

MEETING MINUTES | SEPT. 17, 2019

111 West Avenue, Room 104
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-6069



COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

James Lytle, Anthony Esposito, Donna Luh, Patricia Salkin (via telephone), Daniel Wall

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Jim Malatras, Kyle Adams, Meg Benke, Lexie Bonitatibus (via telephone), Mitchell Nesler, Mary Caroline Powers, Anastasia Pratt (via telephone)

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council Chairman James Lytle opened the meeting at 10:08 a.m. and asked for public comment. Hearing none, he requested that members approve or amend the minutes of the May 2019 meeting. Dr. Esposito moved that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wall and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Lytle then encouraged members of the council to consider attending the ACT annual conference for members of councils and boards of trustees of SUNY institutions scheduled for Oct. 18-20 in Cooperstown.

A short discussion ensued regarding dates for the next three meetings of the College Council. It was agreed that the Dec. 11 meeting would be held at the Rockefeller Institute for Government in Albany. Additionally, it was suggested that the spring meeting be set to coincide with the council's anticipated meeting with members of the Middle States Reaccreditation Team visiting the college April 5-7, 2020.

II. REPORT OF THE SENATE CHAIR – CHAIRWOMAN ANASTASIA PRATT

Senate Chairwoman Anastasia Pratt summarized her report by saying that several proposals for new academic programs are being prepared and are likely to begin working their way through the governance structure for analysis. She also said she expects much of the work of the Senate will be concentrated on streamlining the college's governance system during the 2019-2020 academic year.

III. REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT – JIM MALATRAS

Mr. Lytle welcomed President Jim Malatras, commenting that he hit the ground running upon his arrival two months and two days earlier. Dr. Malatras reviewed several items of business that he considered immediate priorities, among them appointing Dr. Meg Benke as permanent provost of the college. Another was to refresh the marketing and launch a new campaign, redo the branding, and overhaul the communications under the direction of Kyle Adams.

Dr. Malatras also discussed the budget situation and the work of the new budget director, Lexie Bonitatibus, who is dealing with what appears to be a multimillion budget deficit. She also is investigating ways to generate additional revenue for the college.

Other priorities he discussed included:

- The need to recommit to our facilities; thus far Malatras has traveled to 13 of the college locations and has concluded it is very important to show them off and, when necessary, improve them through upgrades or consider new locations;
- The development of new additional academic programs such as the B.S. in Addiction Studies, and the nursing program partnership with Suffolk County Community College;
- The partnership agreement with the state Department of Labor to create the Career Connection program for mid-career workers who are transitioning, which will point them to academic programs that will feed the needs of the job market;
- The 22-by-22 initiative that will see enrollment grow to 22,000 by 2022;
- Partnering with the communities we are in, linking them to our resources, such as opening our computer labs for the collection of census data and designating some locations as early voting sites;
- Integrating the unique resources of the Rockefeller Institute of Government into Empire State College;
- Promoting the arts created by our outstanding arts faculty and alumni and sharing them with our communities;
- Renaming the Van Arsdale Center for Labor Studies to the School of Labor and establishing a new labor research program that will, among other topics, study the future of work;
- In response to an expression of student interest, stage the college's first ever "winter commencement" in Albany on Dec. 15, at which former Gov. David Patterson will deliver the commencement address;
- With the opening of the college's new building in Selden, establish it as the "Selden Campus, of ESC Long Island;" use similar locational nomenclature for other college facilities, such as the "Rochester Campus" of ESC Finger Lakes, messaging that conveys the college's broad statewide distribution.

Mr. Lytle asked if there had been push back regarding the change of name of the Van Arsdale Labor Center. Dr. Malatras said that our partners in the labor sector were enthusiastic as long as we didn't touch the core mission of the college. They liked being affiliated with a "school" for labor studies. Dr. Benke said the faculty are very interested in the changes, partnering with the Rockefeller Institute and especially the chance to differentiate their labor studies research agendas. Mr. Lytle also asked if moving RIG to SUNY Empire will necessitate a state law change and was told the SUNY Board of Trustees can so designate such a change.

