



## College Council Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Williams Center S204DE

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

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**President's Cabinet Members Present:** President Kolison, Naomi Baldwin, Michael Kelly, Michel Kouadio, Vicki T. Sapp, David Starrett, Tracy Stenger, Jeff Woodard

**Absent:** Karen Rohr, Maria Carroll

**College Council Members Present:** Frank Pagano, Richard Alexander, AJ Dolce, Richard Morrisroe, Tamu Graham-Reinhardt, Rosemarie Rapisarda

**Absent:** Cynthia Ahlstrom, Stephen Keefe, Joe Johnson

**Guests:** Justin Rose, IT; Dr. Bruce Simon, Chair of University Senate; Gordon Carpenter, Chief of University Police; Jeff Handler, Enrollment Management Consultant; Stephen Wright, SA Vice President

### Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:40 a.m.

### Approval of Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes from by Mr. Dolce, which was seconded by Mr. Morrisroe. The minutes were approved.

### Report from the Chair of College Council

Presented by Hon. Frank Pagano, Chair of College Council

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### **Introduction of Chief of Police**

The new Chief of University Police, Chief Gordon Carpenter, was introduced, and he offered a few words about Fredonia. The council members welcomed him to the campus.

### **Proposal of a Resolution**

Chairman Pagano presented a letter of resolution prepared for the Mayor of the Village of Fredonia and the Village Trustees, which appealed to the Village of Fredonia to work with the City of Dunkirk to help improve access to a reliable and safe water supply.

Mr. Morrisroe made a motion to approve the resolution, and it was seconded by Mr. Dolce. The resolution was approved.

Chairman Pagano gave a hardcopy of the resolution to Dr. Baldwin to move forward to the Office of the Mayor and Village Trustees, to be read aloud at the next Village Board Meeting.

A new member of the College Council, Ms. Graham-Reinhardt, joined the meeting and was briefly introduced.

President Kolison introduced a new section of the agenda, to allow for council members to offer updates about their advocacy efforts and engagements that will benefit SUNY Fredonia.

### **Introduction of Consultant for Enrollment Services**

Provost Starrett introduced Mr. Jeff Handler, who spoke about his role as a consultant while SUNY Fredonia is in the search process for a VP of Enrollment Management. He is scheduled to work with us through the end of January and has a solid record of increasing enrollments at other institutions and experience with implementing strategic enrollment management plans.

Mr. Handler's career has been focused on enrollment management. He assured the council members that based on some observations, there is great potential for SUNY Fredonia to succeed. Some of the challenges that Fredonia is experiencing have been 20

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years in the making – these challenges are historical and structural. The good news is that Fredonia is “one of the best kept secrets”. The faculty, deans, and admissions teams are doing wonderful things. By modernizing our approaches, Fredonia should be able to greatly expand our reach and capacity for enrollment.

Mr. Handler offered an opportunity to ask questions.

Through the question/answer period, Mr. Handler offered additional historical perspectives and gave additional examples of modernized approaches. A new model of awarding scholarships that will help Fredonia stay competitive was also discussed, and Mr. Handler emphasized the importance of being perceived as a good value as compared to awarding the most financial aid.

A question was raised about the origin of our student population with the context that many of the students the local school districts do not have enough information about financial aid and scholarships. About 75% of our students come from Western New York.

The university website was discussed with several actions underway to ensure that SUNY Fredonia’s website will help focus on admissions and recruitment while also maintaining other online presence, as needed.

Mr. Handler affirmed that there will be positive results based on the actions SUNY Fredonia is doing now and by doing some new things. There are great things happening at Fredonia that need to be highlighted.

### **Report from the President of the Student Association**

Presented by Ms. Rosemarie Rapisarda, President of Student Association

The SA President, Ms. Rosemarie Rapisarda, “Rosie”, introduced herself as the newly appointed SA President and offered her report, starting with the results of the recent class president elections. They also recently had a professional development summit for student leaders, and they are looking forward to an upcoming Title IX training. Also joining Ms. Rapisarda was Mr. Stephen Wright, SA Vice President, who reviewed activities

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coming up. On Fridays, all clubs will be coordinating a Karaoke activity to help increase student organization activity. In terms of upcoming events, they are hosting a tie-die activity to raise funds for the American Cancer Society, a Safe Halloween in Mason Hall, and the Annual Fall Sweep.

Ms. Rapisarda encouraged the College Council members to participate in the events that they described. More information can be sent, events will be announced on the SA website, and they will be posting flyers around the Fredonia and Dunkirk areas. They can also check the [Events Calendar](#) for these activities and others.

When asked if high school students were able to attend, and the SA leadership offered their willingness to collaborate to expand opportunities that would welcome high school students in efforts to help them understand what university campuses are like. In addition to discussing some of the logistics for high school visits, the group talked about grants that may be available to support these visits, and departments such as the pre-college outreach office that can be resources for promoting these efforts.

### Report from the President

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

President opened his reports with comments on an article in *The Leader*, the student newspaper, about the recent US News and World results, which showed that SUNY Fredonia continues to stay strong in regional rankings.

He then summarized the new strategic plan for SUNY Fredonia, which was provided to each College Council member. The divisions will be working on the next steps of the implementation of the plan, which will guide the campus for the next 5 years.

President Kolison offered updates to the council members on a number of community engagements and recent committee appointments.

