

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT FREDONIA
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL
ZOOM
June 10, 2020

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

Absent: Michael Cerrie

Guest: Betty Gossett, Dennis Hefner, Cedric Howard, Kevin Kearns, John McCune, Natasha Matteli, Michael Metzger, Mary Beth Sievens, Denise Szalkowski, Jeff Woodard

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The College Council meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The College Council minutes of February 19, 2020 were approved without modification with a motion by Richard Alexander and seconded by JoAnn Niebel. Motion carried.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH UPDATE

College Council Chairman Frank Pagano had a call this morning with members' of the Chancellor's staff at SUNY and learned that the selection of SUNY Fredonia's president has not been finalized yet. The SUNY Board of Trustees has not made a selection yet due to the large number of presidential vacancies and the recent resignation of Chancellor Kristina Johnson. If necessary, Dr. Dennis Hefner will remain in the interim post for a few additional weeks so that SUNY will not need to appoint an Officer-in-Charge during the transition. Chancellor Johnson announced she is resigning effective September 1 to lead The Ohio State University. An interim Chancellor will be named sometime this summer.

Frank thanked Dr. Hefner for his continued good work as interim president. He remarked, "Fredonia will never forget you."

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

Dr. Hefner acknowledged the good work of Middle States Accreditation Co-chairs Mary Beth Sievens and Tracy Collingwood. As part of the requirements for maintaining accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the campus is required to engage in a college-wide Self-Study process every eight years. MSCHE's member institutions must be approved for accreditation to be awarded federal financial aid dollars. This was the first time in the history of the campus that the Middle States visit was conducted virtually. At the end of March, the team conducted virtual meetings with various community members and campus committees. At the conclusion of their interviews, the Visiting Team presented their oral report, announcing that the campus passed every standard. The report was submitted to the

Middle States Commission and we anticipate we'll receive formal notice sometime in July. Two areas the campus will likely need to report back on in two years are institutional effectiveness and campus diversity. Overall, we are very pleased with the outcome as this was very good news for the SUNY Fredonia campus. Dr. Hefner said he was proud of everyone who was involved in the process. Dr. Mary Beth Sievens added that the visit wouldn't have been successful without the expertise and leadership of Dr. Hefner. She added her sincere thanks to the College Council members who participated in the virtual meetings.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Dr. Hefner gave kudos to the many faculty and staff who made distance education a viable option for Fredonia students this past spring semester. In only 10 days, the campus turned "in-person" classroom instruction into "distance education" instruction. Over 2,000 residential students returned home and only 113 remained on campus to finish out their spring semester.

The presidential search and the Middle States Accreditation visits were both conducted virtually and over sixty percent of the campus workforce telecommunicated from home this past spring semester. Only essential staff remained on campus. Regardless of whether an employee remained on campus or worked from home, state employees remained on payroll. Western New York is now in Phase 2 and supervisors of multi-person offices will return to campus on Monday, June 15 while other 12-month employees will return on Monday, June 22.

CELEBRATORY CLASS VIDEO

In recognition of students who were eligible to graduate this spring, Marketing and Communications produced a video to recognize graduates. Dr. Hefner acknowledged the good work of Jeff Woodard, Jim Gibbons, Lisa Eikenburg, Denise Szalkowski and Raleigh Hawk on a top-notch video (Fredonia.edu-2020) which showcases many traditional pieces of Commencement as well as over 400 self-submitted photos of graduates. Dr. Hefner said he received many positive comments about the video including one from a parent of a student who passed away before she began her studies on campus.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION

According to Vice President Michael Metzger, the campus will apply for a loan from SUNY in the fall of 2021. The amount of the loan will be significantly less than what we had expected to borrow due to budgetary cuts made this past year.

As the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all non-essential campus construction work ceased temporarily on campus. Construction reopened in May under very strict COVID guidelines. Summer work on campus includes the window replacement project at Reed Library, roof replacement at Mason Hall, and Houghton Hall renovations. As for a delay in completing projects, the expectation is that all three projects will be completed on schedule.

UNIVERSITY SENATE REPORT

University Senate held elections for officers and the current slate of officers was re-elected for the 2020-21 academic year, according to Professor and Senate Chair Mary Beth Sievens. Senate

held two virtual meetings this past semester. Ongoing meetings are critical to keep the curriculum approval process moving along. Senate approved the following undergraduate programs: minor in Music Industry, revised BFA in Dance, and revised BS in Psychology. Senate also approved the following graduate programs: Master of Music Therapy, and revised Master of Music in Composition.

