

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA  
MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL  
ZOOM/LENNA CONFERENCE ROOM  
MAY 19, 10:30 AM**

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

Guests: Betty Gossett, Cedric Howard, Kevin Kearns, Stephen Kolison, Jr., Michael Metzger, Mary Beth Sievens, Denise Szalkowski, Jeffrey Woodard

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The College Council meeting was called to order at 10:36 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The College Council minutes of February 17, 2021, were approved without modification with a motion by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel and seconded by Mr. Joseph Johnson. Motion carried.

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**

University Senate Chair Mary Beth Sievens informed the Council about new and revised academic programs. A new bachelor of Arts in Writing and a bachelor's in Dance were approved. A master's level program was added in Arts in Strategic Communication (online only), as well as two revised bachelor's programs in Computer Science and Computer Information Systems. Dr. Sievens said new policy guidelines had to be adopted for graduate-level courses to create better pathways for graduate students to enter 4 + 1 or 3 + 3 programs. University Senate also addressed emerging areas of concern due to violations of academic integrity this past year. University Senate and Enrollment and Student Services (ESS) are working collaboratively to create a required online module for incoming students to complete during orientation to address violations of academic integrity. Dr. Sievens added that many students don't understand that even paraphrasing needs to be cited.

Council members asked for more details about the online Master of Arts in Strategic Communication program. The program is designed specifically for professionals who are already working in the communication and public relations field. Emphasis is placed on utilizing digital technology as a means of communicating.

**STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Association (SA) was very active this past academic year. Dr. Cedric Howard explained how SA operates on a calendar year with the election in leadership occurring in December. In January '21, Mr. Israel Ortiz was voted in as SA President by his fellow classmates. Mr. Ortiz's campaign platform focused on student mental health and public safety, both of which he successfully advanced this past year. A student advisory council was appointed to work with University Police to help improve relationships

between students and campus police. SA also proposed and implemented an on-campus wellness lounge to help address student mental health concerns. Mr. Stephen Keefe asked if the Village of Fredonia and City of Dunkirk were included in the campus policing conversations. As of the date of the meeting, the local community was not invited to join these conversations.

Mr. Russell Diethrick, Jr., asked how the campus plans to prepare students to return to in-person instruction. Mrs. JoAnn Nieble also expressed concerns about reacclimating students to campus. Mr. Howard explained that Fredonia staff are well trained in handling pandemics (e.g. Swine Flu) so he feels confident that student needs will be met when they return to campus. Additionally, financial support to address COVID-19 related expenses (testing and PPE) was provided by New York State. Weekly communications by Enrollment and Student Services kept parents well informed this past year and will do the same going forward. Students are encouraged to complete a FERPA release form so that health-related information can be shared with a parent or legal guardian.

Chairman Pagano thanked President Kolison and his staff, including the many COVID-19 volunteers, for such an outstanding job this past year. Council members also shared their appreciation for the weekly communications Dr. Kolison sent out to the campus community and College Council. They were very informative.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Kolison remarked that it was good to finally meet everyone in person.

The President's report included a summary on the pandemic, campus financial goals, upcoming administrative searches, Commencement, and a recent visit with two SUNY Board of Trustees members.

Dr. Kolison said many SUNY campuses had to shut down during COVID, but Fredonia was able to remain open due to the good work of the staff. Cleaning and sanitation services were increased to meet the demands necessitated during the pandemic. A number of additional interventions, including behavior, testing, telework and vaccinations were implemented this past year. Students and employees were reminded regularly to comply with CDC social distancing and hand washing guidelines. COVID testing was done weekly with over 40,000 tests conducted on campus. This was a tremendous amount of work performed by Fredonia staff and volunteers. If a student tested positive, we were able to isolate them in a separate building, thus eliminating the possible spread of the virus. The vast majority of those on campus complied with the SUNY mandate to wear a mask, wash hands, and social distance. Faculty and staff were allowed to telework to reduce the density on campus. SUNY Fredonia's local two-day a week teleworking agreement concludes on June 30, 2021.

Fredonia collaborated with Chautauqua County to host a COVID vaccination clinic in Steele Hall. Over 15,000 local residents benefited from the vaccination site; building goodwill between the campus and the community. According to a recent survey, 46 percent of local residents

received their COVID vaccination on the SUNY Fredonia campus. The vaccine site gave Fredonia positive exposure.

