

Revised

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

291st MEETING

APRIL 19, 2022

Present:	Ronald O’Neill, Chair Joseph Rich	Grace Burke (zoom) Jennifer Stevenson	Marie Regan (zoom) Jonah Black
Absent:	Toni Kennedy	Brian Plonka	
Others:	Courtney Bish (zoom) Laini Kavaloski (zoom) Travis Smith Lenore VanderZee (zoom)	Matt Burnett Shawn Miller Zvi Szafran Michaela Young	Peggy De Cooke Stephanie Petkovsek Tracey Thompson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m.

Chairman O’Neill announced that the College Council would be going into Executive Session at the end of the meeting and that there would be no action taken.

Minutes of the December 17, 2021 Meeting

Everyone received a copy of the minutes by email.

Mr. Rich made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 17, 2021, meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Regan, with no additions or corrections; the minutes were approved.

New Business

There was no new business to report.

Old Business

There was no old business to report.

Chairman’s Report

There was no report given by Chairman O’Neill.

President’s Report

The President and other participants provided the following report.

- It has been a challenging year, but all in all, I think things have gone reasonably well at the College. Let’s start with some good news—our new student enrollment for Spring 2022 was up a good bit from Spring 2021, rising to 290 from 224. While it’s early, our Fall new student numbers are also running ahead of last Fall’s numbers as well, by about 30 students at the present. We’ve had two excellent Accepted Students Days over the past few weekends. I spoke at both and had the chance of speaking to multiple families

individually, and all were very positive about coming to SUNY Canton—in fact, at the more recent event, every single person I spoke to was coming.

- While that's good news, due to the drop in enrollment over the pandemic, we're still replacing larger classes with smaller ones despite these increases, so our overall numbers will still fall a bit. As an example, if you look at the overall enrollment for spring, it fell from 2929 to 2796—that's 133 students.
- The enrollment situation is also extremely challenging due to declining numbers of high school graduates in New York (especially upstate) until at least 2025. SUNY and the State recognize this challenge, and this coming year's State allocation looks good. We haven't seen the final details yet, but a significant part of the TAP gap has been closed, which will save us some money, and additional funds for capital spending, hiring faculty, and other worthy purposes seem to be on the horizon. On the other hand, SUNY and the unions are beginning to negotiate a new contract, with increases that could be as large as 6%. Will the State cover the cost of whatever these increases wind up being? We don't know.
- Between one thing and another, I still anticipate that after applying CARES funds, we'll have a deficit of somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.5M. Shawn, would you like to talk a bit more about our current budget situation and what you foresee for the future?

Shawn reported that there has been a drop in the Fall numbers, with the Spring rebounding a bit. She provided an example for the group – 133 students equals \$931,000, which is just tuition. She offered that the usual breakdown runs about one-third each for tuition, housing, and meals at about \$7,000/each. The College's PSR runs about \$25M, which means we do not actually generate enough revenue to hit payroll. We do have some State support on top of tuition. She offered this information to help everyone understand the situation better and to explain that one low class will follow us for four years.

She went on to report that we did receive over \$12M in federal funds this past year, with half needing to go to the students. We were also fortunate that we had reserves and were able to get some funding for our residence halls, which allowed the interest to be paid and not the debt service for a period of time to help keep them stable. Kennedy Hall and College Association were also able to get help through the COVID funding sources. She indicated that she was pleased that we received the federal funding, but she has concerns for the future once the federal funding stops/is gone. She stated that we are stable right now, but she felt that it would be in our best interest to review areas that could/should be adjusted while we can do it on our own terms.

Chairman O'Neill asked if any of the \$12M was COVID funds. The response was yes; it was all COVID-related funds. Shawn explained how the money was being spent – half went directly to help the students and the other half went to help various aspects of the campus, which ultimately supported the students. All was spent according to the criteria that was provided by the federal government.

Chairman O'Neill additionally asked if it was anticipated that these funds would go away after this year. The response was yes. It was reiterated that that is why we need to be careful with spending. Chairman O'Neill also asked if the campus has received information on the State budget yet. Yes, a summary was provided, and it appears that we will be at least flat, with a possibility of some additional capital money. Shawn noted that we will continue our process of using campus dollars to create shovel-ready projects, so we can be prepared when the Construction Fund awards project dollars.

Mr. O'Neill asked if staffing declines when student enrollment declines. Ms. Miller explained that our PSR is down from \$25M to a little over \$24M. She explained that by utilizing temporary faculty we are able to make the necessary adjustments.

