

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA  
MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL  
UNIVERSITY TOWNHOUSES, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
OCTOBER 20, 2021**

Present: Richard Alexander, Joseph Johnson, Stephen Keefe, JoAnn Niebel, Frank Pagano

Absent: Cynthia Ahlstrom, AJ Dolce, Israel Ortiz, Mary Beth Sievens

Guests: Maria Carroll, Betty Gossett, Cedric Howard, Stephen Kolison, Jr., Michael Metzger, Vicki T. Sapp, David Starrett, Denise Szalkowski, Jeffrey Woodard

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The College Council meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The College Council minutes of May 19, 2021 were approved without modification, with a motion by Mr. Richard Alexander, and seconded by Mr. Joseph Johnson. Motion carried.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Chairman Frank Pagano took a moment to introduce Dr. Vicki T. Sapp, Chief Diversity Officer; Jevon Hunter, ACE Fellow from Buffalo State; Mrs. Maria Carroll, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. David Starrett, Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs.

**BEST OF LUCK**

Mr. Pagano congratulated Dr. Cedric Howard, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, on his new position at the University of Northern Colorado, UNC Division of Student Affairs. On behalf of the College Council, Mr. Pagano wished Dr. Howard and his family all the best.

**STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Mr. Israel Ortiz was not able to attend today's meeting, nor did he submit a report on behalf of the Student Association.

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**

Dr. MaryBeth Sievens was not able to attend today's meeting, nor did she submit a report on behalf of University Senate.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Stephen Kolison, Jr., thanked the College Council for their good work and support of campus initiatives. He's very appreciative of all the support he has received from the Council since beginning his Presidency 14 months ago.

Dr. Kolison also recognized Dr. Howard for his good work as Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services. He is grateful for the candid and honest conversations they engaged in to move the university forward. Dr. Howard will be leaving next week for his new position in Colorado. Dr. Howard has made significant contributions to the University over the past five years. He has been a steadfast advocate for students' well-being and success. Thank you, Dr. Howard.

Most recently, SUNY Fredonia ranked 14<sup>th</sup> (out of 61 universities) in the category of “Top Public Universities in the North” for 2022. Fredonia also tied for 62<sup>nd</sup> in “top Regional Universities, North,” which includes both public and private universities in the northeast; Fredonia is one of five SUNY comprehensive universities ranked as a “Top Performer on Social Mobility,” and Fredonia is one of seven SUNY comprehensive universities listed as a “Best Value.”

We'll use this data to promote the University and to recruit top students. Dr. Kolison said he's very pleased with *U.S. News* rankings, especially given the significant increase in our ranking among outstanding institutions in the U.S. North. He said it's a clear manifestation of the outstanding work done by our faculty and staff, and the achievements of our students.

Assistant Professor of the School of Music, Adam Luebke, was among one of several alumni to receive a 2021 GRAMMY award, presented on March 14. Professor Luebke received a GRAMMY for Best Choral Performance for the recording of Richard Danielpour's “The Passion of Yeshua.” Dr. Kolison had the honor of meeting Professor Luebke and holding the GRAMMY during their last visit. It's tremendous recognition for Dr. Luebke and the Fredonia campus.

SUNY Fredonia partnered with the Chautauqua County Health Department to administer over 15,000 COVID-19 vaccinations. Additionally, the campus administered more than 40,000 pool tests to students and staff. Approximately 97 percent of SUNY Fredonia students are vaccinated and 80 percent of the staff. Only 119 students were granted a medical or religious exemption. During the vaccination clinics, many people from off campus visited the campus for the first time, giving us additional exposure. Dr. Kolison hopes we can relax some of the COVID-19 mandates once we reach a 90 percent employee vaccination rate. SUNY Fredonia cannot mandate union employees to get vaccinated. The unions have been very supportive in making sure their members are well educated about the benefits of the vaccination. All non-vaccinated employees test weekly and vaccinated employees test monthly.

