

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL
October 7, 2020

Present: Cynthia Ahlstrom, Richard Alexander, AJ Dolce, Joseph Johnson, Stephen Keefe, JoAnn Niebel, Frank Pagano

Absent: Jillian Beard, Russell Diethrick

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

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The College Council meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The College Council minutes of June 10, 2020 were approved without modification with a motion by Mr. Richard Alexander and seconded by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel. Motion carried.

College Council members virtually and in-person introduced themselves to President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr. In a time of unprecedented crisis, the Council expressed their gratitude to Dr. Kolison for taking over the helm at such a challenging time. As the advisory board to the President, the Council offered their ongoing support and commitment to President Kolison.

WELCOME DR. STEPHEN H. KOLISON, JR.

Dr. Kolison acknowledged the College Council's work and thanked them for their role in his appointment to SUNY Fredonia. As Fredonia's 14th President, he's honored to serve and looks forward to working with the Council in the years ahead. As to be expected, he said his first two months have been overwhelmingly busy. He provided a brief background on his academic and administrative experience and briefly shared his excitement about a new vision for the campus.

UPDATE ON COVID REOPENING

Led by Ms. Tracy Collingwood, the Fall Reopening Taskforce implemented a campus plan which was nothing short of a success. Ms. Collingwood said, along with the committee, many campus colleagues helped to implement and manage the plan. She's especially proud of the faculty, staff, and students who complied with COVID-19 guidelines put into place at the beginning of the semester. The President and the President's Cabinet played a key role in helping navigate the "storm," according to Ms. Collingwood. Vice Presidents were key communicators in getting time sensitive information to their staff.

President Kolison's steady and unwavering leadership brought a sense of trust that made the difference in the success of Fredonia's reopening. His appointment meant we were able to lead

with a confident momentum. Although there were many sleepless nights during the planning stages and even into the execution, overall, the good decisions and thoroughly vetted reopening plan guided us through unprecedented times.

Ms. Collingwood explained that the Fall Reopening Steering Committee meets weekly and regularly corresponds with the following three subcommittees: **Student Life** (chaired by Dr. Tracy Stenger), **Academic Technology** (chaired by Dr. Andy Karafa), and **Budget** (chaired by Drs. Susan McNamara and Andrew Siegel). Additionally, Jeff Woodard, Director of Marketing and Communications, widely shares COVID-19 information with the campus community through social media platforms. A COVID-19 web page was created to help mitigate a plethora of questions coming into the President's office for immediate response or action. A parent portal was also developed to keep parents abreast of the evolving COVID-19 policies and procedures implemented on campus.

Most recently, it became evident that additional staffing would be necessary to help facilitate the need for increased testing on campus. Emergency Planning Coordinator, Charles Holder, was appointed temporarily full-time to assist with employee and student testing in Steele Hall. To offer further assistance, Ms. Kelly Vincent, was hired as a Response Coordinator, primarily serving in the residence halls to help triage students.

Campus testing began in August with 100 surveillance tests a week. Based on further guidance, SUNY Fredonia increased its testing from 100 to 300 saliva tests per week. Student and employee volunteers continue to assist with the increase in campus testing. Last week, SUNY mandated that SUNY campuses must conduct a minimum of 1,500 tests a week (1000 students/500 employees). The Fall Reopening Taskforce is working to identify the infrastructure to handle this volume of testing which will begin in the next few weeks.

Several quick actions taken over the course of the summer made a huge difference to the success of Fredonia's reopening. Faculty, staff, students, and campus visitors were all required to wear facial coverings while in the core area of the campus. Social distancing and hand washing were reinforced and hand sanitizers and facial masks were made readily available as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees and students. A variety of academic modality options (virtual, face-to-face, and hybrid) were offered to students to complete their studies.

College Council members were made aware of a live dashboard on the Fredonia website. As of today's reporting, Fredonia has 10 active cases. Fredonia's COVID-19 numbers include students and staff both on- and off-campus, including those not living in the immediate area. Students who test positive quarantine for 14 days and then take a follow up test before being released from quarantine. Local county health departments are notified when a student from their county tests positive. Fredonia's testing team remains in constant contact with local municipalities. Effective September 26, in-person classroom instruction will be suspended for campuses reaching 100 cases over a two-week period.

