

MEETING MINUTES | MAY 15, 2017

SUNY Empire State College
2 Union Ave.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4390



COLLEGE COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

James Lytle, Council Chairman
Anthony Esposito
G. Angela Henry, by telephone
Judith Quinn, by telephone
Patricia Salkin, by telephone
Linda Weiss

SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Merodie Hancock, President
Tai Arnold, Interim Vice Provost
David Bejou, Incoming Provost
Tom Mackey, Vice Provost
Michael Mancini, Chief of Staff
Mitchell Nesler, Vice President for Decision Support
Mary Caroline Powers, Vice President for Communications and Government Relations

SENATE REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT:

Mary Mawn, Senate Chairwoman

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS – CHAIRMAN JAMES LYTLE

A. Minutes Review and Approval

James Lytle called the meeting to order. The minutes from the Dec. 5, 2016 meeting were approved.

II. INTRODUCTION OF DAVID BEJOU, Ph.D., INCOMING PROVOST – PRESIDENT MERODIE HANCOCK

President Merodie Hancock welcomed David Bejou, who will join the college on July 1 as the new provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Bejou spoke about the challenges of budget cuts and reduced funding that face many colleges and universities in the country, including Empire State College. Despite the difficult environment, faculty, staff and senior leadership have continued to work diligently to offer quality educational opportunities to students. Bejou described his own personal experiences that, he felt, brought him closer to the journey of nontraditional students. In his work leading up to accepting the college's provost position, he had used a theoretical college as a model of how students can work best within higher education. Upon finding Empire State College, with its distinct mission, he saw that it was the place he had envisioned.

College Council member Angela Henry served on the search committee for the provost position, and she was enthusiastic about the process and how it was run, thanking Mitchell Nesler for his leadership as chairman of the search committee. The committee was pleased that Bejou was ultimately chosen by Hancock for the role.

III. COUNCIL BUSINESS – CHAIRMAN JAMES LYTLE

College Council membership across the state

Many college councils across the state are in the difficult position of having council members with terms that are expired or will soon expire, with no new appointees from the governor's office. Empire State College, Maritime, ESF, Optometry, Purchase and New Paltz are some of the institutions that have councils with no actual current members. Powers has been working with members of the state government to urge the governor's office to move forward in the appointment of council members to alleviate the hardship felt around the state. Out of nine total council members, Empire State College has two vacancies and all seven members still serving are in expired terms.

Powers reported that she and Hancock had a conversation with Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito, which facilitated additional future conversations between Destito and Hancock. Hancock added that an objective of these conversations has been to maintain a strong relationship with the commissioner's office, and discuss potential future locations for the college. Plans to add another downstate location did not work out, but the commissioner would be contacting the president to discuss other similar opportunities.

Destito has indicated that Empire State College is being considered for new council members, but there is not yet a concrete timeline for this. As a result, Hancock explained that the college is unable to engage with prospective council members, as they have busy lives and can't wait for years for the official appointment. Over time, the extremely slow-moving process does not reflect well on the college. The Association of Council Members and College Trustees has been working to help the councils achieve full membership as well, but has faced the same challenges as the college.

IV. REPORT FROM SENATE – CHAIRWOMAN MARY MAWN

The Senate has had a number of policies and programs come through for consideration, which Mawn listed in her report. The most notable news is that the long process of revising the Senate bylaws was passed by a vote of the College Assembly at the All College Conference in March. The bylaw changes were needed to realign the governance representation with the academic and administrative restructures of the college. The changes, effective June 1, 2017, will facilitate more cooperative work among groups and better suit the new organizational structure of the college.

New open seats generated by the changes now must be filled, which is a process supported by the Office of Academic Affairs. Elections for the new Senate chair will be held at the annual governance retreat, scheduled for June 6-7.

Hancock added that the process has been as transparent and inclusive as possible, bringing in the college community to give feedback whenever possible. The bylaw revisions aren't a way for governance to change the structure of the college, but rather to ensure that governance aligns with the changing structure of the college and maintains efficiency in that structure. Hancock thanked Mawn and the Senate leadership team for their efforts.

