

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Present:	Ronald O’Neill, Chair Jennifer Stevenson	Kathleen Dodge	Joseph Rich
Zoom:	Marie Regan		
Absent:	Toni Kennedy	Brian Plonka	Anikko Serrano
Others:	Courtney Bish Shawn Miller Tracey Thompson	Thomas Burl Travis Smith Lenore VanderZee	Matthew Burnett Zvi Szafran Michaela Young

Note: This meeting did not have quorum. The minutes below are for informational purposes only.

The meeting began at 10:06 a.m.

Introductions

Chairman O’Neill introduced and welcomed Thomas Burl. Mr. Burl is the new Faculty Senator and an Assistant Professor in Decisions and Graphic Media Systems.

President’s Report

The following is a summary of the President’s and other area reports.

- Last spring’s graduation went very well; 835 degrees were conferred to students from 9 countries and 17 states. Our Outstanding Graduate Award recipients were Muhammad Shabbir, graduating from the Civil and Environmental Engineering Technology bachelor’s degree program, and Gracyn Emmerton, graduating from the Physical Therapist Assistant associate’s degree program.
- Our accreditation visit from Middle States went extremely well. Our self-study was comprehensive and well-received, and as the visiting team left, they told us that they had found us in compliance with all standards and requirements, found no deficiencies that we needed to address, and commended us on several things, including how everyone at the College was relentlessly focused on student success. The accreditation process requires a vast amount of work from pretty much everyone on campus, and we just had a thank-you barbecue for the various leads a few weeks ago. The next visit will be in 8-10 years.
- We received an increase of \$2.8M in funding from the State this year. The areas and amounts that we were approved for are listed below.

- \$940K was allocated toward a **transformational investment**, where we had to choose between four things that we could do. We selected to be part of an Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) program on our campus, which will provide enhanced advising and some additional financial support to a group of 50 transfer students this coming spring, and 100 new associate-degree students next fall, with the goal to improve retention and graduation rates for these students. Part of this funding is also for our Jump-Start summer program, which acclimates students to our campus and provides them with support, and for the creation of multiple micro-credentials for workforce development (more on that later). Currently, this money is one-time funding, spread over three years, but SUNY hopes that, if this effort proves to be effective, the State will provide ongoing money.
- \$1.1M was allocated for **additional operating aid**, which we will use to cover operating costs. This is permanent money, which means our State Aid will increase by that amount permanently. Some of this money was in lieu of a 3% tuition increase. If the same happens next year, it is anticipated that additional funds will be received. This is the first increase in operating aid for some time.
- We were allocated permanent funding in four other categories as well, increasing our State funding by those amounts.
 - \$33,900 was allocated toward **food insecurity support** for students. Up until now, the College's food pantry supplied non-perishable goods for students in need. The new funds will allow us to staff the food pantry with student workers and to supply perishable goods as well.
 - \$250K was allocated toward **mental health support**. These funds will support the hiring of a new assistant director for our counseling center who will provide tele-counseling and student mental health programming, an alcohol and drug counselor, and a P/T registered dietician. It will also pay for student counseling assistants and the purchasing of an electronic medical record software. The remaining funds will provide professional development in mental-health areas campus-wide and a programming budget.
 - \$250K was allocated toward helping **students with disabilities**. We plan on expanding the space allocated to our Office of Student Accessibility Services, hiring an assistant director who will lead the electronic and information technology efforts (EIT) and oversee the daily operation of accommodative services for students, hiring a testing supervisor, and hiring a programming coordinator.
 - \$193,600 was allocated toward improving **internship opportunities**. We began offering paid internships two years ago, doing 50 per year at \$1,000 each through our Career Services Office. The new funding will allow us to add approximately 65 additional paid internships, as well as providing better support the interns with funding for transportation and childcare, allowing for internships at non-profits off campus, hiring an internship coordinator, and purchasing career-services software.
- The demographic cliff in high school graduation numbers and attacks on higher education have not affected our enrollment yet, as we remain mostly even with last year, down by 0.5% or 14

students. This drop was due to losing dual enrolled high school cohorts at Indian River and Carthage. In housing, we have 728 students, which is down 25 from last year, but revenue is up due to offering more single rooms and a 3% price increase. Housing though remains way down from before the pandemic and is an ongoing issue that we are trying to address. The largest part of the problem is that more students are studying online to save money, and students are less willing to travel far from home.

- Last year's budget closed at slightly in the black. Shawn was asked to tell the Council more about that and what she foresees for the future, as well as updates on other issues, including SUNY and campus responses to cybersecurity challenges.

It was reported that the College started the year with a \$3.9M deficit, and due to conservative budgeting and delayed increases, the year ended positively.

It was asked if the College has a deficit now. It was stated that we are projecting a \$2.6M deficit for the same reasons as last year. An explanation regarding negotiated faculty increases and other factors (retro pay, signing bonuses, discretionary awards) that add to those increases was provided. More concrete numbers will be known after November 22.

