

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

284th MEETING

June 4, 2019

Present:	Grace Burke Joseph Rich	Ronald O’Neill, Chair Roger Sharlow	Marie Regan
Absent:	Timothy Currier Michaela Young	Thomas Sauter Cameron Smith	Cecily Morris
Others:	Courtney Bish Anne Sibley Lenore VanderZee	Shawn Miller Travis Smith Barat Wolfe	Molly Mott Zvi Szafran Debbie Flack

Call to Order

Chairman O’Neill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes of April 30, 2019, Meeting

Ms. Regan made a motion to accept the April 30, 2019, minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Burke and approved.

New Business

2019 Advisory Board Appointments/Reappointments.

Chairman O’Neill noted that the 2019 Advisory Board appointment/reappointment list was sent to everyone via email.

Mr. Rich made a motion to approve the 2019 Advisory Board appointments/reappointments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sharlow and approved.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Chairman’s Report

Chairman O’Neill had nothing to report.

President’s Report

Dr. Szafran reported that Commencement went very well, with some 900 students earning degrees. The venue was full, our keynote speaker, Fergal Foley, was terrific, and the day was perfect. The next big event was Recognition Day which was perfect with one exception: neither Dr. Szafran nor Chairman O’Neill knew the answers to the first two questions of the annual Family Feud contest. He also noted that one of the President’s Meritorious Service Award recipients, Dr. Barat Wolfe, is in attendance at the meeting today. (Congratulatory hand-clapping.) The Faculty Co-Chief Diversity Officer Search has concluded, with Dr. Emily Hamilton-Honey appointed to a three-year term. He thanked Mr. Bill Jones, the incumbent, for serving, as well as the search committee chair, Ms. Courtney Bish.

Student Affairs Update

Ms. Bish began by mentioning that summer is not a time of rest for her department, and that they are working on planning fall events. Plans are in progress for speakers for the Leadership Lecture Series and the Cultural Competency Badge events. Athletics has had some exciting events, with our e-Sports Team the showcase of the Extreme Networks Conference in Nashville, TN, where seven of our students and some staff members traveled. Our students were treated like rock stars and had opportunity to experience some things they may not otherwise have done without this new program. The Women's Lacrosse team won the NAC Championship and made it to the NCAA Division III National Class for the first time in our College's history. Searches are underway for volleyball and men's basketball coaches, with over 80 applicants to the latter position. Spring 2019 athletic GPAs are great, with Men's Golf the highest at 3.51 for the team. Women's Hockey came in second at 3.50.

Ms. Bish announced that SUNY has asked her to serve on a Mental Health and Wellness Task Force. As a member of this task force, she hopes to talk to SUNY about online services to enhance health and wellness and get that on their agenda.

Another endeavor is to increase the size and visibility of the campus food pantry, which has been in operation for about 15 years. The purpose is to address and improve food insecurity on campus, and she is working with Ms. Honey Jenkins from the Church and Community Program in downtown Canton. They have a connection with the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, which has a food source that is more abundant than they can use themselves. To address housing insecurity, we house some students for free who have no other place to go over the summer or during other times when the campus is closed. That was a SUNY Board of Trustees initiative a few years ago, with mandatory compliance.

Mr. Rich pointed out that Ms. Bish is on the United Way Board of Directors. Ms. Bish indicated there are a lot of partner agencies also on that board, giving opportunities for collaboration.

Dr. Szafran remarked that the issue of food security is a big focus for SUNY, because a high percentage of students surveyed nationally – up to 30% - indicate some degree of hunger on campus. Ms. Bish added that she also serves on the SUNY Food Insecurity Task Force along with Ms. Priscilla Leggette, and that the first ever SUNY Food Insecurity Conference is going to be hosted at Monroe Community College next week, which Ms. Leggette will attend.

Mr. Sharlow requested clarification on the students taking advantage of the free housing. Ms. Bish answered that it is a small number, only two or three currently.

Other News

Dr. Szafran reported that the Vice President for Advancement Search is progressing well, with the three finalists coming to campus in the next couple of weeks. He noted appreciation to Ms. Sibley for staying on in her role until her successor is appointed.

Dr. Szafran then provided information on a big development in advance of its public announcement, requesting confidentiality until after it is made public later this week. A project we have been working together with the Town and the Village for two years – the development of a downtown shopping center

property – has evolved over time. He invited Ms. Anne Sibley to tell the group about the Canton College Foundation Board’s role in the process.

Ms. Sibley explained that Dr. Szafran has a good relationship with the current property owner, Garry Cohen. Since the plans for the property would include development using grant money, it made sense for the Canton College Foundation to be the lead organization in the initial step of the purchase. The developers in turn agreed to take the liability of the property off the hands of the College Foundation should a purchase agreement be reached. The Foundation Board approved the proposal.

