

Campus Safety Committee Meeting *Immediate Convening”

Meeting Date: 2/24/22 @ 1:00pm

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Chief Daniel Daugherty
Coryn Voels
John Gross
David Vitt
Svetlana Tlupova
Jeanne Radigan
Brian Kelly
Deanna Devlin
Emily Fogarty
Justina Geremia
Lashonda Boggan
Andrea Xu
Christine Corio
Alireza Dalili

Guest Speakers:

President Nader
Sr. VP and Provost Laura Joseph

An Immediate convening of the Campus Safety Committee was called into session by President Nader to discuss possible changes to the SUNY policy in regards to Covid Restrictions.

President Nader is scheduled to present to FEC tomorrow (2/25/22), and would like to obtain feedback/thoughts from the members of our committee before that meeting.

President Nader informs the committee that yesterday (2/23/22), SUNY revised Covid policies for the remainder of the Spring 2022 semester, to remove masks from SUNY college campuses.

- Sr. VP Laura Joseph and President Nader will both meet with the FEC.
- Campuses may move to an indoor mask option.
- The President spoke with the Dept of Health and there are no objections to removing masks.
- President Naders opinion is that Farmingdale remove the masks campus wide.
- The Covid positivity rate is 0.0% for the last 7 days. Less then .1% from 14 days.
- 99% vaccination rate amongst students- The other 1% test weekly.
- The vaccine is not mandatory for staff and the 14 day average is 0.
- February 15th was the last positive student case that Farmingdale was informed about.
- There has been some friction amongst students, especially when there are large congregations/ events.

President Nader is looking for feedback/ suggestions/ questions from the Safety Committee.

VP Laura Joseph informed the committee that she is concerned with protecting both faculty/ students and that Spring break is approaching and needs to be considered in the decision.

President Bader discussed the option of accelerating testing if the decision is to remove masks.

The Meeting opened to questions/concerns/opinions committee members had:

Professor David Vitt asked if teachers would have any discretion when it comes to enforcing masks in the classrooms, etc.

President Nader informed the committee that it would not be up to faculty/staff. That the decision to remove masks would be Universal. However, any individual that would want to wear a mask can continue to do so.

Jeanne Radigan Aviation Chair voiced her opinion in that the mask mandate remain in place and that The Aviation faculty members feel the same. They would like the mask mandate to remain in place at least through the Spring semester.

Professor John Gross asked what the time line for removing the masks would be.

President Nader informed the committee that it would be ASAP. It would be as soon as next week and that other campuses have already gone ahead with removing masks.

Professor Deanna Devlin asked if there was a protocol in place where the masks would become mandatory again depending on the positivity rate/ if the number of positive cases begin to climb.

President Nader informed the committee that a policy could be discussed with campus Health. 5% was the percentage used over the last few months.

LaShonda Boggan Residence Life Director informed the committee that visitation in the dorms was to be reinstated next Monday and is concerned with how that will affect cases/ Residents.

President Nader responded that if their were to be an increase in cases that we would monitor the situation and assess.

Professor John gross asked if there would be any distinction between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

President Nader told the committee that there was no way to disclose those individuals- Privacy laws, and that hopefully those few individuals will continue to wear their masks if the mask mandate is lifted.

Jeanne Radigan discussed with the committee that not everyone is getting tested on campus and that could lead to inaccurate numbers of positive cases. Asked if there was any way to keep the mask mandate just in classrooms.

President Nader discussed that the policy could state that masks must be worn in classrooms. It is a possibility.

- Jeanne asked to put this option forward as a motion.

Chief Daugherty asked Alexis, a student committee member, had an opinion, or any feedback regarding the mask policy.

Alexis informed the committee that professors rarely wear mask in class currently. The students feel the masks are constricting and that no one is wearing the mask correctly. Alexis agrees to remove the masks.

President Nader has heard from various sources that the faculty along with the students are not wearing the masks correctly.

Professor Brian Kelly voiced his opinion of this decision not being centered around politics and that it should only be about campus safety. Brian expressed that the college needs to move forward and he supports the option.

Professor David Vitt expressed his concern over wearing masks in class, in which he feels does not make sense to do. Hallways, stairways, elevators are sometimes more crowded than a classroom.

Professor John Gross asked again if it was possible for it to be up to the teachers at the professors discretion.

President Nader said once again that leaving it up to the teachers discretion was not an option.

Justina Geremia from Internal Control discussed that leaving the option of masks up to the staff could cause issues such as bullying, etc.

Chief Daugherty informs the committee that he is and has been pro masks since the beginning. But seeing that numbers are low and the lowest they have been it's the best time to remove the masks. If we as society are waiting for covid to disappear completely that chances are extremely slim that that is ever going to happen.

Professor Svetlana Tlupova asked if it was possible, that if we change the mask policy, that we could lose students?

President Nader said that it would be extremely unlikely but we do not have any data. The percentage of students wanting to be on campus was overwhelming in the last survey that was emailed out. Students want to be on campus.

Justina asked if there would be refunds available to those students who decide not to come back due to the change in the mask policy.

President Nader answered that it would be possible to get those individuals refunds.

Professor Emily Foggarty asked President Nader if it was possible to obtain air purifiers/ air filtration systems, or any way to increase the indoor air quality in the buildings on campus.

President Nader informed the committee that the buildings on campus can not be retrofitted to handle new air filtration systems. However, the air quality is monitored and tested regularly.

The President concluded the meeting by thanking the Campus Safety committee and he will meet and discuss with the FEC tomorrow. Unsure of what the final decision regarding mask mandates will be.

Meeting Concluded.

An Email with a doodle poll will go out to the committee members to schedule the next campus safety meeting sometime during the week of March 7th 2022.