

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Economic
Affairs Committee

DATE: May 14, 1997

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Dunn and Legislators
Felicello, Jennings, Todd,
Wadnola, Lomita and Magarelli

LEGISLATORS EXCUSED: Legislator J. Naccarato

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislator Gordon

OTHERS ATTENDING: CLAIRE BURLINGHAM, Acting Dean
of Administration, UCCC;
GERALD DAVIDSON, Executive
Director, U.C. Development Corp.
LEE REIDY, Director, Cornell
Cooperative Extension;
PETER CARAFANO, Director, Ulster
County Tourism;
TINA IAPOCE, Deputy Director,
Ulster County Tourism;
JANET CRISPINO, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and recognized Peter Carafano, the new Director of Ulster County Tourism, who has replaced the retired Joe Munster. Mr. Carafano introduced to the Committee the new Deputy Director of Ulster County Tourism, Tina Iapoce.

At this time, Chairman Dunn recognized Claire Burlingham, Acting Dean of Administration at Ulster County Community College, who brought the Committee up-to-date on 1996-97 budget, starting with the Fall enrollment. Ms. Burlingham said we are 22-1/2 FTEs over our budget projection and for the Fall, 1997 it looks like we will break even. She is looking at 25-30 FTEs below budget, but have not realized the FTEs from non-credit for the Spring Semester. She expects UCCC will meet its budget projection for the Spring.

Summer registration is now going on. Dean Burlingham reported that there are presently 39 plus FTEs for Summer, but that still leaves 69 FTEs under budget. Hopefully registration will grow before the Summer session begins.

Regarding the 1997-98 budget, requests are being received from Department, Division and Administrative heads. So far \$18,114,000 in budget requests for the 1997-98 operating year have been received. Dean Burlingham said that looking at revenues at this point, if nothing changed we would start the budget process with a \$2.8 million revenue gap initial shortfall. She added that the \$18 million in requests were very realistic and were for optimum use of the money.

She is looking at revenues based on enrollment projection for next year and anticipated State Aid and she believes the revenues would be about \$15,811,000, which is a 3.6% increase overall from 1996-97. Dean Burlingham said these figures are based on several assumptions. In the worst case scenario, there would be no increase in student tuition, state aid, which is flat now, and no increase in county funding, grants or chargebacks. Basically, it was flat and yielded \$15,300,000.

Best case would include a \$100 increase in full time tuition and a \$2 per credit hour for part-time tuition bring part-time to \$89 per credit hour. The total full time tuition would go to \$2,470.00 per year. There would be no increase from the local sponsor. The Dean said State Aid may increase \$100 per FTE with some adjustments. There may be slight increases in other income such as chargebacks and grants, bringing revenue projections to \$15,800,000.

Regarding State Aid, Dean Burlingham said that realistically, the best estimate for any increase looks to be about \$35.00 per FTE. Student increases are realistic to enable us to address some of the technology needs, but the increase in student tuition only generated \$160,000. The sponsor contribution of \$4,966,000 would remain the same. She said there would be a slight increase in chargebacks; Federal Aid money should continue and there may be some slight inflationary increases. The appropriated fund balance would remain at \$250,000.

On appropriations, Dean Burlingham reported there is a \$211,000 deficit as of today and she is working on trying to close that now, having already cut \$2 million in operating expenses. She said that does not include capital improvements, and there are no lay-offs anticipated. The college will be holding a series of budget informational sessions next week looking for input to make this an open process and get some ideas on how to close that budget gap.

Leg. Lomita asked about the President's residence, and asked about the possibility of selling it to reduce costs and have a one-time income. Leg. Wadnola explained that the house, if not used as a residence for the College President, reverts back to Dr. Tocco's estate.

Chairman Dunn asked if the County appropriation would be the same, would that include the \$300,000 added on last year, and Dean Burlingham affirmed this. She also said the budget would be presented to the Trustee's at their June 17th meeting. The public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Wednesday, July 2, 1997.

Leg. Magarelli asked for clarification of the \$2.00 per credit for part-time and Dean Burlingham reviewed that portion of her report. She said there was no increase last year. For a three credit course that would mean it would cost an additional \$6.00 to take the course. She also said that any higher increase in fees for part-time enrollment would further erode the base of enrollment.

Dean Burlingham said a survey was done and our part-time tuition is not that far out from Dutchess, Orange or Greene; however, Sullivan would not comment and she believes their fees are yet to be determined. She also said Dutchess may also be looking at a small increase in fees.