Dr. Szafran continued the story by adding the factors of the Canton Village application for a \$10M NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant. This development was included in that grant as a potential anchor project. Dr. VanderZee spent many hours working to ready that application, which had a deadline of last Friday at 4:00 PM. Much negotiating with many parties happened during the final days and hours. An agreement was reached regarding the sale of the property at noon on Friday. Our goal was to make this a win-win-win situation for everyone involved.

Dr. VanderZee added that they called this a “Generational Opportunity” for Canton. Property that has been derelict and abandoned for nearly 20 years has made an impact on development in the downtown area, and this is poised to make a huge positive impact. The developers see great economic potential in the property. She mentioned some other projects that are being planned, including the American Theater; the vacant Family Dollar space; the old laundromat on Riverside Drive; some municipal, infrastructure, beautification projects, and more. The kinds of projects being proposed for this initiative could be game-changing for Canton and the region.

Dr. VanderZee continued, adding that we are also applying for the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) round of funding this summer with the downtown projects. The Midtown Plaza property has been included in proposals in the past, but one of the reasons they were not approved was likely that there was not site control of the property. Having that makes a huge difference in the strength of the application. The Entrepreneurship Center is going to be an anchor tenant within this proposed project.

Mr. Rich emphasized how critical it is to revitalize the shopping center.

Dr. Szafran replied that the synergy of all related pieces makes it work. Dr. VanderZee added that a lot of people who really love the community are working hard on this project, which has made all the difference. The seller even wrote a letter of support for the project.

Dr. Burke remarked that the health care marketing in our area has vastly improved, and that the residential portion of the plans will likely bring better health care providers to the area. Dr. VanderZee agreed that having good quality housing in the heart of downtown will help, as we have lost good health care prospects due to the unavailability of appropriate housing.

Chairman O’Neill requested clarification on the property purchase, and whether the College Foundation will retain title to the property. Ms. Sibley explained that the Foundation holds the option to purchase, which will be held during the process of assessing the site and the grant applications. At a later date, that option can be transferred to the developer. The Foundation will not actually purchase the property

nor hold the title, but can control the property through this process and then assign that contract to the developer.

Chairman O'Neill asked what assurances there are from the developer. Ms. Sibley explained that there is the option to back out for any reason if all the pieces do not fit into place. Ms. Sibley further explained that the goal throughout was to ensure they did not own something that they couldn't manage and to not have expenses beyond their means.

Chairman O'Neill inquired whether the Foundation will have to approve the developer's plan. Ms. Sibley answered that the developer can do whatever they want, but that our goal is to have the Entrepreneurship Center there, so we can get that assurance from the developer prior to assigning the contract to them.

Chairman O'Neill and Dr. Burke asked the nature of the living spaces in the plans and the size of the parcel of land. Ms. Sibley and Dr. VanderZee answered their questions.

Ms. Regan emphasized the potential for this project to transform the image of the Town and Village of Canton, and the importance of listening to those voices as plans develop. Dr. Szafran mentioned his discussion with the Canton mayor on Friday and the phone call from the Town supervisor, as well as interactions with other Town and Village officials, all of whom are very pleased with the deal. Dr. VanderZee added that SUNY Canton is putting out the press release to the news venues, ensuring that all involved parties accept the content before sending it. She also mentioned the vital role Dr. Szafran played in the deal.

Chairman O'Neill asked whether the hair business adjacent to the property was addressed. Dr. Szafran said they left it up to the developer.

Online Learning Update

Dr. Mott explained that we are piloting two programs for SUNY Online. Health Care Management in fall 2019 and Cybersecurity and Crime Analysis in fall 2020. SUNY will be looking to us to craft how to scale online programs. One of five campuses selected, we have three of the programs SUNY will introduce. This is a big project, but we are resilient and are asking a lot of questions. We have a lot of good people working with us, such as Dr. Marela Fiacco from Health Care Management and Dr. Elizabeth Brown from Cybersecurity and Crime Analysis. This is an opportunity for us to shape SUNY's future in the sense that they are going to have this pipeline of scaled programs, and we would rather be part of shaping that instead of having them tell us how it's going to be done. We have been contributing honest feedback in a collaborative way that is helping inform how things move.

Dr. Szafran added that this is a wonderful example of how things work on our campus. It was not by chance that we were selected to participate. We have a culture and history of support for online programs, have developed new facilities, and engaged our faculty and staff in the growth process. Dr. Mott has worked on this for 10 years now, and we have been able to accomplish this because of her. He thanked Mr. Kyle Brown for Information Technology support and Ms. Shawn Miller for fiscal support. They picked SUNY Canton because they know we know what we are doing. Our unique programs have gained us recognition. Engaging and cooperating with our unions is the piece that causes jaws to drop across SUNY and another big reason SUNY wants our participation, because it is unique to our campus.

