

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA
MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL
FREDONIA TECHNOLOGY INCUBATOR
OCTOBER 2, 2019**

Present: Cynthia Ahlstrom, Richard Alexander, Russell Diethrick, Joseph Johnson, Seth Meyer, JoAnn Niebel, Frank Pagano

Guests: Betty Gossett, Dennis Hefner, Cedric Howard, Brent Isaacson, Kevin Kearns, Michael Metzger, Mary Beth Sievens, Denise Szalkowski, Jeffrey Woodard

Absent: Michael Cerrie, Anthony Dolce

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The College Council meeting was called to order at 1:16 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The College Council minutes of May 8, 2019 were approved without modification with a motion by Richard Alexander and seconded by JoAnn Niebel.

INTRODUCTION OF CHIEF OF UNIVERSITY POLICE

Chairman Frank Pagano welcomed Fredonia University Police Chief Brent Isaacson. Now in his 11th week, Mr. Isaacson said he has over 23 years of experience with the FBI. A native of Jamestown, NY, and a graduate of the University of Rochester, Mr. Isaacson took an interest in behavioral analysis while working for the FBI and returned to school to earn a master's degree in psychology. He's been heavily involved with K-12 schools in the county, helping to build an off ramp for students who are on a path to violence.

Mr. Russell Diethrick questioned the connection between offenders and the violence they're exposed to prior to an offense. Chief Isaacson explained that offenders are often motivated by a grievance. Mrs. JoAnn Niebel suggested Chief Isaacson connect with Fredonia's health professional students to offer his expertise.

Chief Isaacson was sworn in by Interim President Dennis Hefner on July 8 at a ceremony held in the Kelly Family Auditorium in the Science Center. Since that time, he's developed some important college and community partnerships with local school districts.

INTRODUCTION OF MIDDLE STATES CO CHAIR

Chairman Pagano introduced Mary Beth Sievens, Professor of History, chair of University Senate, and Fredonia's Middle States Co-chair. Along with Co-chair Tracy Collingwood, she's been overseeing seven Middle States working groups on the development of a first draft to be

submitted to Middle States Visiting Chair Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrson before the end of the week.

UPDATE ON PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Chairman Pagano has agreed to serve as chair of SUNY Fredonia's Presidential Search Committee. The committee consists of 19 members including JoAnn Niebel, Stephen Keefe, Richard Alexander and Seth Meyer. Search Committee members are expected to make every effort to attend committee meetings. Mr. Alexander will serve as Search Committee Co-chair.

Dr. Hefner announced that 13 search firms expressed an interest in Fredonia's presidential search. The Search Consultant Committee will identify a presidential search firm after conducting online video interviews. Once a firm has been identified, the search committee will commence their meetings, beginning with a charge by Chancellor Kristina Johnson. The search committee will then identify a small pool of candidates to interview. Although a timetable has not been set, Dr. Hefner expects the naming of SUNY Fredonia's 14th president to be before summer 2020. Chairman Pagano would like the new president to work with Dr. Hefner and Vice President Michael Metzger before the budget is due July 1.

One important difference with this year's search is that SUNY has mandated it be a confidential search. Therefore, candidates' names will not be publicly disclosed and there will be no open forums. SUNY anticipates a larger pool of interested candidates because it's a closed search. SUNY conducted two successful closed searches last year. Following today's meeting, the Presidential Search Committee's members' names will be released to the campus community.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hefner said he was delighted that Fredonia ranked 13th among top public universities in the North in the 2020 edition of *U.S. News and World Report's* "Best Colleges." These rankings represent a comprehensive overview of how colleges rank based on a wide set of accepted indicators of excellence. The rankings help students and their families compare data from nearly 2,000 colleges and universities. Fredonia was also ranked high by *Princeton Review* and *Kiplinger*.

