

**MEETING MINUTES | DEC. 11, 2017**

21 British American Blvd.  
Latham, NY 12110



**COLLEGE COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

James Lytle, Council Chairman

Anthony Esposito

Patricia E. Salkin, via telephone

Daniel Wall

Linda Weiss

**SUNY EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:**

Merodie Hancock, President

David Bejou, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Marian Conway '01, '04, Chair of the Empire State College Foundation Board of Directors

Joseph Garcia, Executive Vice President for Administration

Mary Caroline Powers, Vice President for Communications and Government Relations

Walter Williams, Vice President for Advancement and  
Executive Director of the Empire State College Foundation

**I. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Sept. 20, 2017, College Council meeting were approved.

College Council Membership Across the State

The College Councils at many SUNY institutions are experiencing difficulties and delays from the governor's office in their efforts to fill vacancies and to appoint new members. Additionally, many councils' current members are serving long past the expiration of their terms. All the members of the Empire State College Council except for Judith Quinn, student representative, are serving on the council in expired terms.

The Empire State College Council currently has five active voting members and requires all five to be present, per the SUNY mandate, to reach a quorum. Mary Caroline Powers has shared information with James Campbell, director of legislative relations at the SUNY Office of State Relations, about the ongoing efforts to refresh council membership. Campbell was not aware of the severity of the problem, and Powers has provided the records of their many attempts over the last eight years to work toward a solution. President Hancock also has worked to bring this to the forefront at SUNY System Administration because of the work to prepare for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education review and reaccreditation. Middle States dictates that all governing bodies of an institution must be fully operational, but with the council's current status, the college does not meet this requirement.

Lytle suggested that the members of the council make recommendations of any individuals that might be a good fit to serve on the council, so they can be prepared with names once the governor's office is ready to move forward with appointments. Suggestions for appointments have been made to the governor's office in the past but the council's situation remains the same. Hancock added that the additional members for council would not only mean a more robust council to easily reach a quorum for voting, but it would allow the college to call upon council members more frequently for advice on important issues facing the college.

Lytle said that, where Middle States is concerned, the college should be safe from criticism because the ultimate governing body is the SUNY Board of Trustees, which is fully appointed and functioning. Although membership terms have expired on the College Council, members serving still count as legitimate members, serving as a functioning governing body.

## **II. REPORT FROM SENATE**

Anastasia Pratt was unable to attend the meeting but provided her report in writing to be distributed to the council. Hancock reviewed the key items, including the new governance structure that was developed and put into place beginning in 2017. The new governance structure is meant to reflect the new overall structure of the college. Although the transition is going well, a review will be held in two years to gauge the effectiveness of the changes.

With new technology available to the college, governance is looking at ways to set and maintain the college academic calendar and course catalog and is considering setting sessions within a term to increase availability of courses to students. New degrees are in the works, including a newly approved Bachelor of Science in addiction studies. Members of governance are also looking into the teaching requirements of charter schools, an issue that has been raised at the state level. Empire State College will work to ensure that they are able to educate teachers in their programs to be prepared for any type of school environment after graduation.

### III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

#### Empire State College Budget

Empire State College's 2018-2019 fiscal year will begin with a flat budget with no expectation of added funding from the state. SUNY, with the recent addition of new Chancellor Kristina Johnson, will be requesting its own funding for new SUNY-specific initiatives. The college will have to manage its budget to accommodate regular cost increases, such as negotiated employee pay increases.

Executive Vice President Joseph Garcia explained that the Office of Administration will be asking the various offices to look carefully at their budgets to consider funding from within when a new cost arises: What could be sourced from within that office, or what could be given up to cover the new expense? It's vital that the college carefully manage spending because even though budgets in general have been well controlled, planning is needed in the event of any changes in enrollment. Regarding Middle States, the college's budget plan is well aligned to the guidelines in the way that resources and priorities are carefully weighed.

#### Doctoral Degree Process

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs David Bejou told the council about the doctoral degree approval process that resulted in approval by the SUNY Board of Trustees. The next step for full approval of the program is to take it to the New York State Education Department, though that phase can sometimes take years, and no clear indication of the timeline can be given. The process was met with many questions and the masterplan amendment did not pass through the board without concern. Hancock remarked that people who are less involved in nontraditional modes of higher education still have a difficult time grasping why someone would want to pursue a professional doctorate in an online setting. There is a feeling in higher education that a Ph.D. candidate working on anything but that degree can't possibly take it seriously, but the reality is that many students work full time and maintain a balance with family as well, all while pursuing their degrees. By filling the vacant council seats and keeping the council filled with people who have gone through a similar process to earn their degree and have become successful in their field, the college might be able to better educate outsiders on the values and opportunities with nontraditional learning at the doctoral level.

