



College Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 18, 2024
Foundation House Conference Room

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

President's Cabinet Members Present: President Kolison, Naomi Baldwin, Maria Carroll, Kathryn Kendall, Michel Kouadio, Karen Rohr, Vicki T. Sapp, David Starrett, Tracy Stenger, Jeff Woodard

College Council Members Present: Frank Pagano, Cynthia Ahlstrom (Zoom), AJ Dolce, Stephen Keefe, Tamu Graham-Reinhardt, Richard Morrisroe, Dakota Richter

Absent: Richard Alexander

Guests: Ed Blue, ITS, Jesse Blum, ITS

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

Chairman Pagano called for an executive session. The motion was made by AJ Dolce and seconded by Steve Keefe.

The meeting resumed at 10:21 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion from Richard Morrisroe, seconded by Steve Keefe to approve the October 9, 2024 minutes. The minutes were approved.

Report from the President

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

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President Kolison began his presentation by thanking the council members for their commitment and the work they accomplished together this year. He also acknowledged a letter received by College Council members and his response, which clarified the facts. To ensure full communication, he has followed up with the Vice Provost, Provost, and Dean, who will be keeping the faculty up-to-date and informed on decisions and progress on action items.

President Kolison noted the renewed energy and enthusiasm from the students this year, and the employees on campus have also indicated a positive campus vibe. This speaks to the quality of the campus life and instructional experience that the students are having, especially after the impacts that COVID-19 has had on student life. President Kolison shared several photos of the various events he has attended demonstrating the vibrancy of student life.

Chairman Pagano noted that their College Council identity cards can have a cash balance added to them, which they can use to eat on campus or attend events.

There are several budget priorities that include the coverage of negotiated salary increases, continuing the level of NYS support to SUNY and the campuses, and the continued funding for student success programs such as ASAP (Advancing Success in Associate Pathways), for community colleges and ACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement), a program that is showing promise for SUNY Fredonia students. Other initiatives that SUNY is advancing include prior learning credits and improving seamless transfer of students among all SUNY campuses.

Nationally, there are several themes emerging in higher education including the prioritization of student success, offering more flexibility to earn credentials, enhancing digital experiences, engaging non-traditional student populations, providing more options for financial support, and building strategic partnerships.

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President Kolison has published his goals online and invited the College Council to send him their comments. His most recent priorities have included continuing the work with SUNY on the financial deficit plan; this work will be ongoing as he implements the plan, and he will be working with SUNY to ensure they support the campus through the implementation. He noted the recent addition of \$1.2 million in operating funds committed from SUNY to the financial plan.

Reviewing the last two weeks and the extraordinary snowfall in the local area, President Kolison acknowledged several departments and individuals who were key in helping the campus through the winter storm. This was a learning opportunity to further explore how faculty and students can be equipped with the appropriate skills and technology to continue instruction even when most campuses must work remotely.

President Kolison reviewed the results of recent searches and some strategic committees he has appointed. He has just recently interviewed three strong candidates for the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and he anticipates having an announcement early in the New Year. Two recent and strategic hires include a new Title IX Coordinator and a new Director of Facilities Services. Strategic committees include—the Bicentennial Commemoration Steering Committee, The Information Technology Advisory Council (to streamline business operations and expand instructional capacity), and a Spring Event Planning Committee. As an example of one of the initiatives led by the ITAC committee, he reviewed the process of streamlining the hiring process, which will be key for substantial efficiencies and cost savings.

To conclude his report, President Kolison updated the council members on a SUNY Print initiative that will be implemented on campus in the Spring 2025 semester, which will reduce printing across the system. For SUNY Fredonia, this will save on the costs of paper, ink, and maintenance of machines. When printing is necessary, users on campus will have a larger selection of networked printers they can use regardless of location on campus, and he anticipates that after full implementation, there will be significant cost

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savings. This spring, ITS will fully assess individual departmental needs and any accommodation needed by employees to ensure access to printing when needed.

