

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

289th MEETING

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Chairman O’Neill introduced the following people:

- Toni Kennedy – new College Council member
- Jonah Black – new Student Government Association President and College Council member
- Stephanie Petkovsek – UUP Chapter President
- Matt Burnett – Presiding Officer of the Faculty – was unable to attend the meeting.

Minutes of the November 17, 2020 Meeting

Chairman O’Neill stated that the minutes were emailed to everyone.

Mr. Rich made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 17, 2020, meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stevenson, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved.

New Business

Naming Opportunity – Don Garrett ’72 Civil Construction Engineering Technology Lab

Ms. Thompson explained that Don Garrett ’72 has recently been reconnected with, and he has agreed to a naming donation of \$100,000 and an additional donation of \$50,000 to the Steel Bridge Team.

Ms. Stevenson made a motion to approve the naming opportunity. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rich and approved.

Old Business

There was no old business to report.

Chairman's Report

Chairman O'Neill provided an update on College Council membership – Dr. Burke decided to not be reappointed, Mr. Sharlow resigned due to his plans to retire, and Ms. Regan and Mr. Rich have accepted their reappointments. Three new members are in the process of being appointed – one is from Watertown and two are local.

President's Report

The President and other participants provided the following report.

- The semester has begun, and we're off to a good start. Our reopening plan was reviewed and approved by SUNY, and we've welcomed somewhere between 2,900 and 3,000 students back to the college. We'll know more exactly when the final census date comes around next week. It's great to see faculty, staff, and students walking around campus, taking classes, and participating in activities after more than a year of relative emptiness.
- We received some very good news about the College's ratings. U.S. News & World Report has us categorized as a Regional College—North, which means that less than half of our graduates get degrees in the liberal arts, since we're a college of technology. North includes schools in NY, PA, NJ, MD, and DE. We moved up seven spots on that list and are now in 12th place. We also moved up a notch from 12th to 11th place on Best Value Regional Colleges—North. On Top Public Regional Colleges—North, we moved up two steps to 9th place—so we're in the top 10. On Best Regional Colleges for Veterans, we're in 6th place, and in Top Performers on Social Mobility, we're now up from 19th to 15th place. On national rankings, our online Business programs were ranked #19, and our overall online programs were ranked #119 of the 1,200 schools that were rated. This puts us in the top 2% nationally for business and top 10% overall. Our Nursing program was also ranked in "Best Undergraduate Nursing Programs for Regional Colleges—North. These are the highest rankings we have ever gotten on this well-known list, and it's all due to the excellent work by our faculty and staff. Peggy, can you tell us a little about what our faculty are currently working on as we move toward our upcoming accreditation and in other faculty endeavors?

Dr. De Cooke reported that they are fully engaged in the Middle States reaffirmation process – self-study cycle began last fall, co-chairs (Kirk Jones and Johanna Lee) have been named, steering committees and working groups have been developed and charged, and substantive work has begun. Campus priorities have been prioritized, self-study design documents have been submitted, and a virtual visit has been scheduled for October. A final schedule for reaccreditation is forthcoming.

- We are also holding a robust set of student-life activities on campus to reassure students that we're doing everything possible to provide a full-campus experience. We believe that by showing that we can do this successfully, on-campus numbers will improve, hopefully next semester, but certainly next fall. Students were strongly encouraged to get vaccinated before returning to campus and advised that vaccinations would become mandatory once any of the vaccines were approved for non-emergency use. We held a vaccine clinic at the beginning of the semester, and a second one is being held today.

Thus far, our number of positive cases is well under control, with 10-15 being the average number at any given time. Courtney, can you tell us a little about our vaccination rates and on-campus testing, as well as our Best Year Ever effort?

Ms. Bish reported that there is a 92% vaccination rate among residential students, includes full and partial. The second vaccination clinic is being held today. We are working with a deadline of September 27 to comply with the Chancellor's mandate for student vaccinations, with an extension of October 4 for those that have shown a true effort to get fully vaccinated. A small number of religious (59) and medical (3) exception have been approved.

Unvaccinated/undisclosed persons are tested weekly, with every other week being a 100% testing week.