It was noted that we are doing several Capital Projects, and the Council was invited to tour at any time. It was shared that capital projects are funded by the State and no repayment is required; dorm projects require us to borrow, bond, and pay back. The College strives to be conservative, use our own cash, and avoid putting the dorms in more debt.

As cybersecurity becomes more of an increasing concern/issue, SUNY has delegated \$200M to build a stronger network, and the College has hired a security coordinator to help with our campus needs.

- To help with the potential budget gap and enrollment and retention issues, the College is working to get information out to students earlier, looking to offer targeted scholarships to students who applied but never enrolled, and doing an extensive analysis of our academic program offerings (optimize enrollment and reduce costs).

The following questions were asked and answered:

- What program is the most expensive? A cluster of programs in engineering is the most expensive and are also under enrolled.
- What is the last program we cut? We do cut programs from time to time, with Agribusiness being sited as the last one eliminated.
- Are we able to pick up any programs that Potsdam is eliminating? No, as they do not fit our mission; however, there might have been a possibility with their master's in public health.
- Why do we lose money on a program like nursing? There is a shortage of nursing teachers, and we are having to pay much higher salaries to attract them. However, we are collaborating with Upstate Medical to maximize revenue and start a pipeline of

teachers. It was noted that even though the program loses money it is important to our region and will not be cut.

- Some clarifying questions were asked related to the students with disabilities funding, and that information was reiterated. It was additionally noted that it is currently an office of 1 and will soon be an office of 2.5.
- Courtney was asked to give an update on Student Life and Athletics.

The College has been accepted into the SUNYAC conference. The previous conference was good, but this will offer some better opportunities for us, as well as keep the competition to only in-state schools and hopefully reduce the travel costs. The coaches are recruiting and seeing good results.

Additionally, they are considering bringing on some new sports, such as bass fishing, men's volleyball, wrestling, and field hockey; it was noted that some of these are limited by space. Athletics is also working on a men's club hockey team, as well collaborating with Professor Wolfe and a senior on a mental health survey to try to get more resources for athletes. The athletic season is underway, and the women's hockey team received a highly-complimentary email about their play and sportsmanship. They have also recently hired a new Esports coach.

Student programming is at an all-time high. As mentioned above, housing numbers are down a bit, but the single-room initiative has been good. There is also a push to bolster mental health help, as there is a concern about isolation.

Additionally, it was noted that the Civil Engineering program has entered a new competition, and in their first year, they came in 2nd nationally and 7th internationally.

A question was asked if all students could be notified in the case of an active shooter on campus. The answer is yes, and we do drills related to that. It was noted that we are very careful on how the notification is used, so it will be heeded.

- Our Advancement Office has had another excellent year, surpassing almost every goal. Tracey was asked to provide her area update. The following provides information on their fundraising efforts and other initiatives:
 - Their fundraising year ended with \$1.683M, against a goal of \$1.050M.
 - The Canton Fund surpassed its goal of \$450,000 with a total of \$471,000.
 - \$21,000 was raised to support the Steel Bridge Team.
 - The 3rd annual Athletics' Giving Week surpassed previous ones by raising \$110,000.
 - The most recent scholarship awards set a new college record with \$660,000 being awarded through 400 different scholarships, with continued growth expected.
 - The athletics' giving software is being used for a Campus Day of Giving on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, with eight different funds being highlighted.
 - The Foundation does two big appeals each year with the first being in September and the second in December.

- They are participating in the NYS Charitable Tax Program, which provides up to \$10M in tax-credit benefits to all of SUNY. Campuses recruit donors, and donors can get a deduction and credit against their NYS income tax. They have already raised \$350,000 this fiscal year.
 - The Campus Enhancement Awards were fully awarded in the amount of \$30,000. The program received 34 applications totaling over \$71,000 in requests for items such as tools, updated equipment, conference fees, and expanded programming. Some requests were funded through other sources, and some were asked to be resubmitted.
 - The following are some planned events - Scholarship Luncheon, moving to October 3; Hall of Fame Dinner, moving to May 16; Reunion Weekend, coinciding with homecoming/family weekend; Food Truck Roodeo; car show; and more.
- It was announced that Lenore VanderZee has been promoted to Vice President for Strategic Relations and Communications, with the areas of entrepreneurship, workforce development, and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs being added to her portfolio. Lenore was asked to provide an area update.

Lenore reiterated what she already oversees and noted that adding grants and research makes sense as it fits with much of what she is involved in. She noted that she is working with Betsy Rohr Adams who oversees all the grants and sponsored research we have; Betsy is also the Co-Principal Investigator on a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant (\$400,000 over 3 years). This grant is meant for capacity building for undergraduate institutions like ours, so we will be in a position to receive other NSF grants by expanding faculty and student ability to do research and entrepreneurship.