Returning to some of the ITS initiatives, Richard Morrisroe offered a recommendation to consider starting a degree completion campaign to help working professionals finish with Fredonia; many people started work with some credits earned, and SUNY Fredonia can help them complete a degree by leveraging ITS.

President Kolison mentioned the work he has started exploring with JCC to expand access to educational opportunities. JCC is also exploring ways to expand some of their instructional activity in the north part of the county. As a next step, both institutions are working on appointing members of a working group to fully explore the next level of the SUNY Fredonia-JCC partnership.

Cynthia Ahlstrom commented on the leverage of IT resources to expand instructional opportunities, and as a follow-up to her question regarding online instruction, she asked what the plans will be to increase online instructional options. She noted this is low compared to other SUNYs.

Provost Starrett stated that there are five online programs being developed in Academic Affairs, which they plan to launch in Fall 2025. These would be degree completion programs and other programs that are in high demand.

President Kolison noted that we will continue to advance our online offerings and that the ITS area will be key increase this capacity. The current capacity is not an obstacle; the development of the courses and launching the programs must be done first.

Cynthia Ahlstrom asked about President Kolison's goals and their timing; how is he approaching their re-evaluation and updating of them? He clarified that this is a live document updated and adjusted as required by the institution's and SUNY's priorities. His intent behind sharing the goals is to invite ideas from the council members and

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other stakeholders, to create opportunities to listen to concerns across the community and campus, and to ensure that the best interests of the institution are served.

Report from Enrollment Management and Services

Presented by Dr. Kathryn Kendall, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Services

Dr. Kendall shared some updates on the enrollment cycle and ongoing strategies. The focus at this point in the cycle is on enhancing yield and sending out financial aid packages. She is also working with academic units to coordinate and liaise more effectively with the admissions team. This coordination helps centralize resources and enhances the relationship building between prospective students and SUNY Fredonia by ensuring that the messaging from the campus is consistent and aligned with the student interests and needs.

There have been some recent financial aid reorganizations, which have benefited the staff, and they have streamlined their processes to send financial aid packages out months earlier than they have before while also saving on the cost of staffing.

In terms of financial aid, there are many generous donations through the Fredonia College Foundation, and Dr. Kendall is working in partnership with the foundation to ensure that the timing of different types of awards is aligned and the total award amounts are communicated to students as early as possible and to be as beneficial to the students as possible. This ensures that SUNY Fredonia is competitive when students are receiving their total aid packages from other institutions at around the same time. Most students are applying to multiple institutions and compare the financial aid opportunities as they are making their final decisions.

Chairman Pagano asked for clarification on merit aid, and Dr. Kendall confirmed that this is part of the total package. She summarized how the various awards are funded and the recruitment potential for the different types of awards in the context of total cost such

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as cost of living. Chairman Pagano asked about the total cost of attendance at SUNY Fredonia, and for residential students with housing and a meal plan (as posted on the website) it is approximately \$24,000 per year, including living expenses and fees. She also clarified how the rates work for out-of-state and international students, clarified what flat-rate tuition means, and that there are other benefits we can offer to students such as low-cost parking, and comparatively lower fees.

Chairman Pagano asked for an update on enrollment. Dr. Kendall noted that enrollment numbers for the spring are too early to report; this information will start coming in after the spring semester starts. Enrollment can depend based on whether the metric is headcount, FTE, or credit count. Tuition is the primary source of revenue, yet we are also looking at other ways we are generating revenue and focusing on the bigger picture while enhancing enrollment as much as possible.

Tamu Graham-Reinhardt asked for clarification on the admissions liaison group. This is a set of faculty and staff who represent the academic units plus some admissions staff.

As a follow-up to staffing plans, Tamu Graham-Reinhardt asked if there is a possibility of having student ambassadors or graduate students engaging with prospective students in local schools; Dr. Kendall clarified that they have over 20 student assistants and a graduate assistant as part of her team. These students are active on campus and through social media. There are some limitations with what student employees can do off campus in terms of travel and funding policies. However, there is a volunteer program that matches students with visits to their home schools.

