



College Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 5, 2022
University Village Conference Room

Prepared by Dr. Naomi Baldwin, Interim Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant,
SUNY Fredonia, Office of the President

President's Cabinet Members Present: President Kolison, David Starrett, Naomi Baldwin, Betty Gossett, Mike Metzger, Vicki T. Sapp

Absent: Tracy Stenger, Maria Carroll

College Council Members Present: Frank Pagano, Cynthia Ahlstrom, JoAnn Niebel, Richard Alexander, German Beltran Figueroa (on behalf of Ilene Thompson, SA President)

Absent: Joe Johnson, AJ Dolce, Stephen Keefe, Russ Diethrick (resigned)

Guests: Matt Sullivan, IT; Dr. Bruce Simon, Chair of University Senate (arrived 11:05 a.m.)

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Pagano made a motion to approve the May 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded and approved.

Report from the President of the Student Association

Presented by Mr. German Beltran Figueroa on behalf of Ms. Ilene Thompson, President of Student Association

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Mr. Beltran Figueroa updated the group on the renovations in the Williams Center. Notable upgrades are the Blue Lounge and the Blue Devil Den (Game Room), among other student-supporting spaces.

Report from the President

Presented by Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., University President

President Kolison began his report by inviting the College Council members to the Houghton Hall tour and ribbon cutting ceremony on October 14, 2022. Council member Richard Alexander will be offering a few words on behalf of the College Council. President Kolison reviewed the positive impacts of this newly renovated space that will support the enrollment and expansion of Fredonia's STEM programs. Over \$800,000 was raised in naming opportunities.

A memorial garden has been established in collaboration with the Eagle Scouts Troop 267. This will be a place dedicated to remembering those we lose during their time at Fredonia. Members of the Council are encouraged to stop by the space.

Fredonia has opened 4 searches for leadership roles - The Chief Information Officer, The Vice President of Finance and Administration, and the Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director for the Fredonia College Foundation.

A question was asked about the interim dean positions, and Provost Starrett will cover those in his report.

The university rankings have been established for the 2023 year, and Fredonia continues to have favorable rankings in the US News and World Report and Princeton Review rankings. Among these, the high ranking in social mobility is the most encouraging - Fredonia has started a Bicentennial Campaign that aligns with supporting social mobility for our students. President Kolison noted that the

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Princeton Review is generated by student input and therefore represents student perspectives and what students are looking for.

Mr. Alexander asked what some of the rankings are, and a few examples were offered, which are detailed in the publications linked in the presentation.

President Kolison updated the group on community and external efforts he is working on. One key activity is to raise the official status of the comprehensive colleges to “university” status - there are some minimum requirements needed to change this status, including a certain number of Master’s programs. The group discussed the branding change from a few years ago as compared to the official titles of institutions that New York State catalogs. More information on this status will be forthcoming from President Kolison.

President Kolison took a moment to answer questions about the Brooks Memorial Hospital plans and the Amtrak plans.

The council members offered feedback about seeing SUNY Fredonia leadership and President Kolison connecting with the external stakeholders in the communities and thanked him for his contributions to these important initiatives.

The inauguration ceremony for President Kolison was successful and helped Fredonia fulfill an important tradition while also creating an opportunity to raise money for student scholarships. Fundraising was also successful to cover the costs of the ceremony so no tuition or state dollars were used for the event. Any residual amount from the fundraising efforts will be contributed to the Bicentennial fund to support students. President Kolison reviewed the Bicentennial fund vision and purpose - accessibility, affordability, and persistence. Many of the scholarships will be based on need as well as merit. Persistence and retention of students will be supported by programming and offer help when students have financial emergencies.

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President Kolison concluded his report and we continued with the report from Finance and Administration, offered by Vice President Michael Metzger.

Report from Finance and Administration

Presented by Mr. Mike Metzger, Vice President for Finance and Administration

The budget for 2021-22 was reviewed and VP Metzger summarized that we met the target goals for the budget. With stimulus and savings, in addition to the measures we took to stabilize the budget, we were able to end the year without unfunded shortfalls.