The campus unveiled a FREDLaptop Program (FLP) this fall. One hundred and twenty-three first-year students opted into the program. The FLP provides an enterprise-grade laptop with premium warranties and comprehensive on-campus support services. The laptops provide students access to Fredonia's digital tools, device standardization for academic instruction, and the ability to convert quickly to online classes, if needed. All SUNY Fredonia students will be eligible to participate in the FREDLaptop Program by the 2022-2023 academic year. Benefits of the program include:

- An enterprise-grade, state-of-the-art laptop well suited for the Fredonia experience
- Four-year international manufacturer's warranty with accidental damage protection
- On-campus help desk support
- On-campus hardware repair services
- Free loaner laptops during repairs and service

Participating students can choose between an Apple MacBook Air or Lenova Thinkpad laptop. The initiative was a collaborative effort between the President's office, Information Technology Services (ITS), and others on campus. The program is paid for by students at the time they enroll.

Following today's College Council meeting, Council members are invited to tour the \$32 million dollar renovated Houghton Hall. This state-of-the-art science facility now completes the STEM academic corridor. This fall, the Departments of Computer and Information Sciences, Geology & Environmental Sciences, and Physics moved into the renovated space. Council members should contact the President's office to arrange for a one-on-one tour if they are unable to tour the facility following today's Council meeting. A ribbon-cutting for Houghton Hall is being planned for Spring '22. Several spaces within the building have already been named.

Dr. Kolison talked about the robust presence SUNY Fredonia will have in terms of attracting students as the result of additional money being spent on marketing initiatives for the campus. In addition to TV commercials, signage was erected in October '21 along the New York State Thruway (I-90) at exit 59 and near the off-ramp. We were fortunate to have help from the right people to make this happen.

A campus-wide VoIP Phone system was launched on campus on January 4, 2021, and completed in September '21. A total of 750 phones were converted to VoiP; resulting in an annual savings for the campus. All new VoIP phones currently have long-distance service enabled and a new Police Fire EMS button that dials directly to the University Police Department to provide quicker response times in the event of an emergency on campus.

President Kolison is very pleased with the high level of talent brought in following the search for the Executive Vice President and Provost, Chief Diversity Officer, and Human Resources Director. He looks forward to working with Drs. Starrett, Sapp, and Mrs. Carrroll to grow the University. Searches are currently underway for Deans in the School of Music and the School of Business. We anticipate filling these critical positions before next fall. Additionally, we will initiate a search to replace the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services.

As we continue to work on increasing our student and staff diversity numbers, Dr. Vicki T. Sapp will coordinate our campus diversity efforts to help attract underrepresented populations to the Fredonia campus.

SUNY Fredonia's Fall '21 enrollment reached 3,780 (3,555 undergraduate/225 graduate), comprised of students from 20 states, one U.S. territory, and 13 countries. We anticipate 1,100

incoming students for Fall '22. Dr. Kolison said the campus would like to expand its footprint into New Hampshire, Virginia, and New Jersey. We must also address retention issues, as we lost over 600 students last year. The Office of Enrollment and Student Services was recently reorganized to help with retention efforts. We need to make sure our retention and recruitment align so we can create synergy going forward. When asked to provide data about retention in comparison to other SUNY comprehensives, Dr. Kolison said he did not have that data readily available, but our retention curve is likely to be steeper than other SUNY comprehensives. Dr. Kolison said it's going to take a lot of work to turn retention around, but Fredonia is up for the challenge. After launching the Good Neighbor Program, out-of-state numbers went up 80 percent; just under 100 students. Our two out-of-state recruiters are targeting Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Although the northeast is experiencing a loss of college-age students, Massachusetts and New Jersey are experiencing a growth.

Dr. Kolison acknowledged that a primary reason students leave Fredonia is academic based, particularly their first year. Other reasons include financial, lack of major, or maturity. We need to be better at providing services to students before they arrive on campus. We offer one residence hall strictly for first-year students. We do not offer a community mentoring program, but Dr. Howard will be sure to suggest that idea to his replacement. Dr. Kolison agreed that we have our work cut out for us, but it's not impossible, if we all work together to address our retention challenges. Approximately 20 percent of our students are first-generation and 37 percent are PELL eligible, making our challenges even greater. The academic and financial issues are real, and we need to consider them as we address our ongoing retention challenges.

