



College Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 2025
Williams Center S204DE

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

President's Cabinet Members Present: President Kolison, Naomi Baldwin, Maria Carroll, Judith M. Horowitz, Kathryn Kendall, Michel Kouadio, Karen Rohr, Vicki T. Sapp, Tracy Stenger, Jeff Woodard

College Council Members Present: Frank Pagano, Cynthia Ahlstrom, Richard Alexander, AJ Dolce, Stephen Keefe, Richard Morrisroe, Dakota Richter

Absent: Tamu Graham-Reinhardt

Guests: Jesse Blum, ITS; Edward Blue, ITS

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion from Richard Alexander to approve the March 19, 2025 minutes, and Richard Morrisroe seconded. The minutes were approved.

Report from the President

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

President Kolison started with gratitude for the College Council members' service and the work they do on behalf of the university.

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The New York State budget has been approved, with increased and continuing support to the campuses from New York State and SUNY.

President Kolison expressed his appreciation to the Chancellor, the legislature, and the Governor. In a time when funding is being cut in other states, New York is moving in the right direction. This year, the contractual raises will be covered fully, and campuses will continue to receive additional operating support and support for programs that assist with student recruitment and retention.

President Kolison reviewed his priorities and accomplishments from the previous year. The campus now has a financial sustainability plan that will be implemented over the next few years, and he continues to work on the longer-term goals in alignment with SUNY's pillars that he communicated earlier this year.

At commencement, we will recognize several outstanding students who have been recognized with the highest honors: the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, the Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for EOP Student Excellence, and the Lanford Presidential Prize. The campus will also welcome back two SUNY Fredonia alumni as speakers this year.

President Kolison recently traveled to Washington DC to advocate for support for higher education at the national level. Among his advocacy efforts are to protect Pell Grant funding, sustain Federal programs for SUNY Fredonia, and to oppose risk-sharing legislation regarding Federal loans.

The search for a new provost will start in the Fall semester with the goal of finalizing the search by the end of next academic year.

To conclude the presentation, President Kolison reviewed his vision for establishing Centers of Excellence, and highlights of those centers, which are a key part of the Academic Master Plan.

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As a follow up to advocacy efforts at the national level, Steve Keefe offered support to continue efforts to ensure Pell Grants will continue.

Report from Enrollment Management and Services

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

Dr. Kendall reviewed the many activities and events underway with the goal of increasing yield. The efforts the team has made to shift existing resources have led to positive results, such as the record numbers attending the Big Blue Welcome day and increased attendance and deposits from the NYC students they bring to campus.

The Admissions Liaison group also continues to be a productive partnership, engaging departments and admissions staff to collaborate on recruitment activities. The group combines resources, establishes best practices and improves communications with the common goal of recruiting more students to the programs. The admissions team is also onboarding a new staff member who is dedicated to Slate management. The staff member will be focusing on utilizing the Slate software in strategic ways to ensure students who apply to us receive more customized information in efforts to enhance engagement with them. A new financial aid advisor will start this summer, and they will assist with scholarship awarding and monitoring, FAFSA completion outreach and enhancing accessibility to financial aid packages.

The team is continuing to leverage foundation funds and Bicentennial funds to ensure the competitiveness of the university's financial aid packages, and this is also showing results in the yields. Dr. Kendall reviewed several other initiatives underway with the team, including shifts to a more high-touch concierge model, focus on territories to be sure we have advisors focusing on Chautauqua County and the local area.

The university is ahead in transfer students, and Dr. Kendall noted that this is the strongest transfer student intake in the past few years. One strategy that may have led to this is the partnerships the university has been building with community colleges. The first-year-first-time students and graduate student intake is also looking strong, as is

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retention of current students. She noted that there is still work to be done over the summer, and underscored the positive outlook so far.

Cynthia Ahlstrom asked how we determine the reasons for students who transfer out. Dr. Kendall offered a few resources that help with that information, but there is generally an idea of where students transfer to, but the reasons are not always clear. The strategy is to shore up the services that support students and make it more likely that they will continue with SUNY Fredonia.

Richard Morrisroe asked how to direct students who stop out of their four-year programs and want to get started again, especially when working with students who need additional support. Dr. Kendall described the next steps and the supports available to ensure that applicants have access to direct and personal guidance to continue their education.

To conclude her report, Dr. Kendall reviewed several summer activities her team will be working on, and she recognized the tremendous efforts and professional growth of the members of her team that are leading to stronger enrollments.

Cynthia Ahlstrom asked about efforts being made to strengthen graduate programs. Dr. Horowitz summarized the newest graduate programs as examples: the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is thriving, and the School of Business is launching a new MBA Accounting. There are also more efforts to move graduate programs online and ensuring they meet the highest standards by registering them for recognition with the SUNY Online+ designation. The division is continually reviewing opportunities to develop new master's programs in alignment with student demand and job market.

