

SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL

298th MEETING

OCTOBER 2, 2024

Present:	Ronald O’Neill, Chair Jennifer Stevenson	Kathleen Dodge Evan Velasquez	Joseph Rich
Zoom:	Marie Regan		
Absent:	Toni Kennedy	Brian Plonka	
Others:	Courtney Bish Peggy De Cooke Zvi Szafran Michaela Young	Matthew Burnett Stephanie Petkovsek Tracey Thompson Tim Ashley (Guest)	Jesse Clark-Stone Travis Smith Lenore VanderZee

Call to Order

At 2:00 p.m., the meeting was called to order for non-action items.

At 2:06 p.m., Council Member Stevenson arrived, and quorum was met.

At 2:22 p.m., Chairman O’Neill paused the President’s Report to officially call the meeting to order. The President’s Report resumed, with a plan to handle the action items at the end. See notation of pause in the minutes below.

Old Business

Chairman O’Neill stated that the following e-votes were approved, either unanimously or by majority vote, by the Council on August 5, 2024, and August 19, 2024. He read the list of e-vote items below to enter them into the record.

- New Cybersecurity MS Degree
- Academic Integrity Policy Edits
- Camping and Use of Tents on Campus Policy (SUNY Mandated)
- ID Card Policy (SUNY Mandated)
- Posting Policy (SUNY Mandated)
- Freedom of Expression Policy (SUNY Mandated)
- Roo Express Policy

No questions or comments were asked/stated. The e-votes were recorded into the minutes.

President’s Report

The following information was shared as the President’s Report, which included campus leaderships’ input as well.

Another academic year has started, and there are some changes on the horizon that we would like to update you on.

Our enrollment is essentially flat – up in new first-year students, but down by the same amount in transfer students. While this isn't as strong as we had hoped, given the issues with FAFSA and the predicted demographic cliff, it's a good result.

The number of students living on campus is up significantly overall – 778 students in housing, equaling our numbers from Fall 2021, a 7% increase from last year. This has resulted in a very engaged student presence on campus, which has everyone excited and seeing it as a return to “normal.”

The first half of the semester is almost here and gone and things are going well. Our College rankings from US News are out, and we have retained our highest ratings ever on the “Regional Best Colleges (North)” list. We were ranked #9 overall, #6 for Best Value Schools, #14 on “Top Performers on Social Mobility,” and #4 on the Best Colleges for Veterans. We have a Career Fair that is taking place today from 11 AM-2 PM, with 32 companies and agencies participating. Dr. Szafran spoke to which employers were scheduled to be at the career fair, as well as the paid internship program, which has been expanded.

Additionally, it was noted that with the help of the early-warning system we can monitor how students are doing. The completion rate from our faculty is at an all-time high of 95.45%, with 75% of our students getting 3,515 kudos, which are sent to encourage students to keep up the good work. We also reached out to the 9.7% of students who were reported as not engaged for one reason or another.

Dr. Szafran noted his recent trip to attend the Association of Council Members and College Trustees (ACT) meeting, and he was joined by Council Members Jennifer Stevenson and Kathy Dodge. He shared that the various sessions ranged from a Chancellor's update on how SUNY is on the move, to sessions on Artificial Intelligence, International Programs, and Campus Climate. Both Council Members Stevenson and Dodge commented on how informative the conference was and how fascinating the AI session was.

Due to last year's protests happening on several campuses (fortunately, not at SUNY Canton), SUNY is concerned about campus climate. Understanding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is a central focus, since many campuses are being sanctioned by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights about this topic.

He provided the following information about Title VI, Freedom of Speech, and what the campus has been required to do. Title VI forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance. This includes discrimination based on perceived national origin or religion, which includes antisemitism and islamophobia. Title VI very much applies to colleges, and there have

been quite a few investigations by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights of various campuses for not following up properly when complaints have been lodged. The complicated part of this is that colleges, especially state colleges, have a heightened expectation of upholding free speech from the 1st Amendment, but that free speech can also lead to a hostile learning environment on campus, which would be a violation of Title VI. Consequently, whenever we believe that a hostile learning environment may be forming or present, we are required to act in several ways—to conduct an investigation of both the alleged act and/or speech and all similar acts, to offer assistance to the impacted groups, to tell the campus about how the speech or act is contrary to our ethos and policies, and to take prompt action if campus policies have been violated. We have submitted the Title VI implementation plan required of each campus by SUNY. A Title VI training has been mandated for all employees, with students having an opportunity to take it if they choose.

