



**State University of New York at Fredonia  
College Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 26, 2022  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
Williams Center Horizon Room**

**College Council Members in Attendance:** (In-person) Frank Pagano, Richard Alexander, Steve Keefe, and JoAnn Niebel; (Via Zoom) Cynthia Ahlstrom, Russell Diethrick

**Absent:** Joseph Johnson and Anthony Dolce were not in attendance.

**University Members and Guests in Attendance:** President Kolison, David Starrett, Betty Gossett, Tracy Stenger, Naomi Baldwin, Jeff Woodard, Vicki T. Sapp, Mary Beth Sievens, Ilene Thompson, Michael Metzger, Maria Carroll, and Denise Szalkowski. Guests included IT support from Andrea Wasiura and Matthew Sullivan.

### **Meeting Called To Order**

Chairman Frank Pagano called the meeting to order at 10:20 am.

### **Approval of Minutes from Meeting on Oct 20, 2022**

The College Council minutes were approved with the modification that Russell Diethrick be added to the attendance list. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Richard Alexander, which was seconded by JoAnn Niebel. The motion carried.

### **Welcome to Incoming Student Association President and Report**

The incoming President of the Student Association, Ilene Thompson, was recognized. Ilene gave the report for the Student Association on behalf of the outgoing president, Mr. Israel Ortiz.

Mr. Pagaono asked Ms. Thompson if there were going to be changes to the student activity fees. The Student Association has not had a chance to discuss this yet, and Ms. Thompson will provide an update as more information is available.

### **University Senate Report**

Dr. Sievens reviewed the upcoming activity for the semester. The SUNY-wide University Faculty Senate has been doing budget advocacy that they believe has had a positive impact on the Governor's budget proposal. Dr. Sievens noted that they have been working with Provost Starrett to open searches for key dean positions. They are also working with administration to find an equitable way to calculate teaching loads. On behalf of the University Senate, Dr. Sievens stated that they are looking forward to continuing their work with Provost Starrett to develop programs of distinction and to strengthen the partnership with Jamestown Community College. The University Senate is also excited to see some of the newly developing programs, especially at the graduate level, and they look forward to seeing these presented at future Senate meetings.

Mr. Pagano initiated follow-up discussion about the impact of interim leadership at the SUNY level on new degree programs. President Kolison explained for the group that both the SUNY Provost and Chancellor are at the interim stages. A search for the SUNY Provost was underway with 10 outstanding candidates. However, that search has been put on hold while the Chancellor position is in interim status.

Ms. Niebel asked how upcoming elections might impact the new Chancellor appointment, and Mr. Pagano replied that they will be following protocol with a nation-wide search. After the appointment of the SUNY Chancellor, it is anticipated that the SUNY Provost search could continue.

### **President Kolison's Report**

President Kolison reviewed the campus posture for continuing to protect the campus from COVID-19. Students are being required to bring a negative test when they return to campus this week. State-wide, the students are being required to boost if they are eligible, and he expects this will happen over the next 4-6 weeks. Fredonia is continuing to encourage faculty and staff to be vaccinated and boosted, although labor management rules prevent this from being a requirement. Ms. Carroll added that over 80% of our employees are vaccinated. More than 95% of our students are also vaccinated.

President Kolison encouraged everyone to be vigilant. The campus is continuing to review policies, especially when considering outside guests at on-campus student activities. These decisions and protocols will evolve as we move through the weeks ahead.

Mr. Pagano asked how many students have tested positive for COVID-19. VP Stenger noted that only 5 students have tested positive and are in quarantine. Thanks to the requirement of testing prior to the start of campus, 40 students have deferred their arrival. This is a very small percentage of our student population, and staff and faculty are working with the students to support them and ensure they will not lose out on instruction.

President Kolison noted that, due to the announcement of new legal activity regarding requirements of masks, he sent an email to the campus to reinforce the requirement of masks on campus. He continued with an update to the group that we have agreed to host a testing site for the community in Jewett Hall. The site can accommodate 100-200 people per day, and VP Metzger added that it has been testing less than 100 people per day recently.

