**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA**

**MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL**

**ZOOM OR LENNA CONFERENCE ROOM**

**DECEMBER 16, 2020**

Present: Cynthia Ahlstrom, Richard Alexander, Jillian Beard, Russell Diethrick, AJ Dolce, Joseph Johnson, Stephen Keefe, JoAnn Niebel, Frank Pagano

Guests: Cedric Howard, Kevin Kearns, Stephen Kolison, Michael Metzger, Isreael Ortiz, Mary Beth Sievens, Denise Szalkowski, Jo Ward, Jeffrey Woodard

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The College Council meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The College Council minutes of October 7, 2020, were approved without modification with a motion by Mr. Joseph Johnson and seconded by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel. Motion carried.

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**

University Senate Chair Mary Beth Sievens announced that four courses were approved at the University Senate meeting on December 7.

* Online MA in Strategic Communication, Department of Communications (first fully online degree)
* BA in Writing, Department of English
* Revisions to BS in Computer Science, Department of Computer and Information Sciences
* Revisions to BS in Computer Information Systems, Department of Computer Information Sciences

Dr. Sievens said faculty have been busy reviewing, modifying, and initiating curricula. New curriculum approval can take up to six months or longer. She added that the MA in Strategic Communication is designed for a professional audience, in particular, those already working in public relations. If taken full-time, it’s possible to complete the online MA program in one year.

**STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Jillian Beard announced that her term as the Student Association (SA) President concludes at the end of this year. Jillian introduced incoming SA President Israel Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz, a junior from Rochester, NY, is a Political Science major, with a minor in Philosophy and Criminal Justice. Mr. Ortiz served as SA Vice President last year. Chairman Frank Pagano and members of the College Council took the opportunity to formally congratulate and welcome Mr. Ortiz to the College Council. Mr. Ortiz said he’s very excited to serve and looks forward to working with SUNY Fredonia’s administration and the College Council for the good of the students.

Miss Beard explained how campus club events were scaled back this semester to prioritize the health and safety of students on campus. Eight hundred and four students participated in the fall Executive Elections through Survey Monkey. Over 66 percent of students voted in favor to keep the Student Activity Fee (SAF) a mandatory fee. As a result of this referendum, the Student Activity Fee will remain at $114.50. Miss Beard believes the information SA shared through social media platforms helped students understand the importance of this SA fee. Miss Beard was encouraged by the number of students who expressed an interest in SA by running for open seats on the board. Five of the three SA seats were filled by new members. She’s very optimistic about the future of SA.

**PRESIDENT’S UPDATE**

President Kolison thanked Miss Beard for her unwavering dedication as SA President. Miss Beard served as a member of the Presidential Search Committee, and he had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know her virtually last spring. He was very impressed with her professionalism and welcoming demeanor during the interview process.

As to be expected, the fall semester was dominated by COVID-19. The pandemic had a significant impact on faculty, students, and staff. The type of instruction provided last spring and this fall not only impacted in-classroom instruction, but life for students in the residence halls and around campus. Campus operational costs were impacted significantly due to the necessity of personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep campus employees and students safe. To date, SUNY Fredonia has not received any COVID-19 financial reimbursement from the state. The office of Finance and Administration is keeping a detailed record of all costs associated with COVID-19 in case the state should provide reimbursement for these essential expenses. Dr. Kolison said he’s not optimistic we’ll receive any funding from the state to help offset these costs.

SUNY Fredonia conducted 8,012 student pool tests in the fall and another 1,351 tests on employees and emeriti. As of December 7, 209 students tested positive. Of those students, 83 live on campus and 126 off campus. Additionally, 496 students were placed in quarantine this past semester. It’s anticipated the campus will have spent about $1.4 million on COVID-19 related expenses. Students were given the option of attending classes in-person, online, or a combination of both from late August through mid-November.

Classes continued uninterrupted for the entire fall semester, and Dr. Kolison credits the students and staff for keeping the campus open and safe. For the spring semester, residential students will move-in between January 30 and February 2. Spring ’21 classes will begin February 3. Dr. Kolison will continue to communicate with students prior to their arrival to campus so they are well informed about campus protocols relevant to COVID-19. The most up-to-date Information about the spring semester can alos be viewed at: [www.fredonia.edu/spring2021](http://www.fredonia.edu/spring2021) . Approximately 72 percent of classes this spring will include some type of face-to-face component.

