

MEETING MINUTES | SEPT. 15, 2016

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



MEMBERS PRESENT

James Lytle, Council Chairman
Anthony Esposito
G. Angela Henry, via telephone
Judith Quinn, Student Representative
Patricia Salkin, via telephone
Daniel Wall
Linda Weiss

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Merodie Hancock, President
Rick Barthelmas, Associate Vice President for Administration
Mitchell Nesler, Vice President for Decision Support
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

OTHERS PRESENT

Patricia McLeod, SUNY Empire State College student and ACT Scholarship recipient

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Minutes Review and Approval

The minutes from the May 4, 2016, College Council meeting were approved.

B. Introduction of Judith Quinn, New Student Representative to College Council

James Lytle began the meeting by welcoming Judith Quinn, who will serve as the new student representative to the council. Quinn's biography was provided in the packet of materials. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from SUNY Empire State College in May 2016, and is currently enrolled in the School of Nursing's master's program with a concentration in Nursing Administration.

II. REPORT FROM SENATE – CHAIRWOMAN MARY MAWN

Mary Mawn reported on recent senate activity, including the approval of the proposal for Bachelor of Science in Allied Health at the June 2016 senate meeting. The proposal was then advanced to the next step of the approval process.

Senate members are serving on a special committee focusing on how governance will fit into the changing structure of the college and what role it will play. The committee will bring suggestions to the senate, and if the items are passed, they then go on to the annual bylaw review and revision process.

Merodie Hancock spoke about the tremendous amount of work that Mawn and Senate Vice Chairwoman Thalia MacMillan have put into moving the Allied Health program proposal forward. The program initially was SUNY-funded, with a grant resulting from a competitive grant bid process. The program will allow easier transfer from existing community college transfer programs, increasing accessibility to a wider range of students. Ultimately, the college will be working toward the implementation of the Allied Health program to be part of a suite of offerings that will hopefully one day include Health Sciences and Healthcare Administration.

III. REPORT FROM ACT – IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT G. ANGELA HENRY

A. Introduction of Patricia MacLeod, ACT Scholarship Recipient

The annual ACT conference will be held Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at the Woodcliffe Hotel in Fairport, N.Y. A full and engaging agenda is set for the conference, including items such as responsibilities of council members and updates on SUNY campus activities.

Angela Henry reported she served on the ACT scholarship selection committee, which has chosen SUNY Empire State College student Patricia MacLeod as one of the recipients. Henry told the council members that MacLeod, who was in attendance, stood apart from other applicants with her work in her community in Cobleskill. Her work strives to bridge gaps in the community through the sharing of similar experiences and nurturing relationships among groups of people that might not otherwise get the chance to explore the things they have in common. An example of this was given: a refugee and a veteran might find they have shared experiences if given an environment that nurtures the community bond and works to strengthen connections, rather than deepen feelings of otherness. People throughout a diverse community have more in common than they might realize, Henry said.

MacLeod chose to split the award, and donate to both Blessings in a Backpack and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The two organizations have a strong emphasis on giving back to the future generations to achieve the best lives possible.

MacLeod currently is working toward a bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services and plans to go on to earn a master's degree, possibly in patient advocacy.

IV. DISCUSSION TOPIC – ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATION RICK BARTHELMAS AND VICE PRESIDENT OF DECISION SUPPORT MITCHELL NESLER

A. Past, Present and Future ESC Budgets

Merodie Hancock began the budget presentation and explained the shift in focus in the budget process from being expense-based to purposeful planning and revenue-based. Due to the nontraditional nature of the college, the budget tends to follow the same trajectory as community colleges. Recent changes in legislation put the college in a more challenging position, and trends show that revenue will tend to decrease as a result. In order to be successful with this new budget method, faculty and staff must have a thorough understanding of how it works. The college will be moving forward by reviewing investments and beginning the strategic planning process.