SUNY Fredonia is also working on developing a financial sustainability plan that will result in the least disruption. There are three main strategic areas of focus for the plan:

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Growth through new programs and revenues; Increasing operational efficiencies, including utility savings, and; Reductions in expenditures.

As examples, President Kolison reviewed a number of strategies that are helping to build up our infrastructure and capacity to increase enrollment: Enrollment services staffing, IT technologies, marketing efforts, and new degree programs.

President Kolison offered positive reassurance that there is progress, and he encouraged College Council members to help with recruitment by referring a high school student or attending a recruiting event.

Finally, President Kolison announced that he and his family will be moving back to Lanford House this October as the construction work is nearing the next phase but still ongoing.

As a follow-up regarding council member attendance at recruitment events, a list of events will be distributed to the members along with some talking points.

### Report from Academic Affairs

Presented by Dr. David Starrett, Executive Vice President and Provost

Provost Starrett offered updates on the enrollment numbers. The retention rate has improved a great deal as a result of the actions of the staff and the dedicated position overseeing recruitment and academic support areas. Enrollments are up in international students and in students who are from Chautauqua county. The Enrollment team is already admitting students for the Fall 2024 semester, and they are working on engagement and yield with the admits. SUNY will be offering another 2-week free application period, so the team anticipates an uptick in applications at the end of October. Provost Starrett offered examples of some of the techniques they are using to engage with the admitted students in efforts to continue maximizing yield.

Provost Starrett summarized the academic health process, which has been the work of a joint task force with administration and faculty. Programs are typically reviewed every 5

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years, and this year, there was a review of all programs to get a base score. This is a process that helps programs keep on track for improvements and know what strengths to continue to emphasize. Provost Starrett noted that Program Health assessment is not the same as a program reduction process.

The Clinical Mental Health Master's program is moving along, with likelihood of a first cohort of 24 students as early as Spring 2024 or Fall 2024, depending on the final approval from New York State.

Also underway is an MBA Accounting, which is currently being reviewed by SUNY. The current online MEd in Literacy has been submitted for review to receive SUNY Online Plus status, and the RN to BS Nursing program is at the curriculum development stage.

### Report from Finance and Administration

Presented by Mr. Michael Kelly, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Due to significant salary savings and other efficiencies, SUNY Fredonia was able to cover the shortfall in last year's budget, with additional savings carried over to help cover the current year's deficit. In addition to exceeding the enrollment target this academic year, Fredonia has started the current fiscal year in a much better position than in earlier budgeted projections.

VP Kelly reviewed some of the progress being made on capital projects – McEwan/Maytum Plaza, LoGrasso Hall, and the Mason Hall, Lanford House, and Gregory Hall.

Meal plan sales are slightly on the rise, and the bookstore is working on e-commerce sales for FSU merchandise.

New York State will be implementing electric vehicle mandates for state-operated agencies over the next several years. The division is in the early stages of planning for that change. The division and FSA are awaiting news about whether SUNY Fredonia will be able to host a summer music camp, which depends on NYS funding. After reviewing

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some other operational updates, such as steps to reduce utility expenses, exploring bike patrols for UPD, and upcoming internal control reviews, VP Kelly concluded his report.

A question was raised about the plans for the athletics programs and whether SUNY Fredonia is still exploring this area. Mr. Kelly confirmed that this is part of the charge with the newly appointed Athletics Strategic Planning committee.

### Report from Student Affairs

Presented by Dr. Tracy Stenger - Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

VP Stenger reviewed some of the opportunities from SUNY to use specific, targeted funds. SUNY Fredonia has been successful with proposals for these allocations, and has been awarded a total of almost \$1M in SUNY Transformational Funds for the Accelerate, Complete, Engage program, which will provide funding over 3 years. Provost Starrett added that these transformational funds will specifically help serve under-served populations such as first-year, transfer students, and pell-eligible students.

Over \$720,000 in funding was also awarded for five other areas that SUNY is highlighting: Food insecurity, Support for students with disabilities, Mental health supports, Graduate student fee mitigation, and Support for internship opportunities. While Fredonia already has these services in place, this will help us expand the services they can provide and increase their capacities to help students.

### Report from the University Senate

Presented by Dr. Bruce Simon, Chair of University Senate

Dr. Simon reviewed some of the data related to direct state support that is informing the advocacy efforts of the University Senate. They will be focusing on a few components with their advocacy work and have approved the following resolutions:

- New York State Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Resolution
- SUNY Cost of Attendance and State Financial Aid Resolution
- SUNY State Funding Allocation Formula Resolution
- SUNY Public Good Index Resolution

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Dr. Simon made an appeal for ways that College Council members can help: Advance our mission, support the new strategic plan, and advance the message about the value of public universities.

### Reports from Other Areas

President Kolison updated the College Council that by the next meeting in December, he will have some new IT developments to discuss.

### Remarks from Chair of College Council and College Council Members

A question was raised about what temporary housing options are available during emergency weather situations, and VP Stenger confirmed that the residence halls have a number of "safe rooms" to provide temporary housing to students when needed for short term emergencies. In larger emergency situations, such as in extreme weather, the university would be providing support through larger emergency team protocols.

### Meeting Adjourned

Chairman Pagano called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, and a motion was made by Mr. Morrisroe and seconded by Mr. Alexander. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.