

FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE  
College Council Meeting - In person Quintyne Hall room 100 or  
Virtual via TEAMS  
November 19, 2025

Councilmembers present in person: Patricia Hill Williams, Paul Caroleo, Robert Sweeney, James Durant  
Randi Shubin Dresner, Michelle Torres

Virtual Attendees: Ralia Polechronis, David Curry

Excused absences: James Durant

College Administration: Robert Prezant, Sean Lane, Rohan Howell, Chris Maio, Ronald Jackson, Kim Nyoni,  
Carolyn Fedder

Guests: Amanda Cataldo, Lloyd Makarowitz, Brett Southard

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. She asked if all had reviewed the minutes from September 10 meeting and if any corrections were needed. As there were none, she requested a motion to accept the minutes. Councilmember Sweeney made a motion and Councilmember Caroleo seconded.

**Motion carried.**

**Chair's report:** Chair Williams said she was proud to have both President Prezant and former FSC President Nader beside her at the ACT Conference held in Albany. She also appreciated Councilmember Sweeney's attendance and support as she was re-elected ACT President. The 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Conference had representation from 44 of the 64 SUNY campuses. Chancellor King did a presentation and spoke about expanding the role of councilmembers and their importance in sharing information and advocating on behalf of SUNY. Dr. Williams thought that there was excellent conversation among the participants and informative workshops and panelists that shared information on topics such as challenges facing education and on AI in the classroom. FSC student, Aliyah Khan, was awarded the ACT scholarship. One topic of conversation at the conference was about having two student members on college councils because student representatives are typically seniors who leave after their one-year term. Adding a student who is not a senior would allow them to be familiar with rules and procedures and prepared to step right into the position in their second year.

**President's Report:** President Prezant reported that he was pleased to attend the ACT Conference and accept the scholarship award for Aliyah. Important information was exchanged about legal issues, finances, and the Academic Momentum initiative. He also attended the AASCU Conference in Tennessee which focused on many of the federal issues affecting campuses right now. He welcomed Kim Nyoni, new VP for Development and Alumni Engagement, who came from the University at Buffalo. Dr. Prezant said the President's Gala had 270 attendees. Our largest donor, Murray Pasternack announced a matching gift challenge up to \$500,000. The corporate and community advisory boards had their first meetings. President Prezant said he was open to bringing items for discussion to these groups when they next meet in February. He reminded that he will be the conduit between the advisory boards and the College Council and report back after each meeting. The President's Student Leadership Council, composed of ten exceptional students, also met. Chancellor King visited campus during Hispanic Heritage month. He spoke at the ACE Event which celebrated the expansion of the program, and had a discussion with students, including Michelle Torres, student representative on the Council.

Michelle commented that they spoke about the opportunities Farmingdale holds for students and other things that could be brought to campus to help students. The Chancellor also visited some of our laboratories to hear about research projects going on here. President Prezant attended the Skyline Conference at Manhattanville University. Dues, ticket pricing, fiscal management, enforcement, compliance and conference identity were topics of discussion. The conference will be using Huddle streaming service with audio for the finals and semi-final games. The Commissioner, Melissa Reilly, will be visiting FSC in the spring. Island Harvest and LI Cares did a food distribution on campus for federal employee households. The American Heart Association along with Webster Bank contributed a CPR kiosk that is housed in Nold Gymnasium. Farmingdale had a table at the Melville Chamber of Commerce Business Expo. Dr. Prezant reported that the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council has partnered with New Lab to create a \$50M proposal for a facility to serve as a corridor for LI manufacturers, inventors and startups to innovate, develop and build. He reminded that the Legislative Breakfast will be held on January 30 at 8:30am. Also, FSC will host a Long Island College Presidents Panel addressing leadership and challenging times for higher education on March 4 at 10:00am.

President Prezant said that our enrollment numbers are up by 80 students over last spring. The year-to-year enrollment across SUNY tech schools is up 1.7%, with FSC up 1%. Numbers of international students are down across SUNY. Dr. Prezant shared a Campus Financial Risk Accountability Ratings document that shows FSC to be financially stable and strong.