Mr. O'Neill's final question was with regard to information provided at the last meeting about State funds for faculty in the Health Care area. Dr. Szafran reported that we have not seen anything yet. There was a discussion on promised programs with no State follow through and the general ideas and struggles surrounding program review.

- We're making good progress in our preparations for next year's Middle States accreditation visit and have tentatively reached an agreement with the working group on compensation for our Department Chairs. Something else that is complicated at present is the retention of our faculty and staff, due to the so-called "Great Resignation." We've had some turnover in key positions, such as our Registrar, Director of Human Resources, and two deans, but also had some successes in how we have been able to address this turnover. Peggy, would you like to update the Council on these issues, as well as other faculty endeavors?

Peggy reported that they are making good progress with the accreditation, and the working groups have been working through the year to gather evidence, populate the evidence inventory, and work on drafts of charters that will comprise the self-study. She also shared that the process of selecting a Chair for our review has been a challenge; one has been identified, but we are waiting to see if they accept. Additionally, she shared that regular reports are given at Faculty Assembly and posted on our webpage regarding the progress being made, and if anyone has additional questions, they can contact Peggy, Kirk Jones, or Johanna Lee.

Peggy provided some additional details about the program leadership discussions. Compensation and duties are being reviewed. She shared that the discussions began in 2019, and in 2020, due to our fiscal situation, it was decided to forego the Curriculum Coordinator positions, with the understanding that it would be reviewed again when the situation eased. In 2021, a comprehensive review was initiated, and recently, a tentative agreement has been accepted for the structure. Further discussions with key people are in the works.

Revised

Peggy reported that our previous Registrar was not renewed at the end of their term. A full search was completed yielding a successful candidate, but that person did not stay long. Sharon Tavernier, Director of Advising and First-Year Programs, was appointment as Interim Registrar, and after a full search, was the successful candidate and accepted the offer to be the Registrar.

The position of Dean of the School of Business and Liberal Arts became vacant when Dr. Phil Neisser was appointed Officer in Charge for SUNY Potsdam. Dr. Kirk Jones was appointed as Interim Dean for the School and will remain in this position until Dr. Neisser decides on his future role.

Dr. Ken Erickson stepped down from his position as Dean of the School of Science, Health, and Criminal Justice. The internal search candidate resigned from this position shortly after being appointed. Dr. Erickson agreed to step back into the role as Interim Dean, while a full, external search took place. Four candidates will be brought to campus over the next few weeks, and links to their campus presentations will be provided.

Peggy also reported that they are experiencing a transition to a new learning management system and to new Gen ED categories.

Dr. Szafran added that we do have a new Director of HR, an internal candidate, Amanda Deckert.

- The COVID situation continues to be complicated, especially due to the new variant. Our campus numbers have stayed low so far this semester, and we've been able to reduce the frequency of our testing for vaccinated students to once monthly, with unvaccinated students remaining weekly. We've also lifted the masking requirements on campus, except in classrooms where the faculty or offices where the staff member requests that people mask. Numbers in the county are rising, however, so we're keeping a close eye on the numbers and are prepared to reinstate masking if the number of cases warrants it. SLU is experiencing an uptick on their campus and have requested some quarantine and isolation housing in Smith Hall as was the case in the Fall.
- Last time we met, we talked about the College's "Best Year Ever" campaign in Student Life. The campaign has worked extremely well, with lots of students engaged in a wide range of activities, and our Fall to Spring retention rising, especially among on-campus students. Courtney, can you tell us a bit more about student life this semester and anything else that needs to be mentioned about the COVID situation?

Courtney reported that our numbers have been relatively low. She went on to report that this year's melt with regard to enrollment numbers is better than normal, surpassing the normal retention of 85% by 5%. We currently have 700 students in the residence halls.

Student Activities has been working hard to have an array of events to make this the "Best Year Ever" for the students, and she reported that they are doing a

good job. Some examples include – first-ever Comic Con, Student Government Leadership Conference, two NYC bus trips (including a first-ever Fall one), and Student Government elections (which have had the most participation ever, even pre-COVID). Springfest is also coming up.

She shared that all of our Spring sports teams are in contention for playoffs. Currently, women's lacrosse is first in the NAC, baseball is second, and e-Sports is in the playoffs and doing great.