Last fall, Interim President Dennis Hefner and Cabinet members made the decision to switch from a 3/3 teaching load to a ¾ teaching load for all full-time faculty. Since some faculty have other responsibilities, it makes moving over from a 3/3 load to a ¾ load challenging. At the last University Senate meeting, a resolution was put forward for the President to appoint a task force to consider the variables of changing over to a ¾ load. Dr. Kolison appointed a very diverse group of faculty members to provide an analysis on the variables along with their recommendation for three options for the President to consider. Interim Provost and Vice President Kevin Kearns explained that a ¾ teaching load is equivalent to a seven-course load over the course of the academic year. The Task Force will do a deep dive and consider important elements in their final recommendation including an analysis of peer institutions’ teaching loads, class sizes, disciplines, and Fredonia’s Carnegie Classification. Until a final decision is made, the current ¾ teaching load will remain in effect. The final decision on teaching load remains with Fredonia’s administration. Dr. Kolison feels confident that a mutually agreeable decision can be reached after all variables are weighed and considered.

Since Fredonia’s current Strategic Plan expires in a year, Dr. Kolison appointed a Strategic Planning Committee, co-chaired by Drs. Cedric Howard and Susan McNamara. This committee is well represented by faculty and staff from across campus divisions. College Council members and SUNY will be invited to participate in conversations on the development of this new plan.

SUNY Fredonia officially received Middle States Reaffirmation this fall. Although the campus passed with flying colors, there are a few assessment items that need to be addressed before September 2021. Campus team members are already working to gather this data to report back to Middle States before the deadline.

The following key positions are currently being advertised.

* **Retention and Academic Success Coach** – Update: An offer was made yesterday. This position was funded by a generous donation.
* **Director of Admissions** – Update: The final candidate interviews tomorrow. This position became vacant after a retirement followed by the reassignment of the former Admissions Director to Executive Director in Enrollment and Student Services.
* **Director of Human Resources** – Update: An Interim Director of Human Resources and an Interim Assistant Director of Human Resources are serving. There are constraints by the current staff so it’s critical we find permanent leadership.
* **Chief Information Officer** – The position opened up this fall following the abrupt resignation of the former CIO.

These positions are expected to be filled permanently before Fall 2021.

Despite the constraints precipitated by the pandemic, Dr. Kolison was able to meet with a number of dignitaries including Chancellor Jim Malatras, Senator George Borrello, Congressman Tom Reed, Assemblyman Andy Goodell, Fredonia Mayor Doug Essek, Dunkirk Mayor Wilfredo Rosas, and he had a phone meeting with Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. He’s very appreciative of their time and support and he remains optimistic about the future of the campus.

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE**

Dr. Kearns covered a few highlights from his Academic Affairs report including an update on new campus programs. The new Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) program will be accepting its first graduate students in Summer 2021. This fully online, 16-credit, five course, graduate program addresses a chronic need for advanced training to help improve the effectiveness of teachers and other educational professionals who are working with children who have experienced maltreatment and abuse. The College of Education fully online, 30 credit Educational Leadership CAS program leading to certification in School Building Leadership and School District Leadership, has advanced to the second round of consideration for inclusion in the SUNY Online Degrees at Scale Initiative. If accepted into this online initiative, SUNY anticipates we could get up to 500 additional students. We’re currently a finalist and Dr. Kearns is optimistic Fredonia will be chosen.

Dr. Kearns announce a new 5 year BSEd/MSEd program began this semester and there is enthusiastic interest among new first year students who are the first Ed majors to have access to this option. 

The School of Music provided many public performances through live streaming this fall. The

Hillman Opera received an award of first place from the National Opera Association for last fall’s production of *Cendrillon* and on November 27th the Hillman Opera released a very creative, socially distanced performance of *Beatrice and Benedict*. Dr. Kearns reported that Fredonia’s School of Music had nine GRAMMY nominations, two as finalists.

The Council asked how student teaching is going. Dr. Kearns explained that it has been challenging especially in our educational and clinical programs, but equipment was purchased to keep students and staff connected remotely. There are 25 undergraduate pre-service teachers now completing their student teaching experiences in New York State schools from Manhattan to Dunkirk, and there are 268 undergraduate students currently engaged in early field experiences in Western New York. We have implemented GoReact software for virtual supervision of our students in the field, and our 6 full-year interns in the Hamburg School District are each spending 2 full days doing face-to-face classroom teaching and 1 full day each week doing supervised virtual instruction.

