

**SUNY CANTON COLLEGE COUNCIL**

**299<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2024**

**Present:** Ronald O’Neill, Chair Kathleen Dodge Toni Kennedy  
Joseph Rich Jennifer Stevenson Evan Velasquez

**Zoom:** Marie Regan

**Absent:** Brian Plonka

**Others:** Matthew Burnett Jesse Clark-Stone Peggy De Cooke  
Shawn Miller Travis Smith Zvi Szafran  
Tracey Thompson Lenore VanderZee Michaela Young  
Amanda Crump (Guest)

***Call to Order***

At 10:01 a.m., the meeting was called to order.

***Minutes of the October 2, 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 October 2, 2024, meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dodge, with no additions or corrections; the Minutes were approved.**

***New Business***

None

***Old Business***

None

***President’s Report***

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

Council Members received a copy of the President’s Report in their meeting packets, which was noted to align with the College’s strategic goals.

It was reported that the semester has been good so far. The concerns that SUNY had related to protests about Israel/Gaza and the election did not come to fruition here; however, we were required to adopt some related policies.

Dr. Szafran provided the following update for Student Affairs. Information regarding this weekend's naming event for the Terry Martin Arena, as well as the game schedule was provided to the group. In terms of team statistics, the following was highlighted: Women's Basketball started with a 2-0 record, Women's Ice Hockey knocked off the #2 team in the country, and Esports continues to compete with a full roster, with playoffs starting soon.

The following information was shared regarding SUNY's current focus areas: remaining vigilant on Title VI issues, encouraging civic engagement and civil discourse, and continuing major pushes for higher enrollment. The anticipated decline in high school graduates is of concern and is expected to be as follows: 8% state-wide; 5% in the North Country; and 12% in Long Island, the Finger Lakes, and the Southern Tier. Among the strategies to counter this is for campuses to be engaged in workforce development and to pursue non-traditional students and those who dropped out without a degree, all things that SUNY Canton has been engaged in for many years. The strategy has worked well so far, with enrollment at SUNY up 3.4% from 2022-2024. Nationally, enrollment of fulltime, first-time students is down 5%; however, SUNY Canton was up 14% this year for fulltime, first-time students.

As a result of the elections, SUNY is also looking at some **potential** risks (*could happen, but not necessarily will*) in terms of policy and funding. Some of these include:

On Policies:

- Protection for undocumented college students
- Will federal funding be tied to ending DEI efforts, as has happened in several states?
- Changes in the interpretation of Title VI and Title IX, the latter of which occurred in the previous Trump administration
- Less focus on stopping predatory for-profit colleges

On Funding:

- Research agency funding (including CHiPS Act and the recent funding announcement for Corning Glass in Canton)
- Green infrastructure funding
- Pell grants (major concern) – about \$8M
- Public service loan forgiveness program
- SNAP benefits and eligibility
- FEMA reimbursements, DSH cuts, and changes to Medicare/Medicaid

Chairman O'Neill asked a clarifying enrollment question related to what SUNY reported. Dr. Szafran stated that he was referring to fulltime, first-time students, and he noted that the College is working on the transfer population. He further noted that the data at the time of the budget presentation showed transfer students down by about six, not inclusive of dual enrollment students, which would shift the number positively.

It was asked if the College had plans to do something micron related to the CHiPS program. The response was that a lot of educational funding is concentrated in Central NY; however, the College continues its practice of seeking opportunities and doing whatever/whenever it can.

Vice President Miller provided the following update and noted that if there are federal cuts that impact grants, etc., the College's reserves provide the ability to make informed decisions, making it critical to keep those reserves. Related to the budget, she reported that state funding continues to look favorable. However, with the decrease of 300 to 400 students, she stated that the College still needs to be thoughtful when hiring, look at programs, etc. She stated that the budget is good, and she is comfortable with what was presented to the campus.

Vice President Miller announced her retirement, effective year end, and she introduced Amanda Crump as the Interim Vice President until the search concludes. Amanda introduced herself to the Council and noted that she has already started the transition by attending various meetings.

Dr. Szafran acknowledged Vice President Miller's accomplishments, specifically her work during shared services and her role in increasing the College's reserves.

Vice President De Cooke was asked to update the Council on her area, including the approval of a new academic program beginning this fall, SUNY initiatives in prior learning assessment, and civic dialogue becoming part of the core curriculum.

Vice President De Cooke shared two core competency changes related to GEN ED – Identifying AI and Civic Discourse in Democracy. Due to these requested changes happening over the summer, the College was unable to follow the normal process; however, an ad hoc committee was quickly formed and was able to meet the deadline. When obligation resumed, faculty were able to provide comments on the submission and SUNY changes, with the original ad hoc committee being reconvened to develop final comments. It was noted that the implementation date was changed from Fall '25 to Fall '26, which allows for the normal process to happen, and if things are in place, there is the option to implement it early.

