

Meeting Minutes | October 13, 2020

Via Microsoft Teams



COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Maggiore, Arlene González-Sánchez, Colleen West Hay, Donna Luh, Roberta Reardon, Patricia Salkin, Mark Schroeder

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Lexie Bonitatibus, Janet Aiello-Cerio, Meg Benke, Beth Berlin, Tracey Meek, Mary Caroline Powers, Anastasia Pratt, Nan Travers

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council Chairman John Maggiore called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. after dispensing with the period for public comment per Executive Order 200.1. He had those joining the meeting introduce themselves. He then asked for a review of the minutes from the August 27, 2020, meeting. Mark Schroeder moved for approval of the minutes as submitted. Arlene González-Sánchez seconded. The motion was approved by a voice vote of the council members.

Chairman Maggiore then reminded council members of the upcoming virtual ACT conference set for 10 a.m. to noon, Friday, October 16. He added that there was still time to register. Ms. Salkin asked if someone would check with SUNY to ensure that her registration application was successfully received.

Chairman Maggiore then offered some remarks about the important work that lies ahead for the College Council in the form of a presidential search, mentioning that the council membership is largely new, as is the chair to his position. He noted that Chancellor Malatras has yet to take the formal step of granting the college permission to move ahead with a search. He said it is important to be aware of the roles the college plays in workforce development, other societal problems in the state of New York, and leadership in the area of distance learning. He made note of the fact that the college has undergone repeated leadership changes in recent years, with nine presidents, acting or interim presidents, or officers in charge. He also suggested that the council could meet before the next scheduled meeting should it be necessary to discuss the search process.

He then asked Mary Caroline Powers to brief the council on the presidential search process. Powers invited Anastasia Pratt to join her in the discussion. They explained that the college follows SUNY guidelines set and approved by SUNY's Board of Trustees, and revised in 2016. In previous searches, the process has lasted approximately 9 to 12 months, is heavily dependent on in-person meetings and interviews, and has cost in the neighborhood of \$100,000, or more.

Powers suggested that the majority of the 2020–2021 search will most likely be a totally virtual experience. She has made suggestions about how to collapse the timeline by accomplishing some tasks concurrently and thus saving money on the total cost.

She then reviewed the composition of the search committee as dictated by SUNY BOT guidelines as follows: (the listings in red are those the college is asking be added to the committee)

Committee Composition (unless elected, all members are appointed by the search committee chair in consultation with appropriate stakeholders)

4 College Council Members (includes council chairman, who heads search)

6 Elected Full-time Faculty Representatives

1 Elected Part-time Faculty Representative

1 Elected Professional Staff Representative

1 Elected Support Staff Representative

1 Student Representative (undergraduate)

1 Student Representative (graduate)

1 Alumni Representative

1 College Foundation Representative (can expand to 2 reps)

1 Academic Dean

1 Chancellor Designated SUNY President or Senior Staff

1 Chancellor Liaison (non-voting)

1 College Staff Liaison (non-voting)

Powers then explained what actions need to be taken to lay the groundwork for a successful search. They include:

- Selecting a search firm using the state of New York's procurement process visits campus.
- Representatives of the firm then work to gain an understanding of the campus culture, determine the specific qualifications for a new leader, and then craft a proposed job description and college prospectus in consultation with the search committee.

At the first meeting of the Search Committee, the chancellor will deliver his charge to the committee members, the college's chief diversity officer will brief the committee on the need for diversity in the candidate pool, and the search firm will introduce its plan for the search and explain how to gain access to a secure website for applications.

Following first meeting, approval from the chancellor of the job description will be sought and once gotten, advertising for the position will begin and then committee members will begin reviewing applications.

Powers then reviewed the multi-step process generally taken that leads to the selection of the finalists who are invited to campus, and how the presentations and interviews conducted during those visits will likely be conducted virtually.

She then discussed how the finally vetting of each of the finalists needs to be achieved during the fourth and final meeting of the search committee and how, at its conclusion, the task of selecting the three names to be sent to the chancellor is turned entirely over to the full membership of

the College Council, which then meets to discuss all the finalists and select the final three to be recommended as the next president.

From that point, the SUNY Office of Executive Leadership and Employee Development will set up interviews for each of the three candidate with the chancellor and his staff. A single name is agreed upon and is recommended to the SUNY Board of Trustees, which typically votes at its meeting in May but that vote can occur at other times during the year.

Ms. Salkin, who served on the last presidential search committee, said the council voice is very significant in the process and suggested we should start with the last job description and gather additional input from faculty, staff, and administrators about the skills now needed for the job, a description that will be reflected in the final prospectus that will be circulated.

II. REPORT OF THE SENATE CHAIR

Chairman Maggiore asked for the report from Senate Chairwoman Anastasia Pratt. She detailed the work of the Senate in considering new academic programs and implementing the changes recommended by our Middle States reaccreditation team. The programs under review or recently approved by the Senate are:

- Microcredential for MBA program
- BBA in Business Administration (Bachelor of Business Administration?)
- Microcredential in Career Self-Management Self-Marketing
- B.A. in Liberal Studies

Work is also being done to make current programs more accessible and more focused on our learning outcomes.