Enrollment decline continues to be a major concern. Dr. Kolison said the campus plans to raise enrollment to 6,000 students by 2024-2025 to help eliminate the spending deficit. Fredonia expects to enroll 4,296 students this fall, 4,710 in 2022-23, 5,195 in 2023-24 and 6000+ by 2024-25. Fredonia needs to reverse its retention numbers and increase its graduate student population. Dr. Kolison believes Fredonia can increase enrollment up to 6000+ students if new programs are adopted. This is going to be a heavy lift, but one that is necessary if we want to sustain the university without a deficit. Fredonia earmarked Stimulus funding to use for marketing purposes to promote the university and to help attract new students. Dr. Kolison reported good news on the retention forefront, with 77 percent of 2019-20 students returning compared to 70 percent in 2016-18.

We had two wonderful hybrid Commencement ceremonies which included multiple in-person stage walks. All ceremonies were live streamed, recorded, and uploaded into a Class of 2020 and a Class of 2021 video. Traditionally, the College Council members are invited to attend the ceremony, but because of CDC restrictions, we had to reduce the number of staff allowed in King Concert Hall. We will return next year to a traditional ceremony with a full platform party in Steele Hall. A total of 917 students graduated (93 graduates, and 824 undergraduates), Over 500 of the eligible students walked. The event, featuring Commencement speaker Thomas Quatroche, Jr., can be viewed online.

The Director of Human Resources search concluded with the successful appointment of Ms. Maria Carroll. Ms. Carroll, resides in Hamburg, NY, and previously worked for Erie Community College and most recently for the private sector. This weekend, Dr. Kolison will meet face-to-face with two Provost finalists and two Chief Diversity Officer finalists. He expects to make an offer for both positions in the next week. The Provost and CDO will begin in late July/early August. The search for a Chief Information Officer was temporarily suspended.

After a permanent Provost has been identified, we will move forward with filling the Acting Dean of the College of Education, School of Music, and the School of Business. As required for accreditation, our Middle States report will reflect these searches are underway. Dr. Kolison anticipates the searches for these critical positions will wrap up before the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Dr. Kolison had the pleasure of meeting in person with SUNY Board of Trustees Chair Merryl H. Tisch and Eunice A. Lewin. Members of the University Senate and a select group of students also joined the meeting. Drs. Tisch and Lewin were extremely complimentary about SUNY Fredonia during their visit.

Dr. Kolison publicly thanked Dr. Kearns for the good work he did as Interim Provost. He served at a most difficult time, converting in-person instruction to online modality in record breaking time. The College Council added their gratitude. Overall, Dr. Kolison said the campus had a

successful year. Fredonia remained open and safe during the pandemic. He is grateful to everyone for their support and encouragement—especially the faculty, staff and students.

Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom asked if students and staff have been reluctant to get the COVID vaccine. Dr. Kolison said he encouraged the campus community to receive the vaccine, but he also respects those who choose not to be vaccinated. SUNY may make the vaccine a requirement for returning students in the fall, however, many issues still need to be addressed such as masks, online instruction, and athletics.

Mrs. Ahlstrom asked if any employees will be allowed to continue teleworking. Dr. Kolison expects some employees will object to having to return to the office, but the expectation will be that unless someone has an underlying medical condition, they must return to the office to work after June 30, 2021.

### **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT**

Dr. Kevin Kearns explained several new and important retention initiatives Academic Affairs rolled out this year. With the assistance of a very generous financial donation, a full-time Retention Coordinator and Academic Success Coach was hired this past spring. Mr. George Morgan has already made some great strides in retention efforts. Mr. Morgan is responsible for monitoring and providing intervention and enhancing students' academic success. He also reconnects with students who leave before completing their degree and he provides assistance and resources to help them achieve completion of their degree. Academic Affairs will introduce an academic exploration program for non-majors, allowing incoming students to take introductory courses with intrusive advising to assist them in getting into a major and staying enrolled. Outreach efforts during the pandemic resulted in an increase of students that reduced the number of non-registered, eligible students by 69 percent. Five fully approved new programs were introduced and approved through SUNY, with a few more are in the pipeline. To address the budget deficit, Academic Affairs reduced the number of faculty from 249 in Fall '18 to 234 in Fall '20 (6 percent decrease). Part-time faculty were reduced from 176 in Fall '18 to 167 in Fall '20. Historically, the decline in faculty has not decreased according to the number of student credit hours. Faculty tenure and promotions include nine one-year extensions, two promoted to Associate Professor, 26 reappointments, 2 promotions to Professor, and three continuing appointments. Eleven semester sabbaticals were deferred, and two full-year sabbaticals were granted for 2020-21. For academic year 2021-22, nine semester long sabbaticals and four full-year sabbaticals were approved. Faculty returning from sabbatical provide a written report outlining their sabbatical activities.