Mawn will be serving as co-chair of the Middle States committee along with Nesler and will continue work in Senate as a member.

V. REPORT FROM ACT – PAST PRESIDENT G. ANGELA HENRY

ACT is planning its annual conference, which takes place this fall. The agenda includes topics chosen based on feedback from past attendees as well as current events in SUNY, and the new SUNY chancellor, Kristina Johnson, is invited to attend.

This conference will mark the first year that the scholarship named for outgoing Chancellor Nancy Zimpher will be awarded, and the annual scholarship and community service award luncheon will also take place.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – PRESIDENT MERODIE HANCOCK

A. Update on SUNY and ESC budgets

After the All College Conference, the college turned its focus to the state budget, the impact of the Excelsior Scholarship and the new SUNY chancellor. Kristina Johnson, the incoming chancellor, wrote a piece that appeared in the New York Times about individualized education. Although Johnson's experience is mainly from a K-12 perspective, the mission of the college embraces individualized learning and she and Hancock will meet to talk about it once she begins in the fall.

B. Excelsior Scholarship

The budget request process is underway but submissions to the Board of Trustees likely won't be made until Johnson is in place, which will be after Sept. 5. The college did not have any approved tuition increase for the 2016-17 year, but this year, the rational tuition increase is back in the budget. Like many SUNY schools, Empire State College faced a decrease in enrollment, which translated to a smaller budget.

The college's administration should know the target budget number within the next few weeks, once SUNY distributes the allocations.

Hancock is reaching out to the academic areas, especially undergraduate studies, to be sure that faculty and staff about ways to best help students, and to manage student and course distribution for faculty, with cost in mind. The college will be looking to cut a few million dollars from what was spent last fiscal year, which requires careful planning.

Associate Vice President for Administration Rick Barthelmas is working to pay for the enterprise resource planning tool, or ERP, that the college is in the process of implementing, out of the savings funds instead of the yearly budget allocation. Even once the ERP is paid for, the college's reserve funds will be above the minimum required amount.

The Excelsior Scholarship isn't likely to have a great impact on Empire State College students, as less than 2 percent of current students would be eligible under the scholarship guidelines. The guidelines include that the student must study full time, or take 30 credits per year, but those credits will only be paid for if they are taken during the fall and spring semesters. This excludes the many Empire State College students who take advantage of the additional terms offered in the summer. There are also limiting criteria surrounding the degree completion timeline that would act as a barrier to many students, though the specifics of these guidelines are still being discussed. The details are still be clarified, especially as to how the guidelines will affect active service members and nontraditional students with prior learning. The college will still have a need for generous donors and scholarships to assist students who are unable to take advantage of the Excelsior Scholarship.

SUNY is concerned about capacity issues once people begin to take advantage of the scholarship and Empire State College could potentially help with the online course student load, but need to remain mindful of their own limited resources and funds.

Recruitment has become a major focus for the college and the marketing presence is visible through increased advertisement placement and statewide open houses. There are plans to outsource conversion work, to manage prospective student leads and ultimately get them enrolled, which has not been done here before.

Hancock invited all of the council members to the upcoming commencement ceremonies. The ceremonies have been streamlined by eliminating the event for just distance learning students in Saratoga, which seemed to encourage people to attend other ceremonies around the state of their choosing. This has worked out well overall.

Chancellor Zimpher attended the All College Conference in March to speak about her connection to the college as her time in SUNY is concluding. Lytle added that with the span of Zimpher's time at SUNY, she has seen the college change and understands and appreciates its mission. H. Carl McCall, chairman of the SUNY Board of Trustees, has also shown great support to the college. It's important that this support is used to further the college's mission and move forward with its educational offerings.

Lytle will attend a meeting with Hancock and New York State Assemblyman Joseph Morelle to discuss the college's need for more support in financial aid policies that often leave part-time students behind and the next steps in pursuing this kind of support. Morelle has been a strong advocate of the college in the past, especially of the college's presence in the Rochester area.