The updates were turned over to each area representative.

Administrative Affairs: In Shawn's absence, Dr. Szafran reported the following:

- The campus' budget for 2024-2025 has been submitted and approved by SUNY. It was noted that we are fortunate to be financially stable and to not have been among some campuses that had to adjust their budgets to better align with their revenues.
- Since the budget has been approved, the campus accounts are now active, with available funds.
- The campus course fee requests have been submitted, and we are awaiting the results from SUNY.

Chairman O'Neill briefly paused the President's Report to officially call the meeting to order and stated that the President's Report will continue with action items to follow.

Student Affairs: We are now full members of the SUNYAC athletic conference, and this has been a great year so far with student involvement. VP Bish was asked to provide an update to the Council.

It was reported that the student population is robust and engaged. Homecoming and family weekend, combined with Alumni Weekend, was held a few weekends ago. Acknowledgement was given to Student Activities for their involvement.

It was shared that Tammy Rotonde was hired as the new Health Center Director.

Appreciation for the new SUNY funding was noted, and it was shared that some of the funding has been used to train a group of staff on mental health issues. This was accomplished through a train-the-trainer program, so the training can continue for others on campus.

The food pantry has seen increased growth and usage. They have implemented some new software that allows them to track the program better, and they are in the process of applying for support through the Food Bank of Northern New York, which will allow them to open it to the entire campus if they receive it.

With regard to Athletics, it is their first year in SUNYAC, and they began the year with four new, full-time coaches – parttime baseball, softball, and volleyball coaches were converted to fulltime, with one new fulltime hire for soccer. It was noted that this is the first year that all teams have a conference home, as men's hockey has never been part of a conference. It was further noted that men's golf has joined the Empire 8. Athletics and the Foundation are collaborating on hosting Alumni Hockey Weekend on November 15 and 16; if any Council member would like tickets, please contact Randy Sieminski, Courtney Bish, or Michaela Young.

VP Bish shared the stats for Volleyball and Soccer and noted that going forward the "wins" may be harder to secure; they will have some great opportunities as they build towards the wins.

They have also established two new teams – JV Basketball and Men's Club Hockey, and E-Sports is ready for their new season and has transitioned to the ECAC.

Advancement: Our Advancement Office had another excellent fundraising year and has begun their new year. VP Thompson was asked to provide an update.

It was reported that for the last fiscal year (7/1/23 to 7/30/24) fundraising was 29% over their goal, and they performed well in all benchmarks. Support from the Foundation Board Members was over \$250,000, and they also received gifts to 85 different endowed funds and 99 different restricted funds.

Currently, with three months into the new fiscal year, they are at 35% of their annual fundraising goal – \$475,000 (This year's goal is \$1.350M, which is 13% higher than last year.) Tomorrow, eight new endowments will be approved, representing \$185,000 in new pledges, which will add to the current 430 endowed and annual scholarships. This year, approximately 350 students received \$720,669 in scholarship funding. It was also noted that over the last year endowments have gone above \$19M, and over the past five years, they have raised over \$3B.

It was reported that Sara Hartman Richmond has worked to raise \$250,000 to name the hockey rink in Terry Martin's honor. The SUNY Board of Trustees' approval is being sought for this. If approved, they are hoping to hold the naming ceremony in November.

It was further reported that the Gift Officer team is ramping up for the various fundraising appeals and have set more aggressive goals than our peers. They are also focusing on putting donors at the center of everything and have managed to bring back 22 donors.