The Senate also has voted to support a variety of resolutions to bring greater diversity, equity, and inclusion to the college, including a resolution on equity and inclusion, a policy focused on name and pronoun choice, a resolution calling for greater diversity in the holidays recognized on our calendar, and resolutions seeking membership in the Age Friendly University, Global Network, the NAACP, and Prospanica, all with the goal of continuing to be a safe space, welcoming of a diverse learning community and respectful of all.

III. DISCUSSION TOPIC: LEARNING RECOGNITION AND MICRO CREDENTIALS

Nan Travers, director of Center for Leadership in Credentialing Learning

Director Travers began her presentation by stating that 90 million adults in the United States have no official diploma and millions more are non-degreed. She said the disparity is particularly evident across racial lines with whites having achieved a 15 percent higher degree completion rate than Latinos and a 20 percent higher rate than Blacks.

SUNY Empire State College has long engaged in non-traditional ways to credential learning that include prior learning assessment, professional learning evaluations and micro credentialing.

This work has been widely recognized and largely is funded with numerous outside grants, two from the Lumina Foundation.

The college's involvement in credentialing college-level learning is grounded in data that show much higher college completion rates once some of this learning is awarded credit. Director Travers cited those who have some type of prior learning assessment in their accumulated credits have a two and a half times higher college completion rate than those who do not. Similarly, at the associate degree level, the completion rate for those with prior learning assessment is twice as high as their peer students.

The college also accrues benefits from offering credits for credentialed learning in the areas of improved recruitment and retention rates, increased partnerships which leads to increased enrollments, and the less tangible but equally important professional knowledge base gained by faculty members who engage in PLA.

Director Travers stressed that the key to a successful learning recognition and credential program is that the learning being evaluated is college level and is verifiable. She said many of the college's industry partners are doing a good deal more in establishing workplace competencies and wanting to evaluate them. This is where SUNY Empire comes in by setting up ways to evaluate the college-level learning value of those competencies and assign certain amounts of credit for mastery of them by employees. The college does not charge the organization for this work, believing that we gain back in new enrollees and tuition paid what was given over in the process of evaluating the competencies.

With regard to micro credentials, the learning being awarded credit is in smaller increments that can be built upon and stacked into a degree. Research has found that for many students, particularly adult learners, by using this approach they are better able to persist and complete a degree.

Provost Benke added that a good deal of effort has been given over to how to embed these micro credentials into a degree that can help reduce the high number of non-credentialed adults in the U.S.

IV. REPORT FROM OFFICER IN CHARGE

Officer in Charge Beth Berlin began her report by thanking both Provost Benke and Director Travers for the presentation and stating that the college is on the forefront nationally in the area of credentialing learning.

She then reported that former President Jim Malatras laid out a blueprint for the college for 2020 following a comprehensive analysis of all its processes. Following that blueprint, the college has been in a cost-cutting mode while at the same time improving student services and attempting to increase tuition revenue through increased enrollment, which showed gains in both the summer and fall terms. Theories abound on why and how much this may be connected with COVID-19.

Provost Benke said that a long-held theory asserts that when unemployment is high, adults return to college, but said she also thinks some of the boost may have come from the advertising message the college is pushing about how long it has been offering online learning. She added that the

other SUNY comprehensive colleges and the community colleges are really struggling with drops in enrollment.

Officer in charge Berlin went on to discuss the long-lasting value of partnerships and said that former President Malatras put great emphasis on the value of these. She added that he was able to leverage these to produce a lot of valuable “earned” media by publicizing the partnerships, and the college has to work even harder on creating and publicizing partnerships now that former President Malatras is gone.

Provost Benke said that several new academic programs are being offered in the School for Graduate Studies, such as a master’s in information technology, which she said was growing soundly. She also mentioned another in the area of board of director leadership positions, which council member Patty Salkin is taking this semester. And finally from the graduate division, the new Ed.D. in educational leadership and change is the college’s first doctoral-level offering and already there have been 85 inquiries for only 15 seats in the program. There also have been several additions to the undergraduate offerings, some of which allow a seamless path from the bachelor’s to the master’s degree.

Ms. Berlin then discussed the operational issues the college is facing and what actions are being taken. She revisited the closing and or moving of several locations and the transitioning of several individuals who formally work in those facilities. In Manhattan, the college will be leaving its Hudson Street location and moving to 4 Park Avenue, as well as the Powell Building in Harlem, and the SUNY Global building on East 55th in midtown.

Use of the CARES Act funding has gone to student support and improving technology infrastructure and the increase in enrollment has helped the college realize an additional \$1 million in revenue. As for the reduction of the deficit, which started immediately after former President Malatras joined the college, it was projected to be at \$2.2 million at the point in time, but as of October 8 it was down to \$1.8 million.

Ms. Berlin concluded her presentation by discussing what the future holds and said the top priorities are increased enrollment growth, continuance of fiscal stability initiatives, more efforts to improve the student experience, enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion, and enhancing current partnerships and establishing more.

Chairman Maggiore asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none. He then said that the business for the meeting was completed and mentioned that the next meeting is December 1, but a meeting may have to be called in the interim to discuss the presidential search process.

Ms. Reardon moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Ms. Luh. The motion was approved by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Caroline Powers
Liaison to the College Council