Cynthia Ahlstrom clarified how the headcount and FTE enrollments might fluctuate and asked for clarification about how enrollments are reported to College Council members. Dr. Kendall confirmed that she has been using these terms in her reports and will ensure from her side that this is communicated as clearly as possible for all audiences. She encouraged College Council members to feel free to ask if it is not clear.

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Richard Morrisroe asked about the approach to financial aid packaging in the cases when students are applying later in the cycle. The May 1 deadline is universal for SUNY campuses and many of the other regional institutions, so this is the priority for most financial aid packaging. However, students who apply after this are still awarded merit scholarships if they qualify; any available foundation award would also be awarded if the student qualifies. Most applications are in at the beginning of the year, and the admissions team is actively recruiting students and awarding financial aid packages to students up to the first day of classes.

Chairman Pagano asked about recruitment from the region and the local schools; Dr. Kendall clarified that Chautauqua County is the second highest place of residence for the SUNY Fredonia student body. In the context of population density, this is a very high representation. We will continue increasing engagement with local students, and Dr. Kendall noted that if there are rumors otherwise, please let her know so that she can correct them.

Richard Morrisroe added that many students in the region need support to be college ready, so the schools and student engagement is only part of the issue. Richard Morrisroe added that many students in the region need support to be college-ready, so the schools and student engagement are only part of the issue. Students in local schools need to be engaged in discussions about the prospects of a university education much earlier. Tamu Graham-Reinhardt advised that more can also be done with parents to help them see the value in higher education, be aware of funding that is available, understand the prospects for their child. With that awareness and resources, they would be better equipped to support their children to achieve a college education.

Cynthia Ahlstrom noted that further analysis about what local high school students do after graduating could help fine-tune how we approach the students and their families to offer the best support. While there are many rumors about this, Dr. Kendall has not seen any data to support the rumors and will look into this information.

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Report from Academic Affairs

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

Provost Starrett reviewed some of the new programs in various stages of development; some are being developed jointly with JCC to serve high needs degrees. A new academic master plan is making its way through the finalization stages.

Academic Affairs will soon onboard a new Director for Sponsored Programs. This position is a strategic investment and will help faculty locate and secure grants and other external funds. With the intentional focus and coordination by this staff member, Provost Starrett anticipates that the position will pay for itself through the increased funding it will be able to find and secure for the campus.

Provost Starrett offered an update on the ACE Program – 150 students this fall will grow to 165 in the spring. Internship funding has also opened more of these experiences for students. Internships grew from 105 to 130 students this fall, and they expect to serve around 200 students in the spring. SUNY Fredonia is part of a community of practice to continue improving on the processes and opportunities for meaningful internships.

JCC and SUNY Fredonia signed a preferred partnership agreement as a foundation to strengthen the collaboration between the two institutions. The institutions are scheduling meetings to be held on both campuses to create opportunities for faculty and administrators to meet up and discuss initiatives. According to information distributed at a conference the Provost attended, up to 40% of community college credits do not transfer to a bachelor's degree. The preferred partnership agreement with JCC will address issues such as this to maximize the transfer of credits and other benefits to transfer students. Additional JCC-Fredonia collaboration meetings are planned.

Report from Student Affairs

Presented by Dr. Tracy Stenger, Vice President for Student Affairs

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Dr. Stenger extended an invitation to the weeklong celebration of the upcoming Martin Luther King Presidential Commission. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni will be hosting various events from January 27 through February 1 including poetry, dance, performances, fireside chats, a day of service, and a keynote speaker.

Report from University Advancement

Presented by Ms. Karen Rohr, Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the Fredonia College Foundation

Vice President Rohr noted the calendar year operations of the foundation activities, which is distinct from the academic and financial fiscal year of the university. She summarized the donations year to date and explained the difference between restricted and unrestricted donations. Most donations are restricted in some form, and she encouraged the college council members to consider unrestricted dollars as these offer the most flexibility.

