

## **FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE**

### **College Council Virtual Meeting via Google Meets**

**February 24, 2021**

College Council members present: Patricia Hill Williams, Kathleen Ferrell, David Curry, Jim Durant, Robert Sweeney, Kenneth Card, Richard Redmond, Paul Caroleo, Natalie Rodgers

Excused absence: Randi Shubin Dresner

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

Guests: Orla LoPiccolo, Lloyd Makarowitz, Brett Southard, Pete Grizzaffi

Chair Williams asked if all were in receipt of the December 2, 2020 minutes and entertained a motion to accept them. The motion was moved by council member Robert Sweeney and seconded by council member David Curry. Chair Williams requested a motion to approve today's agenda which was made by Mr. Curry and seconded.

#### **Motions carried**

##### Chair's report

Chair Williams stated that she appreciated the information Dr. Nader and the administration have provided to keep Council informed. She has heard in external conversations that FSC is up to par and safely moving forward in its COVID response.

As president of the Association of Council Members and College Trustees, Dr. Williams will host an Executive Board meeting Friday which will focus on whether to give up the contract for an in-person ACT conference in October 2021. She asked council members for opinions on this, as a decision needs to be made by April 1. Council member Ferrell said that she is comfortable with an in-person conference and suggested that the contract should be reviewed by legal counsel to protect ACT's interests. Dr. Williams said that Counsel from the Governor's office and SUNY have been consulted. Dr. Williams will recommend that scholarships for students be presented whether the conference is in-person or not. Also, it will be determined if ACT dues will be deferred for campuses again this year. Ms. Ferrell agreed that scholarships should be awarded, and that campuses are facing difficult budgets, therefore, deferment of dues makes sense. Chair Williams stated that the governor has made 10 new council member appointments to Polytech, Delhi, Maritime and Canton. The question of ACT having a voting place on the BOT board will be revisited at Friday's executive board meeting. Dr. Williams announced that she will represent FSC College Council and ACT as keynote speaker for the Town of Babylon Black History month virtual event. The event which will be livestreamed on the Town of Babylon Facebook page on February 25 and she will mention Farmingdale during the program.

##### President's Report

Dr. Nader congratulated Dr. Williams for being selected as the keynote speaker for the Town of Babylon event and thanked her for promoting Farmingdale at every opportunity.

Dr. Nader reported that FSC is one of two institutions leading the Offshore Wind Training Institute which was announced by the governor July 2019. Executive Chamber and Chancellor's office have been involved in defining the project details. Marj Issapour, Renewable Energy and Sustainability Center Director, and Dominic Esposito, Director of Sponsored Programs Administration, are developing programs that are to be offered here this summer. Stony Brook and Maritime are working on programs as well. Dr. Nader will put some details in writing and share for discussion at the April council meeting.

Dr. Nader said that in late January the SUNY Construction Fund informed us that the \$30 million project to renovate Roosevelt Hall has been approved. The Facilities staff has kept this project in the forefront and we were ready to take advantage of the opportunity it when presented itself. It will transform that part of campus.

Dr. Nader informed that students and staff with a regular on-campus presence are expected to test weekly via COVID pooled saliva testing. There has been a high level of compliance from students. Health and Wellness has administered over 3000 tests since February 1 which yielded only 6 positive cases. Dental Hygiene and Biology staff members have been testing employees in the evenings.

A Carmencement has been recommended by the Commencement Committee for May 2021. Plans to enhance what was done in June are underway and Student Affairs will reach out to seniors to set up meetings for feedback and suggestions.

The Middle States self-study is complete, Carolyn will send the document electronically to council members. The team chair and evaluation committee will attend a remote campus visit which will begin the evening of April 18.

Dr. Joseph reported that summer course instruction will continue in online, traditional hybrid, and in-person formats. The plan for fall 2021 is to offer at least 75% of course sections in-person. Distancing protocols may present issues with having enough classroom space. We will implement an A/B weekly schedule alternating use of livestream technology and in-person instruction. Use of unconventional space like the ballroom and conference rooms will help increase the student population on campus. Dr. Makarowitz, Presiding Officer of the Faculty, suggested investing in technology for instructors that would enable use of whiteboards and blackboards to enhance interaction with students. Pete Grizzaffi, IT Director, said the department has purchased high-definition wide-angle cameras so that professors can move around a 12 ft. radius. Council member Jim Durant asked council member Card about how K-12 schools are handling these challenges. Dr. Card said his district rotates in-person and at-home instruction for students. Other issues such as younger students not being able to self-regulate and older students showing up but tuning out are common. He added that some have benefited from the experience but he is hopeful for a return to full in-person learning in the fall. The SED may require a remote option for families who choose not to send their children to school. Ms. Ferrell inquired if SUNY has made recommendations for fall 2021. Dr. Nader replied that we are awaiting their guidance, as numbers of COVID cases decline, criteria may be relaxed. For example, outdoor sports will be played this spring. Instructions will be communicated to SUNY from State of New York and the Dept. of Health. Council member Caroleo asked if there is pressure to decrease tuition due to virtual learning. Dr. Nader responded that our tuition has been held flat and fees have been reduced. We will not raise room rates for residential students.

