

University Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2026
University Village Conference Room

Prepared by Dr. Naomi Baldwin, Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant

President's Cabinet Members Present: Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., Naomi Baldwin, Maria Carroll, Judith M. Horowitz, Kathryn Kendall, Wayne Lynch, Karen Rohr, Tracy Stenger, Jeff Woodard

Absent: Michel Kouadio, Vicki T. Sapp

College Council Members Present: Frank Pagano, Cynthia Ahlstrom, Richard Alexander, AJ Dolce, Stephen Keefe, Jordan Stephens

Absent: Richard Morrisroe, Tamu Graham-Reinhardt

Guests: Emily Schaad, standing in for University Senate Chair, Jesse Blum, ITS; Michael Puleo, ITS

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion from Steve Keefe to approve the March 18, 2026 minutes, and Richard Alexander seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Chairman Pagano called for an Executive Session. Richard Alexander made the motion, Steve Keefe seconded, and the executive session started at 10:08 a.m.

The regular business agenda started at 10:22 a.m.

Report from the President

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

The President thanked the council members for their work and support over the last academic year. Heading into the next academic year and the bicentennial recognitions, he encouraged the council members to continue their support and advocacy.

He also thanked Interim Provost and Vice President, Judy Horowitz for her leadership over the past academic year. He acknowledged the courage she has demonstrated through a very difficult academic year, and the balance of grace and candor with which she has led and navigated many challenges and changes that will benefit the institution.

President Kolison updated the council members on the upcoming commencement plans and speakers, recent SUNY system and SUNY Fredonia awards, and a reminder and update on his overall goals.

The coming years will continue to focus on the path to Financial Sustainability. The three pillars of the financial sustainability plan include growth, enhanced efficiency, and strategic reductions. While the campus is amid changes and strategic reductions, the President reminded the council members of the many other accomplishments in growth and efficiencies that will ensure the university's continued success. Enrollment has stabilized, and SUNY Fredonia continues to add new programs and support that will help enrollment grow. Examples include new degree programs and the success of the Director of Sponsored Research and Programs.

In terms of efficiency, the university has invested in optimizing business processes, expanding the use of technology, and strategically reorganizing the administrative functions of the Division of Academic Affairs.

President Kolison thanked the council members for their attendance at the new Track and Field ribbon cutting – another demonstration of the ways in which the campus continues to grow and thrive. In addition to its investment of \$13 million, New York State also continues to invest in the campus through other capital projects. For example, the \$53 million Jewett Hall project is well under way and will centralize many student services in one location on campus, a key strategy for enhancing student services and retention. Also under discussion is the Center for Innovation and Economic Development, a high priority for planning over the summer.

Report from Academic Affairs

Presented by Dr. Judith M. Horowitz, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Provost Horowitz shared some of the highlights for the Division of Academic Affairs. The campus recently hosted the SUNY-wide Undergraduate Research Conference, which welcomed over 400 students from across the region to our campus. Special thanks were offered to Dr. Jill Reese, who coordinated the conference and proudly showcased the campus and the work of students and faculty.

Provost Horowitz reminded the council members of the new Academic Master Plan, which has been key in reviewing and updating our full academic array. New programs on the horizon include the new BS in Music Studies, which officially launches this fall and already has 26 new students enrolled. This program offers a path to pursue music for students who do not wish to perform music at an advanced level. An additional new program is an Advanced Certificate in School District Business Leadership. This program helps teachers or school administrators develop skills in business administration, financial leadership, and facilities planning in the context of school leadership. Another new program in BA Digital Storytelling is a great example of an interdisciplinary approach – several departments coming together – to offer a program for people who want to be online content generators. The campus anticipates that this program will move to the SUNY approval level early next year.

A key initiative in the coming academic year will be the Middle States reaccreditation self-study. The campus will submit for approval of a self-study design this coming summer, and in August, the campus will be working to demonstrate evidence of meeting the accreditation body's seven standards.

Offering additional context on capital projects, Provost Horowitz reviewed some of the work starting for Reed Library. The building will be closed over the summer for the building rehabilitation. In the meantime, the holdings will be stored in another location on campus and will be available through virtual check-out services. The library building will re-open for the return of the students in Fall 2026. Provost Horowitz highlighted the prestigious Zweig collection, which is housed in Reed Library, and there is an ongoing digitization project underway to ensure that our holdings are available worldwide.

As a follow up to the President's summary of the Sponsored Programs and Research activity, Provost Horowitz offered additional details that the Director has assisted with an additional \$5.1 million in additional funding since their appointment in 2025.