There followed a discussion of community colleges in general and the enrollment problems facing them. Chairman Dunn said he believes the College could be in much worse condition.

Dean Burlingham advised the Committee that the annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony and Reception would be held on May 27th at 7:00pm in the Theatre. She also advised that Graduation was to be held on June 5, 1997 at 6:00pm, and invited all Committee members and Legislators to attend both events. She also reiterated that the public hearing on the budget would be held July 2, 1997 at 7:00pm on campus in the Student Lounge.

At this time Leg. Felicello requested permission from Chairman Dunn to make a statement. He said Legislators should represent their constituents and try and do what is best for the community and the county. He said as a Legislator he wanted to state, for the record, his support of Dr. Donald Katt for the position of President of UCCC, and urged other Legislators to voice their support also. Leg. Lomita agreed with Leg. Felicello and the Committee discussed the Presidential Search. Chairman Dunn asked if Leg. Felicello had attended any of the candidate forums and he said he had not. Leg. Wadnola said he was on the Search Committee and believes the search process was very extensive and thorough.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Gerald Davidson, Executive Director of the Ulster County Development Corporation.

Mr. Davidson said one of his prospects is a New Jersey firm looking for COBOL programmers to employ. He thinks this firm will be coming to Ulster County. This firm will bring about 100 jobs and that figure may go up depending on the workforce available. He has been working with the College, JPTA and the Department of Labor on training programs.

On the business retention survey, Mr. Davidson said one of the items asked for was a business-to-business day with companies within the County. Many do not know each other, or the products they sell or manufacture. This would also include the tourism industry and agriculture, with a Farmer's Market. It would be held mid-October.

Chairman Dunn asked if UCDC was working closely with the various Ulster County Chambers of Commerce. Mr. Davidson said an economic cabinet meeting was coming up, which would include local Chambers of Commerce as well as development organizations and Planning Boards from the towns. This would encourage networking and get people working together. He said UCDC is not just concerned with the City of Kingston/Town of Ulster area, but is reaching out to other areas of the County as well. UCDC is also starting outreach breakfast programs with businesses such as Schrade and Rotron and also with municipalities. He also discussed the New York City Watershed area where a lot of money will eventually be spent.

Leg. Jennings said that when Alice Cocalas was Director of UCDC she gave out a written report, and wondered if UCDC could reinstitute that policy. Mr. Davidson asked if the Committee wanted the report before each meeting. Chairman Dunn said he could bring it with him.

Leg. Magarelli said he was hoping the Catskill Mountain Railroad could come and look to UCDC for support.

Leg. Lomita said the Town of Rosendale is forming an Economic Development Committee and asked Mr. Davidson if UCDC could do some outreach to them. Mr. Davidson said the Town of Rosendale was already included in UCDC's outreach plans.

The report of the Ulster County Development Corporation being concluded, chairman Dunn recognized Lee Reidy, Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension. She said she does a quarterly report which is sent to the Legislators, but would be willing to get more information to the Committee if needed.

She said that on May 22nd she would be working with the Ulster County Water Support Advisory Board at a tour of the New York City Watershed lands in Ulster County. They will look at some of the efforts being undertaken to repair the damage from last years storms. They will have dinner at the Boiceville Inn and a general discussion. She requested members of the Committee call her office for a reservation. She is also going to try and videotape the tour.

Ms. Reidy reported that the Agricultural Farmland Protection Board is holding meetings to put together a Plan for farmland protection in Ulster County. There will be a meeting tomorrow to look at a draft of the Plan and she hopes to have a public hearing within a month after the draft is out. The Plan has to be approved by the Legislature and is then sent to Agriculture and Markets for their approval. With approval, Ulster County becomes eligible for funding under the Federal Bond Act. She said that all Legislators will get a copy of the final Plan.

Chairman Dunn asked Ms. Reidy to express the Committees' thanks to Ellen Strother and that he was very sorry to see her leave. Ms. Reidy said it was a grant funded program, and the grant ended. She will be making a decision tomorrow on how to continue to further the Plan. She will recommend hiring a public relations person to do some agricultural promotion, including the Ulster County Fair and other events and festivals. She may also be looking to hire a grants writer will work on commission.

Chairman Dunn asked if it were appropriate to know the figure they were talking about in the Federal Bond Act. Ms. Reidy said it was a little premature; she needs to see what is available, look at the Plan and see what fits before a dollar amount can be decided upon. Ms. Reidy advised that UCDC has been very helpful in working on the Agricultural Protection Plan.