Copies of the Summer Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (RSCA) Grant Report 2019 were shared with College Council members. The report includes the work of the following faculty members: Carrie Fitzgerald, Language, Learning and Leadership; Wentao Cao, Geology and Environmental Sciences; Kay Chen, Communication Disorders and Sciences; Michael Dunham, Physics; Randy Hohle, Sociocultural and Justice Sciences; Christina Jarvis, English; Eileen Lyon, History; Heather McEntarfer, English; Toluwani Oloke, Communication; Darrin

Rogers, Psychology; Ignacio Sarmiento Panez, World Languages and Cultures; Junaid Zubairi, Computer and Information Sciences; Angela Hass, Music, and Jill Reese, Music.

Sabbatical Activities and Accomplishments of the faculty who were awarded sabbatical leave during the 2019-2020 academic year are as follows: KimMarie Cole, Associate Professor, English; Natasha Farney, Professor, School of Music; Timothy Frerichs, Professor, Visual Arts and New Media; Angela Haas, Associate Professor, School of Music; Randolph Hohle, Associate Professor, Sociocultural and Justice Sciences; Lei Huang, Associate Professor, Business Administration; Stephen Kershner, Distinguished Teaching Professor, Philosophy; Bruce Klonsky, Professor, Psychology; Karen Lillie, Associate Professor, Education; Joseph McFall, Associate Professor, Psychology; Sungick Min, Associate Professor, Sport Management; Peter Reinelt, Professor, Economics, and Ted Sharon, Professor, Theatre and Dance.

Dr. Kearns briefly discussed the mental health grant the Research Foundation office has been involved in and the lake research being conducted by Fredonia faculty. Fredonia continues to refine pre- and post- award functions interfacing with the SUNY Research Foundation management team. Most recently, funded external awards were led by Michael Jabot, Michael Dunham, Junaid Zubairi, Courtney Wigdahl-Perry, Michael Milligan and Wentao Cao.

Dr. Kearns said over 90 percent of adjuncts have been reinstated to the payroll, however, each position is scrutinized carefully by Cabinet before filling so as to keep within the budget. Interim Provost Kearns admitted it was a challenging year to keep a good balance.

This past year, the School of Business underwent a pilot program with a Director leading the area rather than a Dean. This allowed us an opportunity to consider reorganizing the school. Our numbers do not show the cost savings is worth not having a Dean oversee the School of Business so we will pursue our traditional structure by hiring a Dean for the School of Business in the immediate future.

The Fredonia Incubator is in its second year of a NYSTAR grant which helps defray the majority of its personnel costs and programming.

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

Vice President Cedric Howard announced that the three-year FTFY average for Fredonia is 883. In May '20, the FTFY reached 613 and in May '21 increased to 753. That's an increase that Admissions and the rest of the campus worked hard to achieve. Fredonia's transfer numbers dropped slightly from 117 in May '20 to 114 in May '21. We are hopeful that we'll reach our enrollment target this fall and have already implemented our campus swat team to help attract students. The number of students entering Fredonia from bordering states of Ohio and Pennsylvania is at an all-time high this fall. The Good Neighbor program was launched two years ago and we are beginning to reap the positive impact of this initiative. We have focused primarily on Pittsburgh and Cleveland, and have increased our out-of-state student population from 25 to 48 students. Dr. Howard said our tuition is very competitive as a result of this initiative.

Chairman Pagano stressed the need for the campus to advertise more. He said ads need to run in Erie, Pa and Pittsburgh, PA to attract students from those bordering states.

Dr. Howard and Mrs. Betty Gossett are working on a complete overhaul of the scholarship process.

Mr. Stephen Keefe asked if Fredonia recruits students from Puerto Rico. Dr. Howard said Fredonia does try to work with local area high schools, especially Jamestown, to recruit a diverse student population, but some students require remedial assistance beyond the services Fredonia offers.