Academic Affairs: Provost De Cooke was asked to provide an update for her area. It was shared that they are working hard to increase enrollments. One strategy involved a planning exercise with academics/faculty – conversations were had with each program to see where they were at and what they needed. That information has been reviewed over the last few months, with plans and some progress being made.

Recently, approval was given to develop the Data Science and Analytics program, with hopes of receiving full approval by next week and implementation by next Fall. Approval is also being sought to convert engineering programs from BTech degrees to Bachelor of Engineering degrees; if approved, we will need to reaccredit those programs, so both types of degrees will be offered for a while. Additionally, we have applied for our first master's degree in Cybersecurity. Due to rebuttals from three other campuses, we are in a holding pattern and awaiting a response from the SUNY Provost. To meet market demands, a name change from Telecommunications to Digital Communications and Storytelling was requested and approved.

It was reported that the ACE/ASAP programs initiated back in January – the new student success programs – are proving to be successful, with the enrollment target of 185 being met. The State has provided funding for one cohort, and there has been some additional funding from the Robin Hood Foundation. In an effort to secure continued funding for these programs, conversations have been had with Assemblyman Gray and the Chancellor.

Chairman O'Neill noted that we used to be a feeder school for Clarkson and others, and he asked if that was still the case or if students now stay here. In response, it was felt that many stay here, but we still serve as a feeder school for Clarkson's master's degrees.

Council Member Rich asked if there are any drawbacks with duplication of efforts when proposing new degree programs. In response, it was noted that issues mostly come up during the comment period; however, we try to avoid issues by doing market research before we propose new degrees, and we try to contest those that would hurt us. It was noted that more help is needed from SUNY on system management of degrees.

UUP: Stephanie Petkovsek reported that there are planned activities for Indigenous Peoples' Day. She also shared that UUP keeps advocating for decreasing the number of adjuncts and paying fulltime faculty the same rate as parttime faculty during Summer and Winter Terms. Dr. Szafran stated that part of the reason for using adjuncts stems from fulltime faculty leaving unexpectedly, which results in the need to hire quickly.

Faculty Governance: Matt Burnett shared that he has been working to fill vacancies of the volunteer positions, including those held by students. As this seems to be an ongoing issue, he is also looking into having less positions or committees. Additionally, he reported that faculty/staff are voicing concerns about not being aware of big changes that will impact their work. Matt offered a suggestion to communicate and listen to the

employees that are affected. Dr. Szafran asked Matt to let him know if anyone has any questions about the changes.

Matt and Peggy both spoke to the implementation of SUNY's last-minute request of GERs. Due to the timing, it was not possible to follow the normal campus/governance process; however, the ad hoc working group was able to meet the deadline. It was noted that, for now, these are being implemented through stand-alone courses.

Matt also noted that through a collaboration with SLU and with campus support the College was able to bring two Senegalese artists to campus.

Faculty Senate: Jesse Clark-Stone reported that there has not been a plenary yet for the Faculty Senate, but he has attended a meeting to discuss branding and a training.

Jesse asked if anything would change regarding our designation as a college of technology and granting degrees if we are approved to offer master's degrees. Provost De Cooke explained that it is a lengthy process involving a change to our charter that needs approval from the State and Middle States, along with subsequent approvals by SUNY's Board of Trustees and the Governor. She added that the College is not new to this process, as it was accomplished when we moved to bachelor degrees. Jesse also asked about bringing the issues of late notice of GERs implementation and Title VI requirements before the Plenary, but it was felt that both issues have been handled.

Student Government Association (SGA): Evan Velasquez reported that SGA has either approved or are in the process of approving five new clubs. He also reported that the College Activities Board's (CAB) events have been well attended. Additionally, they have also held a leadership training for the Executive Board and clubs, and Evan attended a conference on Civic Engagement. Whereas the conference was helpful, there is not much civic discourse on our campus. Evan also shared that the Executive Board will be attending the SUNYSA meeting next month, and they are working on plans for a mural project – Roo Prints – outside the SAIL office. Lastly, he noted that the Budget Director is currently out, but they have a plan to follow.