Dr. Malatras then turned the meeting over to Kyle Adams, who is leading the Office of Communications and Marketing, to discuss the branding changes that will be introduced to the college later this week.

Mr. Adams said the marketing team will be revealing the new front page of the website tomorrow and a full web redesign will be undertaken but will take a year to complete. The new logo is meant to suggest the torch held by the Statue of Liberty, which he described as one of the top three icons in higher education and one of the strongest globally. The color pallet aligns with the official colors of the state of New York, and the preferred use of SUNY Empire conveys the notion of a "trusted SUNY institution." Finally, the marketing phrase "Make it Happen" tells our prospective students that they can take control of their lives and we'll help them through anxious times.

Ms. Luh noted that at graduations, she has heard people in the audience say such things as, "That's my mom," and this marketing shift reflects that. Mr. Adams agreed that the new messaging is all grounded in our student and alumni narratives and is much more emotive than previous campaigns.

It was noted that Southern New Hampshire University spends upwards of \$90 million a year on marketing. Dr. Malatras responded saying that SUNY Empire will spend some resources on marketing but we'll be more competitive by being smarter, earning a lot of free media, using our alumni network, engaging in community activities, and generating energy and excitement.

IV. REPORT FROM THE PROVOST – MEG BENKE

Dr. Benke reported that she and her team in the Office of Academic Affairs is working with Senate Chairwoman Anastasia Pratt to develop more structured academic programs and get them approved by governance committees. She also said that a lot of work is underway to revitalize the college's partnership programs, and cited as an example, the newly signed agreement with CVS to provide educational services for 50 students in New York City who are store managers. Nationally, the company has 9,300 managers who the college may eventually be able to serve.

She discussed SUNY Online, saying it has been a bit slow starting up with light enrollments for the fall. The main programs being offered from SUNY Empire are from our School for Graduate Studies.

Mr. Lytle had questions about the program, specifically, what institution does a student affiliate with. Dr. Benke explained that in part the purpose of the initiative is to help a student put together a pathway to a degree with several institutions and initially institutional affiliation is not a priority.

V. DISCUSSION TOPIC: VISITS BY MIDDLE STATES REACCREDITATION TEAM – MITCHELL NESLER

Dr. Nesler said the next important visit related to the Middle States Commission is one scheduled for Oct. 2 with the Middle States Reaccreditation Team Leader Dr. Matthew Prineas. Members of the council have the option of attending in person at Jim Lytle's office in Albany or calling in between 1 and 1:30 p.m. The call-in information will be distributed to all council members before the meeting.

He went on to discuss the two primary steps in the reaccreditation process. Step one involved the creation of the self-study report based on seven Middle States standards that institutions strive to meet and describes how they are doing that. At SUNY Empire, 105 people from the college participated in the self-study report that produced a 135-page report that will be cut to 100 pages. The completed first draft will be submitted to the team leader, who will decide if the college is ready for the next step.

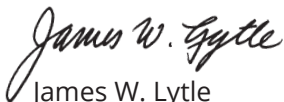
Step two involves a visit to campus by team representatives from peer institutions April 5-8, at which time the members of the College Council will be expected to meet with some of the team members. Team members also will be visiting additional college's locations in Manhattan, Selden, and Hauppauge.

Dr. Benke, who is a Middle States Commissioner, said she believes the main issues the college will be quizzed about are its finances and student readiness and support systems.

Mr. Lytle also raised the issue of regenerating the membership of the College Council, while acknowledging the long service of so many to the college through continued membership on the council, suggesting this may come into question during the reaccreditation process.

Dr. Esposito moved to adjourn. Mr. Wall seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous voice vote. The meeting officially concluded at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Lytle
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers
Liaison to the College Council