Due to a steady population decline in Western New York, Fredonia will begin recruiting students in metropolitan areas closer to Fredonia including PA and OH. A PA/OH Good Neighbor Scholarship will be offered to out-of-state students; no cap on the number of eligible applicants. The scholarship will make Fredonia's tuition competitive with what students in those two states now pay.

Dr. Hefner continues to work with University Senate, Planning and Budget, and Administration staff on developing a four-year correction budget plan. Still in the planning stages, Dr. Hefner will share the plan with College Council once finalized.

MIDDLE STATES REACCREDITATION UPDATE

Middle States Reaccreditation is moving forward with a campus visit by Middle States Visiting Chair Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrson from Clarion University, PA, October 24-25. The full team campus visit will be March 29 – April 1. Dr. Hefner thanked Co-chairs Mary Beth Sievens and Tracy Collingwood for their good work on developing the Middle States draft report.

The Rockefeller Arts Center 50th Anniversary celebration kicked off with a dinner on September 20th in the Williams Center Multipurpose Room followed by a spectacular 50th Anniversary Gala Pops Concert in King Concert Hall the following evening. Earning the reputation as one of the best performances in the history of the campus, the concert featured 15 alumni performing favorite Broadway songs.

ENROLLMENT

Dr. Cedric Howard provided an update on campus enrollment. Overall, Fredonia is down 4% or 206 students, however; Admissions is optimistic about the quality of the class. Fifty-two percent of incoming students received merit awards or are at the top of their class. This year brought another record number of applications – up 1.8%, making it the largest number of students admitted to Fredonia, but yield (admits becoming deposits) dropped, resulting in a lower number of incoming freshmen. Moving forward, we still need to address our yield and retention efforts. Dr. Howard believes the PA/OH Good Neighbor Scholarship will help attract students from Cleveland, Erie, and Pittsburgh – all within driving distance to Fredonia. To address retention issues, Enrollment and Student Services has restructured their division to better address the student experience.

Fredonia began recruiting students from the downstate area when the local population began to decline, but students from such a distance face two challenges, 1) adjusting to a rural campus and 2) Driving such a long distance. As a result, Fredonia is losing many students from the downstate area through non-retention. We hope to take our out-of-state PA/OH student enrollment from 30 to 70 students in the next year. Even though we don't have a recruiter stationed in PA/OH, we have a territorial recruiter visiting high schools in those states. We're also utilizing social media to help with our recruitment efforts. Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) continues to fine tune the campus' plan to increase and sustain enrollment.

RETENTION

SEM is looking at ways to holistically address retention. There are a number of reasons students are leaving, but the majority of students leave between their second and third or fourth and fifth semesters. We need to focus on that timeframe to understand why students are leaving, and we need to understand why we've lost such a high percentage of students of color. If there's an economic or geographic reason, we need to identify it. Third year students who leave are primarily going to the University of Buffalo. Many others are leaving for Rochester or Syracuse. We need to mitigate those students from leaving. Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom questioned

whether this issue is specific to Fredonia and if there are certain things we could have controlled to prevent this retention issue. Certainly bad press at the wrong time did not help our enrollment efforts. The campus is going through a number of potentially disruptive changes, but Dr. Hefner has methodically slowed some of them down. Currently, Fredonia's graduate enrollment numbers are down 55%. We have four to five graduate programs in the pipeline and a number of initiatives that are student friendly to help with campus enrollment and retention efforts. We are working to address these complicated issues. Also, the campus received a SUNY PRODiG grant to help attract underrepresented faculty.

DATA FLIGHT TRACKER PRESENTATION

Student Inderdeep Singh Bajwa and Professor Junaid Zubairi presented on Dr. Zubairi's patented flight data tracker. The device has the potential of eliminating the need to recover the "black box" following an airplane crash. Inderdeep assisted Dr. Zubairi, a senior faculty member who focuses on student-centered research and learning, at the Fredonia Technology Incubator this summer. Through the financial assistance of a SUNY Research Foundation grant, they received marketing assistance for the device.