They are focusing on the Bicentennial Fund, which helps students with persistence and completion, especially for financially challenged students. Through small funds that are stackable with other awards, the foundation, in collaboration with Enrollment Management and Services and the Office of Retention and Academic Success, was able to assist 50 students who would otherwise not be able to attend or stay at SUNY Fredonia. These funds are extremely helpful for retention, because they support students who may need just a small amount to get through the semester – a book fee, a small bill, etc.

The division is also launching an alumni fundraising campaign. Vice President Rohr has sent each College Council member an individual report of their lifetime donations and funds they have given to in the past, and she encouraged all College Council members to consider supporting the students with their gift.

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Chairman Pagano asked all College council members to lead by example and offer a gift if possible.

Report from the President of the Student Association

Presented by Mr. Dakota Richter, President of Student Association

Mr. Richter updated the council members on the incoming and outgoing student leaders; he will continue as the SA President through the Spring 2025 semester. SUNY SA is looking at increasing the referendum from 2 years to 4 years to be more inclusive to the incoming classes.

The class presidents have been coordinating events and fundraising activities. The senior class president is putting succession plans in place to help transition new leadership and serve the student body. The junior class president is working on installing art that promotes sustainability in the lobby of the Science Center, and the sophomore and freshman class presidents are collaborating with the junior and senior class presidents to continue building their skills.

The Fredonia student leaders and SUNY SA are preparing for Advocacy Day. Mr. Richter offered insight from the student body into the demands and needs for more online classes.

The student leadership is also working on increasing funding for the food pantry; the sustainability chair is working at the SUNY SA level and others on campus to investigate ways to get high quality local produce on campus and in the dining halls.

SA recently passed a resolution in support of trans students on the campus, and there are additional resolutions working their way through the process.

A new chair for student voices has been added to the SA leadership to help coordinate representation of perspectives from the community and student voices.

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Mr. Richter noted that student clubs have been very active with an estimate of around 200 student events each semester; he is looking at how student event advertisement can be better coordinated. He is also looking into other university's models that incentivize student leadership roles. This would encourage more students to be involved and engaged. He noted that at Geneseo, for example, there is a small stipend and a performance-based incentive through additional scholarships and awards. Dr. Stenger noted that there are great opportunities and value in documenting these experiences; she offered her partnership to the student leadership as they continue to explore this.

Mr. Richter invited the College Council members to Activities Night, which will be January 29th, 7:00 p.m. in the Steele Fieldhouse. There will be tabled student organizations, dancers, and other performances.

There are 13 students confirmed to attend Advocacy Day in Albany in mid-January and they have appointments to meet with the Governor's cabinet members.

President Kolson updated Mr. Richter that he is working with a SUNY Fredonia alum who is willing to speak with students about best practices in advocacy efforts to help them be as effective as they can be.

Remarks from Chair of College Council and College Council Members

Chairman Pagano asked some follow up questions about online marketing and how AI has been impacting the campus.

In terms of the website, Jeff Woodard remarked on the improvement on Fredonia's social media presence thanks to the social media ambassadors. The collaborations with Enrollment Management and Services have contributed toward improving the web presence, and they are constantly implementing improvements. In terms of AI impacts, Dr. Kouadio noted that there is a best practices group looking into issues with AI and how to best leverage AI for learning opportunities. This is also part of a SUNY initiative

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to reform technology through a Digital Transformation initiative. Part of the group's charge is to ensure that state resources are not misused, that the campus is educated on responsibilities regarding AI, and that it is utilized with a focus on enhancing learning and business processes.

Chairman Pagano closed his comments with gratitude to the College Council members and the members of President's Cabinet.

Meeting Adjourned

Chairman Pagano called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was made by Richard Morrisroe and seconded by AJ Dolce. The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.