

## MEETING MINUTES | JAN. 13, 2016

SUNY Empire State College at Latham  
21 British American Blvd.  
Latham, NY 12110



### MEMBERS PRESENT:

James Lytle, Council Chairman  
Anthony Esposito  
G. Angela Henry  
Daniel Wall

### EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Merodie Hancock, President  
Rick Barthelmas, Assistant Vice President for Administration  
Samuel Conn, Interim Executive Vice President for Information Technology Services and Administration  
Alfred Ntoko, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Mary Caroline Powers, Vice President for Communications and Government Relations

### SENATE REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT:

Mary Mawn, Senate Chairwoman

### I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the Sept. 16, 2015, College Council meeting were approved by voice vote.

### II. SENATE REPORT

Mary Mawn outlined the senate business that had been prepared for the previous College Council meeting, which had been canceled. A committee is looking at how governance will be restructured and reviewed within the new ESC 2.0 framework. Initially, the purpose was to review pros and cons of different structures, but now they will propose some potential models moving forward. The college faces an interesting time and it's a good time to think critically about the effect of governance structure on the college. Budgeting also will be reviewed with governance committees. Governance chairs have been brought in on conversations with the president to review some of these changes as well.

### III. ACT REPORT

Tony Esposito began to give the ACT report in Angela Henry's stead, but Henry arrived shortly thereafter. Esposito shared with the council that the ACT Annual Conference was held in October and SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry Board of Trustees Chairwoman Vita DeMarchi was named ACT president, replacing Henry.

Mary Caroline Powers noted that, as of June of 2016, every single member of the council would be serving past their term, with some terms expiring five or more years ago.

Unfortunately, the council is in a position familiar to councils across the state. Very few have received attention from the governor's office to refresh their membership. Henry gave an example of a council that was not able to vote to accept a large gift from a donor due to the lack of a quorum. The councils are unable to fulfill their roles to the colleges they serve without having a full quorum for important voting matters.

At the State of the State Address, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that the rational tuition increase has been extended and several other funding initiatives are underway. SUNY institutions also have been charged with working towards sustainability with their heating and cooling systems in any owned building. This shouldn't be a difficult task for Empire State College, as currently any owned property has been, or will be, equipped with LEED-certified systems.

The governor also announced that the minimum hourly wage will increase for state university workers to \$15, which will affect the college's employees, including student workers. Empire State College doesn't have the same number of state employees as a traditional college would have to staff a campus, due to the lack of traditional college vendors and facilities, but it is something to consider moving forward.

## REPORTS FROM VICE PRESIDENTS

### IV. OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION: FINANCIAL UPDATE

Rick Barthelmas reported on the college budget, with information current up until Dec. 31, 2015. For the 2015-2016 calendar year up until that point, the total budget was \$97.9 million, with actual expenditures at \$41.3 million. Revenues are in line with the projections, but enrollments are trending slightly lower than expected, so the college is continuing cautiously, despite its already modest spending.

A new budget allocation planning process is in progress, with meetings being planned with the vice presidents to set everything up for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The new process will feature more planning and monitoring, in order to reach a balanced budget with better management of the surplus and restoring cash reserves, building capital for strategic planning, providing funding for training, investing in facilities and resources and investing in many upgrades at different locations.

The college's foundation board has approved a lease-to-own plan for 3 Union Ave., which will mean that at the end of 10 years, the college will own the building. The process is complicated and will be ongoing, seeking appropriate approvals and permissions, but this is a move in the right direction.

The potential of adding a Queens location is being explored to serve downstate needs better. President Hancock highlighted the importance of stepping back and thinking about how the college wants to be in the next 10 years and beyond. Instead of reactionary responses to lease expirations, it's important to review facility usage and plan ahead to best suit the vision of the college.

The budgeting system is being reviewed to best share resources across the college, keeping in line with ESC 2.0 planning. Reserves will likely decrease in the coming year, and a better communication schedule will be developed surrounding the college's spending. Samuel Conn said that they will be measuring enrollment planning alongside tuition and revenue growth and looking into where money is being spent, as well as which locations within the college are growing revenue and which are not.

The change in the budget process could help the college better illustrate its areas of need and provide an outline of performance, as the college has struggled to do in the past, when being compared to more traditional colleges.

Hancock explained that the college will be working toward the goal of finding a balance among full-time, tenured faculty and adjunct faculty. It's difficult to find faculty in certain fields, but important for the college to offer a wide academic range, as well as an environment that will appeal to faculty who will decide to stay long term. Faculty in the areas of nursing, business and technology tend to be the hardest to find and keep at the college, but with growing demand for courses in those areas, the college must be poised to serve students best. Tenured faculty lines make up some of the larger areas of expense for the college and, therefore, must be considered carefully.

## **V. OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

### **SUNY Investment Fund Proposal**

Alfred Ntoko reported on the various projects underway in the Office of Academic Affairs. In October 2015, the Office of Academic Affairs submitted a grant proposal to the SUNY Investment Fund, applying for \$1.1 million to launch two new programs in Construction Management and Health Sciences. While the funds for the development of the Construction Management program were not granted, Chancellor Zimpher did award \$400,000 to the college to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences. The field of Health Sciences has been labeled a priority by SUNY and is an important area for growth in the state. Empire State College will be looking to partner with two-year intuitions to create a clear path for students to move from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree. Where the existing partnership programs known as Pathways are sometimes hard to describe to students, this new plan will be presented to students at the start of their education, with clearly defined steps that they can take to earn a four-year degree.