Mr. Pagano asked if we will still be hosting an Open House for prospective students. Provost Starrett confirmed that they are still planning on this event. Mr. Pagano asked if the visiting prospective students will be required to be vaccinated. VP Gossett explained that we are looking at all group visits like this and being very careful about crowd management, and she confirmed that they are not checking vaccination status of visitors.

President Kolison added, we are moving forward with the planning of in-person events such as commencement, but we are being careful and taking things step-by-step. Mr. Pagano asked to confirm about an in-person commencement, and President Kolison and Ms. Szalkowski confirmed they are still planning on having the two traditional in-person ceremonies.

Ms. Thompson asked what the plan is for Multicultural Weekend. She explained that this event was important in her decision to attend Fredonia. President Kolison clarified that we are accommodating as many of these important events as possible, and that events will be considered case-by-case with so many variables at play.

Ms. Ahlstrom asked for clarification about the testing of students. President Kolison explained that there is a two-part approach. First, all students must bring a negative test prior to arriving on campus. In addition to that, the campus will also be requiring the regular pool testing protocols similar to previous terms.

Ms. Ahlstrom asked how the campus was handling the 90-day testing hiatus for students who have tested positive and President Kolison confirmed that they are removed from the pool testing requirement.

Ms. Niebel asked when Multicultural Weekend is being planned, and Ms. Thompson offered a date in March.

Ms. Niebel asked for more information about pool testing. VP Stenger explained - samples are collected in sets of 12 and tested. If the result is positive, they are re-tested individually to identify any specific individuals with a positive result. The individuals are then contacted using the usual protocols. Ms. Niebel brought up the way this is being done in the prisons and stated that in those cases, all members in the pool sample were required to quarantine if there is only one that is positive. She asked whether individual tests or pool testing is better. VP Stenger replied that both are good methods depending on the context. She explained that the campus works very closely with the Chautauqua County of Health, our local Health Center, and Residence Life to implement smooth protocols for safety. She expressed appreciation for the work that is done by multiple individuals to support the students and to help them stay engaged in their academic studies.

Mr. Pagano also offered appreciation for the excellent job that VP Stenger, her team, and campus leadership has been doing with so many variables and changing regulations.

President Kolison moved along in his presentation by stating that all employees are also doing pool testing the first week.

Mr. Pagano asked about the community testing site. President Kolison stated that we want to move toward more individual and rapid testing, which is a newer method that helps manage earlier alerts.

VP Stenger added that there is a 24-48 hour delay on pool testing results, so having a faster turn-around time for test results would be an improvement in containing the spread of the virus.

Ms. Niebel stated that she was not aware of the on-campus testing site, and Mr. Pagano explained that it is communicated out through the county communication sources and website. Mr. Pagano asked about the lines at the testing site and VP Metzger said that the lines were not long and that community members can pre-register online or just walk in from 8-4, Monday-Friday in Jewett Hall. There is parking for people using the test site in the Jewett lot. Ms. Thompson shared her positive experience of using the test site and noted the fast turnaround time.

President Kolison then reviewed how we are taking advantage of several opportunities to reduce the operating budget and address the structural deficit. Savings are realized through the redesign of some staff roles and eliminating redundancy. Since October, the campus has saved close to 700k through these efforts. The campus is continuing to look for ways to reduce the budget without catastrophic measures. Mr. Pagano supported the efforts to help increase enrollments, and acknowledged that positions and budgets can be cut only to a certain point. President Kolison emphasized that we are very diligent in making sure that staff, faculty, and safety of our operations are not impacted.

President Kolison closed out his report and Mr. Pagano thanked him again for his leadership amidst such uncertain times. President Kolison acknowledged the many excellent individuals who have been supporting his leadership and collaborating on many efforts - notably his cabinet team members as well as the University Faculty Senate.

Mr. Alexander asked the difference between residential students and those living off campus, in terms of COVID-19 impacts. President Kolison used our experiences from last year as a reference point and explained that off campus students had a much higher infection rate. However, the numbers overall have been manageable. He continued by expressing his gratitude to students who are being cooperative and paying attention to safety measures. There are universities with more resources than Fredonia who have had to shut down, and Fredonia has not had this happen. He restated how impressive the students have been with their efforts.

