

## College Council Minutes for September 14, 2021

Via Microsoft Teams



### **PRESIDING MEETING**

John Maggiore, chair

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Donna Luh, Molly Reilly, Sheila Poole, Albert Culler, Roberta Reardon, Arlene González-Sánchez, Mark Schroeder, Patty Salkin

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT**

Lexie Bonitatibus, Nathan Gonyea, Janet Aiello-Cerio, Tiffany Williams

### **REPORTS GIVEN BY**

Thalia MacMillan, Ann Sconiers, Deslayn De-Souza

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER 3 P.M. — CHAIRMAN JOHN MAGGIORE**

John Maggiore made a motion to approve the minutes, and Donna Luh seconded.

#### **II. REPORT OF THE SENATE CHAIRWOMAN — THALIA MACMILLAN**

Senate has met three times since last meeting.

In June, the college held a retreat for members of governance. One item governance focused on is the Student Conduct Policy. College Council may vote on this policy in January meeting.

Thalia MacMillan and Dave Puskas were reelected to their governance roles at the retreat. There was a new parliamentarian elected, a professional staff member, Jason Lloyd.

The Senate of SUNY Empire State College thanks the College Council for their presidential search involvement.

### **III. REPORT OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ACTING PRESIDENT — ANN SCONIERS**

John Maggiore introduced Ann Sconiers, the new Student Governance Association (SGA) president. This is Ann's first College Council meeting.

In April, the SGA did a presentation for other students about vaccination facts.

In May after resignation of former president, SGA hosted a trivia night for students.

Mission of acting president is to build solid foundation for SGA. As a result, the SGA has been working to solidify their infrastructure and has been working on bylaws. The SGA budget has been passed.

In August, the SGA participated in SUNY-wide campaign for vaccinations with social media campaign.

Since the SGA cannot host in-person retreat due to the pandemic, they are planning a virtual retreat in November after elections.

### **IV. REPORT FROM THE OFFICER IN CHARGE — NATHAN GONYEA**

For the fall term, face to face student services are open. Student vaccine requirements will begin at the end of this September. A few classes are running face to face for the fall 2021 term.

4 Park Avenue location is opened, and construction is mostly completed. This location allows the college to have street-level signage on a location in metropolitan New York for the first time in a long time. The college is also opening location in Harlem.

Enrollments over the past couple of years has been variable, with enrollments School for Graduate Studies and the School of Nursing and Allied Health steadily increasing. The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies saw a 200 student gap due to Union enrollment/apprenticeship during COVID. We expect enrollments for our international programs to level off.

In mid-June, enrollment numbers crept down compared to last year. We are starting a new fall 2 term to help close the gap.

Factors: the college saw an artificial bump in nonmatriculated students due to COVID in the fall 2020 term.

Enrollment and retention related activities include the following:

- An increase in marketing budget
- New ad campaign and website redesign
- Better leverage of partnerships
- Early transcript review
- Improvements to student supports from accepted to enrolled student and
- The previously mentioned second fall start for new students.

Retention related activities include the following:

- JumpStart programming and virtual welcome to give students in their first term the information they need to get started.
- Registration outreach for returning students.
- Expanding Opportunity Programs.
- Improvements to the Educational Planning process, including an in-depth evaluation of improvements needed.

Many new academic programs launched this fall at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including a Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Change.

## **V. BUDGET UPDATE — LEXIE BONITATIBUS**

Three financial themes:

Successes:

- Increased enrollment during the pandemic.
- We kept our expenses and cash-flow outlay down.
- Cash to cover raises was put aside.
- The federal government awarded SUNY Empire \$26,318,255 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds.

Challenges:

- Current year enrollment is down substantially going into fall 2021.
- Labor is forecasted to increase over fall 2020–2021.
- The \$1 million savings from the Manhattan location move is being reinvested in marketing, DEI and student services.
- The current forecast is showing a \$7.0 million deficit.

In order to have long-term financial success:

- We must grow enrollment as our business model is revenue driven.
- We need to continue to use all cost-control techniques.
- We need to remain lean and flexible.

## **VI. DISCUSSION TOPIC — DESALYN DE-SOUZA**

New York State Department of Social Services — Local District Training Contracts

Local district training contracts exist between SUNY Empire State College and the following counties:

- Erie
- Ontario
- Dutchess

The contract with Erie County is the largest. These contracts cover two components: staff training and employee education.

Funding comes from Office of Children and Family Services. Counties have to find an educational partner and once they have, the county submits a proposal for funding to OCFS. As a result of the contract, the county agency employees are provided comprehensive educational services to increase their professional competence. The contract also provides support to the counties for their own personnel. These contracts allow the county employees to submit for funds for tuition, books, and fees to work toward their degree.

For the Erie County DSS partnership, there is a focus on the training program for county staff. Examples of the skills covered by training are communications and customer service skills, professional boundaries, and technology and computer skills. The Erie County DSS partnership also includes an Employee Education Program with SUNY Empire State College and two other local SUNY colleges, SUNY College at Buffalo and SUNY Erie Community College.

The 2019–2020 contract year saw 70 students supported, 36 in particular from SUNY Empire, where 95% of applicants pursued a bachelor degree. The total cost of the contract was \$379,955 with the vast majority of costs covering tuition. Contract for 2022 is \$1.2 M and has been received already.

Each student is required to be submitted for financial aid. Of the students in this program, 94% are retained.

Desalyn is interested in expanding this model to other county DSS programs, statewide.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Congratulations to Al Culler for his recent ACT Scholarship win!

Information will be shared with the Council regarding the ACT Conference.

Chairman Maggiore reminded the Council that the next meeting would be held at 3 p.m. on Friday, January 14. The chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made to adjourn and was seconded; was passed by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m., at which point the meeting moved into executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Aiello-Cerio  
Liaison to the Council