Mr. Rich added that the State and Federal governments are not providing the funding to human service agencies and educational facilities in New York State. They have instructed agencies he is affiliated with to do their own fundraising if they wish to survive. He applauded Dr. Szafran and the entire team for getting all this done in this economic climate.

Administrative Affairs Update

Ms. Miller began by stating our fiscal year ends June 30. It looks like we are going to end up even. Some of our reserves had to be pledged to balance earlier, but as numbers are updating, it looks like we may not need to use those reserves. In talking to other business officers, other campuses are much worse off. Maintaining or slightly increasing our enrollment has made a big difference. With state support flat for the past 10 years, tuition increase from higher enrollment is very helpful. We have been promised that the State will cover half of our retroactive salary increases this year, but they have not given us an amount or timeframe for when we will see it.

Mr. McCormick from Facilities gave Ms. Miller a list of infrastructure projects moving forward. The outside of Dana Hall should be completed in October. A lecture hall in Wicks, the Library first floor, the French Hall lobby, and the plaza behind French Hall are in the works or coming up soon. Recently completed are the building envelope of Dana Hall, Chaney Dining Hall, and Payson's north side. Coming soon are some HVAC projects, energy saving adjustments such as LED lighting, interior renovations of Cooper Service Complex, and remodeling the lower level of Southworth Library. In the design concept category are phase 2 of Dana Hall renovations and additions, electrical upgrades (the campus is on full generator power at this moment), and an atrium inspired by Dr. Mott.

Dr. Mott explained the impact that upkeep and improvements make on the College's image when parents and prospective students tour our campus. She outlined a few of the recent projects that have increased and improved faculty-student engagement and collaboration. All this helps students perceive their value to us. Ms. Miller agreed that many times a student will make a decision within 15-20 minutes of being on a campus. Many decisions are made based on how comfortable they feel in a place rather than the name of the college.

Ms. Regan added that a lot of our positive image in the community comes from events such as weddings held at Chaney Dining Hall over the years. She asked how the changes to Chaney will affect that kind of event going forward.

Ms. Miller stated that College Association decided to stop doing catering of large events about two years ago. Ms. Bish added that the decision was in part due to the consultation on the dining hall's proposed renovations. The renovation design, combined with the lack of revenue compared to the amount of preparation time required for such events, were considered. Now we are using Roos House for many activities open to the community.

Dr. Szafran added that there are other ways, many closer to our mission, in which we draw our community to our campus. Economic development events, a recent Green Construction Conference, Engineering Week, and Women in Engineering are all examples of events that draw potential students to our campus and make them aware of our programs. Our Criminal Justice program also hosts events on campus annually.

Dr. Burke asked if there are kayaking opportunities for the community, given we are situated on a river. Ms. Bish answered that we have kayaks and canoes available for free to students. She added that we have room to grow in the area of offering outdoor activities to engage our students with our beautiful campus. Dr. Szafran concluded with a reminder that our campus' Master Plan includes long term vision for improvements step by step, with many improvements happening in stages.

Dr. Szafran then announced that our Student Steel Bridge Team has just placed in the top ten nationally (applause). Ms. Miller added that we will be hosting the competition next year. Ms. Bish said that the Steel Bridge Team and the e-Sports Team share a larger space which was previously for the Steel Bridge Team exclusively. There was concern at first on how well this would be handled by the students, but the students are not only sharing the space collaboratively, they are sharing experiences by attending each other's events, which is a delightful surprise.

Alumni/Development Update

Ms. Sibley began with news on this coming weekend's Reunion events, including the annual Hall of Fame Dinner on Friday evening. Fundraising continues to do well this year, with new strategies and activities paying off. We will finish the year around 200% of our goal, which will be a 60% increase over last year's goal, which itself was a 70% increase over the year before. This tremendous rate of growth reflects all the untapped potential out there. Dr. Szafran thanked Ms. Sibley for her years of service, echoed with applause.

Faculty Senate Update

Dr. Wolfe began by echoing the concern over SUNY Online. Faculty are concerned about keeping control over curriculum and have passed some resolutions reminding SUNY that faculty are the ones responsible for that. Another concern is regarding PRODI-G and the tech sector. The concern is that undergraduate students are being ignored, that you must start earlier than grad students, because many undergrads do not see themselves fitting into a diverse faculty if it is not represented in their current classes, and therefore do not pursue graduate degrees. The plenaries are taking on a theme lately, with the most recent theme culture and civility. Campuses are opting out of hosting plenaries because of the cost, so more are likely to be held at SUNY System. It would be good for System to begin paying for these events. There was discussion on our recent plenary hosting and its cost, as the planners are very demanding with their expectations.