Conversations with the Foundation have occurred about funding student tuition dollars. A Bicentennial Fund to Enhance Student Access and Persistence (FESA), is being set up to help support student success. The campaign will conclude in 2026. Chairman Pagano encouraged College Council members to donate once the campaign kicks off.

Dr. Kolison was appointed a member of the search committee for the SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and to the Board of Directors at Brooks Memorial Hospital.

### **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE**

Executive Vice President and Provost David Starrett said it's a pleasure to be working at SUNY Fredonia. He looks forward to working with the College Council on a path to success. In the Academic Affairs division, Dr. Starrett recently appointed Dr. Janeil Rey, Interim Dean for the College of Education, through academic year 2023. He also appointed Stephanie Teachman, Administrative Assistant 2, in the Provost's office. The search committees for the School of Business and School of Music have been populated and co-chairs appointed. He expects to have both positions filled by next fall.

Since his arrival on campus, Dr. Starrett has made the following observations: too many staff members serving in interim positions; instructional costs do not align with the reduction in

enrollment, and many opportunities for new programs. He's very pleased with the science facilities and strong arts programs that Fredonia has to offer.

Chairman Pagano said he's concerned about the number of employees we have in relation to the decrease in enrollment. He also wants to see academic programs that will bring Fredonia up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He feels many of Fredonia's programs are antiquated and need to be eliminated to allow for new programs.

Strategies that Academic Affairs is considering include strategically raising course caps, revamping course scheduling, and reducing the number of course sections offered. In Spring '22, there will be 40-50 fewer sections than Spring '21, which equates to a reduction in costs of \$120,000 to \$150,000.

An Academic Master Plan is being developed. Academic Affairs will apply for SUNY online plus status to serve more students and will continue with a SWAT team to address retention and at-risk student concerns. A Retention Committee will continue to meet to develop new strategies and retention efforts will be centralized under a new organizational structure. Additionally, Academic Affairs will continue to explore new program development, micro-credentials, and stackable certificates.

#### **ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Dr. Cedric Howard announced new fall enrollment is at 809 FTFY undergraduate (+142) and -75 graduate (+23). He reminded the Council that an increase in enrollment is a significant achievement during the pandemic.

As of Fall '22, 5,641 students have been tested for COVID-19. Of that number, 108 (39 on campus and 69 off) tested positive. Over 99 percent (includes exemptions) of the student population has complied with the mandate to be vaccinated. Only one student did not comply.

Admissions has expanded its geographic location for the Good Neighbor Program to include Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Virginia.

Phase one of the Residence Life Master Plan begins in Spring '22. This comprehensive plan will be developed by Enrollment and Students Service and Finance and Administration. We anticipate the plan will take eight to ten years to complete, at which time, residence halls will be updated and modernized to meet the needs of today's student.

Dr. Howard thanked the College Council for the support he received as Vice President. He said he will always remain committed to SUNY Fredonia no matter where his professional life takes him.

#### **UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT**

The Fredonia College Foundation endowment market is slightly over \$50 million. Mrs. Betty Gossett attributes this to the successful work of the Foundation staff during the campaign. The

*Nurturing Innovation Comprehensive Campaign* exceeded its goal of \$24 million by reaching \$24,520,307. The breakdown of giving follows: \$10,343,254 for access to quality education; \$5,809,537 for learning from experience; \$4,683,675 for learning spaces; \$1,445,939 for exceptional faculty and \$2,237,902 for unrestricted gifts. In academic year 2021-22, \$1,579,200 was allocated for scholarships and programs through 548 endowed funds. Forty-six percent of Fredonia students are PELL grant eligible, making these donations critical to the student population.

The Foundation is looking forward to unveiling the silent phase of the Bicentennial Fund to Enhance Student Access and Persistence (FESA), which was established by the Fredonia College Foundation and President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., to support student access and persistence. Solicitation of funds begins this fall and a public announcement about the campaign will be made in Fall '22. The fund will culminate with Fredonia's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2026.

Renovated Houghton Hall will allow the Foundation to raise additional financial support. Eleven rooms in the building have already been named, totaling \$460,000. Plaques will be displayed in each of the named rooms by the time of the ribbon cutting.

