

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

CONFERENCE CALL

April 20, 2020

Present: (on call)	Grace Burke Joseph Rich	Ronald O’Neill, Chair Roger Sharlow	Marie Regan Jennifer Stevenson
Absent:	Cameron Smith		
Others: (on call)	Courtney Bish Zvi Szafran	Suzan McDermott Michaela Young	Shawn Miller

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two regularly scheduled meetings of the College Council were canceled. The Council’s action regarding the Children/Families On-Campus policy had been tabled for discussion at one of those meetings. The vote needed to meet a June 1 deadline, so the Council was asked, and agreed, to hold the discussion via conference call.

Call to Order

Chairman O’Neill started the conference call at 11:02 a.m.

He took roll call, indicated that he would ask all campus staff for comments, and then ask Council members for questions. All agreed to this.

Dr. Szafran briefly shared an update regarding how the campus has/is handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though things have been challenging, the campus has been able to switch all of its instruction to 100% online. This was helped by our new format of teaching – flex modality – and a request for funding proposal was submitted and accepted by SUNY, so they will be helping with this expense. It was noted that all actions have been taken with safety as our top concern, and there are no cases on campus. Several from our campus community are finding ways to help the community and State – testing of low-cost ventilators, Operation Helping Hands (helping to manage the fatalities in the City), developing the eSports tournament for the System, etc.

Ms. Bish echoed what Dr. Szafran shared and added that she felt we are handling things well.

Ms. Miller shared that campuses have been asked by System to cut their spending by 10%, and we are complying. We may be looking at a 10-25% cut in State support for next year. Scenarios for future planning are being developed, and there may be impacts to the budget.

Children/Families On-Campus Policy Discussion

Ms. Young noted that the only item that the Council has to act on is the Children/Families On-Campus policy.

Ms. McDermott noted that the policy was developed in an effort to address some issues of people bringing their children to campus and not monitoring them. There was a need to put some guidance in place.

Dr. Szafran shared that we are using a new policy format that is simpler and clearer.

Chairman O'Neill asked if Dr. Burke had any questions regarding the policy. Dr. Burke indicated that she did not.

Chairman O'Neill asked if Ms. Regan had any questions regarding the policy. Ms. Regan asked about the emphasis of children/families needing to be supervised by a parent. She noted that when she taught on campus students with an emergency situation often addressed it by having an on-campus friend watch their children while the parent had class. She wondered how this policy affected those situations. Ms. Bish noted that with regard to the student part the spirit of the policy was to give guidance on when it might be appropriate to bring your child to class. Friends helping to watch them during the parent's class is not something we are looking to penalize. The policy is not intended to find code violations; sometimes it is not safe to bring them, and that is what we are trying to avoid.

Chairman O'Neill asked if Ms. Stevenson had any questions regarding the policy. Ms. Stevenson asked about how the student is supposed to connect with their instructor before class if it is an emergency situation. Ms. Bish noted that students have access to an instructor's cell number and email in the syllabus. It was reiterated that the policy is not aimed at penalizing them; it is meant to put reasonable guidelines in place.

Ms. Stevenson noted her concern regarding an increase of people using this policy and how this will disrupt the other students in the class. She has real concerns with children coming to class. Ms. Bish noted that we do not want children in class either, but we need to have something that addresses the issues that are already happening. This is an attempt to put guidelines in place to be safer, as she feels we have an obligation to do this.

Ms. Stevenson asked how it was being handled now. Ms. Bish indicated that it is a judgement call, as currently, there is no policy. This is why guidelines were developed, so there would be something to follow.

Ms. Stevenson stated that she felt it was too subjective.

Chairman O'Neill asked what the frequency of the occurrences are in a week. Ms. Bish indicated that she did not know for sure, and she was not aware of it being a prevalent issue. Ms. Regan noted that when she taught it was not a huge problem. Ms. Bish agreed that it is not a huge problem, but she reiterated that we need to have some guidelines. She also noted that they did not want the policy to be draconian, but rather, a tool that would guide people to make good decisions.

Chairman O’Neill asked if Mr. Rich had any questions regarding the policy. Mr. Rich shared that he had some experience with a similar policy. He stated that he thought they had a good policy too, but they ran into issues with “emergencies” lasting a few days and supervisor approvals being too easy. Ms. Bish stated that she appreciated the example that Mr. Rich provided and noted that if we see too much rigidity or flexibility those things can be addressed.

Chairman O’Neill asked if Mr. Sharlow had any questions regarding the policy. Mr. Sharlow stated that he supported the policy and that he felt it was the first step in setting proper guidelines, which can be tweaked in the future as it makes sense.

Chairman O’Neill stated that he felt it was a new area, and we should not make it real rigid. He also felt that it was a first step and was good to start. He noted that Ms. Stevenson’s points may need to be addressed down the road.

Ms. Stevenson asked what the plan was for tracking these requests. Ms. Bish noted that at this point we would not be tracking them; however, feedback from students and others would be monitored. Ms. Regan agreed that this is the beginning and reminded the group that the College is a friendly place, and she does not want to see that lost.

Ms. Bish noted that her personal view of policies is that they are living documents. She stated that she felt if this policy was put into place we would know quickly if it was an issue or not. Dr. Szafran added that the nature of the campus is if there is a problem we hear quickly, and we respond quickly. For any policy that we create, there is an overarching policy of we will always do what is right. We look to see if the policy is reasonable, address any issues that arise, and if there are too many issues with one particular policy, we review the policy.

Chairman O’Neill asked if doing a survey in the future would help. Dr. Szafran indicated that he thought that might work, but he suggested that we wait to do it around a year after we return on campus to give it time to be implemented and used. Ms. Bish suggested that we might want to consider doing a survey for all new policies, not just one.

Mr. Sharlow reiterated that it is a good policy, and he thanked the administration for putting it together and bringing it forward. He also felt that if there are any issues they will be known in a short time. Mr. Rich agreed and added that he felt it was also good to have the discussion.

Children/Family On-Campus policy

Ms. Regan made a motion to accept the Children/Family On-Campus policy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sharlow.

Chairman O’Neill asked the Council if there was any additional discussion. Ms. Stevenson asked for clarification as to if these points were correct – monitoring will be done by survey and if there is an uptick in use, the policy will be reviewed. Chairman O’Neill indicated that they were. Ms. Stevenson said she felt more comfortable about that. Chairman O’Neill stated that policies can always be looked

at, and he told Ms. Stevenson that if she ever hears of an issue she can always bring it forward for discussion.

The policy was unanimously approved.

Ms. Bish thanked everyone and stated that she appreciates the feedback.

Chairman O'Neill thanked everyone for their willingness to call in and review/discuss the policy.

The conference call ended at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michaela Young
Secretary to the College Council

DRAFT