The council members asked questions about the budget as compared to the January forecast, and VP Metzger confirmed that our final budget situation improved due to reducing expenses and delaying hiring activities. President Kolison confirmed that the presentation slides from the meeting including the financial information would be sent. President Kolison asked College Council members to also refer to the financial information that he sent via email over the summer and offered to re-send to anyone who would like the additional reference.

President Kolison also spoke about how the state budgeting works and how other parameters of the budget are established. Council members asked additional questions about how enrollment and projections are calculated.

VP Metzger concluded his report by summarizing some of the initiatives he has completed. We discussed the status of some construction projects, some timelines on updates, and costs for the projects were clarified. VP Metzger also summarized some of the actions being taken to address some of the delays. The group reaffirmed the importance of the Lanford project in support of President Kolison returning to his home.

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VP Metzger was thanked for the clear financial presentation and review of the budget outlook.

Report from Academic Affairs

Presented by Dr. David Starrett, Executive Vice President and Provost

Provost Starrett began his report with a review of the enrollment numbers. Of note is that graduate students are up by almost 50%. Graduate studies are very promising and additional new programs that will attract students are under development and well underway. These programs will be better at attracting students to the region and in addition will encourage students who complete bachelor's degrees to stay.

In addition to enhanced recruitment events, Provost Starrett reviewed some of the newer retention efforts - being back to in-person visits, increases in college fairs and program attendance, Fred-Ready days, and a new summer bridge program. We clarified the admissions standards and interventions that are being done to help students who are not as prepared for university studies due to impacts of COVID on their K-12 education. Provost Starrett summarized some of the many ways that these students are identified for specific support and programs. Chairman Pagano mentioned a program sponsored at the state level involving students with a science background and a 2.5 high school GPA, and Provost Starrett will follow-up on that program. He also mentioned a number of other new state sponsored programs that we are ensuring Fredonia will be part of.

Several points arose in support of ensuring that students are poised to be supported in the context of the transition from high school to university and the change in expectations and teaching structure. In addition to ensuring this, Fredonia is also looking at making sure students are going to be supported socially so that they feel part of the campus.

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Provost Starrett answered a question about the new graduate programs underway, which include an MBA in Accounting and another Master's in education. He also updated the group on the JCC-BOLD program. This is the initial year and his team will continue recruiting for it with a full year of recruiting ahead of them.

Provost Starrett reviewed other initiatives and he offered some examples related to the help we are receiving from EAB, a consulting firm. Another new program that is showing great promise is Mental Health. We have hired a dedicated faculty member who is currently building the program.

We took a moment away from Provost Starrett's report to discuss the technology and whether a Zoom attendance might be made possible. Ms. Ahlstrom requested from Chairman Pagano whether we could continue future meetings with a Zoom link. Chairman Pagano agreed to reinstate the Zoom option.

Provost Starrett continued with his report and reviewed the importance of the program health assessments that are in progress. These are collaborative committees involving faculty and administration.

In Academic Affairs, there are three dean searches underway: School of Music, School of Business, and College of Education. While all of these are being filled by qualified interim deans, it is important for accreditation purposes to ensure the stability of these leadership roles. In addition to the dean searches, we will also be hiring faculty for key programs. There are new funds available from SUNY to help support these new faculty hires.

Other special funds from SUNY include an allocation to support initiatives that will enhance enrollment. Provost Starrett has submitted proposals for a total of twelve projects that would be supported by these funds.

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Provost Starrett ended his report with a summary of the chair appointments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They have reduced the number of chairs to better align with the size of the departments in the college and current enrollments.

Report from the University Senate

Presented by Dr. Bruce Simon, Chair of University Senate

We moved to the report from Bruce Simon, Chair of the University Senate.

There is a new framework for the General Education program from SUNY, and the faculty are looking at our recently revised Fredonia Foundation program and how it will align with the new SUNY guidelines. Fredonia is ahead of the new standards. As a follow-up, they are also working on making sure students will know what to expect when the new program is in effect in 2023.