She went on to report that SUNY has been expanding policies related to Prior Learning. Vice President De Cooke, Vice President VanderZee, and Director Brown have been working together to develop prior learning policies in the following areas: credit for high school students for AP and CLEP exams, challenge or departmental exams that assess learning outcomes related to a specific course, credit for non-credit college courses given for military and non-military experiences (ACE and NCCRS), and locally-accessed training (i.e., the College has the ability to provide credit for experience in local businesses, non-profit, volunteer, government or such training). Standardization of the process is well underway, with logistics and final policies completed by early next year for campus-level approval.

State Ed has approved a new major – Data and Science Analytics – that will be actively promoted with a start date of Fall '25. The engineering degree proposals have been submitted to SUNY without contest and are now being developed. The Cybersecurity master's degree proposal is waiting for System-level approval; some campuses contested this one. Vice President VanderZee shared information related to Senator Gillibrand's visit on Monday, which is to promote her Cyber Service Academy program, and invited the Council to attend. It was noted that the Senator chose SUNY Canton because of the Cybersecurity program's strength,

the master's proposal, and the new Data and Science Analytics program, which also led her to offer letters of support in favor of the master's proposal.

Provost De Cooke continued with her update providing information on some minor program changes to improve marketing – Technological Communications program's name changed to Digital Communications and Storytelling; Computer and Information Science and Information Technology programs are now fully approved for distance learning; the IT program is developing a name change proposal as advised by their Advisory Board and students; and Automotive Technology will change from AAS to AOS, which means there is more practical training for students.

Vice President Thompson provided the following update. Advancement had an excellent fiscal year for 2024, raising \$1.5M against a goal of \$1.2M. They raised \$563,000 in restricted funds and \$630,000 in endowed funds, growing the endowments to \$19M. She reported that fiscal year 2025 is off to a strong start (\$851,000 towards an increased goal of \$1,350,000). The fund breakdown is as follows: Canton Fund - \$280,000, Restricted Gifts \$460,000, and Endowed Gifts \$183,000. This success is being attributed to the fantastic work of the Gift Officers and the implementation of their nationwide "Next Level" program, which puts a laser-sharp focus on donor stewardship. The endowed gift amount was abnormally supported through donations totaling \$16,850 after Linda Fay's passing.

Another major change that Advancement made this year is to embrace creativity and innovation. Geoffrey VanderWoude and his staff are working to think outside the box when it comes to fundraising, i.e., raised \$60,000 for a Sponsorship Wall in Nevaldine to support Canino; raised new endowed funds to support things such as internships, entrepreneurial efforts, senior capstone project costs, vet tech licensure costs, initiatives in engineering education, student emergency funds, and purchase of tools and automotive equipment. These are creative ways to raise money that will provide some funds for subsequent years.

Chairman O'Neill asked about the Foundation's Investment Committee – if there is one and what they invest in. It was stated that there is a committee, and they are guided by a professional advisement firm (ALESCO). The investments follow an investment policy with a portfolio that minimizes risk and promotes return, so it will continue to grow. ALESCO also provides a full, annual report to the committee.

Vice President VanderZee provided the following update for the Council. Dual enrollment numbers are at 900 and growing. The Council was reminded that these are high school students taking college courses at their high school at no cost to those served by St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES. These students are not currently enrolled at SUNY Canton, but they are required to come to campus once for a visit to remain eligible for the no-cost deal. This effort has led to additional relationships between those schools. Next steps include marketing this program to state-wide high schools at a cost, so the program could generate revenue.

Additionally, efforts to increase for-credit and non-credit micro credentials are underway. The for-credit options ladder into our degree programs, with the same model being applied to the

non-credit options. The for-credit options allow for stand-alone credit, additional credit, or an introduction to our longer credit programs, and the non-credit options span a variety of topics.

Two new grants have been received – \$50,000 grant for the NSF program and an \$11,000 grant to promote women in engineering.

Other initiatives underway include the launch of 12 summer camps this year – 2 camps/week for 6 weeks – and an Entrepreneurship Day, in collaboration with Clarkson, set for January 31. Entrepreneurship Day participants work to build a team and complete a business plan in one day. This is an invite-only event, with 12 students/campus being invited; SGA will be contacted for their input. The hope is that this will feed into the NYS Business Plan competition. Additionally, once Payson Hall has been renovated the on-campus entrepreneurship center will be housed there, and the downtown space is moving forward.

Council Member Dodge asked if all high schools in St. Lawrence County are participating in Dual Enrollment. It was stated that there has been outreach to every high school, but there might be one that does not have students this year. It was asked and answered that it is too early for analysis data.

It was also asked and answered that the length of the micro credentials depends on the course itself.

The UUP Union President was unable to attend the meeting. Dr. Szafran stated that we continue to work together with the Union on a number of projects.

SGA President Evan Velasquez provided the following update. Requests for a spring concert (in the amount of \$150,000) and two new clubs (Dramatics and Celestial Crafts) were approved.

SGA will host the following events: Year-end celebration to honor seniors and club work (Dec. 4), Carnival of Love (Feb. 4), and Spring Leadership Conference - Success is a Mindset (Mar. 26).