President Kolison underscored the positive results in enrollments and attributed this to the work that Dr. Kendall has done with her team and the great efforts of her team.

Report from Academic Affairs

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

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Dr. Horowitz started her report with a summary and update of the JCC-Fredonia partnership and the continued efforts to explore how to expand the partnership. There are three subcommittees working on focus areas, and facilities is reviewing spaces that would be appropriate for JCC students to take classes. The goal is to find a way to find a seamless pathway to serve JCC students on the Fredonia campus. There is a focus group that continues looking at job demands in the region and identify gaps that may provide opportunities for the two campuses to come together and offer a program that will help fill that need.

The university already has a preferred partnership agreement with JCC, with dedicated recruiters and advisors who support JCC students on their campus.

Richard Alexander asked if the university is looking at other models of two-and-four-year partnerships. Dr. Horowitz reviewed some of the examples they have analyzed and how it has helped build the unique and current JCC-Fredonia partnership.

Richard Morrisroe asked about the north county JCC campus. Dr. Horowitz noted that the discussions are focused on identifying students locally who are not already being served and how we can serve them.

Dr. Horowitz continued her report and updated the council on the goal to launch five online degree completion programs by 2025. Among these, SUNY has recently approved online completion programs for childhood and early childhood education programs, which are the only ones of their kind in the entire SUNY system. This will be helpful for students who have stopped out and wish to finish their degrees. The other online completion programs underway include psychology, sport management, and music studies. A sixth will be ready by 2026.

In terms of graduate programs, the online modality has resulted in tremendous growth for graduate programs – there has been an 86% growth (approaching about 400 total) in just the last few years due to the shift to online formats. Added to this, the quality of those degree programs continues to be excellent, as demonstrated by the SUNY Online+ status that was mentioned earlier.

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Cynthia Ahlstrom asked about availability of online courses, outside of the full degree programs. Dr. Horowitz reviewed the strategy for identifying courses to offer in an online modality. These tend to be courses that are in high demand and that are not able to be offered frequently enough in an in-person format. As another factor that helps determine online course modalities, Dr. Horowitz noted the opportunities during the intersessions and clarified how the flat tuition rate also impacts the availability of online courses and the need to balance these with in-person modalities during the semesters.

Richard Morrisroe asked whether COVID-19 accelerated online courses, and Dr. Horowitz noted that it helped expand the modality by identifying faculty who have an aptitude for teaching online.

Dr. Horowitz continued her update with news about the Academic Master Plan, which is essential to the campus's facilities master plan and continued support for projects from the State University Construction Fund. She and the Director of Facilities Planning presented the Academic Master Plan to the SUCF, which will be seeking a consultant to move forward with the Facilities Master Plan. Dr. Horowitz highlighted some of the degree clusters and the programs that would be explored under those clusters, which will help the university serve new populations of students.

Richard Alexander asked who was involved in identifying the clusters and programs, and Dr. Horowitz reviewed the various stakeholders and methods of collecting input; it has been a campus-wide committee and effort.

Cynthia Ahlstrom asked about whether the RN to BS in Nursing program would be revisited. Dr. Horowitz updated the council that the degree program was well-crafted, but once presented to SUNY, they felt the interest and landscape for those particular programs had changed and we did not move forward with it. Dr. Horowitz clarified that there are other ways to offer high-need programs in that discipline, which are in the Academic Master Plan in more detail. The Academic Master Plan is critical for continuing to move the university forward.

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Dr. Horowitz then noted how the programs in the Academic Master Plan and the Centers of Excellence would be related, building on programs that are already among the university's strengths, and offering a few examples.

Richard Alexander complemented the work of getting the programs in alignment with demand and noted that this is as far as he has seen the university come in its strategy, in his experience.

Steve Keefe asked about the prospects of a doctorate program, and Dr. Horowitz reviewed the steps that will be taken to continue in that direction and clarified terminology around different types of doctorates.

Dr. Horowitz concluded her report, building on the high retention rates that Dr. Kendall had mentioned, and she highlighted the expansion of the ACE program from 150 students to 250 students. She also recognized the great success of the OSCAR Expo (a student research event), with the largest turnout in Fredonia's history, with a 44% increase in attendees and a 57% increase in student research presentations, performances, and exhibits.

Report from Student Affairs

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

Dr. Stenger reviewed the many student activities that have been happening on campus, beginning with the Big Blue Bash, which continued the tradition of an on-campus spring event. Other events include a walk for mental health awareness and many programs in residence life. Dr. Stenger elaborated on the unique support and contribution to student retention in the residence halls and offered examples of how the support and programming impact the well-being and persistence of the students.