Ms. Ahlstrom asked which administrative positions related to the savings have been paused. President Kolison noted that this is an issue of some sensitivity and he would be happy to follow-up with her later.

### **Academic Affairs Update**

Provost Starrett started by acknowledging Dr. Sievens for her preview of many of his updates. He offered more details on the developing JCC partnerships. The idea is that Fredonia will offer 4-year degrees on the JCC campus with the goal of helping students seamlessly complete their Bachelor's degree programs. Students will begin their two-year program at JCC and move on to their Bachelor's degree without having to move locations or travel to Fredonia. Academic Affairs has a curriculum and is working on the staffing for a business and an education degree under this model. To start, they are anticipating cohorts of 20 students per program. They are looking at other programs that will benefit and that will have significant positive impact on the local communities.

Mr. Pagano asked how the tuition would work. Provost Starrett clarified that the students pay tuition to Fredonia when they are taking Fredonia courses, but they will study at the physical location in Jamestown instead of on Fredonia's campus. He added that they are Fredonia's classes, instructors, and curriculum. Mr. Pagano asked what the benefit is to JCC, and Provost Starrett stated that this will help increase JCC's recruitment reach as well by attracting students who want a 4-year bachelor's degree. Ms. Niebel asked if the students are Fredonia's for only 2 years, and Provost Starrett confirmed that yes, they will be very similar to transfer students in terms of the tuition model. He clarified that compared to traditional transfer models, this is a much more seamless and attractive option for students who are seeking a 4-year degree. Ms. Niebel asked how many students have been transferring over the years. Provost Starrett mentioned that we have served hundreds of transfer students, and we are now improving this model by expanding access to Fredonia - some students lack transportation or are place-bound, and this helps increase our outreach.

President Kolison gave more details about why this is strategic: Jamestown is considered an underserved region because there is not easy access to a 4-year public institution in that area. When Fredonia provides this service to that region, it contributes to the area by helping to develop the regional workforce.

Provost Starrett completed this section of his report with the information that Fredonia will have a staff member to serve the students on the JCC campus. This has been very positively received by JCC.

Ms. Niebel observed that this could strengthen relationships with Pennsylvania, which is very close to Jamestown. Provost Starrett confirmed and mentioned some of the financial award programs we offer that he believes will attract more out of state students.

Ms. Ahlstrom offered a suggestion that we consider a Bachelor's degree in Nursing (BSN program) under this model. She mentioned her experience with nursing programs and that this would serve a high need and could be a wonderful opportunity. She offered several points to advocate for this suggestion.

Provost Starrett responded that the Governor's vision aligns well with exploring these kinds of programs, and referred to the support for developing a workforce in the health and medical sciences.

Provost Starrett moved forward in his report by summarizing some of the re-titling of roles: Erin Mroczka is serving as the new Associate Provost for Retention and Academic Supports. Provost Starrett praised the efforts Ms. Mroczka has been involved in, which have helped increase registered students between the Fall and Spring semesters. These methods are demonstrating promise in reducing the total number of non-registered students.

Mr. Pagano asked about wellness checks at the beginning of semesters. Provost Starrett described the system that we currently have in place to do this. He is also working on making the communications and connections even more robust. VP Stenger added to this with more detail about the early alert system, which helps identify intervention needs as and pulls in a dedicated Students of Concern Team. Mr. Pagano discussed the importance of ensuring that students are able to make friends. Tracy supported this idea and offered several examples of the variety of resources at Fredonia to help students connect to others. Among the examples, she mentioned the residence life staff who are very high-touch. Fredonia also has a new student wellness lounge that is helping to address many of the support issues. In addition, we have streamlined processes for students when they need to take time off from their studies and return to Fredonia later. Mr. Pagano asked about resources available when students need someone to talk to, and VP Stenger reviewed various options from peer support networks to counseling professionals. Each case is different and VP

Stenger emphasized that they are addressing these needs through personalized and varied methods that help provide a human connection.

Provost Starrett added that we are also working on helping students connect through special interest groups, which helps them find others who have similar experiences.