The SGA E-Board travels to SUNYSA today where they will be involved in a number of discussions, one of which will be changes to the student activities fee – cap increase and mandatory status. Lastly, he shared that many of the board members are graduating next semester, and they are hoping to have a well-trained new set of members.

Dr. Szafran added that he and Courtney met yesterday with the Student Athletic Advisory Council. The Council raised a number of things that they would like to see happen, as well as talked about some initiatives they have been working on.

Matt Burnett provided a College Assembly update. He noted that elections are coming up for the various governance committees, with 40 open spots and currently 10 nominations. Participation is down this semester, but Matt noted that it historically fluctuates. He will continue to encourage committees to look at their charge and consider changes that make sense. There are a handful of committees that regularly meet and complete needed work. It

was asked and answered that we are not unique to volunteer issues. Lastly, Provost De Cooke thanked Matt for his service to the College Assembly.

Jesse Clark-Stone provided his update for the Faculty Senate. He noted that the Plenary was held on October 25-26 and shared the following as topics/points discussed:

- SUNY's Provost, along with some SUNY Presidents, are piloting an initiative to build relationships in India and sub-Saharan Africa as a way to grow enrollments. Dr. Szafran noted that SUNY Canton already has such relationships and is working on more, and the Chancellor and Provost are aware of this.
- SUNY is providing funds, specifically for EOP students, to expand undergrad and study abroad opportunities. ACE/ASAP/TRiO students were not mentioned.
- Empire AI initiative looks to create a single location for students to ask and get answers to their questions. They are looking to do this through the Governor's general State support of \$400M for AI initiatives.
- There are new resources for the new GERS.
- Restarting Conversations in the Discipline that were paused, with approved applications getting up to \$5,000 to host on-campus discussions.
- Seamless Transfer push – i.e., digital backpack that puts everything in one place, making transfers more seamless; remote access to critical software, so better licensing can be leveraged; etc.
- ACE/ASAP – SUNY Canton is 1 of 12 campuses to receive approval, and SUNY is pleased with the College's results. Dr. Szafran added that he received an email stating that we have met all requirements for the programs, as well as for the transformational funding areas, and we will receive the next portion.
- Transfer Taskforce – comment period is open for another couple of weeks.
- PRODiG (a program to expand diversity) – currently, there are 20 in a cohort, but they are trying to increase it to 40. SUNY Canton received approval for a biology/chemistry position last year, but the search failed. The College applied for another one this year in Cybersecurity, and we are awaiting SUNY approval.
- Economic development and student upward-mobility push – SUNY as a public good – i.e., internship support (including librarian internships), summer research, Empire State Service Corp, FAFSA Completion Corp, SUNY Climate Corp, Veteran support and enrollment, and SUNY Institute for local news. It was noted that SUNY Canton participates in many of these.
- Climate and Sustainability Action Plan – development of proactive approaches to issues that may arise. The comment period is open until end of month.
- Questions to the Chancellor – the Tech Sector asked about hiring more tenure-track faculty. The Chancellor indicated that it was a campus decision and offered that the “numbers” should make sense. It was added that SUNY Legal will identify one of their lawyers to help with international candidate hires. Other groups asked about funding for IT infrastructure and lab equipment.
- Partnerships – Plattsburgh and Clinton Community College are working on seamless transfer. SUNY Canton is also working on partnerships.
- Culture of Continuous Evaluation
- Supporting Students

- CUNY Reconnect – reaching out to students who have not completed.
- Civil Discourse

He also shared the five resolutions that passed:

- Asking Administration to take faculty feelings into consideration when assigning hybrid and flex classes.
- Graduate Education Standards working group – development of best practices.
- Asked the Chancellor to work with each campus to adopt the Okanagan Charter for Health Promotion in Universities and Colleges or a comparable program and commit to implementing it – commitment is board but shows support in helping faculty and students with their mental health.
- Funding Public Higher Education – joint statement letting the State know the System needs more money.
- Term Appointment policy change – allows for faculty to receive a 5-year term appointment instead of a 3-year term one.

Travis Smith provided the following for his PR update:

- PR recently moved to French Hall; Travis gave shout outs to Marty Avery, Chris Eggleston, and their staff for their work in providing a seamless move.
- PR won another Case Award (3<sup>rd</sup> since Travis has been here); this award was in district 2 for their Cybersecurity commercial. This competition was among schools in the mid-Atlantic region (NY, Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC, and Ontario).
- PR has been pushing out information on the new Data Science and Analytics degree since its approval in October, and their efforts have received 1,000 views so far.
- PR continues to strategically run commercials during games, as well as on Election Day.

A brief discussion took place regarding college programs for developmentally disabled people. It was noted that this is something SUNY Canton is working on. Council Member Rich offered his help.

The micron-related program topic was revisited, and it was reiterated that SUNY Canton will pursue this as things move along.

### ***Adjournment***

***Council Member Dodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:33 a.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Stevenson and approved.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michaela Young  
Secretary to the College Council