Senate approved a policy on Open Access to allow scholarship to be more widely available. Four by-law revisions were approved: Planning and Budget Committee, Contingent Faculty, Affiliate Committees list updated and Administrative Review timeline revised. The new timeline calls for four-year administrative reviews with an optional two-year review after an administrator's initial appointment. The previous timeline for administrative reviews every two years had become too onerous.

A resolution was approved in support of protecting Fredonia's Jewish history artifacts and archived materials. Senate respectfully requested they be notified in the future before any artifacts are sold or before public access to these artifacts is given preference.

PHASE 2 REOPENING OF CAMPUS

Western New York moved into Phase 2 one week ago. Supervisors returned to campus and made the necessary changes to offices to ensure social distancing strategies are in place for all operations. New office cleaning protocols will be introduced and cleaning supplies will be made readily available to staff. All employees will be provided with a cloth and a disposable mask. Employees who work directly with the public will need to wear their mask at all times while on campus. Other employees can practice six-foot social distancing or wear a mask. Mr. Metzger noted that the campus is minimally staffed this summer; orientation and summer camps have been cancelled.

PLANNING FOR FALL 2020 SEMESTER

Dr. Hefner said the campus is moving forward with a plan to reopen the campus in the fall. A Reopening Steering Committee, chaired by Tracy Collingwood, has been charged with developing a reopening plan that would allow Fredonia to safely bring students back to campus in the fall. Keeping faculty, staff, and students safe while offering a considerable amount of in-person instruction is our top priority. The committee is working collaboratively with three subcommittees, each charged with specific aspects of reopening the campus: Student Life Subcommittee, Academic/Technology Subcommittee, and Budget Subcommittee. The Task Force submitted a seven-page summary to the President and his Cabinet, which was approved and forwarded on to SUNY. We're now awaiting final approval from SUNY. Dr. Hefner will share the document with the campus once it has been approved by SUNY and Governor Cuomo. If for some reason we are not allowed to reopen, we will move to 100 percent online instruction, but that will come as a huge financial challenge for the campus. Highlights of Fredonia's plan call for reopening on schedule, and having students report to campus one week earlier. Classroom instruction would conclude by Thanksgiving. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that students complete their courses online after the holiday. After Thanksgiving break, all final exams will be distance-based or online so students will not need to

return to the campus after the holiday. Dr. Hefner said the Taskforce did a masterful job of addressing the key elements SUNY requested in their reopening template.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hefner discussed campus enrollment. Beginning this summer, an Advanced Certificate in Educational Leadership will be offered and by next spring a Masters in Literary. We currently have eight students enrolled in the Advanced Certificate program. Additionally, Fredonia's graduate numbers for Summer School I are up over 40 percent from last summer. This is very good news since the tuition rate for graduate students is much higher than undergraduate tuition. The PA/OH Initiative is making good strides, and we expect the additional students from this initiative to continue to increase in the coming years. Overall, retention was up by 4 percent over last year. As the result of the pandemic, we anticipate our fall enrollment will be down slightly.

Next fall the Office of Diversity will roll out a *Dialogues on Diversity* series to the campus community. Spearheaded by Dr. Sandra Liggins, a terrific array of programs will showcase diversity and help our campus community better understand racial issues that impact minority communities. Dr. Hefner said Dr. Liggins has done a wonderful job this past year as Interim Chief Diversity Officer, Title IX Coordinator, Affirmative Action Officer, and ADA Compliance Officer.

Dr. Hefner did express dismay that due to the pandemic Fredonia's budget is no longer on track to reduce the structural deficit. We lost significant revenue this past spring as the result of having to refund students the remainder of their room and board after they returned home. As the result of state actions, it's likely Fredonia will need to cut its budget even more than the \$3.1 million already cut. We've been working diligently and the Vice Presidents have done a remarkable job in their divisions to make budgetary cuts to put the campus in a better financial position.