The new Center for Workforce Community and Industry Partnerships was recently created. Liz Brown is the Executive Director for the Center. She is working on micro-credentials across campus, with 17 complete and more than a dozen in process; she is working with the community and industry partners to maximize the for-credit and non-credit offerings. Additionally, she is working to increase the outreach in K12 schools to solidify a pipeline of potential students for the College; a specific focus is on a grant that will bring SUNY Canton and Madrid Waddington together to help students work towards an associate's degree in engineering. It was also noted that a lot of this goes hand-in-hand with what the Liberty Partnership program does.

It was added that there is \$100,000 in new money to support micro-credentials, and there is prior learning credit being given to military students.

- Matt Burnett provided an update for Faculty Governance. He shared that, with elections coming up, he feels there is a renewed interest in holding a governance position. The effort to increase and improve communications has also made things better. The following are some things that they have been working on: looking at ways to simplify the process, changed the name and structure of Faculty Affairs to the Steering Committee, working to fill student positions on committees, waiting on the results from the ad hoc committee about remote work, and working to measure the effectiveness of faculty governance.

Matt also shared that the Visiting Scholar visit recently ended, but it was very productive, resulting in an MOU and looking for ways to collaborate and recruit more students.

Matt shared that he was included on an email requesting the suspension of the Appeals and Promotions Committee, and he noted that he opposes any removal of the voice of the body. President Szafran stated that Administration is looking into this matter.

- Tom Burl was asked to provide an update to the Council.

Tom shared his experience of attending a University Faculty Senate meeting. He noted the resolutions that were presented. The resolution regarding SUNY Potsdam led to a brief discussion regarding support for Potsdam was held, and the College's plan to collaborate with JCC, as well as Fort Drum, on possible partnerships was shared.

- Travis Smith was asked to provide an update for Public Relations.

It was shared that PR just wrapped up the annual report, and in June, Wil Young, won an award for his record-breaking Cybersecurity video.

A list of rankings and awards for the College were shared:

- The College received its highest ranking for US News and World Report – #9 on Best Regional Colleges North List, #6 on Top Public Regional Colleges North List, and #7 for Best Value Schools.
- #4 on the US News Best Regional Colleges for Veterans List and Gold-Level, Military-Friendly School from GI Jobs magazine. And, they have been notified that another recognition is coming at the end of the week.
- Recognized with a spot on the 2023-24 Military Spouse List.
- #10 for Best Pet-Friendly School by University Magazine, a Canadian publication.

He also shared that there have been media on campus for stories related to Esports and Cybersecurity. Cybersecurity has also been named as a National Center for Excellence. And, PR will also be interviewing Dan McClean and presidential intern, Tsiawentonnih [phonetically Jaw-one-due-nee] Elizabeth George, on her project that will help decipher the etymology of Native names and help connect students and faculty with the Mohawk language.

During free app week, Admissions received 1,000 more applications over last year; they are waiting to see how things even out though.

Additional Shared Information

- The College is talking with BOCES and a local construction company regarding sponsorship of students to work for them.
- An acknowledgment was given to Travis for his work on the website – building and maintaining it.
- A shout out was given to Dr. Maureen Maiocco for being named to the rank of SUNY Distinguished Professor and for another successful Trunk or Treat event.

Old Business

The following e-votes were noted as prior action items by the Council:

- Recorded E-Vote ~ Advisory Board Appointments/Reappointments
- Recorded E-Vote ~ Minutes of the April 4, 2023, Meeting and Adoption of the 2022-23 President's Annual Report as the Council's Report

New Business

The following item cannot be acted on today, but Council Member questions will be discussed, with an e-vote to follow - #05-020 Volunteer Policy.

The following background information was shared with the group – In working with Upstate Medical, there was a need for a volunteer. SUNY Legal's review of the agreement led to the College needing a policy, so we used SUNY's policy and Cantonized it. The College was already doing it; we just did not have a written policy.

A comment related to volunteer payment in addition to reimbursement was noted as a possible union issue and might need to be written better. A discussion was had, and it was noted that there is no paycheck (that line was added by SUNY Legal). It was asked if volunteers are covered under the College's insurance, and it was noted that the insurance language was the exact wording for SUNY's policy. A discussion happened related to the need for a separate volunteer accident insurance, and it was noted that the College's policy has an umbrella policy to cover these things. It was noted that the VP of the relative area makes the decision between a task being volunteer or paid. Dr. Szafran was asked if he was okay with the policy as it is written, and he stated that he was.

Chairman O'Neill directed Michaela to send out an e-vote on #05-020 Volunteer Policy later. There was a brief discussion related to securing quorum. It was shared that we are down two members. Chairman O'Neill is checking to see if Grace Burke would like to come back; he also asked the group to forward any suggestions they might have. Chairman O'Neill also stated that he would like to step down as Chair. A brief discussion happened.

The meeting concluded at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michaela Young
Secretary to the College Council