An initiative by Upstate Medical has made it possible for Fredonia to provide continuous random surveillance testing in Steele Hall. Testing is particularly important for those students who are positive but are not showing any symptoms. Surveillance testing, also referred to as pool testing, allows for 12 people to be screened at one time in the same testing pool. The testing is done using saliva rather than swabbing inside the patient's nose. Individuals administer the saliva testing themselves, swabbing their mouths for 10 to 15 seconds, and then providing the saliva sample to medical personnel.

UNIVERSITY SENATE REPORT

University Senate Chair Mary Beth Sievens reported that Senate held a special meeting over the summer to address employees' concerns about initial testing plans that we're not as robust as current testing. Moving forward, Senate plans to appoint a taskforce to address faculty teaching workloads. The campus budget continues to be an ongoing topic of discussion. Working with Academic Affairs, a gender and ethnic proposal has been submitted to SUNY for final approval. Overall, faculty have done a tremendous job teaching virtually and in person.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Kolison thanked Ms. Collingwood and the many other staff members for an exceptional job managing COVID-19. To keep the campus well informed, President Kolison sends a weekly COVID-19 communication message to faculty, staff, and students. A well-received piece of the weekly communication has been the recognition of FREDHeroes.

The 2021 rankings from the *U.S. News & World Report* of "Best Colleges," ranked SUNY Fredonia 16th among the top public universities in the North. In the larger category of both public and private institutions in the North, SUNY Fredonia tied for 67th (out of 176 institutions) in the top tier of the "Best Regional Universities."

On Sunday, September 5, Dr. Kolison welcomed Chancellor Jim Malatras to campus. Chancellor Malatras' visit was prompted by a growing number of positive COVID-19 cases on state campuses. Along with members of Cabinet, University Senate Chair Mary Beth Sievens, and College Council Chairman Frank Pagano, Dr. Kolison met with the Chancellor to explain what Fredonia has been doing, more specifically following the suspension of 13 Fredonia students who violated the Student Code of Conduct after hosting an off-campus gathering. Immediately prior to the Chancellor's visit, Fredonia's dashboard noted 64 cases of COVID-19 with 63 active cases. Chancellor Malatras helped us understand how SUNY measures the COVID-19 numbers. Dr. Kolison said it was a very good and productive meeting and the Chancellor was appreciative of how Fredonia is continuing to handle the pandemic. Prior to his stop in Fredonia, the Chancellor met with SUNY leaders in Buffalo to announce that Western New York campuses will increase their pool testing frequency in response to the recent uptick in cases.

Dr. Kolison shared an enrollment graph with College Council members. He said the Council needs to understand the implications of our financial standing based on these declining enrollment numbers. As noted in the graph, enrollment has steadily declined at SUNY Fredonia since 2009. Enrollment poses the biggest threat to the future of our campus. Enrollment and

Student Services and Academic Affairs are working collaboratively to identify ways to stabilize and reverse Fredonia's declining enrollment trend through admission strategies and retention efforts.

The PA/OH Good Neighbor Policy was launched this fall, and despite the challenges we face with the pandemic, we've been able to successfully double our student numbers from those two states. Dr. Kolison suggested we re-access our recruitment boundaries to include Chicago, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh.

Fredonia is moving forward with filling a full-time Retention and Academic Success Coach position. This newly created position will provide high-touch support to help motivate, advise, assess, and identify students' goals and interests to better ensure academic progress as we try to increase student retention, success, and program completion. The Retention and Academic Success Coach will work with new students, students on probation, students who are considering withdrawing and students identified as at-risk. The position was made possible by a generous financial donation.

Former President Dennis Hefner had requested during his interim appointment that SAT scores be raised for incoming students, however, SUNY suspended all state tests for this year and the following. Admissions will revisit the SAT minimums beginning with the Class of 2022.

