

**SUNY OLD WESTBURY COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: April 23, 2021

Meeting Time: 12:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting, conducted via Zoom

<b>Attendance Appointed Members of the College Council:</b>	<b>Representatives of the College:</b>	
Ms. Mili Makhijani, Esq. (Chair)	Dr. Timothy E. Sams	Dr. Magdy Shady
Ms. Melissa Archbold	Dr. Duncan Quarless	Mr. Usama Shaikh
Dr. Phillip E. Elliott	Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson	Dr. Diana Sukhram
Ms. Cania Infante	Mr. Randy Daniels	Ms. Lisandra Ramos
Ms. Martha Maffei	Mr. Len Davis	Ms. Martha Santana
Ms. Theresa A. Regnante	Dr. Raj Devasagayam	Ms. Jillian Nissen
Mr. Scott Reich	Dr. Amanda Frisken	
Mr. Kalief Metellus *Student Representative	Dr. Barbara Hillery	
	Dr. Michael Kavic	
	Mr. William Kimmins	
	Mr. Michael Kinane	
	Ms. Claudia Marin Andrade	

**I. Chair Welcome, *Chair Makhijani***

Chair Makhijani opened the meeting at 12:35 pm. Upon the motion of Mr. Reich and a second by Ms. Infante, Council approved by unanimous vote the minutes of the February 26, 2021 Council meeting.

Mr. Reich expressed his gratitude to Dr. Sams for the message to the campus with regard to the Chauvin Verdict. Dr. Sams shared there were 6 events planned in advance in anticipation of the moment to respond to the range of feelings and emotions to that one verdict. He thanked the many organizers many of whom were on the screen.

**II. Report from the President, *Dr. Timothy E. Sams***

***COVID-19:***

- Our response to COVID, as well as our preparation activity to COVID is being led by our COVID response team that has done an outstanding job.
- Our faculty has done a great job in instructional delivery, demonstrating flexibility throughout the last year around academics.
- We have not received a lot of complaints around faculty instruction on our campus, it is a testament to the degree to which our faculty take instruction seriously. And in spite of the

difficulties associated with being flexible and moving from the traditional in class setting to full online instruction virtual instruction, they have done it.

- Instruction will end formally around May 5 and finals week will begin on May 13, running through May 19.
- There are approximately 1500 students from across the state who signed a letter to the Chancellor asking for a break -- an imminent break. In other words, our students across the system are saying they are exhausted at the same time that we are about to go into finals. The Chancellor is taking this request seriously.
- The campus' COVID positivity rate for the semester thus far is 0.36, which equates to 12 cases out of over 3200 tests.
- We have not gotten clear guidance from the SUNY system on COVID requirements, expectations, limitations, etc. We don't have information that will at this point speak to issues like social distancing, testing volume, and more for either summer or fall.
- Until we get that guidance, the approach we are taking is a fairly simple and straight headed one. We are making sure that we are prepared to be at 100 % capacity in the fall, 50% and remote once again. We also are making sure that we have the flexibility to move both faculty staff as well as students on campus quickly to 50%.
- Once the guidance comes our way, we will be offering housing in the fall, same outline, well 100% 50% and 0%.
- Student Activities have some framing that allows us to even think about student engagement in the largest outdoor setting you can have. If we are willing to check people's temperatures and verify that they've been tested within a framework or that they have been vaccinated, we can have events that will host 500 outside. And that slides all the way to the most conservative being 100 inside without that requirement, and there's a lot of variation in between.

***State Budget and College Finances:***

- \$400 million reduction was avoided for the SUNY system in the State budget; direct state support increased by \$3.7 million to \$1.47 billion overall funding for state operations. Funding for state-operated campuses was flat from last year and Capital Program funding increased by \$100M from last year.
- Legislation was approved that will completely eliminate the TAP gap by 2024/ 25. The max TAP award will increase by \$500, from \$5100 to a little over \$5500.
- EOP and EOC are receiving a 20% increase which Dr. Sams noted was a statement about the priority that the state holds around the part of its mission that calls for access and extending opportunities.
- COVID Federal funding,
  - **Cares Act student award:** All money has been disbursed.
    - \$2.7 million has been given directly to students and \$5,000 remains.
    - \$2.7 million in institutional aid has been expended.
  - **MSI (minority serving institution award)** roughly \$425,000 awarded with just more than half having been dispersed; another \$190,000 remains to be dispersed.
  - **CRSSA** student awards is \$2.7 million, only roughly 500,000 remain to be dispersed.
    - CRSSA Institutional funding, which is just under \$7 million, was received this week. Still awaiting SUNY guidance on how it can be used.