The new outdoor track renovation is underway, and the work is expected to be completed next spring. There will be new stadium seating, a press box, and improved lighting. Continuing with athletics updates, Dr. Stenger reviewed some of the many

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awards that the athletics teams have received, with a special mention of the high GPAs of many of the teams, showing their strengths as both students and as athletes.

The search for the new Athletic Director is underway and should be concluded soon, and Dr. Stenger expressed her appreciation for the two current co-directors. There are three candidates visiting campus for interviews.

Dr. Stenger concluded her report with recognition to one of the outstanding student athletes, who received awards for his exceptional resilience, and the coaches and staff who provided life-saving support.

Chairman Pagano remarked on the impressiveness of the high GPAs of the student athletes.

Report from Finance and Administration

Presented by Mr. Wayne Lynch, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Mr. Lynch presented a detailed summary of the university's finances. The overall strategy will be to align the university budget with the SUNY budgetary targets and implement strict expense controls and control planning. When he and his team meets with SUNY each week, they are ensuring that they are using the same sets of numbers as they work through the implementation of the financial plan.

Overall, the university has fairly predictable revenues from state appropriations and tuition. Salaries are the largest expense, which is typical for universities. He continued his presentation with a review of some of the specific numbers, terminology, and tactics.

In closing his report, Mr. Lynch noted the support that SUNY and New York State are providing, such as covering all benefits and the State University Construction fund. Aligning expenses with our revenues is up to the university, and doing this is critical to retain autonomy for the institution. There will be many changes for the institution, but the approach is to become proactive and strategic to operate sustainably, and that will require the commitment from everyone at the institution.

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President Kolison offered closing remarks for this section of the presentation to reinforce his and SUNY's commitment to eliminating the financial deficit.

Richard Alexander asked for clarifications of the roles of each unit and division, and Mr. Lynch explained the process that each area will use to establish their budgets.

Cynthia Ahlstrom asked how the financial plan will impact the development of programs, and Mr. Lynch clarified that he works closely with the Provost to ensure that priorities are resourced and that they are following through with intentional planning. The university is committed to offering strong programs that will lead to revenues, and while the university may need to prioritize and make difficult decisions, the overall goals include growth, which will ensure that academic standards remain a top priority.

Report from the President of the Student Association

Presented by Mr. Dakota Richter, President of Student Association

Mr. Richter offered updates on the incoming officers for SA. The current leadership attended the SUNY-wide SA meetings, and several of their officers will be representing at the SUNY level.

SA has also passed a record number of resolutions and Mr. Richter offered examples of some of these.

Mr. Richter reviewed some of the many other activities from the semester such as the organization of activities night, the induction of members to the Alma Mater Society, engaging in leadership development opportunities, and the benefits of the SA summit, where members engage in trainings to stay up to date on various compliance issues and policies.

For next fall's summit, the SA leadership would like to include administrators so that the students can have an opportunity to connect with them and get to know them. A

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member of their leadership team will be getting in touch to find time with each administrator.

The new student leadership is also continuing to work with the village and student body to find a way to host a weekend event that would help alleviate some of the stress around the end-of-spring partying.

Mr. Richter closed his reports with positive comments about his personal experiences, his growth, and his future plans. He offered gratitude for the various supports that have helped him during his time at Fredonia.

Report from the University Senate

Presented by Ms. Jennifer Wilkins, Chair of University Senate

Ms. Wilkins offered her greetings to the group as the new incoming chairperson for the remainder of the year. She is working with the incoming leaders of Fredonia University Senate to transition the roles.

The executive leadership and senators are interested in working on improving the shared governance process and the program development and review process. Next year, they will be focusing on how to support the conversations, even when difficult, to ensure they are constructive, positive, and help move the university forward.

The senate has approved new bylaws which will help make the senate more inclusive, including CSEA representation.

They are also continuing to look at how they continue and promote advocacy for the value of public higher education. Dr. Bruce Simon has recently been elected as the SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) president, and UFS is working on various statements to advocate at the national level, which will be shared with campuses.

President Kolison offered his gratitude for the collaborative experiences he has had with the Fredonia University Senate leadership and Student Association leadership,

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remarking on the strength of everyone's common interest of the wellbeing of the university.

Remarks from Chair of College Council and College Council Members

Chairman Pagano offered his closing remarks, recognizing the positive outcomes due to the hard work of President Kolison and the cabinet members. He has observed many favorable activities and encouraged continuation of the progress.

Meeting Adjourned

Chairman Pagano called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Steve Keefe and seconded by AJ Dolce. The meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.