Due to the pandemic, Fredonia experienced a significant decline in first year students. Dr. Cedric Howard estimates the decline in downstate students is approximately 22 percent. We hope once we're past the pandemic, those same students will matriculate as sophomores.

Mrs. JoAnn Niebel gave kudos to Vice President Howard. Considering enrollment is down statewide, she said Dr. Howard has done a remarkable job of maintaining Fredonia's enrollment numbers.

Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom asked if it's typical to see both undergraduate and graduate enrollment numbers decline at the same time. Dr. Kevin Kearns explained that typically, in a recession, graduate enrollment goes up, however, Fredonia doesn't offer many online graduate programs, making it difficult for non-traditional student to attend college. Fredonia is slowly adopting to students' needs by trying to bolster its online offerings. Most recently, two new graduate programs were introduced: a Certificate of Advance Study in Cybersecurity and a Certificate of Advance Study in Child Advocacy. The Cybersecurity program will be offered by the Department of Computer and Information Sciences and the Child Advocacy program will be offered by the College of Education. A Data Science minor is also being added next semester through the Department of Mathematical Sciences. This summer, we introduced a Certificate of Advance Study in Educational Leadership online. This new degree program is for teachers interested in becoming school administrators. Teachers who have earned both their bachelors and masters degrees and have taught for at least five years can apply. This program is of particular interest to those students who are already place-bound and need an online program.

Dr. Kolison announced that Fredonia will become a laptop campus beginning next fall. The goal is to create an opportunity for every student to connect to instruction regardless of their circumstances. In four years, every Fredonia student, regardless if they're full-time or part-time, will be provided with a robust Microsoft Windows or Apple laptop equipped with the latest technology to meet their basic computing needs throughout their academic career. The devices will be preloaded with standardized University software. The Student Laptop program will be a partnership between ITS and the Faculty Student Association (FSA). Finance and Administration is developing a plan to identify funding to support this initiative.

Dr. Kolison said he's strategically moving forward with permanently filling a number of interim positions before academic year 2021: Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs (EVPAA), Chief Diversity Officer (full-time), Chief Information Officer, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Admissions.

Conversations have started with University Senate about three vacant dean positions in Business, Education, and the School of Music. Since these positions report directly to the Provost, their appointments will begin after the Executive Vice President and Provost has been hired.

Mr. Richard Alexander asked if the Vice President for Engagement and Economic Development position will be back filled. No, the position was merged with University Advancement.

The academic calendar was revised for Fall '20 and Spring '21. Fall in-person classes will conclude November 20 and students will complete the remainder of the semester online. Classes for Spring 2021 will begin February 3, 2021. There will be no spring break or travel days built into the spring calendar. Commencement will be held May 15, but a decision has not been made whether it will be conducted in person or virtually.

Fredonia's next Strategic Plan begins 2023. After a committee has been assigned, work will commence on developing a new plan.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Dr. Kearns said he's very proud of the faculty who have done an exceptional job converting to a number of different teaching modalities and continuing to support students' needs. Fredonia's online learning team has done a phenomenal job of making resources available to faculty, staff, and students. Lack of available Wifi was a problem for many students who needed to connect remotely for instruction, but the Fredonia College Foundation was able to raise nearly \$200,000 to help offset student technology needs.

SUNY students were sent a survey this fall regarding online classes. Nearly 500 students completed the survey, and we'll be reviewing those responses as we plan for the future.

Council members asked if enrollment is down in the College of Education. Fredonia's education numbers are strong and consistent. As the result of a number of district-wide public school

retirements, there is a high demand for teachers, and we've been successful at recruiting new students into this field of study.

Dr. Kearns acknowledged the good work of the interim deans and directors who stepped up to assist this fall following the retirement of several key administrators: Dr. Anna Thibodeau (Education), Dr. Linda Hall (Business), and Mr. Daniel Ihasz (School of Music).

Students were invited to submit business proposals for the sixth annual Student Business Competition to compete for an office space in the Incubator. The winner will have access to Incubator services including mentoring, networking, professional consulting, education opportunities, administrative and business services, and access to a work-ready space. The competition is open to all majors and class levels.