There followed a general discussion on the State Right to Farm Law as and the various recommendations for a County and Town Right to Farm Law. Chairman Dunn said the statistics are alarming when one looks at the use of the land. Ms. Reidy said the cost of farming becomes more expensive daily. The cost of just setting up the farm is very high when you could the equipment, machinery, etc.

Ms. Reidy said Cooperative Extension is getting ready for the Ulster County Fair, which will be held July 30th to August 3rd. She said they just had a 4-H Clothing Review with 103 participants, which is surprising considering is now cheaper to buy clothing than to make it. She also discussed the Master Gardener Program and Spring Garden Day, which was recently held at UCCC.

Leg. Felicello wanted to know if the Community Gardens Project in the Town of New Paltz was still in existence. Ms. Reidy said she believes it is and they would access Cooperative Extension for any information.

Leg. Lomita said the Town of Rosendale is moving its police station to a building in Maple Hill and asked if the Master Gardner program could do anything to help. Ms. Reidy said all they could do is the design and selection of plants.

Chairman Dunn said that at last weeks' Legislative session, it was unanimously approved that the Town of New Paltz be allowed to use part of the Ulster County Fairgrounds for recreation. He said his main concern is that the County Fair have first priority under all circumstances. Leg. Felicello said he is also on the Public Works Committee and if there are any County events going on, the county has first priority, and that included the Memorial Day and Labor Day week-end craft fairs.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Peter Carafano, Director of Ulster County Tourism, who said this was his first Committee meeting as Director. He wished Joe Munster a happy retirement and gave his recognition and thanks to Cornell Cooperative for their help and cooperation. He also congratulated Leg. Todd on his new position.

On the caboose up-date, Mr. Carafano said the Kingston caboose was being scraped by Alternative Sentencing workers and will now be painted. It also needs a new set of stairs in the rear and the Department of Buildings and Grounds will be contacted. A general discussion of ownership of the surrounding lands was had. Mr. Carafano said all other cabooses are open except Ellenville, The Ellenville caboose is being moved on May 15th to a location on the Kelly Farm, about one and one-half miles from its present location. He said it is a better location with good visibility; however, after it is moved it will still need some renovating. He also said Horse Shows in the Sun (HITS) will be returning for five months this summer.

Mr. Carafano reviewed the Governor's Ball which he attended. He met a lot of people and made a lot of contacts with people he will have to deal with in the future. He also discussed the Bed & Breakfast meeting in Saugerties, the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce meeting, and the Woodstock Renaissance Fair which will be held on Saturday, as well as the up-coming Sportsman's Fair in Bellaire. Mr. Carafano said that on Monday a program will be held at the Holiday Inn called "Companys Coming", which is for tourist related businesses. Next Friday, Mohonk will hold a Hudson River Valley Greenway Meeting and Reception and next Thursday a Legislative Reception will be held at Kutcher's.

He reminded the Committee of the Woodstock Craft Fair to be held at the Ulster County Fairgrounds on Memorial Day weekend, at which the Ulster County Tourism Office will have a booth in the Youth Building. The sponsors of the craft fair are encouraging agriculture and the price of booths for farmers will be considerably reduced.

Leg. Todd asked the status of the new County Guide. Mr. Carafano said it would be out for the Spring of 1998 and there will be four pages added - two strictly for Ulster County agriculture, one page for festivals and the last page for advertising to help offset costs.

Mr. Carafano advised that the Travel Guide is on the Internet and will continue to be. There was a discussion of Ulsternet as a provider.

Leg. Magarelli said he had contacted Joe Munster of the Railroad Advisory Board and was hoping through this Committee that the Catskill Mountain Railroad might be encouraged to give this Committee an up-date. Chairman Dunn said they have their own agenda and they are limited to a degree as to their reporting; however, anyone can go to their meetings. Leg. Magarelli said his concern was that the Catskill Watershed is in a position of having some economic development funds and he would like to see the County have some information on this.

Chairman Dunn said the Catskill Mountain Railroad has no direct responsibility to Ulster County as far as reporting. Leg. Todd said they were currently in transition but he would speak with them to see if they had a meeting scheduled or could schedule on. He also advised that the Watershed was a long way from giving out any money.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Jennings and seconded by Leg. Wadnola, and Chairman Dunn declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Vincent Dunn, Chairman
Education, Culture & Economic Affairs Committee