The Fredonia College Foundation Annual Appeals was just announced and the Council's support is appreciated.

Based on a recent survey conducted by Career Development, 92 percent of graduates from the Class of '19 are either employed or enrolled in graduate school. Career Development continues to connect employers and students to internship opportunities. Athenex in Dunkirk, NY, is offering a number of paid internships for Fredonia students.

A budget of \$500,000 was allocated to enhance campus marketing of the university, including digital marketing (display ads, search ads, YouTube pre-rolls, Facebook/Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok). Additionally, billboards have been erected along Route 33, I-190, and I-290 in Buffalo, amounting to approximately 300,000 impressions at each location, per week. It's the largest marketing campaign in the history of Fredonia. Fredonia students are telling their stories and we're utilizing an in-house videographer.

## **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Division of Finance and Administration continues to work closely with all divisions to annually address budgetary shortfalls and challenges. Mr. Michael Metzger explained that \$16,190,847 in stimulus funds were used to balance the 2021-22 budget. These funds were not requested, but came through the federal government. Fredonia received no permanent reduction in state support this past year, and our budget projections were based on a headcount of 4,100 students. Over \$1.8 million in un-funded contractual salary increases were covered. The TAP Gap scholarship was a bonus for the campus. Preliminary budget assumptions include \$250,000 in strategic investment, \$500,000 in campus advertising, and a 50 percent reduction in OTPS. A major difference in our revenue is that we anticipated 4,100 students, but only 3,700 enrolled. Due to federal stimulus dollars, we will not need to take a

loan this year, nor will we face a shortfall. Going forward, we will not have these stimulus dollars. We used \$2.2 million more of the stimulus funds this year than originally anticipated due to the enrollment shortfall. We need to consider cost reductions going forward to offset our budget shortfall. Even if we reach 4,100 students for next fall, we will still face a shortfall next year of approximately \$10 to \$14 million dollars.

Chairman Pagano said he's not satisfied with Fredonia's enrollment and retention numbers. Dr. Kolison would like to raise enrollment to 6,000 by 2024-25 to eliminate the deficit. For academic year 2022-23, he'd like to see enrollment increased to 4,710. Fredonia hired two full-time recruiters to assist with out-of-state recruitment in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

Fredonia is also taking a closer look at study programs to make sure what we offer is attractive to incoming students. Chairman Pagano said, "We need to get into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and get programs students want." Mr. Pagano also said the campus needs to advertise the new science building and renovated Houghton Hall.

Work continues on the Reed Library exterior project. The steps to Reed Library are being replaced and new landscaping will go in to improve the appearance of the space near Reed. Work on Houghton Hall will be completed by December '21. The departments of Physics and Geology have already relocated into the building and Mathematics and Computer Science will move into the building in Spring '22.

The solar photovoltaic array project, erected along the north edge of campus, is fully operational. The panels have the capacity to generate 1.7M kWh/year of electricity. This 20-year private partnership will generate approximately \$35,000 to \$50,000 annually for the campus. The project supports the Governor's carbon neutral footprint initiative. The solar array panels will also provide us with an electrical back up system for the campus.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) OFFICE**

Dr. Vicki T. Sapp referred College Council members to her report. Since her arrival this summer, she has been heavily involved in working with faculty and staff in diversity training.

DEI coordinated efforts across all divisions to promote a respectful campus community promoting diversity values. Dr. Sapp, a full-time Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), was hired in Summer '21 to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and to promote education, training, and equitable work practices among students and employees. The CDO works collaboratively with SUNY Fredonia's Admissions Office, Intercultural and Student Engagement Center, and Marketing and Communications to create DEI brochures, welcome videos, and presentations highlighting collective DEI initiatives.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE**

Human Resources Director, Maria Carroll, said Human Resources continues to review employee staffing numbers and alignment with student enrollment. HR has been very busy addressing compliance issues, COVID-19 protocols, and union issues.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mrs. JoAnn Nieble and seconded by Mr. Stephen Keefe. Motion carried. The College Council meeting concluded at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Szalkowski  
Assistant to the President and College Council Secretary