is launch a huge effort that doesn’t work well for students and faculty; this is why we are exploring a selective launch for January. The information and communications related to Open SUNY do not seem to be filtering down to the faculty base, yet. University Faculty Senate is forming a committee on Open SUNY—one member of the Provost’s Open SUNY Advisory Committee will be on this new committee to offer perspective between groups. Faculty Council of Community Colleges’ fall meeting is in two weeks, and one of their committees will be focusing on Open SUNY (PLA and other academic issues will be covered). It was requested that a uniform FAQ and PPT be shared with the group. The group was told to send any FAQs to ContactOpenSUNY@suny.edu.

III. Proposed committee agenda for the rest of the semester and assignments:
The group then discussed the remainder of the meetings scheduled for the year. Video sites will continue to be available for all future meetings.

IV. Committee Workgroups: Considerations from members of these groups:

a. **Quality Assurance**: If a campus has a program up and running, it is responsible for getting its programs approved. So, will there be a new or additional standard through Open SUNY? There will likely be a set of programs and activities to help elevate existing campus programs. What this type of process will look like, exactly, is still being explored. Readiness assessments were mentioned as one element that will likely factor in here. There will be challenges in rolling such an assessment out over all of our campuses, but this is something that can be worked through with a selected launch model. The quality piece will be particularly important as cross-campus collaboration increases over time. It was indicated that over time, as Open SUNY grows, it is likely that there may be campus designations based on level of readiness. One member said that a major question is whether we are talking about Majors vs. Academic Programs vs. Courses vs. Certificates and that there will be different supports, services, quality, etc., checkpoints
required. Quality pilots with the select launch programs will help develop a model for scaling.

b. Multi Campus Programs: It was discussed that there are existing consortiums out there and campus collaboration that will factor into Open SUNY. Some of these existing consortiums could help model ways to foster campus collaboration. Path programs were mentioned as a general concern of faculty and the perception that Open SUNY is a way to extend those. At regional sessions, it mentioned that student preference seems to be regional, so that may be a way to scale. Distinct collaboration pilots between campuses may be a way to explore this avenue further.

c. MOOCs: This was identified as one of the more contentious elements of Open SUNY. Current policy is that SUNY generated credit in paths courses and gen ed. courses have transferability across the system. Stony Brook is using MOOCs as a secondary delivery of instruction for face-to-face classes. Empire has done some MOOCs. There is a Metallurgy MOOC that one campus is hoping to put on Coursera. It was emphasized that not everything on Coursera needs to be open, so not everything that is on Coursera will be a “traditional/typical MOOC.” There is tension between “open” and a “federated model” of what will and will not go into a degree program. Campuses will be responsible to handle all traditional course vetting before MOOCs will be coordinated into Coursera with assistance from System Administration. It was mentioned that it may be a good idea to involve some of the governance groups.

d. PLA: Empire has invested many resources into this, so lessons learned from them could be helpful. The committee can help model
whether this should be at campus level for PLA or a centralized approval/vetting.

e. **Research and Innovation**: It’s a centralizing concept without necessarily being a System Administration piece. How do we communicate processes for PLA? This could be an avenue for that. CIT was mentioned as a possible avenue for this area as well. A SUNY generated research warehouse could be helpful. There’s a research component in SLN that could be utilized and expanded for this particular area. The SLN version was limited in scope. Staff at CPD could be of some assistance here. This piece of the process was described as “the engine” that could drive some substantial change in coming years.

V. The meeting concluded and the Chair will be in touch with the smaller groups to help organize a start to their work. Next meeting of the full group will be November 4th.