The Student Specialty Awards will be held virtually this year, and they are awarding about 35 students. There are two Chancellor's Award winners this year – Charliann Friedman and Jenna VanAllen – both Vet Tech students. The Outstanding Graduate awards are a little different this year in that there are two Outstanding Graduate Baccalaureate recipients, instead of one – Bryan O'Hearn and Cassidy Asiamah. The Outstanding Graduate Associate recipient is Kathlynn Allen.

Dr. Szafran also shared that Tiffany Hobby won the Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence. And, one of our students, Brooke Ayers, helped to save a life while interning with the SLC Sheriff's Office and received a commendation for her efforts.

- Despite many challenges due to the pandemic, our Advancement area continues to have had an outstanding year in fundraising. Tracey, could you let our College Council know a little about our successes?

Tracey thanked all of the Foundation's partners. She reported that in Giving they have surpassed their fundraising goal, with almost \$1.9M raised to date. Much of that is due to a bequest that came in from Ray Modell '62, which was split between his family's scholarship and the unrestricted Canton Fund.

She stated that it is important to have support from the leadership, and each leadership group was asked to show their support. Donations are still being accepted if you would like to give.

They have also had a great year in establishing endowments, securing 14 new ones this year. Twelve of those are new endowed scholarships, with two others being for support of student success – \$50,000 endowment (Will and Joanne Fassinger) – and for support of campus and community leadership – \$70,000 endowment (Andrew Fitch's parents). Another new one is the John and Shirley Spellacy endowed scholarship. These plus the Modell donation will increase the Foundations endowed scholarship by over \$900,000 in one year.

Tracey reported that they continued their partnership with the athletic departments and held the 2nd Annual Athletics Giving Week. Their goal of 500 donors and \$50,000 was surpassed – 634 donors and \$67,000. The

implementation of a new software has helped them manage this. Once they have a full understanding of what this software can do, they can use it for a campus-wide day of giving, as well as more targeted fundraisers.

Tracey also reported that they are planning a live Alumni Weekend on June 10-12. In the Fall, on September 24, they are putting together a Recognition Weekend, which will include the Scholarship Luncheon, as well as other events.

Lastly, Tracey shared that she donated her late husband's tools and recording equipment to the College, which will be of benefit to the engineering students and create a music space for all students on campus.

- Lenore, we continue our ongoing efforts to redevelop the Midtown Plaza, and to establish an Entrepreneurship Center on our campus. Can you give a brief update on these, as well as what's happening in Government Relations and outreach to the community?

Lenore reported that we received a \$1.1M grant from the State of New York to build an entrepreneurship center on campus, a very student-centered space that will be located in the Campus Center adding about 4,000 sq. ft. We are waiting on matching funds from SUNY, but we are moving ahead with the design. This will add a second floor to the One Hop Shop area. This area will be a complement to the downtown project that is being worked on. She reported that they continue to seek funding for the downtown space. She reminded everyone that a few years ago we received \$1.3M from the State and about \$111,000 from the Northern Border Regional Commission to support the project, and our development partners have committed \$11.5M, but there is still a little more than \$3M needed to fund the building. Conversations have been had with SLC, the Town, and the Village to see if they are willing to support the project with some of their federal relief funding. Conversations have been productive, and they are on-going. They have also applied for earmarks from Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand, as well as Congresswoman Stefanik.

Lenore also reported that we were very engaged with the State budget process the past few months – meeting several times with Assemblyman Mark Walczyk, Senator Patty Ritchie, and Chair of the Higher Education Committee, Debra Glick.

She noted that our SBDC has had a record-breaking year in terms of local impact and helping local businesses weather the pandemic impact – in the last year, 1,100+ clients were helped, over 100 new businesses started, over 150 jobs were created, and almost 1,000 jobs were saved.

- Matt Burnett, can you give us an update on what's new with the Faculty Assembly?

Campus governance is moving forward slowly and steadily on revision of the campus bylaws, it has been decades since this has been done.

Engagement in Campus Governance always has its challenges; there usually ends up being empty seats remaining after elections, which leads to an ongoing effort to fill them. The most active committee has been Academic Standards, who have worked on motions regarding academic integrity, the micro-credential approval process on our campus, permanent pass/fail policy, and is currently reviewing the 1-week review period for online course shells. We have regular reports from the Retention committee, the Nominations and Elections committee, and the Technology and Learning committee. Faculty Affairs has also been active; we just presented motions regarding the future method and modes of Faculty Assembly, and earlier this academic year, two Parliamentarians were added to our structure. Results of the most recent motions – mode of meetings and increase in number of monthly meetings and membership compensation – are not in yet. The hope is to establish greater clarity with the assembly process and encourage participation and productivity in campus governance.