UPDATE ON CAMPUS BUDGET

Mr. Michael Metzger announced that Fredonia's 2018-2019 budget was finalized and closed on June 30. The budget came in much better than anticipated. We had tremendous savings due to efforts to reduce spending and postponing hires. Actions taken immediately this summer helped with closing the budget gap without having to borrow from SUNY

Phase I work on Houghton Hall (exterior and interior) continues and is on schedule. The bleachers in Dods Hall were replaced and the roofs were replaced on Marvel and McGinnies Halls. Steele Hall received a renovation. Phase II for Houghton includes work on the basement and floors 1 and 2 will begin soon. We still need to secure funding to complete Houghton Hall. A meeting is planned with the SUNY Construction Fund to discuss completion of the building. It's important we get funding for the design work so it can be included as part of this year's budget. Work is gearing up on the Rockefeller Arts Center window replacement. The air handling units and controls in Mason Hall were replaced due to an air handling issue. This was not an exposure issue because the air handling units are on the roof and do not recirculate air back into the building. The high levels detected may have been a result of warmer summer temperatures and increased pollen. Dr. Hefner said there may have been inaccuracies in the testing too. Two of the buildings have been retested and the same levels were not detected. We're awaiting final findings.

NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

SUNY approved a few new certificate programs for Fredonia including a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) in Advocacy Studies, CAS in Cybersecurity, Masters in Literacy, and a Masters in Strategic Communication. The first online program at Fredonia will also be introduced -- a

Masters of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). University Senate approved a B.S. in Environmental Sciences, and that too will be forwarded to SUNY for approval.

Fredonia will begin to offer a five-year B.S. to M.S. in biology. We'll also reopen a superintendent program that we expect will attract a large cohort of applicants. This 30-credit graduate certificate program will be offered exclusively online.

To promote recruitment and to bring strategic faculty diversity and pipeline-building plans to fruition, Fredonia applied for and received a SUNY PRODiG grant.

ACT CONFERENCE

Frank is going to attend the ACT conference in Cooperstown. This will be the first time in 10 years that he is not serving as chairman of the scholarship committee.

REPORTS FROM VPS

Interim Vice President Betty Gossett said the *Nurturing* Innovation Campaign is going well with over 40% of faculty and staff making a contribution to the campaign.

Vice President Metzger said the Fredonia Retirement Incentive was a success with 29 employees out of 80 eligible employees retiring under the incentive. Council members questioned the transfer of state funds to cover the budget. Mr. Metzger explained that campus reserves can be used against the structural deficit.

Mr. Joseph Johnson asked if Dr. Kevin Kearns will remain in the Provost position permanently. He also asked about the appointment of a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Dr. Kearns was appointed as Interim Provost and Dr. Saundra Liggins is serving as the Diversity Director on an interim basis.

REORGANIZATION UPDATE

The reorganization plan, which may have impacted enrollment due to the misperception that some majors would be discontinued, is partially on hold this year. To avoid campus uncertainty, we're rolling out a pilot plan on a much smaller scale. We'll review the success or the failures of the pilot reorganization after a year and then decide if it's best for the campus or if there's a better plan for Fredonia. Once a permanent President has been appointed, those decisions can be made by the new president. Dr. Mary Beth Sievens said the faculty are very pleased to see we're approaching the reorganization rationally since University Senate narrowly defeated it when it was introduced at Senate.

Mr. Russell Diethrick asked what impact athletic scholarships have on enrollment. Dr. Hefner explained that as a Division III university Fredonia students are not eligible for athletic scholarships; only academic merit based scholarships.

Chairman Pagano thanked Dr. Hefner for his willingness to return to Fredonia to help lead the campus during a time of turmoil. Along with his senior staff, Dr. Hefner is doing a great job.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. JoAnn Niebel and seconded by Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom. The Council meeting concluded at 2:58 PM.

A tour of the Fredonia Technology Incubator followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Szalkowski, Fredonia College Council Secretary