Ms. Ahlstrom advocated for and recognized the mental health supports on our campus and shared an experience that demonstrated how effective programming and outreach can be in raising awareness of services.

Ms. Thompson mentioned that the Student Association would like to be part of future discussions and efforts to build friendships among students and to raise awareness of resources, and she offered several examples such as home cooked meals and hosting monthly casual get-togethers.

Provost Starrett continued his report by summarizing where we are in the School of Music and School of Business dean searches - both positions have about 20 candidates and they look promising. There are also 11 faculty positions posted. Provost Starrett explained some background about how these searches were saving money. Once the savings from the open lines and the costs of the adjuncts currently teaching them are weighed out, these positions are still budget-positive.

Mr. Pagano asked when we might start seeing fewer interim positions. Provost Starrett stepped through some of the administration changes and how many we have already filled and are anticipating to fill this summer. We should have permanent deans for the School of Business and the School of Music by this summer and the School of Education in one more year.

Provost Startett closed out his report. Mr. Alexander asked a question about the two positions in the Provost Office, referring to the two associate provosts. Provost Starrett explained that there is now a vice provost and an associate vice president. The Associate Vice President is interim for one year and we will fill the position by the end of that year.

Ms. Niebel asked how many adjuncts will be replaced by the 11 positions. Provost Starrett explained that the adjuncts teach a variable number of sections. Individual sections - nearly 80 - will be taught by the 11 new hires.



Provost Kolison clarified that there are additional savings outside of the budget lines and adjunct costs. These savings are related to how the state calculates and covers benefits for the SUNY system. VP Metzger expanded on this: The benefits of full and part time employees are covered by the state. However, for adjunct faculty, the benefits are not covered, so additional savings are realized when Fredonia does not have to cover this cost.

### **Student Affairs Update**

VP Stenger introduced herself and her new title, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs. She offered a few highlights from athletics and student wellness. She noted that there have been over 1200 individual counseling center appointments for the fall semester alone, among the other various supports they offer.

She updated the group on the availability of the student food pantry, which has been helping students with food security issues.

Further, Student Affairs supports several scholarship programs: The Rosa Parks Scholarship is currently underway, and Israel Ortiz, former Student Association President, is one of the recipients. There were an additional 7 scholarships presented to Veterans.

In addition to being a resource for wellness, the FredWell lounge also offers several internships.

In terms of the residence hall occupancy, she noted that there is strong occupancy in the residence halls for the fall-spring continuation and that the townhouses have strong occupancy.

Mr. Pagano asked about some of the other offices organized in Tracy's division, and she clarified that student conduct is still in the division but that the university police have been moved under the Finance and Administration division.

### **University Advancement Update**

VP Gossett summarized the fundraising efforts and what they have raised so far. The campaign they have recently completed has strengthened the Foundation significantly.

VP Gossett mentioned the new fund that President Kolison has started - to support access and persistence - and even without strong marketing yet, they have already raised 400k in gifts. Area organizations have invested significantly in this. Fredlanthropy Day this spring will continue building on the theme.

She updated the group that there are still several naming opportunities in Houghton Hall, which has raised over 500k alone. They are anticipating a dedication ceremony in the early fall term of this year. The annual mail appeals have also been completed.

VP Gossett moved forward in her report by noting the helpfulness of the Fredonia campus community that was initiated by the COVID-19 shut-down: A student emergency relief fund was started by the campus in March 2020. This fund has raised over 200k from campus members and offered financial support to students to get through the COVID-19 early shutdowns. However, students are still in need of significant help - 85 students applied in the fall.

Mr. Pagano asked how they verify who is in need? VP Gossett overviewed the vetting protocol and application process, which include people who are in touch with the students' situations and can verify where the needs lie. The protocols for funding have been very consistent. There are limits to the amount of support and what the support can be used for. Most of the requests are for essential needs such as traveling to return to campus, purchase of school supplies, and food. There is now just over 30k left in the fund, and they have had over 30 requests already this year.