The senate is also looking at some of the needs for faculty to assist with curriculum development, course frameworks, and other work important for the new general education program. We clarified that there are no other SUNYs getting special funding to support summer curriculum development, but that this is something that the University Senate and the SUNY level University Faculty Senate are working on.

The faculty are also working through their senates to continue to advocate for continued and increased support from the state. This is a critical moment in the status of public higher education, and Dr. Simon offered data to illustrate the level of defunding over the years - we would not currently have a structural deficit if New York State had continued to meet their obligations for public higher education. Among these would include the revision of funding structures and the contractual salary increases, which are negotiated by the state. Dr. Simon asked the College Council members to help advocate for this as well. The health of our institution is of great importance to our local region and economic health.

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Dr. Simon completed his report.

Report from Student Affairs

Presented by Dr. Tracy Stenger - Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

Vice President Tracy Stenger was not able to attend the meeting and we continued through to Vice President Gossett's report.

Report from University Advancement

Presented by Ms. Betty Gossett, Interim Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the Fredonia College Foundation

VP Gossett reviewed the total allocations to the university in support of students, programs, faculty, and staff. She also reviewed the current status of fundraising for the Bicentennial Fund, Houghton Hall/Science Complex naming gifts, and from special group annual appeals (All-Campus, Corporate, Emeritus and Alumni).

Next weekend is Homecoming Weekend, October 14th-16th. Vice President Gossett reminded College Council members of the various activities they can participate in. One event is the Scholars Breakfast that usually attracts over 1000 people. This year, it is back in person and will not be as heavily attended. All donors have been invited and those who are able to attend are being matched with the beneficiaries of their funds.

Also of note was the 50th anniversary celebration of the Hamburg Student Teaching program, a very unique program to Fredonia.

Jeff Woodard offered updates on some of the special marketing efforts and some of the ads that are being aired. Another high impact opportunity is the search engine optimization, which is helping bring people to our website. There will also

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be new banners hanging throughout the main entrance of Fredonia, and Jeff showed the messages and designs to the group.

Provost Starret offered an update about hosting 400 boyscouts on campus of things we are doing to bring the community to campus that help future enrollments.

Dr. Simon offered insight on his daughter's experience of recently applying for 15 different universities and observed the efforts in marketing versus Fredonia's personal touch, which makes more of an impact on prospective students. He emphasized the importance of getting people to come to our campus. Our open house activities are unrivaled. We discussed ways that faculty and staff go above and beyond to ensure that people who come to campus are welcomed.

Remarks from Chair of College Council and College Council Members

Chairman Pagano offered a few closing remarks. Council member Russell Diethrick has offered his resignation, and Chairman Pagano read his letter to the group.

President Kolison and Chairman Pagano will follow-up with Mr. Diethrick to recognize his service, and we will be reaching out to the appropriate office at SUNY to request a member assignment.

Chairman Pagano offered his congratulations to President Kolison for an outstanding inauguration ceremony.

He also updated the group that the ACT (Association of Council Members and College Trustees) is occurring next weekend (October 14-16), and Chairman Pagano will be attending as well as the Chancellor of SUNY. He affirmed the advocacy efforts that he will undertake on behalf of SUNY Fredonia.

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Chairman Pagano offered a few additional words of support to underscore the importance of continuing to strengthen and support the admissions team and enrollment initiatives.

We discussed the continuation of efforts in what we have been doing and more to address enrollment. The group expressed examples of the collaboration needed and the common goal of serving the students and the region.

Ms. Niebel expressed some concern about the safety of campus and reviewed some of her perceptions. Vice President Metzger clarified some of the facts and described several actions that the University Police have taken to ensure the safety of the students.

Ms. Niebel expressed some concerns related to hearsay in the community and what she sees from official university correspondence. President Kolison offered to build in some safety updates during future meetings. Ms. Ahlstrom recommended that we have some scheduled safety presentations with College Council members and that this would be very helpful in performing their role of liaison between the local community members and the university.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Pagano at 12:30. The motion was seconded and passed.