SGA Update Council student representative, Natalie Rodgers, is also SGA president. She earned a BA in Visual Communications at FSC and now is pursuing a certificate in Computer Systems Technology with a

focus on web development. Ms. Rodgers reported that last semester the SGA focused on getting students familiar with distance learning. This semester their goal is to get students engaged remotely by humanizing digital space. She added that the overall student experience is affected by the sense of community, the opportunity to communicate and connect with peers, and academic success. Students who are overwhelmed by coursework or who are feeling alone will be less likely to become involved in class, a club, or activity. The SGA feels the learning experience can be improved by making certain features on blackboard mandatory for professors to use. For example, posting of grades and assignment deadlines on Blackboard so that students can access track their progress would be beneficial. After a meeting with campus administration, a letter was sent to faculty advocating for these points. Ms. Rodgers suggested that student committees be publicized and made easily accessible on the website. Meeting minutes should be made available to the student body as these committees make many decisions on behalf of students. The SGA will use Instagram to advocate for utilization of services, such as mental health services from student to student. Social media will be utilized to inspire students by posting about influential people from diverse backgrounds. Due to Farmingdale's diverse population, Programs on implicit bias training should be offered to faculty and staff. The SGA would also like to see an Ombudsmen Office established that would provide a safe space to resolve conflicts, refer students to information, offer workshops to improve skills to empower students, and provide feedback to administration about trends. Chair Williams inquired if the SGA offers webinars and noted that many top presenters are now available virtually. Ms. Rodgers responded that SGA supports and advertises what Student Activities and other areas on campus are offering. Chair Williams shared that she will attend the NYS Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislators caucus where Assembly Member Clyde Vanel, a Farmingdale graduate and previous SGA president, will be a presenter.

Foundation /Alumni recent developments VP Matt Colson said the Office of Development and Engagement has clarified its identity as a department that operates with and on behalf of the Farmingdale Foundation and Alumni Association. The annual report explains what philanthropy has accomplished at FSC and will be shared with the council via email. The virtual gala raised \$100,000 and the annual fund has raised \$30,000 of unrestricted funds which is critical to meeting needs of the College. There will be another direct mailing campaign in March that will focus on reactivating past donors. FSC's second largest major gift (\$500,000) was received from Murray Pasternack for scholarships in engineering. Mr. Colson expects to roll out a planned giving program, a donor appreciation event is planned, and other events connecting alumni with faculty and students in the various schools are scheduled.

Chair Williams entertained a motion to move into executive session. Mr. Caroleo made the motion, Mr. Durant seconded. Chair Williams recessed the general session meeting will reconvene.

**Motion carried.**

The group returned to the regular meeting. Dr. Nader asked for a motion for the College Council to move to consider renaming Conklin Hall in honor of a LI regional civil rights leader. Chair Williams entertained a motion, Mr. Sweeney moved, and Mr. Durant seconded the motion.

**Motion approved.**

Budget and Enrollment VP Calabria reported that we are at 99% of target enrollment for this spring and 91% year-to-date for fall applications compared to last year. We compare favorably to other tech schools, some of which are down over 30% in applications; at 8.7% we have one of the smallest

decreases in all of SUNY. Mr. Calabria said that as he moves to his retirement he feels confident that FSC will continue to have strong enrollment in the future. He thanked the College Council for their support and all wished him well in his retirement.

VP O'Connor stated that overall the COVID response effort has cost FSC \$5.2 million. NYS cut 20% of the funding budgeted for 2020, and campuses paid for 75% of the costs of university-wide programs. We anticipate another 20% reduction in this year's budget and were asked to hold employment numbers and salary expense consistent with April 1, 2020. We anticipate receipt of \$12 million in funds from the COVID Relief Act. If the State budget benefits from the federal relief package, the reduction of funds last year and this year could be restored to campuses. Overall our financial outlook is promising, and our cash reserves are strong. Chair Williams asked about the early retirement announcement, to which Mr. O'Connor replied that it is a local incentive program that will allow our employees to transition into retirement if they wish. Dr. Nader wanted to make clear that we do not have the latitude to spend the cash reserves we have. He stated that we are backfilling positions but have done little hiring for new positions, which is due to COVID and the State and University financial situations. Ms. Ferrell asked about the number of staff members currently on campus. Dr. Nader said only a few hundred essential and tier one employees have a regular on campus presence. Mr. O'Connor added that we are authorized to have employees work remotely into May, and if they can do so effectively we want to protect them and encourage them to continue. As the vaccine becomes more available SUNY may encourage faculty and staff to get vaccinated. Dr. Card reported that the Governor has required his district to report the number of teachers vaccinated, and K-12 teachers now are able to receive vaccines at local hospitals. Mr. Durant asked how the federal stimulus money will be received and Mr. O'Connor replied that this is uncertain. CARES funds came directly to the campus from US Dept. of Education. If funds go to system administration first, they can be easily distributed to us.

With no additional business to discuss Chair Williams asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Sweeney made the motion and it was seconded.

**Meeting adjourned** at 11:22am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Fedder

*Approved April 7, 2020*