Rick Barthelmas prepared presentation materials for the meeting that included a review of the 2015-2016 budget, the framework for the new budget model for 2016-2017, funding, and enrollment and revenue targets.

The 2015-2016 budget year concluded with a \$4.8 million surplus carried over due to restraint of spending, rather than revenue growth. Approximately \$1.2 million is accounted for with contracts and payments that were planned to be completed transactions in 2015-2016, that ultimately had to be carried over into the 2016-2017 budget. Overall, the 2015-2016 budget fell short by \$2.6 million and this change will be monitored closely.

Going forward with a zero-based budget for 2016-2017 will mean more careful planning for expenditures throughout the year. This conservative approach to the budget will encourage an atmosphere of increased financial literacy across the college, and during this time, the college will be exploring areas for investment and building cash balance, which is estimated at 5 percent growth. This built-in flexibility will allow decisions to be made throughout the year based on enrollment numbers, in order to reach the same goal as was initially set. Barthelmas explained that the goal will be to increase reserves beyond the 10 percent mandated by the SUNY system.

As the college moves into the 2016-2017 budget year, there is no maintenance of effort or any budget increases from the state or SUNY. The revenue has become more of a focus in the budgeting process than ever before, which would help the college in setting and managing the budget throughout the year.

The college, in the past, has not let enrollment numbers dictate the number of faculty in a given discipline. Hancock said that while this would be a change in the practices of the college, some scenarios would deem it necessary to allow enrollment to influence faculty and staff hiring practices. The college employs a variety of staff and faculty, including professional and management/confidential employees, support staff, tenured and adjunct faculty members.

In New York as well as across the country, there's more of a focus than ever before on providing affordable higher education options. Empire State College, being part of the SUNY system, is one of the most affordable options and the pressure to overhaul and provide lower-cost degree programs is more on private institutions.

With enrollment numbers as an unknown, monitoring and adjusting the budget plan according to the monthly reports will be key to the budget's success.

B. Enrollment Data

Mitchell Nesler presented to the council on current enrollment data. Across SUNY, enrollments over the last five years have declined 5.4 percent. Nesler shared a breakdown of this data that showed there were some areas of growth, such as doctoral and technology colleges, and others that have experienced a decline. Community colleges have experienced the biggest drop, which is due to the changing demographics of the state.

Nesler showed charts illustrating the registration periods – most areas within the college see registration numbers spike toward the beginning of the period and then again closer to the close of the period. Deregistration also affects the counts, which occurs when students do not pay their tuition during the allowable time. The comparison of Fall 2015 registration to Fall 2016 shows that the enrollment has dropped by 6,305 credits, or 6.6 percent.

Enrollment numbers are influenced by many factors, some of which can be controlled and others that can't. Decision Support staff at the college is working to more clearly define the factors involved and read the data that exists as effectively as possible.

C. Strategic Planning

Nesler presented on the progress of work toward a new strategic plan. The plan will carry the college forward to its 50th anniversary in 2021 and will be themed "Going for the Gold at 50." The mission won't change from the one established at the college's inception, but the vision might. In order to draft and implement the strategic plan, a Balanced Scorecard approach will be used, including tools and techniques such as strategic maps, performance measures and SWOT analysis. In past strategic plans, the measurement component was lacking and didn't yield useful data.

Hancock explained that one of the biggest distinguishing factors of this plan is the shift in focus from the mentor to the student. Historically, the college has put the mentor, in service of the student, at the center of the model, so by moving the student to be the top priority, there will be a difference in how things get done. Changes will be made to everything from learning spaces to the website, making strides to be more student-serving.

The college will be pulling together its resources to achieve the best strategic plan. The Office of the President has assembled some cabinet and senate members to serve on a strategic plan committee and Nesler invited College Council members to add to the process in whatever way they could.