Mrs. JoAnn Niebel thanked Dr. Howard and his team for their good work. She expects enrollment will increase once students know they can return to campus without having to wear a mask.

### **UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT REPORT**

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. Ms. Gossett thanked everyone for their generous support. 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 our student population. Most recently, SUNY Fredonia's fundraising efforts were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in a SUNY comprehensive college fundraising survey.

The Marketing and Communications team did a tremendous job of promoting the 2021 and 2022 Commencement stage walks. Future plans to promote the university include investing in digital marketing (Tic Tok, Spotify, Instagram), as well as expanding traditional means of advertising such as TV and radio ads to target a larger and more diverse audience. Money not spent on travel this past year was reallocated for this purpose. Advertising is a critical investment for the campus. It's also important that we continue to engage Fredonia alumni in our recruitment efforts.

Career Development continues to do important work with experiential learning and internships. This past year during the pandemic, 175 students were placed in an internship. Typically, we have nearly 500 students involved in internships, but this year's numbers are incredible considering the circumstances. The First Destination Survey indicates that 87 percent of 2020 graduates are either employed or attending graduate school. Last year, 92 percent of Fredonia graduates were employed or pursuing their studies. Additionally, 42 percent of graduates were planning to enroll in graduate or professional school (up from 37% the previous year).

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Michael Metzger provided a summary on the 2021-22 New York State budget, including the stimulus funds received for the campus, the current 2021-21 state budget forecast, 2021-22 planning assumptions, a three-year budget forecast, cumulative budget reductions, and Finance and Administration highlights from the past academic year.

SUNY Fredonia was expecting a 20 percent reduction in state funding, however, that was reduced to 5 percent, amounting to a \$2 million savings for the campus. The state provided additional revenue for TAP funding up to \$5,665; TAP gap will be phased out by 2024-25. There was no extension for predictable tuition funding and no adjustments were made to the Excelsior tuition rates which were frozen at the 2016 level, and the criteria for Excelsior eligibility remains unchanged. The campus received \$16.2 million in federal stimulus money. The funds will be applied against the total campus budget shortfall. Based on the current headcount of 4075 students, the unfunded shortfall before stimulus is \$1,638,498. Fredonia's 2021-22 preliminary budget assumptions are based on a headcount of 4,296. The budget includes no permanent reduction in state support, includes all unfunded contractual salary increases, savings from reduced TAP gap scholarship and increases for SUNY-wide union *Agreements*. The budget also includes an \$800,000 reduction in COVID costs, \$250,000 for strategic investments, \$500,000 for campus advertising and a 50 percent reduction in OTPS. Leaving the campus with an unfunded shortfall before the stimulus of \$7,832,006. Going forward, the budget is heavily dependent on meeting its enrollment targets (6,000 students by 2024-25). The Stimulus funds will be put into a government account and applied yearly. The funds give us a grace period to refocus strategic efforts. If enrollment targets are not achieved, PSR reductions may be necessary. This state support gives us an additional \$2.3 million, allowing us to do \$3.8 million better. We fared better than anticipated this past year due to these Stimulus funds; using only \$1.6 of our Stimulus funds this academic year.

Mr. Metzger said cumulatively the campus has reduced its budget by \$15 million over the last three years. State and federal funding have been very generous. Many thanks to Senator Charles Schumer and Governor Cuomo for their support of higher education.

As of last Friday, the solar array project, near the baseball diamond, is generating electricity. This is a 20-year private partnership deal that cost the campus zero dollars. In lieu of providing the land for the project, Fredonia will generate a revenue of \$40,000 to \$50,000 annually from this initiative. The project helps the campus achieve its carbon neutral footprint.

Additional highlights in Finance and Administration include:

- The Western New York Land Conservancy purchase of the forest at the College Lodge
- \$1.1 million spent on personal protective equipment
- Implementation of FREDmart, a new purchasing software
- Initiation of a new laptop program for incoming students
- Transitioning the campus over to VOIP, with a completion date of September '21
- Rolled out a fully automated time and attendance payroll system
- Discussions continue on a shared service agreement with WNY comprehensive colleges
- Completed \$1.4 million in network upgrades

- Fredonia received \$1 million from FSA toward its budget
- FSA struggles to fill a number of open positions
- Erie Dining Hall remains closed; cost prohibitive to bring back online

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Joseph Johnson and seconded by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel.  
The College Council meeting concluded at 1:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Szalkowski, Fredonia College Council Secretary