#### Middle States Accreditation Preparation

With the work on the strategic plan, the college has been able to define goals and objectives and explore ways to measure their progress in a way that has proven useful to the Middle States review preparation process. Empire State College is among the first institutions going through the Middle States review process under the new set of standards, with a tentative start date in 2020. Mary Mawn, past chairwoman of Senate, and Mitchell Nesler, vice president for decision support, are co-chairs of the Middle States planning committee. They will work closely with an executive committee and will ultimately deliver a 100-page report that "tells the story" of Empire State College.

#### IV. DISCUSSION TOPIC: CAMPAIGN FOR EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Walter Williams, vice president for advancement and executive director of The Empire State College Foundation, shared a PowerPoint presentation with the council to address key points of the upcoming capital campaign.

Chairwoman of the Empire State College Foundation Board Marian Conway introduced herself to the council. As a nontraditional student, she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees and went on to earn a Ph.D. in public policy and nonprofit management online while working in the field. Because of her specific experience, she understands Empire State College students and can advocate on their behalf.

The Empire State College Foundation has raised \$1.76 million for the year that has gone directly to benefit students, implement collegewide initiatives, and assist with faculty and staff development. Of that amount, 45 percent is used to provide student scholarships and activities, 19 percent to fund academic programs development, 14 percent to fund personnel support and professional development, 14 percent to outreach partnerships and just 8 percent to advancement expenses. In addition to that overall amount, \$1 million is provided to students in the form of short-term financial aid.

Conway stressed the importance and generosity of the volunteers involved with the college's fundraising efforts, including the members of the Foundation Board. The members are called on by the Office of Advancement to give their input on the capital campaign and provide valuable feedback, drawing from their diverse backgrounds and experiences. The board is made up of volunteer members who do not have to go through the same vetting process with the governor's office as College Council members do, and because of this, it is fully appointed and mainly populated by active alumni who are passionate about the college and committed to the mission.

The important factors in a successful capital campaign include establishing legitimacy of the program, identifying and cultivating prospects, drawing on connections for the fundraising team, partnering with campus leadership and spending time thanking participants and donors.

Williams said that apart from the good work that the foundation does, the college is trying to do more to elevate the foundation in the eyes of the community by publicizing foundation-sponsored events and providing a "tool kit," a resource that gives access to language or media to be used to advance the work of the foundation. Foundation members are encouraged to attend events to engage directly with faculty, staff and students to develop connections.

Staff from the Office of Advancement recently completed a fundraising challenge in which they drove around the state to various college locations to drum up excitement for new and continuing donors, with the goal of reaching 400 donors in four days. The event was able to bring in 410 donors, approximately \$40,000 of challenge money that was provided primarily by members of the foundation and federation boards, and \$100,000 total.

Williams shared the capital campaign PowerPoint presentation with the council, which was also provided in the packet of printed materials. The capital campaign is generally planned to take place every few years, run by the Office of Advancement staff as well as volunteer fundraisers, to raise a large amount of funds during a specific time frame. The college is working to incorporate regularly held capital campaigns going forward to build a solid donation base.

The planning for the upcoming campaign is well underway, with a consultant at the ready to begin working with the Office of Advancement and a preliminary list of campaign priorities has been set. If the foundation approves the campaign plan in July, the quiet phase of the campaign will begin immediately. The quiet phase will take place from July 1, 2018, through the first quarter of 2021. The public phase will begin in 2021 with a gala or other kickoff event, marking the 50th anniversary of the college, and last for about two to three years.

The college has selected Marv LeRoy of the Institute for Philanthropic Excellence, an independent consultant highly experienced in grassroots fundraising, to devise the best course of action for a successful campaign. LeRoy will work closely with the Office of Advancement and gather information through confidential interviews to inform the process.

The office has identified 60 to 70 alumni to participate in the planning discussion, which began in November 2017, running through January 2018. Williams invited College Council members to participate in the discussions and will reach out with specific opportunities to partake in the process.

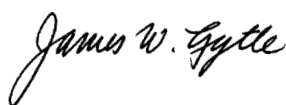
The campaign will focus on four initiatives: maximizing student access and success, elevating the mission of the college, building the academic core and endowment growth, and sustaining the day-to-day excellence with the Fund for Empire State College.

The College Council will plan to meet with both the Empire State College Foundation Board and the Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors.

## V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James W. Lytle  
Chairman



Mary Caroline Powers  
Vice President