- **The American Rescue Plan** provides a student award amount of \$8.2 million and institutional funding of another \$8.2 million. No funding yet provided to campus and no guidelines for use provided to date.
- Four priorities outlined for the remaining funds:
  - Infrastructure and Resilience (Technology)
  - Enrollment Management
  - Middle States Response
  - Financial Reserves

***Commencement:***

- Guidance from the State and SUNY was just released with regard to commencement.
- The College has roughly 1,400 candidates apply for graduation -- the most in the college's history.
- There will be both a virtual commencement and in-person recognition ceremonies.
  - The virtual piece will be the more formal component and the filming of that is taking place now. Graduates have already received information about it.
  - 14 small format recognition ceremonies will be held, as the guidelines dictate to us that we can only have 100 people at a time inside if we choose to waive vaccination and testing requirements.

***Accolades:***

- 2021 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence:
  - Kiana Lee, 2020
  - Kalief Metellus
- Association of Certified fraud Examiners, Ritchie-Jennings Memorial Scholarship:
  - Diana Muyibi, forensic accounting student and a graduate student (\$10,000 prize)
- SGA Awards (4 additional awards were given during the virtual event)
  - Kalief Metellus
- Distinguished Service Professor by SUNY
  - Dr. Fred Millan was nominated and provided the rank of distinguished service Professor by SUNY as well. And this rank is awarded to those who have demonstrated substantial distinguished service not only to the campus, but also the system, the community region, and the state. And he's been at our college since 1990.

***Vision (PowerPoint presentation)***

- Dr. Sams shared an adaptation of a presentation made to faculty and staff to discuss what he heard during his first 100 days and to talk about accreditation. He reviewed his transition to campus and his work with his Transition Team, which helped him better understand the history and culture of the College as well as the concerns and immense opportunities ahead. Conversations ongoing with student leaders, the alumni body, various campus leaders, and community members across the campus.
- He reviewed his thoughts about the higher education landscape and included his approach to:
  - Governance

- Transparency
- Brand development
- Financial stability
- Alumni Engagement
- Assessment

### **Questions**

- Ms. Regnante asked about the American Rescue Plan funding, whether the College had a policy related to contingency cash, and what amount of operating funds OW would need to have on hand at any given time?
  - Dr. Sams stated OW doesn't have a policy of cash on hand as an institution. Because of the precarious nature of the budget over the past year, College reserves functioned as "contingency cash" and were significantly diminished. Dr. Sams went on to share that without those reserves, OW would have been dealing with little or no funding from a cash on hand standpoint.
  - Ms. Regnante requested that Len be invited to the next meeting to get a greater understanding of how much money was in the reserves prior to the pandemic and what that is currently and what that has to be, so OW could potentially mark some of the \$16 million for some sustainability.
- Ms. Regnante asked whether any of the American Rescue Plan funding could be used to enhance the development department at Old Westbury.
  - Dr. Sams responded generally with regard to the federal money could be used for COVID readiness. Making sure we are stocked with PPE, and the temporary staff related to that, not to boost our FTE numbers. Many schools would like to use that money for salary, but we will first need to hire the Vice President of Advancement and then it will be their responsibility to hire the rest.
- Dr. Shady asked if monies would be given by check, a grant or tuition payment.
  - Dr. Sams stated students would receive checks or visa credit cards.
- Dr. Elliott stated that it is a best practice for not-for-profits to have 10% of the budget for **non-**recurring costs.
  - Dr. Sams stated that OW has identified approximately \$1.7 million that can be sent back to the reserves based upon the guidance from SUNY thus far, while still waiting for the guidance for roughly \$8 million that OW is still waiting to receive.

### ***Middle States:***

- President Sams reported on the March visit by a review team from the Middle State Commission on Higher Education. The team was comprised of reviewers who are peer evaluators. Having reviewed the Institutional Self-Study developed by the College over the prior two years, the reviewers during the visit ask for further documentation and conduct interviews to clarify and support what they find in the self-study.
- The Review Team then creates a report based around the seven standards Middle States prescribes:

- Standard 1 focuses on the mission and goals of the institution and how aligned our policies, institutional behavior, curricular offerings and design are with your mission and goal.
  - Standard 2 is ethics and integrity.
  - Standard 3 is the design and delivery of student learning experience for support for student experience.
  - Standard 5 is educational effective assessment, your ability to measure your efficacy, your effectiveness.
  - Standard 6 is planning resources, institutional improvement.
  - Standard 7 is governance, leadership, and administration.
- The College has received a draft of the Team Report and must craft a reply by next Tuesday for submission to Middle States. Middle States will ultimately determine whether accreditation is reaffirmed and whether any conditions, or even probation, might be required.
    - Probation would be is a very highly monitored process. But essentially what it means is that you are going to be subject to a higher level of scrutiny.
    - If not, they may consider a visit to reassess specific areas in 2 years.
  - In its draft report, the Review Team cited as its primary concern what it considered major weaknesses in the College's assessment across a broad range of areas, including most notably learning outcomes.
    - Ms. Makhijani interjected to share that she had a one-on-one meeting with the chair of the Middle States review committee, Dr. Darlene Smith, to talk about issues outside of what was in the Middle States self-study report. Ms. Makhijani commended the roll out of the President's vision during the Middle States visit and the recent changes that impacted the outcome in the report, which she felt represented OW fairly.
    - Ms. Archbold shared that she had participated in the initial Middle States interview between a representative and Dr. Mignone, the former acting Council chair, two years ago. The Middle States representative at that time posed similar questions about the College Council's interactions with the college, and there were a couple of suggestions that were made then and she was not sure if there was any implementation or follow up and she wanted to make a notation of that.
    - Ms. Makhijani stated that the Middle States trusted that what was suggested was implemented and since there was no interim visit, or interim follow up until now.
  - Ms. Santana was asked by Dr. Sams to discuss how assessment was critiqued in the Team Report and then to review how the College's response is being crafted, which he noted would illustrate how thorough and thoughtful the College was being as it moves forward around measuring its efficacy.