VII. DISCUSSION TOPIC: INTEGRATION OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING, PREPARATIONS FOR MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION REVIEW, OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AND ENROLLMENT GROWTH PLANNING

The update on the strategic planning process and Middle States accreditation preparation was delivered by Mitchell Nesler, vice president for decision support.

He explained that the Middle States Commission on Higher Education had a review process that included a reaffirmation visit every 10 years, with a five-year review, but recently it updated the process to have an eight-year review cycle with an enhanced annual report. Currently, Nesler is coordinating the self study, which is meant to generate some narratives to send in to Middle States for consideration. After the self study is submitted, Middle States will send out site visitors to take a look and ultimately, they will make a determination as to the college's status. The self study begins with an invitation to the Self Study Institute, taking place Nov. 6-8. The steering committee will be able to bring as many as four people to the institute, and that group will likely consist of the two co-chairs, Nesler and Mawn, the provost and one other participant. After the institute, the steering committee will have two years to prepare for the site visit in November 2019.

The steering committee co-chairs will work to appoint all committee members, who will then oversee a series of subcommittees. The subcommittees will see that the self study is generated. Nesler shared a detailed outline of the whole study and review exercise. According to this outline, the College Council, as the institution's governing board, will review the self study and provide feedback in March 2019. The subcommittees will be submitting drafts of the study before March 2019, and the council may choose to review the parts as they come in, in order to create a better environment for in-depth feedback.

Nesler has recently been appointed and completed training for the role of periodic report reviewer and is also serving on the substantive change committee for Middle States. These roles allow him to see how people react to the work they do. Meg Benke also works with Middle States as a commissioner. With their involvement, as well as others from the college, their background knowledge of Middle States, and specifically the review process, will help greatly.

Nesler has also been leading the charge for the college's strategic plan. Conversations of the strategic plan began by reviewing the college's mission statement. Many opinions were heard on the specifics of the mission from throughout the faculty and staff, and as a result, the mission and vision are nearly final. The strategic management group will ultimately approve the drafts of the mission and vision statements.

Work has begun and soliciting input from faculty, staff as well as the Foundation Board and the College Council will continue to shape the mission and vision statements. Once the pieces of the plan are in place, the budget and other priorities will be easier to identify and, therefore, the college will be more prepared for Middle States.

A review of recently established and pending new academic programs, certificates and degrees was presented by Tai Arnold, interim vice provost, and Tom Mackey, interim provost.

Arnold began her presentation by defining the steps that it takes for developing academic programs, including phases within Empire State College, SUNY and the New York State Education Department. The time it takes to move a program through the development process varies and can take anywhere from months to years. SUNY is generally supportive of the programs that the college puts through, but

program proposals can get caught up in disputes such as differing interpretations of regulations by the State Education Department.

Once approved and implemented, programs in the undergraduate major level are assessed every six years and at the graduate level every year. The goal is to bring programs into the regular, ongoing assessment processes to ensure consistency and the high quality of educational opportunities are available to students.

Arnold shared a list of future programs, including a Master of Science in Finance, Bachelor of Science in Allied Health, Master of Business Administration in Business Management and Master of Education and Master of Arts in Teaching in Special Education degrees. Projected enrollment numbers in the first and fifth years of the program illustrated the students gained by adding these programs. Future partnership opportunities with the added programs were also discussed.

Additional programs that are not yet fully approved, but have been submitted to SUNY include an Associate and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (a joint degree with Nassau Community College), a Certificate in Healthcare Management and a Doctorate in Education in Leadership and Change. The nursing degree has already generated significant interest.

Three other degree programs are very nearly ready to be put forth to SUNY for the next step of the approval process and have done very well in enrollment projections and reviews so far. These degrees are the Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies and Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling.

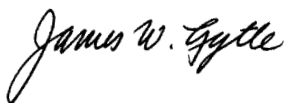
Arnold spoke about even more degree programs in development, including degrees in the area of information technology.

This level of degree development has not been seen at the college before, but the pieces of faculty interest and statewide economic and job development have aligned in a way that allows for all of this growth.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The council adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Lytle
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers
Vice President