Councilmember Curry was happy to inform the group that he and his family attended an Open House at FSC recently and had a great experience. They learned a lot and got all the information they needed from our knowledgeable staff. He was proud to tour buildings and see the construction projects that have been completed around campus.

**Vision and Plans for Development & Alumni Engagement:** VP Nyoni said he is excited to be working to support Farmingdale and the population that it serves. He believes that higher education can impact lives and facilitate social mobility and that philanthropy is a very important part of that. To provide our students with opportunities resources are needed. A culture of philanthropy must be built. Our internal constituents (deans and faculty) need to be part of what we do to raise funds. External constituents (alumni, friends, corporations, community) must be convinced that Farmingdale has an important place on Long Island. Our brand has to be maximized so that we can broaden our base of support. VP Nyoni will work with academic leadership to determine what we do best and leverage that to drive big philanthropy, interdisciplinary initiatives and capital projects. He has a 10-year plan to get the Foundation's assets to \$100M by growing discretionary funding, estate gifts and planned giving. He added that all members of the campus play a role in Development and he is confident that these goals can be met. President Prezant reinforced the fact the corporate and community boards were formed to quickly develop significant partnerships to make our needs known serve their needs as well.

**SUNY's Academic Momentum Campaign:** Provost Lane explained that this initiative is a system-wide effort to improve retention and graduation rates. FSC received campus goals from SUNY in October. We were already moving towards many of them. The Academic Momentum Committee compiled data from across campus using surveys to identify challenges to our students. Now they are working on plans to address them. A draft plan is due by February 5. The initiatives will focus on the fall 2026 first-time freshman cohort. Provost Lane shared the current and target graduation rates for our associate's and bachelor's degrees. Some statistics are misleading, for example, students who transition from an associate to a bachelor's level major were not counted. One way

to increase graduation rates is to ensure that students take a full load of credits in their first year. As the majority of our students are commuters and working, good advising and conversations about time management are crucial. Gateway courses like first year English and Math are good indicators of how students are doing. Support courses have been put in place so that students can move on to start completing their major. Ensuring FAFSA completions is another initiative that is important so that students receive the financial aid they need. Provost Lane said that he wants to build a culture of solving problems and improving the student experience at Farmingdale. A Clear the Path team of operational leaders has been created to identify significant issues that impede our students. They are surveying faculty, students, and parents and have been given the power to rapidly change things that are slowing our students down or decreasing graduation rates. President Prezant said that he recently saw the CEO of Zwanger-Pesiri at an event and conversations about our collaboration will hopefully start up again.

**ACT Handbook:** President Prezant said after the ACT Conference he reviewed the ACT handbook (last revised in 2022). He asked if there were any changes the Council would like to see in it, and highlighted the terms of office and the fact that few reappointments and new appointments have been made by the Governor. There has been some movement on this by SUNY Government Relations. We have the opportunity to make recommendations so now is the time to think about and suggest qualified candidates. The duties listed in the booklet include leading presidential searches, developing town/gown relationships and advisory responsibilities in major plans for facilities and student life. Councilmembers are expected to be advocates for their institution and SUNY generally. Dr. Prezant said that there will be discussion about student housing at the next Council meeting.

**Other Business:** Councilmember Durant asked about the progress of the lacrosse land lease deal. President Prezant believes that we received clearance from Albany and the project is out for bid. He will have VP O'Connor confirm details at the next Council meeting. The President informed that there has been no movement on getting renovations done in Hooper Hall. The LIEOC is operating out of their Brentwood location and one campus building near the golf range. Other options are being explored.

Chair Williams asked all members to review the ACT handbook and keep abreast of what is going on SUNY-wide. There is much discussion about the budget and changes in higher education right now. Webinars are offered to support councilmembers in their roles, including sessions hosted by the Office of General Counsel.

Councilmember Dresner said that Dr. Prezant moderated Island Harvest's special town hall talk on September 29. Island Harvest's larger contributors and board members, elected officials, and FSC staff participated. Attendees discussed how changes in federal funding are impacting food insecurity, healthcare, and education. Island Harvest and Farmingdale State College serve similar populations.

As there was no other business Chair Williams entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Sweeney made a motion and Councilmember Durant seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Fedder

***Approved February 11, 2026***

