

## FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE

### College Council Virtual Meeting via Google Meets

December 2, 2020

College Council members present: Patricia Hill Williams, Kathleen Ferrell, David Curry, Jim Durant, Robert Sweeney, Kenneth Card, Randi Shubin Dresner, Natalie Rodgers

Excused absence: Richard Redmond, Paul Caroleo

College Administration: John Nader, Kevin Jordan, Patrick Calabria, Greg O'Connor, Matthew Colson, Laura Joseph, Carolyn Fedder

Guests: Orla LoPiccolo, Brett Southard, Pete Grizzaffi, Davinder Kaur

Chair Williams asked if all were in receipt of the September 30 minutes and entertained a motion to approve them. The motion was moved by council member Robert Sweeney seconded by council member Jim Durant.

#### **Motion carried**

#### Chairs report

Chair Williams thanked Dr. Nader for keeping the council informed especially in light of how busy the college administration has been. She reported that she found the November 17 SUNY Board of Trustees meeting very interesting and that information was brief, and action was taken quickly. The Budget, Enrollment, Audit, and Finance committees gave reports. She said that despite the challenges that lie ahead, the tone of the meeting offered a promising outlook for the future and that the University System plans to continue to move forward in a new normal way.

Dr. Williams, was pleased that the 50th anniversary of the ACT conference, held virtually in October, had the largest attendance ever. Prior to the conference BOT Chairman Tisch remarked to Dr. Williams that she was impressed by Farmingdale's strong enrollment numbers, as other institutions are experiencing struggles. During the conference, Chancellor Malatras was very open to engagement with the council members and honest in his responses to their questions. Patrick Brown, who heads the new Strategic Planning committee, encouraged council members to submit ideas for a new mission for ACT. Dr. Williams added that at her request, Kevin Law, President of the Long Island Association has agreed to serve on the Strategic Planning committee. The Bylaws committee presented on the responsibilities of council members and what their role as advisers means in SUNY. In a personal note Dr. Williams received from the Chancellor, he stated that it was a pleasure speaking with ACT members at the conference, that they are leaders in SUNY, and that he will support ACT moving forward.

Chair Williams asked for feedback on the conference from the FSC council members that attended. Mr. Sweeney shared that the Chancellor was candid and informal, and Mr. Durant appreciated learning more about the leadership that Dr. Malatras will bring and the direction he sees SUNY moving. Mr. Durant pointed out that ACT members have no voting power on the BOT. Chair Williams said this issue was taken by the former ACT administration and the previous chancellor to the BOT for review. She thought that the topic would be revisited at an upcoming ACT executive committee. Council member Kathleen Ferrell felt the conversation among council members about things going on in their institutions

and what it means to be a college council member was enthusiastic. She added that some new members had questions and concerns and were seeking guidance understanding their roles. Ms. Ferrell suggested that the presentation she and Council member Randi Shubin Dresner prepared several years ago might give the strategic planning committee a head start on the task/charge that they are formulating. Chair Williams asked if all FSC council members would be in agreement on sending the presentation to Patrick Brown. It was decided that the document would be recirculated for review. Dr. Williams requested to have comments and consent prior to the ACT executive meeting on December 10. Council member David Curry thought the presentation would be helpful and Ms. Ferrell believed that it would simplify and give insight to new ACT council members and put all councils on the same page.

Dr. Williams commented that the Gala event was very creative and congratulated Matt Colson, VP for Development and Alumni Engagement, on a wonderful fundraiser.

### President's Report

**Remote Learning:** Dr. Nader introduced Davinder Kaur of Director, Distance Learning and Pete Grizzaffi, Chief Information Officer to give an overview of what has been accomplished to assist in remote learning since March. Mr. Grizzaffi said that students and staff were surveyed in the spring to determine their needs. Coming into the summer and fall, \$1.25 million was invested--laptops were procured, new virtual computer labs were built, our campus network was upgraded and wifi green zones were made available. To make sure new students had a positive experience an onboarding site and checklist were developed. IT also provided faculty easy to use technology, laptops, upgraded classrooms, and training sessions and 98% felt of them were more confident in remote teaching for the fall semester.

Ms. Kaur said Distance Learning has set up a helpdesk, trainings, workshops, and resources for faculty including how to videos, tutorials, and templates for blackboard sites so that there is a consistent look and feel to their courses. A checklist for creating course sites has been developed to deliver the best possible experience for students and faculty mentors who are experienced in online learning have helped deliver specific assistance piers. DL worked with student services on new student orientation, a FAQs resources site has easy access links to Distance Learning, Information Technology and Library pages as well as access to Open SUNY resources. Technologies used are the learning management system Blackboard, web conferencing via Collaborate, Teams, Google Meet, Lecture capture software Ponopto, Proctur U, Plagerism prevention software safe assign. She added that student engagement is promoted using Voicethread and LinkedIn learning. Training management software has been implemented to keep track of faculty training, certifications, and to create development plans for faculty.

Ms. Kaur reported that the Student Satisfaction Survey showed 91% satisfaction with the helpdesk, 66% satisfied with engagement of remote classes, 62% with clarity of instructions finding courses activities, indicating that they want to better understand faculty expectations. Student comments expressed difficulties adjusting to self-directed learning and allocating time required, greater workload, and the desire for increased engagement with instructors and other student. More tools and workshops are being created for faculty to help provide this environment. Faculty's overall satisfaction was 82%, with 97% of them are utilizing resources provided to them. Strategies to increase satisfaction include offering trainings by topic that are discipline specific, informing of pros on cons of different technologies, education on where to go for what types of support, and pier led workshops on how to engage students

in remote classes. Ms. Kaur added that Open SUNY is offering Teaching technology Tuesdays and on demand professional workshops.