She shared that the Best Year Ever's efforts and activities are going well and gave credit to Jonah and the Student Government Association. She also noted that they are ramping up their online programming.

Athletics is back in full swing with full team rosters and most being vaccinated.

Mr. Rich noted that he saw that there were 220 confirmed cases in St. Lawrence County, and he asked if that impacted the College. It was noted that we have been lucky with our highest case number being 15 – cycling in and out of isolation/quarantine. Credit was given to the students as they have done well to comply with the mandates. It was also noted that SUNY Canton has fared the best out of the four colleges, but it was recognized that it could change at any point.

Chairman O'Neill asked about the number of enrollments lost due to refusal of vaccine. That number is not known, but it was suspected that it was lower than we originally thought.

The classroom protocol was asked about. It was stated that at this point masks are required for everyone inside on campus and only for unvaccinated/undisclosed persons outside. This changed from just requiring them in all classrooms when the numbers starting going up.

Ms. Bish added that she is helping to train the local school districts on the testing process that we use.

- Our enrollment is down a little bit, but the bigger problem is the large decline in the number of students in our residence halls. This is due to several factors, including families trying to save money by studying on-line, students wanting to be closer to home during these trying times, and concern that there wouldn't be much to do on campus due to the virus or fear of the virus. Shawn, would you tell us how this is impacting our budget?

Ms. Miller reported that enrollment is down about 200, but we are waiting on final census data. As a point of reference, she noted that for every 100 it equals about \$700,000.

She shared that the College has received about \$12M in CARES funding, with half being designated to help students. Criteria for this funding's use sometimes hinders its spending, but restrictions have been freed up some. It was also noted that there is emergency funding too.

It was reported that testing last year cost about \$600,000, and it is anticipated that it will be the same, or more, this year. A \$1.4M lose is projected, which does not include the dorm losses. Loses make a difference across the campus, but it was felt that overall the College is pretty stable due to the reserves.

It was asked and answered that the College is trying for other grants, as well as working to reduce costs to off-set the losses.

- SLU had an outbreak on their campus that exceeded the number of isolation beds they had, and asked if we could help. We quickly developed a contract that allowed for them to use one wing in Smith Hall, totally isolated from our students, and watched by SLU personnel 24/7. Their students are not allowed to leave the isolation space. All services to them are provided by SLU. Students are housed here until a bed opens up at SLU. The numbers have been low, and as of last Friday, there were no SLU students here as their positive numbers have now fallen.

It was asked and answered that the agreement with SLU was contractual and that our students have priority if space is needed.

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

Ms. Thompson reported that they closed out the fiscal year in June with over \$2M in cash, new pledges, and planned gifts. They also secured two namings. Faculty/staff donor numbers is now over 54%, higher than the national average. The total number of donors and alumni donors increased, in part to the Week of Giving and help from the athletic coaches. Endowments grew from \$13M to 16M last year, which helps to increase scholarship benefits. And, due to being able to travel again, they were able to secure four new scholarships.

Dr. Szafran added that efforts have been made to address critical needs through use of the Student Emergency Fund, which increased to the largest amount ever and has helped many people.

- We continue our ongoing efforts to redevelop the Midtown Plaza and to establish an Entrepreneurship Center on our campus.

It was noted that Gary Cohen and Dr. Szafran talk regularly, and Mr. Cohen is still committed to the project. A CFA was submitted for the on-campus piece, and we should hear about that in December.

Another grant opportunity was shared with the group; this one is very preliminary. There is a possibility for a partnership with the ARC to establish a childcare center on campus; the proposal is for the center to be built on campus land with the ARC or someone else operating it. Students in our programs would be able to interact with their program.

Ms. Kennedy asked if faculty and staff would have use priority. Dr. Szafran stated that there is that need, as well as for students. With the setup described above, the group handling the operation would handle this. Dr. De Cooke also noted that if we do partner with ARC the classrooms would be integrated and be eligible for developmental and delayed children. Ms. Stevenson asked about the Childcare policy and if this partnership would allow for emergency situations such as this policy was meant to address. Dr. De Cooke indicated that it was too early to know, but it needs to be considered.

It was also noted that the College continues to work with local government officials, provide representation on local boards, and work to secure clinical sites.