On that note, one of the items under review by the Bylaws committee in their ongoing work is the structure of Faculty Assembly itself. As one of the last institutions with a “town hall” style assembly structure for considering motions, we will be examining the outcomes of schools who have adopted the more common senate (or representative) model. I have informally invited UFS president Keith Landa to come to SUNY Canton in the Fall, with the idea that he could speak on that topic at Assembly and also be available for Q and A.

Some of the key items of concern to the Assembly body over the past three semesters are general concerns regarding workload creep. A tangible instance of this is the ending of the curriculum coordinator position across campus, which has been seen by faculty to add to the workload of program chairs without a corresponding change of remuneration. When this matter was brought up to Faculty Affairs, upon inquiry we see that it is currently under discussion, so no further action has been taken from campus governance.

Another item that has been developing is the growing workload related to online course development, approval, and review. The campus governance committee concerned with this work, the Online Review Committee, has been working with the Bylaws committee to review its charge. Essentially, there has been concern expressed from the last two chairs of this committee that the management, workload, and accountability currently undertaken by this committee is not sustainable for a full-time faculty member.

While this issue is still under discussion, it seems that a request will soon be coming from the committee via the President’s recently presented “New Initiative Request” process, which is expected to include a request to create a position/part-time position to manage the online review and approval process. To put this in context, the

committee was responsible for reviewing/re-reviewing 66 courses in 2020 and 75 courses in 2021, which includes all of the necessary re-reviews and communication. This shows how the evolution of the needs of online and flex teaching, especially during the COVID crisis, has outgrown our prior resources dedicated to this purpose.

We've seen several efforts over this past academic year from the President and Provost to be more inclusive of the body in strategic and capital campaign planning; we have had invitations and methodology provided to present new proposals and have them formally considered. Provost De Cooke has made herself regularly available to meet with committees working on heavy-lift items, such as our Rank Matrixes and Online Learning Policies. President Szafran is regularly willing to engage with new ideas and opportunities across the university; for example, he and Lenore met with me in Lake Placid recently to tour Northwood's Innovation hub and meet with their director.

Regarding multi-modal learning, the choice/opportunities of faculty, staff, and students to attend face-to-face, virtually, or in other formats has varied dramatically from SUNY to SUNY and from semester to semester since the onset of COVID in 2020. Because this has large ramifications for employment, recruitment, and retention of students, staff, and faculty, we are watching anxiously for guidance from SUNY Central. Right now, these decisions reside mostly within each institution and vary widely even between departments at the same institutions. We are already spread widely across face-to-face, remote, and hybrid realms of delivery at Canton, with some programs that are largely online and some that are all face-to-face.

I'll end with the statement that though we have our struggles, this is a time of rapid change in Academia. There are many persons who are strongly engaged in campus governance and working hard to develop solutions, new ways of engaging with these and other emerging needs, and otherwise continuing SUNY Canton's evolution into the new paradigm of Higher Ed.

- Dr. Szafran asked Stephanie to give an update on UUP. She expanded on a number of the items that were already reported on. She noted that she felt they have a good plan developed for the program leadership discussions. She stated that she does have concerns that some fulltime faculty positions are not being replaced. She also reported that they did have a good meeting regarding the nursing issues and was appreciative of the salary increase that were given to them. She noted that other issues are still being addressed and that conversations are also happening regarding leasing courses.

Chairman O'Neill asked if adjuncts have a standard contract to sign or if they are varied. Dr. Szafran stated that some vary, but most are standard. Ron clarified that he was referring to what their duties are and asked if the contracts could be modified. Dr. Szafran said they can be, and this is something that has been looked into, but it is complicated. A discussion happened regarding adjuncts and fulltime faculty.

- Dr. Szafran provided an update from Laini on the SUNY Faculty Senate.

Board Actions

- The board has put together a committee for the new chancellor search (the names of committee members were released to the press on 4-8-22).
- Transfer credits can no longer be withheld for outstanding student fees.
- Working to eliminate single-use plastics on campuses.

Diversity Requirement

- The DEISJ GER requirement is being implemented across campuses. The Senate President emphasized that this requirement should be part of a robust liberal arts curriculum that includes “a scholarly examination of diversity and equity on campuses and in colleges” and should be infused into all parts of the curriculum and structures of the college. It should NOT be treated as a diversity training or workshop. More guidance to campuses on how to implement the requirement is coming out in May. Keith Landa suggests delaying any curriculum voting/implementation until that guidance comes out.