We offer five teaching modalities this past semester with hybrid being the most common. We offered livestreaming which was particularly helpful for students in quarantine. On January 6, faculty can participate in *Tools of Engagement Day*, sponsored by the Office of Online Learning and the Professional Development Center. Tools for Engagement Day will provide a full-day of introductory 30-minute sessions on a variety of engagement tools for use in any course modality.

Rockefeller Arts Center (RAC) offered a virtual Alumni Christmas Pops Concert on December 15 which was well received. Over a dozen distinguished Fredonia alumni performed. RAC has been doing a wonderful job of promoting virtual performances by the School of Music and the Department of Theatre and Dance. We plan to keep RAC closed for public audiences until summer or fall of 2021.

The search for a new Retention and Academic Success Coach brought a large, strong, and diverse pool of candidates for consideration. An offer was made and the incumbent will begin in January and will report to the Office of Academic Advising. This is a critical position as our retention numbers are low. In fact, Academic Affairs put together a SWAT team to address the high percentage of students who have not registered for Spring ’21 classes. The team will develop and implement strategic actions to maximize enrollment.  The team is working on a campaign that includes sending postcards, texts, and emails as well as creating a “course” that will help students get registered. Dr. Kearns explained that it’s typical for a good number of students to register late, but this year our numbers of non-returning students are exceptionally high. Because of the pandemic, some students are sitting on the sidelines until they feel more comfortable about returning. Going forward, at the end of every semester, we will look at students who have not registered, and we’ll see if we can assist them through intervention.

SUNY recently sent a survey to students to get their feedback on how well their classes went during the pandemic. Fredonia received 64 pages of student comments. We intend to go through those comments carefully to see what follow up is necessary. Some students would like to have a break to decompress in the spring semester, but we intentionally did not build in a break so that students will not leave campus only to potentially return with the virus.

**ENROLLMENT AND STUDENTS SERVICES UPDATE**

Dr. Cedric Howard said enrollment is a mixed bag right now. Spring ’21 applications are up. Fall ’21 acceptances and deposits are also up, compared to last year at this time. These numbers look promising. Overall, his team is making every effort to connect with students. Unfortunately, our transfer student numbers are down. Transfer students make up 22 percent of our incoming class. He believes this number is low because community college numbers are down resulting in fewer transfer students.

Overall, applications are down throughout the SUNY System by 25 to 30 percent. At Fredonia, we’re down 25 percent. Many high school students do not have a counselor and that could be one reason why applications have been delayed. For many of these students, Admissions staff have met with them more than once.

Dr. Howard said even though we are not able to send recruiters into Ohio, the Good Neighbor Scholarship is proving to be successful. We haven’t actively recruited in Philadelphia, yet we’ve experienced a 300 percent increase in applications from that area. We’re beginning to actively recruit in Chicago and Detroit and we plan to keep our footprint in the New York City area. Social media is one of our best marketing tools at this time as roughly 60 percent of our students base their college decision on social media marketing. Even during the pandemic, Fredonia continued to offer virtual college fairs and social media banners. As for a target demographic age, Dr. Howard said there hasn’t been much of a change. We’re seeing a large number of incoming first year-students entering with prior college credits and AP credit hours. Overall, we have many high quality students attracted to SUNY Fredonia. Standardized testing for incoming students was eliminated last fall due to COVID-19. As a system, SUNY decided that testing will not be required next year. In fact, SUNY and many public institutions have suggested that testing be optional for the next four to five years. SUNY Fredonia does require an in-depth evaluation of students’ writing samples at the time of application. Every applicant must complete an online application through the SUNY Common App and a $50 refundable fee. Fredonia’s non-refundable enrollment confirmation fee is $100.

**UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT UPDATE**

Mrs. Betty Gossett announced *Nurturing Innovation,* the Foundation Campaign well exceeded it $20 million goal. The campaign officially closes on December 31, 2020. The total number of donations received exceeds 50,900. During the campaign, a number of spaces were named in the Science Center and Houghton Hall. Many individual gifts helped make the difference in the success of the campaign. Ms. Gossett thanked everyone for their financial support.

One hundred and twenty-eight endowed funds were added this past year which overall is a 30.5 percent increase. Additionally, the Fredonia Student Emergency Relief Fund established through the Fredonia College Foundation raised over $200,000. Marketing and Communications is working on a thank you celebration video to send out to all donors. The next major Foundation event will be the bicentennial celebration which is part of President Kolison’s visionary plan.

