



UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SUNY UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
Wednesday, March 31, 2021
MINUTES

The March 31, 2021 meeting of the SUNY Upstate Medical University Council was held via hybrid model with in person and ZOOM videoconferencing. The following members were present:

Council Members

James E. Sparkes, Esq., Interim Chair

Eric Allyn (virtual)

Calvin Corriders (virtual)

Diane Dwire

Linda Ervin

John B. Johnson, Jr. (virtual)

Gwyn Mannion

Samuel Rowser (virtual)

Akshay Patel, Student Representative*

Mantosh Dewan, M.D., President

Erin E. Peters, Executive Assistant to the President, Administrative Support to the Council

Guest

Stephen Glatt, PhD., Faculty Representative (virtual)

Patricia Numann, M.D., Alumni Representative (virtual)

*denotes absentees/excused

I. Council Report:
Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 PM by Council Chair, James E. Sparkes, who welcomed the group and began the meeting.

Erin Peters was designated Recording Secretary of the meeting and conducted a roll call, whereupon Mr. Sparkes confirmed that a quorum of the Council was present. Council Member Gwyn Mannion agreed to serve as Secretary of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes from the Council Meeting of February 10, 2021.

A copy of minutes of the Council meeting of February 10, 2021 having been earlier provided to each Council Member, Chair Sparkes asked if there were any comments or requests for changes to the minutes and, there being none, the Chair requested a motion to approve February 10, 2021 minutes. The motion was made by Council Member Allyn and seconded by Council Member Ervin. There being no further discussion a vote was called, after which the Secretary of the meeting announced unanimous approval of the February 10, 2021 Council minutes.

Council minutes from each meeting will be signed by Chair Sparkes and a copy placed on the website.

Highlight of March

Chair Sparkes reported on the dedication ceremony earlier in March, for the new Vector Biocontainment Lab located within the Institute for Human Performance. Chair Sparkes emphasized the space is extremely impressive and very significant research is being conducted in connection tick born and other communicable disease. Chair Sparkes thanked Dr. Dewan for inviting Council members to attend the event.

Commendations for Exemplary Service

Chair Sparkes reported Dr. Dewan has suggested Council recognition of certain individuals within the University for their exemplary service and outstanding accomplishments during the COVID crisis. An initial thought would be to recognize the CEO and Deans of the four colleges. Mr. Sparkes acknowledged that he enthusiastically supports the suggestion and reported that his research to identify whether there could be precedent for such within the SUNY Council system, has led to a finding that the SUNY Stony Brook Council has a history of awarding an Extraordinary Service Medal, which would appear to mirror our intent. He will follow up by more detailed discussion of the specifics of the award with the Stony Brook Council Chair, Kevin Law, whom Mr. Sparkes has worked with in the past. Discussion followed with respect to whether this would be an annual award, the manner by which recipients would be identified, the venue for and the timing of the award presentation.

Mr. Sparkes polled the Council as to whether such an award of the nature discussed is an initiative that they wish to advance. Discussion followed and the consensus of Council Members was that this is an important initiative for the Council to undertake and, as such, the Council supports advancement of the initiative to create an annual extraordinary service award that will be granted to one or more individuals.

Council Member comments and suggestions included; "...terrific idea, prefer a stand-alone event tied to the University, process should be discussed with leaders and administration, need to establish a concept, an excellent way to get to know the leadership team." Dr. Patricia Numann suggested that, since the 2021 award would be focused upon the UMSJ response to the COVID-19, we could make it an overarching award to the entire university and hospital, thus having the deans and the CEO accept it on behalf of their constituencies. As such, it would be appropriate to have the Council honor all of those within the Upstate Medical University System who have acted courageously and selflessly throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby making the inaugural award a more comprehensive recognition of the greatness of this institution. Council Members provided input and suggested that Dr. Neumann's idea could provide a

deserving means to celebrate the University in addition to individual awards. One suggestion was that the Council could promulgate such global recognition through a Council proclamation presented on the same day as the event. The proclamation could perhaps be endorsed by Mayor Walsh and County Executive McMahon who designate the day as "Upstate Medical University Day" to honor the extraordinary people and outcomes accomplished throughout the pandemic.

Chair Sparkes stated that provided the Council votes to approve this initiative, he would form a Committee of the Council to achieve the stated objectives as soon as possible. He confirmed his intent further explore the specifics of the Stony Brook University award and report to the Council at the next regular meeting.

As such, Mr. Sparkes brought forward a motion that the Council shall establish an annual award to recognize an individual or individuals for the extraordinary service to or on behalf of Upstate Medical University, and that a Committee of the Council shall be formed by the Chair to undertake advancement of the initiative. Council Member Allyn seconded the motion. There being no further discussion a vote was called, after which the Secretary of the meeting announced unanimous approval to move forward with next steps and to develop a process for an annual Council award.

II. UMU President's Report (report attached)

President Dewan provide Council Members with a written report for review prior to the meeting in order to hold and open discussion during the meeting. President Dewan's report highlights of the spectacular achievements associated with the Upstate response to the COVID pandemic and extraordinary recognition that Upstate has received and will continue received throughout 2021.

Significant among the achievements of and honors recently earned is the designation of Upstate Medical University by Forbes as the "35th best employer, out of the 500 largest employers in the United States"!