Hancock was part of a discussion panel hosted by the Center for an Urban Future, a New York City-based, think-tank group, and was able to make a connection with a representative of the United Healthcare Workers East Local 1199, the largest health-care union in the U.S., and talk about the new Health Sciences initiatives. Hancock and Ntoko will be meeting with members of the union to discuss potential partnerships.

### **Nursing Program Accreditation**

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, as of October 2010, and the college has received initial accreditation for the Master of Science in Nursing as well. These programs must retain accreditation to be viable to the college, and the School of Nursing is a fast-growing area of the college.

### **SUNY Applied Learning Initiative**

In May 2015, the SUNY Board of Trustees adopted a resolution mandating all SUNY intuitions must provide all matriculated students an opportunity for applied learning, which can include volunteer work, field study or clinical placements. The college has an applied-learning team to work on this and will provide a report by February 2016 that will answer questions such as how the college can fulfill this requirement, given its dispersed nature. Ntoko said that, in addition to what SUNY mandates, the college will be working to bring in an entrepreneurial element to the applied-learning programs, and this will be examined by a group that he is overseeing.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office of Criminal Justice Investment Initiative is releasing \$250 million which will, in part, go toward increasing the availability of educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals in New York state prisons. Empire State College is in a good position to become involved, and the program, in general, is very aligned with some of the SUNY initiatives set forth by Zimpher.

## **VI. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

### **Immersive Cloud Technology Pilot**

Conn presented to the council on the restructuring of Integrated Technology Services, as progress has been made since the last report that outlined the plan of action. The new face of ITS will feature an emphasis on emerging and educational technologies; as part of this, immersive cloud technologies have grown.

The foundation for the concept of immersive cloud technologies is advanced video technologies, with the ability to have a tele-video presence, enabling people to connect across great distances, while maintaining a comfortable, classroom-like feel. This is being applied to learning at the college, allowing for increased access to students, removing geographic restrictions to the best programs, and facilitating communications with faculty.

Conn described how using this technology would take shape, with one stream of video for the instruction, or source, being able to connect to many participants, students or viewers, known as destinations. A pilot version of this tool showed that there is a need for flexibility in the source room, where the instructor would be, so that they can deliver material in a way that is best for their situation. Things like this, that seem small but have a big impact, will help both faculty members and students overcome any initial discomfort with this new mode of learning. Faculty will be trained to use techniques to best engage students, despite the lack of an actual physical presence.

Four classes have been delivered using this method so far, from a source site in Manhattan to a destination site in Staten Island, and ITS is looking to expand its use to international locations soon. The goal is to be ready to use this technology for a class in Prague in fall 2016. The potential exists to both make courses more available to students and to create a rich learning environment, pulling together even more diverse students and locations and giving faculty members a better chance to share their expertise in New York state and beyond.

The videos of these classes will all be stored in Learnscape, a video content storage system, for later viewing, if needed. Ultimately, faculty could tap into these videos and use portions of the discussions for purposes such as learning tools for future classes, tutoring and reviews.

The technology components for one setup in this system will cost approximately \$30,000.

## **VII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **ESC 2.0 Update Progress/Internal Restructuring**

Hancock reported on the progress of ESC 2.0 in the college. She told the council about the work that Clayton Steen has accomplished since joining the college on Sept. 1, 2015. Steen has a background in enrollment management, most recently serving as the assistant vice president of enrollment management at Bowie State University, Bowie, Md.

Two new executive directors will be brought in under Steen to oversee the regional locations, focusing on managing the buildings and, above all else, creating the most useful environment for students at all times. This could include making classes and meeting space more available during nights and weekends to meet the demand of busy students. The college also will be welcoming three new associate deans to begin in February 2016.

The directives coming from SUNY are causing the college to expand outward and search for creative solutions. There is a lot of work left to do in restructuring governance for the future, but the pieces are in place to be successful.

Hancock said that the college will focus on growing where demand is greatest to best serve the students and the community. Many colleges are seeing program reprioritization and ultimately cutting some majors. While Empire State College has no plans to cut programs, it will be sure to staff faculty positions according to demand. Some faculty members who have lighter course loads might be called upon more to fulfill mentoring roles, for example. While faculty are encouraged to teach what they are most passionate about and in the areas where they are strongest, they also must teach where there is demand.

#### Diversity and Inclusion Discussion

Hancock put a strong emphasis on continuing to turn to data to inform decisions, looking at things like student success, focusing on the least-performing groups, to see what areas need attention. In addition to these efforts, the college is responding to the call from SUNY to install a chief diversity officer and hoping to go above and beyond what was asked.

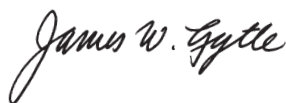
Hancock said that she has requested that faculty and staff, and eventually students, think about diversity, inclusion and pluralism. Seeking this pool of perspectives will yield the best way to be inclusive across the college. The student success rates vary greatly from location to location and across groups, with black male students at highest risk of stopping out. Instead of just putting someone into the role of chief diversity officer, per the SUNY mandate, the college will be working to use this as a way to better serve everyone coming into the college. Training will help to create a more robust response from staff and faculty to a student in need.

With the concept of pluralism, the thought exists that an organization can not only coexist, but can thrive with different perspectives working together. The Muslim population at the college is currently experiencing the most threatening response, but with a keener focus on being inclusive, the college can create a better environment for all students, staff and faculty. The response from around the college has been notable, with people offering to be a part of the initiative, which is encouraging. Empire State College could stand as a role model for other institutions.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



James W. Lytle  
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers  
Vice President