Ms. Gossett provided an update on campus COVID-19 pool testing. This past fall, faculty, staff, and students worked very hard to roll out a safe testing site on campus. During the fall semester, 496 students were placed in quarantine with the last student leaving isolation on December 6. No student on- or off-campus had to be hospitalized during the semester for COVID-19. It should be noted that the recent uptick in local COVID-19 cases did not stem from the campus. Prior to departing the campus, all students were required to test negative and students will be required to re-test and show verification that they were tested prior to arriving back on campus in the spring. This is all part of SUNY’s movement to keep students and their family members safe.

The Reopening Task Force submitted a very thorough plan which outlines campus COVID-19 protocols to SUNY on December 10, and approval was received yesterday. The entire report can be viewed on Fredonia’s website. Instructional modalities for the spring will remain the same as the fall semester. Pool testing will be increased to 4,000 tests a week. Pool testing typically takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes from start to finish. Students and staff are separated into different groups to control flow and timeliness of testing.

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATE**

Vice President for Finance and Administration Michael Metzger announced that the campus budget incurred a hit due to lower than anticipated enrollment numbers. Additionally, the loss of state support brought us down another 25 percent. Likewise, five union raises pose a significant hit to the campus budget. We anticipate $1.8 million will be needed to cover just UUP raises. The five union raises were delayed by the state, but we anticipate union employees will receive their raises retroactively. For now, the delay has allowed us a cash flow savings.

Several assumptions have been built into our budget plan. They include costs associated with COVID-19 testing and PPE expenses, state support reductions, and unfunded union salary increase mandates. Our enrollment numbers continue to remain uncertain.

Fredonia is working with SUNY Brockport, Alfred, Buffalo State, and Geneseo on a shared service agreement in the hope of identifying ways we might collectively reduce our overall expenses and improve administrative functions. Fredonia remains open to alternative revenue sources that could help offset our budget deficit.

Campus revenues are up $1 million and spending in OTPS is up $500,000. We’re planning to permanently fill nine vacant positions, resulting in only a $79,000 shortfall to the budget. Interim employees in these positions will return to their previous position, at their previous salary, if they are not selected for the permanent position. Mr. Metzger explained that by not filling these critical and essential positions, it could cost the campus additional money.

To address the campus structural deficit, one time funds were used. Due to changes made, the operating budget resulted in a favorable $1.5 million structural deficit difference. Fredonia also received $3 million in Federal Stimulus. We’re are hopeful that the bill in front of Congress will result in more financial assistance for the campus.

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is moving forward after a contract was signed in June with DFT as the provider for this new digital phone system. VoIP will result in an annual savings for the campus. The equipment for this new system has already been reserved.

Despite these positive changes, the campus still faces a budgetary shortfall which has been exasperated by a student melt of approximately 500+ students. A SWAT team in Academic Affairs is following up with non-registered students, and 97 students have already been removed from the non-returning list. Typically, fifty percent of unregistered students return in the spring so we remain hopeful. We estimate at least forty percent of these non-registered students are unsure of returning due to COVID-19 or family economics. Fredonia’s current enrollment for Spring ’21 is 3,600; 1,475 of those students are living on campus. Enrollment projections for next fall are still under consideration. Due to the uncertainty of the virus and the vaccine, it’s too premature to estimate what our fall numbers will look like at this time. Several factors weigh into these variables including when the vaccine will become available, how well students can transition out of a gap year, and ongoing economic factors. International students are not allowed to travel to the U.S. and current international students cannot return home. Fredonia currently has 42 international students enrolled, seven of those live on campus.

Renovation work continues on Houghton Hall. Work was halted temporarily last spring, but the SUNY Construction Fund project remains on target for a Fall ’21 completion date. Work also continues on the Reed Library window replacement project. The east side of Reed Library is almost complete; the remaining side of the building will be completed before the end of June, and the plaza area will be rebuilt the following year.

The College Council acknowledged the good work of Dr. Kolison and his Cabinet. The Council appreciates all their work in helping to keep the campus moving forward despite the challenges of the pandemic. Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom thanked Mr. Metzger for his presentation on the budget. She also complimented the entire Cabinet on their professionally orchestrated Power Point presentation.

The meeting concluded with the following School of Music recruitment video, *Now is the Time* ([fredonia.edu/music](http://fredonia.edu/music))

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Joseph Johnson and seconded by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel. The College Council meeting concluded at 12:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Szalkowski, Fredonia College Council Secretary