Dr. Hefner said it was a pleasure serving as Interim President this past year.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Interim Provost Kevin Kearns reinforced some of the items Dr. Mary Beth Sievens discussed. Even though this felt like a year in crisis, Academic Affairs successfully moved Fredonia's curriculum forward. Several undergraduate and graduate programs were approved. TESOL moved mostly online. In addition to the programs already discussed, there are others in the pipeline. Dr. Kearns compared the transition of going from in-classroom instruction to online instruction as turning the Titanic on a dime. Yet, the faculty did a magnificent job. He acknowledged the good work of Fredonia's digital instruction and support team. During the spring semester, 18 training sessions were led by the Professional Development Center (PDC) and a new robust website was built for faculty and staff to utilize for online instruction. Work is progressing on the development of six-training modules for online teaching in the fall. Kathleen Gradel was appointed Interim Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs in the fall, and she

has been doing tremendous work. She helped improve the campus relationship with the Research Foundation and has a substantial number of grants in the pipeline.

The 5th annual business student contest was held at the Fredonia Technology Incubator. The last StartUp NY agreement was finalized for an aircraft restoration company from California. The company is relocating to Jamestown, NY.

On behalf of the College Council, Chairman Pagano thanked the entire Fredonia leadership for their work.

ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services Cedric Howard provided before and after COVID enrollment projections. Before COVID, the campus was ahead in its fall projection numbers. Spring enrollment for new and transfer students is up and Fall 2020 enrollment is on par with enrollment from last year, but deposits are slightly down. We anticipate we'll be down 100 to 200 students this fall (project 4,100 enrollment). COVID forced us to look at our modality and that is boding well with our students. Dr. Howard attributes the decline in numbers to the uncertainty of reopening in the fall. Enrollment and Student Services is having to recruit many students a second time. As for returning students, our on-campus residence hall numbers look promising. We have not experienced occupancy in our residence halls as high as what we're anticipating now since 2011. Over 1,300 continuing students are planning to reside on campus next year. Additionally, EDP admitted the largest number of students in their history. Fredonia mailed out CARE packages in the spring to all Fredonia students.

With a tremendous amount of time and effort, Enrollment and Student Services successfully converted their recruitment efforts over to a virtual platform. The fact that we're down less than 200 students is a testament to their efforts. The CDC has not mandated that we move to single-room occupancy in the residence halls. Students will be allowed to have a roommate and they will not be required to wear a facemask while in their room.

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Interim Vice President Betty Gossett announced that the *Nurturing Innovation Campaign* exceeded \$22.6 million yesterday. Considering that we're in the midst of a pandemic, it's amazing we not only met but exceeded our fundraising goal. A student relief fundraising effort was put into place to help students who are facing a hardship completing their studies remotely. Faculty and staff have been very generous with their giving which resulted in over \$125,000. Additionally, in May SUNY announced a donor match of up to \$50,000 for this student relief emergency campaign. Initially, the fund was set up to assist students with their technology needs, however; there have been instances where the funds were used to help with food insecurities. We hope to continue to meet students' needs in the fall. Over 400 requests were received thus far with nearly 300 met and \$60,000 in funding disbursed. A committee reviewed all requests to ensure funds were distributed fairly and equitably. To donate, please visit Fredonia.edu/Relief. Mrs. Gossett thanked all who generously donated.

What happens if there's a COVID case on campus? Are Fredonia staff trained to deal with an outbreak? Yes. Hendrix Hall has been designated and will remain vacant should we need to quarantine students. Beginning in March, the Fall Reopening Taskforce began working closely with the Infection Disease Committee and the Department of Chautauqua County Health to develop our plan. Thirteen staff members were identified as tracers to trace, mitigate, and triage if necessary to reduce the spread of the virus on campus.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Mr. Michael Metzger recognized the good work of Student Accounts. The office processed over 8,000 credits and refunds. Considering they were down a senior staff member, this was a heroic effort. Dr. Hefner explained that early guidance from SUNY called for students to receive a credit. Later, SUNY gave students the option to choose between a credit or refund; the majority of students selected a refund.

Chairman Pagano thanked Dr. Hefner for his service. He does not believe the campus could have made it through the spring semester without him at the helm. He also acknowledged Jan Hefner who had to make a sacrifice during this time as well.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mrs. Cynthia Ahlstrom and seconded by Mr. Joseph Johnson. Motion carried. The College Council meeting concluded at 11:27 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Szalkowski
Assistant to the President and College Council Secretary