PRODIG

- There have been 2 cohorts of PRODIG hires so far. The Tech sector submitted 5 proposals that resulted in 3 hires total (some at Canton).
- The PRODIG call is late going out to the tech sector schools. There have been issues on the team that delayed the call. It should be sent out this week or next.

Budget

- According to the UUP and the Provost, SUNY has more money than it has had in a decade. The Governor is extremely supportive of SUNY; the budget seems to reflect that support so far. The budget includes money for new faculty hires and EOP among other things.

4 Resolutions Passed

- 1) (From Health Sector) [191-HSC-Successful Implementation of the SUNY Health, Wellness, and Well-Being Infrastructure and Leadership Architecture](#) Calls to fund and deploy a network of wellness officers at all SUNY campuses in order to address the student and employee mental health crisis. Officers will work directly with SUNY Health and report to the Chancellor, Board, and so forth.
- 2) (From Operations Committee) [191-OPS-Costs of Administration Study](#) Call to “establish a comprehensive study of the structure, numbers, ranks... and costs of administration within SUNY and its campuses.”
- 3) (From Executive Committee) [191-EC- Recognition of Service to UFS by Vice Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Elizabeth Bringsjord](#) A recognition and statement of thanks for the service of Vice Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Elizabeth Bringsjord.

- 4) (From Upstate Medical) [Updating Presidential Searches](#). Calls to review and update the State of New York Guide to Presidential Searches with a focus on DEI and faculty inclusion.

Jonah asked if the review of the masking policy was determinate on the numbers in the county or on campus. It was stated that it would be determined by the numbers on campus. He also asked if this was the last Council meeting. It was stated that the last one would be in June.

Jonah shared some information about the events that Student Government have done – Leadership of Tomorrow seminar, Carnival of Clubs (nice opportunity of clubs to showcase what they are doing or get others involved, and it was live streamed), and Comic Con.

He also reported that this is the last day of voting for the Executive Board spots, and at 11 a.m. they will know who the next Executive Board members will be.

Additionally, he reported that SGA has been working on putting forward a proposal for a water fountain replacement initiative in the residence halls, so each unit will have a water bottle refill feature. This is something that would normally be funded by the student fees, but SGA has taken this on. Voting on this happens soon.

Jonah also shared that they offered shadowing to help prepare the incoming board members. And, they are leaving documents to help the new board too. He noted that a group of them will be going to Albany soon for the SUNY Student Assembly.

Lastly, he thanked the Council for letting him participate as a member. And, Ron thanked Jonah for his attendance and leadership; he expressed that he appreciated his efforts and wished him well in the future.

- Dr. Szafran stated that Travis Smith will tell us what's new in Public Relations, including lots of good press that the College has received.

Travis reported that the PR Team has been busy working on After Canton, and they are excited for this issue, as it features our female alumni that are involved in engineering. And, there are nice tributes to Mike Perry and Ray Modell.

Travis shared the awards list with the Council:

- Gold status on the 2022-23 Military Friendly List (11th time to receive this award and highest status to date)
- Military Spouse Friendly School (awarded for the first time since 2016)
- SUNYCUAD Award – not sure which one yet.

On the media front, our EOP office just finished up a fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees. The story was picked up by SUNY EOP and the Watertown Daily Times. Travis also reiterated how Brooke Ayers, our Roosponder to the Crisis, received the highest level of real-world experience. He shared that they are doing some preliminary ex-global marketing campaign work; he will provide more information on this later. They are mostly busy with the year-end events.

Revised

Marie, Joe, and Grace voiced their appreciation for PR's work. Joe was interested to know if Channel 7 was contacted when we had a story; Travis stated that they are contacted.

Dr. Szafran shared his experience of being the Chair for a Middle States review for a college in Pennsylvania. The group briefly talked about the difference in the budgets between them and us and the challenges that we face.

Executive Session

Mr. Rich made a motion to move into Executive Session at 10:50 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stevenson and approved.

Council members, Dr. Szafran, and Ms. Young were asked to stay; everyone else was excused.

Mr. Rich made a motion to move out of Executive Session at 10:54 a.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Black and approved.

The Council returned to regular session.

Adjournment

Mr. Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Regan and approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michaela Young
Secretary to the College Council