- Laini will you give us an update on the SUNY Faculty Senate?

Ms. Kavaloski reported that the Fall Plenary is coming up and will be virtual again this year. She shared highlights of what the campus received through the SUNY budget. She also shared that the current online platform, Blackboard, expires in 2022, and the new platform is still under review but is scheduled for implementation in 2022. Gen Ed revisions have begun and continue to roll out into 2022. She reported that each sector develops a question for the Chancellor prior to the meeting, and the Tech Sector's question is, "Will there be particular resources for diversity, equity, and inclusion?" She indicated that there was no commitment on his part, but he does want to continue to work with campuses on it.

Other requests that the Faculty Senate are putting forward include:

- Implementation of a 360 review for MCs
- Support for/make available holistic student spaces
- Academic planning for future emergencies and examination of modalities for future use
- Recognition of COVID 19 planning and continued help
- Express support for the TIAA fossil-fuel divestment

Chairman O'Neill asked about the faculty's acceptance of the new Chancellor. Ms. Kavaloski indicated that she felt there was never a question about the Chancellor himself; it was about the process. She also indicated his response to some of their resolutions has been good.

- Dr. Szafran asked Jonah to provide an update on Student Government.

Mr. Black reported that students are returning and participating in events; constructive suggestions to include online students have led to planning to make that happen. He shared a student concern regarding unvaccinated students missing messages about vaccination clinics. Courtney stated that she will send out a RAVE alert today, and if there are any concerns, they should be directed to contact Courtney. He raised another concern regarding the contract with SLU and noted that students felt there was a lack of information. He asked that an email explaining the situation be sent to allay fears.

- Dr. Szafran invited Stephanie to provide a UUP update.

Ms. Petkovsek introduced herself and noted that UUP is working with State and SUNY to get as many members vaccinated as possible. Her first delegate assembly is being held in October.

Dr. Szafran added that the first Labor/Management meeting of the semester was held yesterday, and several issues are being worked on.

It was asked if any faculty/staff are leaving due to the vaccination mandates. It was stated that that was unknown, but in any given year, employees leave for many reasons. It was also noted that faculty/staff are not yet mandated to get the vaccine. Only students who access the campus are mandated. Currently, the reported numbers for employee vaccinations are about 2/3. As a State University, we cannot mandate it until the State does. It was asked if we feel it will be mandated. It was stated that it is being negotiated with the State and the unions now.

- Dr. Szafran provided an update for PR.

PR won another SUNYCUAD award for last year's report. They are hopeful that this year's report will garner them another recognition. They also won a SUNYCUAD award for last year's After Canton magazine, SUNY Canton's first ever award in a magazine category. Acknowledgement was given to Matt Mulkin, Lorette Murray, Greg Kie, and the Advancement staff for their great work.

A new videographer, William Young, will be joining the PR team starting October 5. He's a graduate of Madrid-Waddington and earned his BFA in photography from RIT. He's moving back up to the North Country from Brooklyn, where he's been working for a diverse production company, producing music videos and films.

The "Best Year Ever!" marketing campaign has had a phenomenal reception despite the pandemic reemerging to cloud things a bit. The campaign kicked off during the Olympic Opening Ceremony and could be seen throughout the Games. It can also be seen on Channel 7 during the 6 p.m. News, while watching Jeopardy, or from time-to-time during a big NFL or Syracuse game. Acknowledgement was given to Morgan

Elliott for his work on the production. And, Courtney's areas were thanked for creating great activities this year for our students.

Dr. Szafran added that PR is also working on a “People Like Me” campaign as a way to show people that college is for everyone.

Ms. Thompson reminded everyone about the Scholarship Luncheon this Thursday and noted that everyone is invited; attendees need to be vaccinated.

Dr. Szafran added that the Chancellor came for a quick visit to see how we are doing with the vaccination effort and how we work with the County. He reported that the visit went well, two County officials joined the meeting, as well as students, and the students may be featured in a video. He also noted that the Chancellor’s agenda and our strategic plans align.

On behalf of the College Council, Chairman O’Neill thanked the faculty/staff/students for their contributions to the campus over the past two years.

Adjournment

Mr. Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kennedy and approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michaela Young
Secretary to the College Council