Dr. Wolfe added that Senate By-Laws are being overhauled, which will take a lot of work and will need approval. Additionally, Dr. Currier is initiating an update of our Faculty By-Laws, which is important and timely. Dr. Currier has brought some energy to her position as Faculty Presiding Officer, requiring reports from committees at Faculty Assembly, which hasn't been done in a few years. These are positive changes which will align our campus with what is happening in SUNY Senate.

Public Relations Update

Mr. Smith began with the e-Sports teams' participation in the Extreme Connect Conference in Nashville, TN. Our students were the centerpiece of the entire conference, and it was a great experience for them. He reminded the group that the host, Extreme Networks, built the infrastructure for the e-Sports arena on campus. He also mentioned a video that was made by our staff at the conference, but the power outage on campus this morning left the video equipment in the meeting room unavailable today. The link to the

video will be shared with the attendees at a later time. Discussions are underway for an October e-Sports event at Turning Stone Casino, inviting local schools (colleges and K-12 schools) to attend. We now have an e-Sports jersey signed by Wayne Gretzky, who was a keynote speaker at the conference. PR was able to get our Student Steel Bridge Team highlighted on a Syracuse television station for their #9 standing in the nation, thanks to a PR intern and some e-Sports team members from the Central New York area.

Our PR Department won an unprecedented **four** SUNY Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD) awards:

- **E-Sports Promo Video** won the Best of Category in both the Excellence in Digital Marketing **and** the Excellence in Marketing and Communications on a Budget
- **"50 Acts of Kindness"** won the Best of Category in Excellence in Campaigns - Government or Community Relations Campaign
- **"It's Your Time" Online National Campaign** won the Best of Category in Excellence in Campaigns - Advertising Campaign

A press release for the downtown project will go out tomorrow or Thursday, and local media is expected to react quickly.

Dr. VanderZee and Dr. Szafran offered congratulations to Mr. Smith and his colleague in PR, Mr. Mulkin, on their new babies, as well as new babies for others, including Mr. Conklin (Catering) and Ms. Baines (Special Events).

Government Relations Update

Dr. VanderZee announced several recent meetings with NY State Assembly member Walczyk and his interest in SUNY Canton. He met with our Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to hear about their impact in the community. She reminded the group that we recently took over the Plattsburgh SBDC office, and added that this increases our reach and the team is developing and working together very well. This may be a record year in terms of community impact. Two of our members won awards in the State for their work with local businesses. For SUNY Days DC, she visited with staff from Representative Stefanik's office and staffers from both our U.S. Senators' offices. Most of the meeting included complaints and needs, but Dr. VanderZee was able to turn the conversation around to a more optimistic tone, ending with a positive impact that federal funds can have on innovation and grant creation to boost the economic climate. They were very excited to hear about the things we have been able to do with this money in the past.

Dr. Szafran added that a higher education publication recently reviewed trends in the various degree clusters, showing a sharp downturn in demand for liberal arts degrees and a higher demand for degrees in the technology area. We are perfectly situated in the marketplace right now. Increasing numbers of people are studying online as well, an area in which we are very strong.

Student Government Update

Outgoing SGA President, Brayden White, was unable to attend today's meeting. Dr. Szafran shared with the group something that Mr. White said during his remarks at Commencement. He was concerned and nervous when he first attended SUNY Canton. He had never been outside his community, and did

not know what to expect. On his first day, he heard the campus motto, “Everyone is Welcome Here,” and in spite of his doubts, he discovered that they were not just words, but that we are truly serious about making sure our campus is a place where everyone is welcome.

Chairman O’Neill asked Dr. VanderZee about whether the climate in Washington regarding education will change in light of the chaos in the administration. Dr. VanderZee responded that the chaos at the top is not affecting the ones who do the real work, and that she does not feel as though she wasted her time there. There is doubt that anything will happen in the current budget year, but she feels as if she has set the stage for positive change regarding the Higher Education Authorization Act (HEAA). They want to fund “cool stuff” and we are working to get the right pieces into place so that when the time is right it will come to fruition. Dr. Szafran added that we have been planting seeds for our projects with all the people who make decisions, and now we are getting phone calls from a college in Great Britain, Georgia Tech, Albany, SUNY Polytechnic, and UCLA regarding our e-Sports and online programs, wanting to know how WE are doing things.

Ms. Regan remarked at how successful a team Dr. Szafran has around him, and that it is because he appreciates them, knows what they are doing, and shares the credit with them for all the accomplishments, and that is what a great leader does.

Mr. Sharlow added that he always leaves the College Council meetings feeling good, that he learns so much during the meetings, and that each of the presenters’ enthusiasm is contagious.

Dr. Burke echoed that the synergy of the team, finding and developing partners, keeping vision in spite of the lack of Federal and State funding, have all made the plan successful.

Members discussed some of the improvements they have noticed around campus, such as the condition of Miller Drive and the message on the new digital sign.

Adjournment

Mr. Sharlow made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rich and approved at 10:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Flack
Acting Secretary to the College Council