Council member/SGA president, Natalie Rodgers asked if there would be a follow up survey at the end of semester and if changes for the spring will occur based on the feedback from the surveys. Dr. Nader remarked that the 600 written comments for improvement from the fall allowed us to act on what we learned. Ms. Ferrell asked if we continue to extend DL after the pandemic and Ms. Kaur responded that we had much of the software already and now faculty got a taste of it. Many of our students work and the fact that we can accommodate them at home is a benefit and continuation will drive overall satisfaction. Chair Williams commented that previous Chancellor Johnson's wanted to increase Distance Learning. Dr. Nader agreed that SUNY wants to tap into the population of NYS students participating in out of state on line programs to increase enrollment. Council member Ken Card asked how to help professors replicate classroom student to student interaction. Ms. Kaur replied that integrating students' recording video or audio, and peer mentors were some strategies. Dr. Card noted that students are overwhelmed with the piling on of work in asynchronous learning. Our synchronous courses have now been formatted to meet weekly, have live sessions, and faculty are encouraged to take advantage tools that deliver a better experience for students.

**Testing:** Dr. Nader reported that over 4,000 tests have been conducted to date, with only 12 positive COVID results over the course of the semester. H& W and the nursing program have worked hard to test every student with an on campus footprint and our residential students prior to departure for Thanksgiving break and then again upon return to campus per SUNY mandates. Only 400 students have in-person finals thanks to the work on the academic side. Dr. Williams asked for Dr. Nader to provide information about the SUNY COVID dashboard, Dr. Nader said the website [www.suny.edu/covid19-tracker/](http://www.suny.edu/covid19-tracker/) provides data on testing conducted and numbers of cases for all 64 campuses.

**Gala:** Matt Colson, reported that the Gala netted \$100,000 and thanked the council for their contributions, adding that leadership giving gives strong talking points to get others to support. He has been working to build rapport and a team culture in his office and set expectations for the department all year round. He acknowledged Pat Calabria's team for their great assistance with the Gala. The annual fund mailing has been downsized to those who are most likely to give or based on research of who is philanthropic. Only 1/3 of mailing costs were spent as opposed to last year and double has been raised so far. Mr. Colson said the College needs fundraising now more than ever. He plans to grow our alumni engagement and our base by meeting people in ways that are convenient and mutually beneficial. A plan is being designed to attract higher achieving academic students by growing endowed scholarships and provide long term funding to the Admissions department so that they can bring in the best students.

**Spring Plan:** Provost Laura Joseph reports that Winter intercession will be mostly remote. Only the flight center will have in person classes. The spring semester will begin January 29, and spring break has been eliminated. Over 2000 sections are running with 15% of our classes delivered in-person. She hopes that summer courses will be offered fully on campus in a socially distant format. In fall 2021 we would need continued SED approval to extend remote learning, and we may have additional space requirements due to distancing, much is still unknown. An Honors program task force has been put in place to look at how to recruit high achieving students and provide them with a robust educational experience here.

**Enrollment:** VP Calabria said that the environment is competitive and uncertain due to COVID and that applications and registrations are coming in later. Students are deciding where and when to go. Our transfers were up for the fall and we still registered 10,000 students. Spring registrations are behind so far and many students want a campus experience. We have increased our virtual recruiting events.

**E-Sports:** VP Kevin Jordan said that in less than a year, our club has won multiple championships and that two students did so with academic honors. We look to grow the reach and scope of the program to benefit the College. Dr. Nader informed that the idea was driven by students and a space was converted in Conklin Hall at minimal cost.

**Finance:** VP for Administration and Finance, Greg O'Connor stated that we remain focused on protecting jobs, benefits, and the health and safety of students and staff. There is uncertainty in state tax support which we expect to drop 20% to \$9 million. Our enrollment is stable, so tuition revenue is good and our expenses have been curtailed, but the campus incurred \$5 million in COVID related expenses. Due to our high need population, we provided fee waivers and distributed \$2.5 million in federal CARES funds to 4500 students so far. SIC funding will be used to support Nursing students by providing them N95 masks. Our unspent college work study money will go to financial aid opportunities for students. Chair Williams asked for clarification of the fiscal overview she heard at the SUNY trustees meeting regarding the losses and reductions in state support for SUNY in 2022 and the desperate need for state and federal aid. Mr. O'Connor said that there may be some federal stimulus money and that we are tracking COVID expenses for possible reimbursement through FEEMA. He added that SUNY's cash reserves have been hit hard, but our local funds are stable. System may be limiting our allocation and spending to help SUNY's position with borrowing and creditors. Dr. Williams stressed to the importance of college council members to advocate with federal and state legislators for the needs for SUNY funding.

**Other Business:** Chair Williams inquired about winter commencement and Dr. Nader informed that there will be four virtual commencements by school beginning January 11. They will be pre-recorded and available on demand. The ceremonies will include remarks by the school deans and valedictorians for each school.

Chair Williams requested that the council members keep abreast to what's going related to the pandemic and the safety of the campus. She has not heard any news regarding the governor issuing reappointments for council members. She informed that Old Westbury has a new President, Dr. Timothy Sams.

Ms. Rodgers requested that she placed on the next meeting's agenda to provide a report on SGA updates and goals for the year.

There being no other business motion for adjournment. Motion was made by Ms. Shubin Dresner.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Fedder

*Approved 2/24/2021*