Additional highlights from Dr. Dewan's report include a proposal of two major programs – 1. Smart Hospital and 2. A center for early detection and rapid response to emerging threats; magnet success in nursing, FAA permission to use a drone to transport COVID samples.

President Dewan reported with all the exceptional work that has been done by Upstate staff who have worked tirelessly the past year and there are now distinct signs of fatigue. We are looking at ways to reward staff and address matters relating to their wellness.

Dr. Dewan also reported on further undertakings of significance that have been developed and are ongoing including; we have the best COVID19 Saliva test and diagnostic capabilities in the nation ; VBL level 3 – can also work with COVID test and various variants. He noted the intent to establish a detection program and determine how to build that into diagnostic tests. Dr. Dewan further noted that Upstate is working on obtaining pathogens from other countries.

Dr. Dewan highlighted the accomplishments of Dr. Stephen Thomas in the development of a viable COVID-19 vaccine. Dr. Thomas was named by Pfizer as its worldwide principal investigator, but before that he established a 30-year track history of working on vaccines. For example, Dr. Thomas and his team have been involved the creation of and are building upon:

- Dengue vaccine, now in trials;
- Lyme disease vaccine that just passed Phase 2 trials advancing into Phase 3 ;;
- Universal flu vaccine;
- Heroin vaccine and fentanyl vaccine .

Dr. Dewan reported on Smart Hospital and Center for Emerging Health Threats; specifically how do we reach patients without them having to come to the hospital. He indicated that we have remote sensors, 5G coming

into the city, so we are talking to the city about a smart hospital as part of the smart city initiative being advanced. We would do this irrespective of the larger program with the city. Dr. Dewan reported we just pitched this idea for the Center for Emerging Health Threats and are in search of federal funding. In meeting with U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer Upstate has asked for \$225M over the next five years for early detection and prevention for the next pandemic.

Dr. Dewan reported on diversity and pathways. Upstate is keen on taking intercity kids (SCSD) 11th and 12th grade and is nurturing them through OCC as a pathway to health careers at Upstate. If you get into OCC you will get into Upstate. This has broken down barriers. Upstate recently began a collaboration with the Dunbar Center and will be doing screening of students and staff who could work at Upstate. He pointed out that obtaining a more diverse faculty has been a challenge.

Upstate Council Member Calvin Corridors has worked with OCC and suggested there is a need to look at attributes and conflict resolution - being on time, being prepared, as part of the screening process, as these are all important aspects for student success. Upstate Council Member Sam Rowser shared that conflict resolution and soft skills are all built into and engrained in the work OnPoint for College does now. The organization will vet the student and employer to assure a good match and follow-up weekly to see how everything is going. Dr. Dewan indicated that he would like to build a bridge with OnPoint for College.

Dr. Dewan then shared with Council that a concern at Upstate is student hunger. Dr. Dewan reported 10%-15% don't eat two meals a day. Preparations are being made for a food pantry for students at Upstate that will open in May. So far approximately 40 students have signed up. Dr. Dewan shared he has also spoken with Morrison's (UMU food service) to work with us to give excess capacity in order to provide subsidized meals which we will buy and provide to students. Dr. Dewan explained that in 2019 11% underrepresented students and in 2020 23% underrepresented students were hungry. Upstate has been very careful to not stigmatize anyone, therefore students will get a coupon whether they purchase a meal or not. Mr. Sparkes inquired if there is money coming in from the foundation to help with this. Dr. Dewan affirmed that he has tapped into the Foundation, but more money is needed.

III. Organization and Financial Report

Dr. Dewan gave a brief synopsis of the current budget. The budget should be published this week and if it is a balanced budget we will be happy, but will still suffer a small cut. We take a step back each year. Dr. Dewan reported with a flat state budget and continuing losses on the hospital side, it is increasingly difficult to support faculty teaching. UMU received a large sum CARES money for COVID losses, but we still continue lose money. We will need to support faculty with fundraising and endowed chairs. We are planning to name the Medical School very soon.

Union contracts – nursing union doesn't have a contract for the past two years. If the contract comes in we will have to pay for past two years. UUP raises were not paid last year, so if the raise goes through will have to pay 2 years. It is a difficult time, but we will manage. We have to manage.

IV. Review of Updated Council Website

Ms. Peters reviewed the progress for the new Upstate University Council website. Ms. Peters requested feedback and input from Council regarding their thoughts on the site. Updated changes and a draft version of the non-live site can be viewed at the following <https://web.upstate.edu/president/upstate-council/index.php>

Open Discussion

Old Business – None

New Business

- Chair Sparkes reminded the Council that 2021 University Commencement will be held on May 8th and 9th 2021 – Please let Erin know if you would like to attend the 2021 Commencement in person, virtually, or if you are not available to attend.

V. Adjournment

It being determined that there was no further old or new business before the Council, a motion was made by Council Member Mannion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dwire and, there being no further discussion, a voice vote was called and taken. The Secretary of the Meeting announced that the action was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM.

VI. Council Member Social Gathering

Council members attending in person stayed following the meeting to informally mingle and catch-up.

Approved 5.14.21



James E. Sparkes, Esq.

Interim Chair, Upstate Medical University Council