Strategic Relations and Communications: VP VanderZee was asked to provide an update for her area. Lenore reiterated that there was a great collaboration regarding the Senegalese visitors, and she noted that they visited several classes, talked about their art and activism, and offered student-engagement sessions such as graffiti art and music events.

Regarding the Downtown project, a development team has been chosen. More funding has been sought through New York Forward – the \$4.5M grant that the Village received – and they will seek additional funding for the housing portion through Homes and Community Renewal to make some of the units affordable for low to moderate income families, so the project is moving forward. In advance of the Entrepreneurship Center, the College is starting with more entrepreneurship programming, including working closely

with the Business faculty and the Associated Colleges to create an Entrepreneurship Day (January 31) that focuses on a student-lead process of creating a business. Several campuses are involved and will have 10 student participants from each one. The result will be the creation of a business plan that may be real or just a learning experience. In other business success news, for the second year in a row, the SBDC has had one of the businesses that they work with – AM Equipment out of Akwesasne – nominated for a State-wide award – State Growth Business of the Year.

The Center for Workforce, Community, and Industry Partnerships has been extremely busy with CDL class trainings, which continue to be full and require a waitlist. They are also looking to add additional licensures and three additional workforce trainings, including drone training.

Council Member Stevenson asked if the drone training would result in the person receiving their drone license. The training would prepare the person to take the test. It was also asked and answered that the drone course would be of interest to realtors.

It was reported that there were about 72 dual enrolled students last year. This year, there has been a significant increase in enrollments (500), as well as 125 new courses created. She explained that this opportunity is offered to high school students at no cost with the requirement that students in the program must come to campus once a year for a visit.

Council Member Stevenson asked if last year's group visited campus. It was stated that tracking these students is relatively new, and there is not good data on this yet.

Chairman O'Neill asked how acceptance to the program worked. It was stated that acceptance is not necessary as these students are non-degree. However, the course is recognized for credit.

Mr. Clark-Stone asked if there are opportunities for high school students to take an in-person course here. It was stated that this has been discussed, but there are some issues that need to be worked out.

Four camps were held this past summer, and the faculty engagement and student-athlete employees have been great. There are numerous ideas being considered for future summer camps.

Additionally, the Center's Director, Liz Brown, is also working with the SUNY representative on adding to our pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, which are in high demand.

Research and sponsored programs have been busy working with faculty and staff across campus on grants. They have received \$940,000 towards existing or new grants, and they have applied for an additional \$4.5M for various grant supports. It was noted that

the office is now fully staffed with the addition of a new research administrator, and they are hitting the ground running

Public Relations: Travis Smith was asked to provide his area update. Mr. Smith reported that PR is hard at work on the annual report. It focuses on French Hall and plaza upgrades; new banners; the Center for Workforce, Community, and Industry Partnerships; and all that the transformational funding has supported.

He also shared that the CDL trucks and shuttle bus are being used as an inexpensive marketing tool with Roody decals on them.

Lastly, he shared his appreciation for the additional funding that PR received, allowing them to do more marketing.

Chairman O'Neill remarked at how good PR is doing.

Minutes of the June 13, 2024, Meeting

It was announced that everyone received a copy of the minutes by email.

Council Member Rich made a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 13, 2024, meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Stevenson, with no additions or corrections; the Minutes were approved. A minor correction of changing "p.m." to "a.m." for the adjournment time was found and made prior to finalizing the minutes.

New Business

2023-24 President's Annual Report

It was announced that everyone received a copy of the annual report by email.

Council Member Dodge made a motion to adopt and approve the 2023-24 President's Annual Report as the College Council's Annual Report. The motion was seconded by Council Member Rich, with no comments. The 2023-24 President's Annual Report was adopted and approved.

Parking Regulations Policy Updates

It was announced that everyone received a copy of the updates by email.

Council Member Stevenson made a motion to approve the Parking Regulations Policy Updates. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dodge, with no comments; the Annual Report was adopted and approved.

Adjournment

Council Member Regan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dodge and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Michaela Young
Secretary to the College Council