Lytle agreed that the council would help when possible, and Nesler suggested this commitment could take the shape of a weekly conference call meeting to work through the steps of the process and

keep up communications, eventually decreasing to a monthly commitment toward summer 2017. The knowledge and experience that the council members have of the college would be a valuable resource in the process.

The strategic plan teams will likely be announced in October. This would serve as a good point to solidify involvement from council members. Lytle offered his time to act as the primary council contact, with the option to call in other council members as needed. Linda Weiss gave her experience going through similar strategic planning, saying that the initial work that the college committee will put into planning should give the council a better idea of the level of work to come. This preliminary work should be well underway by the next council meeting in December. Hancock said that she would add Lytle's name to the list for contacts, and the December council meeting would be dedicated to the strategic planning process. Lytle suggested sharing the committee meeting agendas among council members to open the floor to them so that anyone with specific areas of interest could step forward to participate in meetings of their choice.

Anthony Esposito asked if low enrollment of students in an area of study with more faculty members than enrollment dictates could mean that the department is shut down. Weiss explained that instead of shutting anything down, it would be more likely that the faculty would be asked what else they can teach and be reassigned to another area while enrollments stayed low. Hancock added that the college has, in the past, been more likely to hire multi-disciplined faculty members, so this would work, but the lack of traditional departments means that it wouldn't play out the same way as in a traditional college.

Nesler continued the presentation by describing the review process for how the plan will work in the college. Strategic themes might include student success, and the process then delves into more specific goals and ways to succeed. From this general plan, offices and departments will branch off and build their own levels of strategic plans and individual performance programs.

During the next council meeting, the members will review the founding charter and the report card that resulted from the SUNY Excels initiative to put this plan into a broader context historically and as part of the state and federal regulations.

V. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – PRESIDENT MERODIE HANCOCK

The accreditation process through Middle States Commission on Higher Education has been under scrutiny, so the college has to work harder than ever to meet the requirements. SUNY Empire State College will undergo review in 2019, and offices are working together with Decision Support as the lead to bring together the materials for a successful review. Hancock mentioned assessment and faculty expertise as some areas that have been brought into focus with this accreditation.

The search for the new provost will be taking place this year, and the search for the chief diversity officer for equity and inclusion, led by Alfred Ntoko, was recently concluded. The chief diversity officer position was created through a mandate from SUNY, and the college is pleased to welcome Elliott Dawes to fill it. Dawes will be located at the college's Manhattan office at 325 Hudson St.

Hancock reported that after speaking with SUNY Board of Trustees Chairman H. Carl McCall, there is no movement on filling vacant council seats. Many colleges are worse off, one with no council members

at all, so, unfortunately the vacancies are a reality for many. Lytle requested the number of council vacancies around the state and offered to bring the issue to his contacts. Mary Caroline Powers will be attending the fall ACT conference, which will feature a discussion of the progress of the council member appointment and council responsibilities.

A landmark piece of legislation, the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), passed with the Board of Regents in New York state, which is a success for the college as it benefits students enrolled in distance or online courses across state lines by establishing comparable national standards for distance education courses and programs.

The “ban the box” campaign worked to remove the requirement for ex-felons to declare themselves on college applications. This initiative was important, as it opened access to more people. The campaign was successful and the checkbox will be taken off of academic applications, but will remain on student housing applications. The college looked into the data from these applications when the boxes were checked – all of the individuals who had checked the box had no unusual problems while enrolled that would cause any concern.

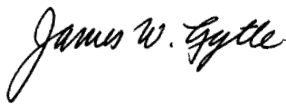
The external reviewers for the college’s first doctoral program have worked with the college, providing information on how to build out the program. The points that the reviewers made were not unexpected, and the college plans to move ahead with its development to be able to offer its first doctoral degree.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The next College Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 7, *[[sic] amended to Dec. 5, 2016]*, in Saratoga Springs, barring inclement weather. If the weather does not allow for travel to Saratoga Springs, the meeting may be moved to Latham.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Lytle
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers
Vice President