Report from Finance and Administration

Presented by Mr. Wayne Lynch, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Vice President Lynch summarized the Projected Year End for the 2025-26 fiscal year and reviewed the Financial Plan's Targets for the 2026-27 year. The 2026-27 projections will depend on the finalization of the enacted state budget.

Report from Student Affairs

Presented by Dr. Tracy Stenger, Vice President for Student Affairs

Vice President Stenger summarized positive impacts of the new track and field, highlighting the ways it will enhance the student athlete experiences and the athletics programs. The campus can now host SUNYAC conferences, and this will put our campus in a positive light and broaden our reach for recruitment of excellent athletes. The Department of Athletics and Recreation also celebrated the many high achievements of the student athletes at the annual FREDDY's program. Vice President Stenger offered examples of the achievements and many services that the student athletes contribute to the local region and organizations.

In addition to the strong athletics achievements, Vice President Stenger reviewed several facts and statistics showcasing the strengths of the Student Affairs services – health, mental wellness, leadership development, residence life, food, housing, basic needs coordination, campus life, and student clubs.

Report from Enrollment Management and Services

Presented by Dr. Kathryn Kendall, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Services

The admissions team is at the peak of the new enrollment season for Fall 2026, and Vice President Kendall reviewed the outlook for the point in time. She focused on first time first year undergraduate students, new transfer students, and graduate students, while acknowledging that there are also many other students who contribute to enrollments through programs such as 3-1-3 programs and other non-degree tracks. The campus is trending slightly ahead in new transfer and new graduate students, but slightly behind in first-time-first year students. Overall, we are on track on headcount for the point-in-time comparison. We still have the summer to yield students and there are many offers of admissions and scholarships awaiting confirmations.

Retention of continuing students is also improving slightly compared to the same point in time last year. Overall, undergraduate and graduate students considered, the target is to retain at least 75%, and the outlook is good to achieve or exceed this target.

Vice President Kendall reviewed some of the successful strategies that the admissions team has been undertaking, and she summarized outcomes from the Open House and Go Big Blue Day events, both of which are high-yield events.

Report from University Advancement

Presented by Ms. Karen Rohr, Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the Fredonia College Foundation

Vice President Rohr offered highlights from four key areas in her area: Marketing and Communications, Rockefeller Arts Center, Alumni Engagement, and the Fredonia College Foundation. The fundraising efforts have seen a strong start in the first quarter, and the past two years of investments have been performing well.

Most of the funds endowed are restricted to donor-specified activities, which are used by various departments and programs to support students and activities in the specific areas. Vice President Rohr summarized some of the activities underway and donor participation over the last few months. The team has also been partnering with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and has hosted new and well-attended engagement events. Additional alumni events in Rochester and Syracuse are being planned.

Vice President Rohr concluded her report with some updates about the 2026-27 season for the Rockefeller Arts Center. She encouraged the council members to support the RAC and its events. She also highlighted some of the achievements from the Marketing and Communications team, including its continued success with the social media campaigns.

Report from the President of the Student Association

Presented by Mr. Jordan Stephens, President of Student Association

Mr. Stephens offered some updates on behalf of the Student Association. The constitution committee identified 63 items to review in their constitution, and they have completed about 19 of those. Work on others will be continued into the summer.

The Student Association has also been working on installing the infrastructure and benches that are part of their Outdoors for All initiative. They will be putting in new plants for the Prairie Garden in late May or early June.

They have also initiated a new series of faculty/staff recognition awards to express the student appreciation of some of those whose help has held particular meaning for the student body.

Report from the University Senate

Presented by Dr. Emily Schaad, on behalf of Ms. Laura Koepke, University Faculty Senate Chair

Dr. Schaad expressed her thanks for the opportunity to attend, and referred to the report submitted to the council members by the University Faculty Senate Chair.

President Kolison offered his thanks to Jordan Stephens and the rest of the President's Student Cabinet and to Dr. Schaad and the other executive members of the SUNY Fredonia University Senate. The partnerships with the leaders of the University Senate and Student Association officers have been very positive.

Remarks from Chair of University Council and University Council Members

Chairman Pagano expressed his thanks to the University Council members for their work and service. He asked for input about future dates and times that will ensure attendance by council members.

Meeting Adjourned

Chairman Pagano called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, and a motion was made by AJ Dolce, seconded by Steve Keefe. The meeting ended at 12:12 p.m.