Council members asked how musical and theatrical performances are being conducted on campus during the pandemic. Dr. Kearns said chorus practices are held outside in the amphitheater (weather permitting) and faculty have adopted creative online learning tools for music and theatre students. Utilizing campus auditoriums and PPE, faculty and students have achieved remarkable results for in-person instruction.

Dr. Kolison charged the Provost Council with identifying new online interdisciplinary degree programs. Working collaboratively with the Senate, we're considering entrepreneurships and opportunities in health care.

ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

Dr. Howard said the Student Health Center has been busy dealing with COVID-19 testing. Student acceptance letters for Fall 2021 will go out next Friday. Overall, student applications are coming in strong. Across the system, enrollment is down 20 percent, but Fredonia is only down nine percent. Council members asked if the number of students living off campus has declined. Dr. Howard said off-campus numbers are roughly the same as last year. We're primarily down first year on campus students by 300.

As a cost-effective means of operating the University Police department, two dispatchers were hired. By hiring non-certified dispatchers, we are able to realize a significant savings which allows us to reduce overtime costs. Both dispatchers previously worked for Chautauqua County so no additional training was required.

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

The College Council approved a resolution to modify the dollar amounts associated with naming spaces in Houghton Hall. A motion was made by Richard Alexander, seconded by JoAnn Nieble. Motion carried.

Mrs. Gossett announced the campuses campaign will wrap up December 31. As of today, the campaign is approaching \$24 million. The Foundation remains optimistic as many endowments and investments have rebounded.

The Student Emergency Relief Fund brought in over \$190,000; the fund includes a match from SUNY. This fund has allowed us to help students with their technology needs during the pandemic. Despite these unprecedented times, the Foundation continues to engage with businesses and donors virtually. Marketing and Communications did a wonderful job of preparing the campus for the fall reopening. Banners, signage, and information about PPE were managed by the Marketing and Communications team.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Vice President Michael Metzger said the campus' shortfall has been offset by reducing campus expenses and not filling vacant positions. Fredonia's request for a loan from SUNY has been postponed until the end of the year. At the next College Council meeting, Mr. Metzger will present a budget forecast for 2021, and he will provide a brief explanation of the budget acronyms in the budget report. The budget will be adjusted to reflect all COVID-19 expenses.

The solar array project will soon be complete. The array is located adjacent to the northwest end of the campus. The array is the largest solar array in the SUNY system. Mitsubishi holds the power purchase agreement and is responsible for all maintenance on the solar array. The actual savings for the campus is nominal, approximately \$30,000-45,000 a year, however, the 20-year solar array allows us to be carbon neutral.

Work continues on Houghton Hall. Because the project was shut down in March, it is running slightly behind schedule. We expect to occupy the building in Fall 2021. Work on the east side of Reed Library will be completed this fall. The west side of the building will be done next spring/summer. FSA can no longer afford to maintain the Alumni House so they've donated it to the campus. State construction dollars will be used to make necessary renovations to the Alumni House. Fenner House, which was slated to be demolished following an architectural study commissioned by the campus, will remain intact and unoccupied. SHIPO will not allow the building to be demolished so the area around the building will be turned into a park like entrance. The trailer near Fenner House will be demolished and removed from the site. Electrical and mechanical work to bring Lanford House up to code will begin next June. The garage at 194 Central Avenue will be demolished.

FSA contributes \$1.25 million annually to the campus. FSA has been utilizing their reserves to cover their losses this fall, but next year will be extremely challenging for them to meet their financial obligation to the campus if enrollment stays stagnant.

Mrs. Ahlstrom inquired about campus water costs due to the Village wide water issue. Mr. Metzger said the incident cost the campus approximately \$100,000.

Chairman Pagano appreciates the actions the President and his Cabinet have taken to address the campus shortfall by working together to reduce campus expenses.

A motion was made to adorn by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel and seconded by Mr. Richard Alexander. Motion carried. The College Council meeting concluded at 12:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Szalkowski
Assistant to the President and College Council Secretary