

MEETING MINUTES | DEC. 5, 2018

2 Union Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

the
COLLEGE COUNCIL
for
SUNY Empire State College

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

James Lytle, Colleen West Hay, Linda Weiss, Tony Esposito,
Daniel Wall, Donna Luh, Patricia Salkin via telephone

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Mitchell Nesler, Meg Benke, Joseph Garcia, Tai Arnold,
Mary Caroline Powers, Bridget Nettleton, Anastasia Pratt

Chairman James Lytle opened the meeting by welcoming Colleen West Hay, student representative, to the council.

He asked for approval of the minutes of the September meeting. Mr. Wall moved for approval and then amended his motion to include the correction of the spelling of Ms. Hay's last name. The minutes were approved as amended.

Mr. Lytle then provided an update of the search for a new president of the college, noting that the committee met in October and November, that the consultants held listening sessions across the college and are reaching out to dozens of potential applicants. He added that he'd encourage any and all prospects to apply. Dr. Nettleton noted that the faculty and staff of the School for Nursing and Allied Health had their own listening session with the consultants and said they found the process very inclusive and were most encouraged by that.

I. REPORT OF THE SENATE CHAIR

Dr. Pratt also noted that she has not heard any complaints about the search process, and said the consultants have done a good job of getting people to participate virtually, as well as face-to-face. She also noted how grateful she and members of the Senate have been for the leadership Dr. Nesler and Dr. Benke have provided, making special mention of their trips around the state to hear various perspectives from people throughout the college.

She said the Senate has been extremely busy with a lot of governance work, but everyone is working together and thus, shared governance is working the way it should, generating solid discussions that she described as honest and frank.

II. FINANCIAL REPORT

Executive Vice President Joseph Garcia reported that the short term actions being taken by his department are meant to remediate a shortfall of approximately \$3 million due to a drop in enrollment and a negotiated increase in employee compensation.

Included in the actions are discussions with SUNY about acquiring additional financial support for the college, and a concerted effort to control expenses by having the Cabinet review every vacant position, and holding many of them open, if possible. Mr. Wall asked if the \$3 million shortfall exists even after these actions were undertaken, and Mr. Garcia said yes, the shortfall remains at \$3 million.

Dr. Nesler added that the college is making sure all faculty are full engaged, adding that in 2011 the college employed 220 full-time faculty and now that number is about 175. Dr. Benke said she has been looking at the use of adjuncts, which was reduced to coincide with dropping enrollment. In 2011, the college used about 1,100 adjuncts and that number has since dropped to approximately 700. She added that the Office of Academic Affairs is also looking at alternate terms, like a second summer term, where adjuncts might be used and additional enrollment generated.

Mr. Garcia went on to explain the reserves portion of the budget, saying the SUNY target is 10 percent, whereas the college has set 15 percent as its target for funds to be held in surplus status. He added that the college leadership is trying to think strategically about the budget and welcomes the feedback of the members of the College Council on the financial plan.

Mr. Lytle asked about any agreement between the college and SUNY regarding its financial support. Mr. Garcia explained the negative mission adjustment applied to the college by SUNY and the attempt to get some of that money back. He also cited the college's lack of access to auxiliary revenue generated by various fees, or activities like sports programs.

Dr. Nesler added that the new leadership at SUNY is unaware of this funding history. He also said that he's told System Administration that the college is built to help provide the increase in online learning the chancellor seeks, especially among adult learners, if SUNY would just fund the college properly.

Dr. Pratt added that the new provost at SUNY, Tod Laursen, is very focused on adult education and online education, saying that he also is working with the System Administration and the universitywide faculty Senate to get additional funding back to institutions to cover the cost of employee raises.

III. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Dr. Benke explained that she stepped back into the role of provost on an interim basis Oct. 1, establishing as her top priority a linkage of the academic programs to enrollment. One program she highlighted as a possible enrollment generator is the "degree accelerator" that the college got money to fund. It has ESC identify people in New York with some college credits but without an associate degree, and then use prior learning assessment to get them additional credits for industry certifications in the area of coding, especially in Central New York and the Southern Tier, and in healthcare, particularly downstate.

She also mentioned the work the college is doing to reduce textbook costs by creating open educational resources, and the push to increase partnerships with entities such as the Long Island Railroad, St. Peter's Healthcare System and, at the national level, with CVS for management programs.

Dr. Benke also discussed Chancellor Johnson's desire to accelerate the growth of Open SUNY and vastly increase online learning but also include individualization.