Mr. Woodard was called upon to offer the updates on the marketing campaign. He reviewed the several strategies Fredonia is using that included billboards, digital ads, and TV advertising. They are seeing a big uptick in impressions through online advertising and new visitors to our website. The TV advertising is focused on news reports and sports broadcasts. Geographically, those with streaming services such as Hulu and Roku are seeing Fredonia ads in their regional areas (Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester). The overall goal is to raise brand recognition of Fredonia and awareness of Fredonia as an option.

## **Finance & Administration Updates**

VP Metzger offered a summary of various construction projects on campus.

The Construction Fund has contributed over \$150 million dollars over the past 10 years to improve and maintain our buildings and facilities. \$100 million of the \$150 million is in the STEM complex - the Science Center and now Houghton Hall.

There is also a new solar panel array, a public-private partnership, which provides 1.4-1.5 megawatts of electricity. This helps reduce Fredonia's utility costs and counts toward Fredonia's carbon-neutral goal.

Houghton Hall is now online as of this spring semester. The physics and geography labs are currently there and operational. We will be fully operational by next fall, due to some delays in the supply chain and some of the furniture and outfitting needs.

The Reed Library window project has been challenging due to the engineering requirements of installing glass directly into concrete - the contractors are on their 3rd attempt and they anticipate being complete by this summer.

The Reed Library Plaza project will also be completed by this summer. This project will replace all of the paving stones and the steps near the library to improve aesthetics, safety, and usability.

Lanford House was scheduled to begin 4 years ago, but the project was postponed until now. The renovations are underway to update the mechanical and electrical systems, and to remove asbestos. VP Metzger is working on ensuring that President Kolison can move back in as soon as possible. It is a \$2.2 million project just to bring the Lanford House up to code.

Fredonia is in the design phase of Jewett Hall - the building has been vacated by all faculty and staff, and it will go offline after its use as a testing site is completed.

Mr. Pagano asked whether the building would be torn down. Provost Starrett described the one-stop shop of student support and financial services that was suggested for the building as part of a consultation from the Brightspot group. Designers will be visiting and doing walk-throughs in the next couple of weeks and they will move forward with the discussions of the best use of the space.

VP Metzger ended his report to clarify the source of the construction funds. He noted that there is often a misunderstanding of these funds. He gave an overview of the State University Construction Fund and its fund sources as being distinct from Fredonia's budget and student tuition. The funds are independent of other state budgets and cannot be used toward our deficit, but they are still helpful in keeping the campus maintained, up-to-date, and efficient. Ultimately, this does support our ability to recruit and retain students and address our deficit.

President Kolison brought up a grant that will help expand an on-campus daycare center, and VP Stenger added that it was a campus-wide partnership with the current childcare center. This was a very competitive grant and it is a point of pride for Fredonia to have this award at our campus.

Mr. Diethrick asked how the construction funds have affected our local suppliers and builders. VP Metzger replied that the state hires a general contractor, which he noted is not always from the area. However, as part of the contract, the general contractor is expected to hire as many local firms as they can at union wages. He acknowledged that this has a positive impact on our local community and suppliers. Diethrick noted the longer-term positive impacts of this.

### **Presidential Awards of Excellence and Acknowledgements**

Mr. Pagano moved on to the awards section of the meeting to recognize four recipients of the President's Awards of Excellence. He expressed how rewarding it is to be able to present these awards and read about the wonderful work of the awardees. He noted that his wife was a student of Kate Levy, one of the award recipients, and remarked on the excellent work she did with the New Horizons band. The awardees were called to the front to receive their certificates:

- Ann Siegle Drege for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- I-Fei Chen-Markham for Excellence in University Service
- Kate Levy for Excellence in Community Engagement
- Jennifer Wilkins for Community Engagement

Ms. Szalkowski was presented with a retirement gift and many acknowledgements. She was praised for her outstanding work for the council, her service of 18 years as Assistant to the President, and a total of more than 37 years at SUNY Fredonia.

Dr. Baldwin was introduced to the Council as the Interim Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant to the President, and it was noted that she would be helping to coordinate future council meetings.

There being no other items of business a motion to adjourn was made. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alexander and the meeting adjourned at 12:09 pm.