Dr. Nesler said the chancellor is talking about how to bring individualization to scale with less "high touch" involvement. He said Empire State College is the logical place to test this concept. Dr. Benke added that a group from the college is having a special meeting with SUNY administration to discuss this.

Mr. Lytle asked to be kept informed about how those discussions proceed and offered to speak to some members of the SUNY Board of Trustees about the initiative, suggesting other College Council members may want to do the same.

Dr. Benke then introduced Dr. Bridget Nettleton, the dean of the college's School for Nursing and Allied Health, who discussed the new B.S. in Allied Health that was launched in January. Dr. Nettleton explained that she has been "on the road" meeting with community colleges about developing customized articulation agreements for the new degree program. Thus far, there are 32 students enrolled and another 21 applications being process. It is expected the first graduation from the program will be in December 2019.

Dr. Nettleton explained the program offers two tracts; one for nurse educators, and a second one for health administrators. Each track is designed to handle up to 100 students each.

She also discussed the M.S. in Nursing the college recently introduced, and said that more than half of those enrollees in the master's program are graduates of the college's undergraduate program in nursing.

Ms. Weiss commented that the college's development of its nursing and allied health programs is where an institution would want to be at this point in time, adding that all the new technology in healthcare has left hospitals really needing nurse educators, and that the college's affordability and flexibility are added bonuses of the program.

Dr. Benke commented that increasingly a bachelor's level credential in allied health is required, especially in such areas as radiation technology and surgical technology. Dr. Nettleton commented that the college has to get the word out about the program, noting that the vacancy rates in allied health fields are two and a half time what the vacancy rates are for nursing.

Ms. Weiss noted that high schools can be good feeders for these programs and Dr. Nettleton said that another good feeder system is Hudson Valley Community College, which has an accelerated program that the students finish in one year and then come directly to ESC for their bachelor's in nursing. She said the college is trying to diversify its nursing and allied health student body.

Mr. Lytle said that Governor Cuomo, in his State of the State address, mentioned artificial intelligence, and suggested ESC is nimble enough that it might be able to play a big role in training students for AI work. He also thanked Dr. Benke for her willingness to again take over the reins of the Office of Academic Affairs.

IV. ENROLLMENT REPORT

Dr. Tai Arnold undertook an explanation of how the conversion by the college to the Banner ERP (enterprise resource planning) system has had an impact on enrollment reporting. She said Banner adds a complex and new environment of data management. When that is combined with new terms recently introduced while at the same time grappling with dates from previous terms, the college is saddled with data measuring different things and also the same things differently. But, she said, after this year, the data will be more consistent year-to-year.

She explained how some terms have been combined, some eliminated and new ones introduced. Mr. Lytle asked what the college was trying to accomplish with all these changes and Dr. Arnold explained that the changes were necessary to bring the college into compliance with the federal Title IV financial aid program regulations. Some of the overlapping terms, which the college would have had, required a different approach to financial aid that would disadvantage our students. Ms. Luh asked if any of the changes will lead to consistent increases in enrollment and Dr. Arnold said that, although there has been an increase in applications, it is difficult to predict where the college is going to land.

Dr. Pratt said a quirk in the federal regulations may allow an overlap of 8 week and 15 week courses, so the college is looking carefully at that option.

Mr. Garcia discussed the changes in the approach to deregistering students who had enrolled but owed the college money. He said the ultimate collection rate of those who owed \$1,000 or less was 98 percent, so under serious consideration is increasing the cut-off point for deregistration from \$300 to \$1,000, and allowing those students to stay enrolled.

Dr. Esposito returned to one of the charts Dr. Arnold shared, asking if enrollments are actually down 30 percent over the long term. Dr. Arnold replied that the fall term is down by 7 percent. Mr. Wall asked about projected enrollment targets last year and Dr. Arnold said they were reduced a bit.

V. REPORT OF THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

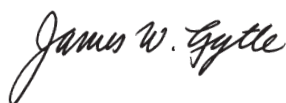
Dr. Nesler said that the previous reports during this meeting largely covered the topics he had wanted to review with the council, only adding remarks about the main themes established by Chancellor Johnson for her tenure: environmental sustainability, partnerships, research-sponsored programs and online delivery.

He then asked if the council could enter an executive session to discuss personnel matters.

At 4:18 p.m., Ms. Weiss moved to adjourn the formal meeting of the council and have its members enter executive session.

Mr. Wall seconded the motion, which was approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Lytle
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers
Vice President