### ***Middle States Response***

- The institutional response to the Middle States evaluation team after receiving the report was prepared in about four weeks. The framework used was an abbreviated version of the Performance Plan to Budget process Dr. Sams hopes to bring to strategic budgeting for the campus. Requests for Proposal were solicited from all Cabinet members and others on campus in response to each of the 10 recommendations and 23 pieces of collegial advice received. More than 55 RFPs were received, reviewed and consolidated

into four overarching RFPs that address all the recommendations and a majority of the collegial advice given.

- From those four RFPs, we created four action plans along with the progress diagrams that illustrate the implementation of those plans. A written response was crafted from the action plans, which is the actual document that will be sent to Middle States.
  - Ms. Makhijani commended the work that went into writing the response and to the Co-Chairs of the OW Middle States committee.

### **III. Ideas from the last meeting, *Chair Makhijani***

- There will subcommittee meetings based on the ideas brought forth during the last meeting by the College Council. Ms. Makhijani, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Sams to have a separate meeting to create subcommittees featuring college council members. Those groups will also include administrators and/or faculty members to collaborate on the ideas and opportunities presented at the last meeting.
  - The planning meeting will be set up with Dr. Robinson and Dr. Sams very soon, once the Middle States response is complete.
- Ms. Makhijani read an excerpt from a letter from the Chancellor Award to Kalief Metellus for his hard work and academic excellence.
- There's a proposed resolution to change the name of the faculty Judicial Committee. And initially, that resolution was going to be presented here for the college council to vote. But in thinking about it, the College Council has regulatory power over the student code of conduct, not over faculty and the naming of faculty committees.
  - Ms. Nissen spoke about the FJC's formation in consultation with the college council and how they very much appreciate the role of the council played in forming this committee, and they are seeking to continue that relationship, which is why we're bringing the resolution before the Senate, and the proposed name changes to the faculty Student Conduct Committee, which would be in line with changes that have already occurred at Old Westbury with the change to the Office of Student Conduct.
- At this time, Ms. Makhijani asked council members to simply show verbal support. The reason this has come to the council is that the name of the committee was created in consultation with the council 14 to 15 years ago.

### **IV. Faculty Senate Report**

- Dr. Kavic shared the faculty's interest in advancing academic offerings in a way that is responsive to the environment on Long Island.
  - Advancing technology and advancing opportunities are changing the landscape of the economy and changing the landscape of the careers that students are going to be interested in.
  - Long Island is going to have off of its coast, the largest wind farm in the entire nation.
  - A number of wind farms are being constructed up and down the East Coast. And it was featured prominently in the recent New York state budget and Farmingdale and Stony Brook have pursued

wind farm Institute. They received \$20 million in the last New York state budget are related to this.

- Faculty Senate has been engaging with the president's office and the provosts' to try to see what role Old Westbury can play and how we can be engaging with this tremendous opportunity.
- Brookhaven National Lab won a very competitive process to get a new facility on, it's going to be built as a multimillion-dollar facility.
- Faculty Senate has been having fruitful discussions with the president and with academic affairs and the provost, about the idea of really pushing in the direction of making us a center for STEM, but then addresses students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM and really being a leader in that area.
- There has been tremendous leadership, as everyone has heard from the President, in particular, a lot of emphasis on the residential college model.
- Priority areas that Faculty Governance is focused on and points of engagement going forward:
  - Strategic planning to budget process
    - Codified in the bylaws of the Faculty Senate.
    - Codifying strategic planning and the SPAARC committee, along with an active Budget Committee. This is being to support and enhance and enable the process that the President is trying to lead.
  - Assessment was a top priority and a major concern in the Middle States report.
    - Governance is now pushing to take an active role, a supportive role in the assessment process, obviously with a huge emphasis on academic assessment, but also assessment of governance.
  - Stimulus funds, some as outlined by the President the College has already received. A key point raised by Dr. Kavic is regards the tremendous amount of federal funding and grants available for research related to institutional priorities. Governance is working to marshal the faculty to apply for those grants.
  - Faculty and Enrollment initiative to grow the role faculty play in engaging with our feeder schools and with potential students.
  - The Task Forces to Strengthen Full-time Faculty is having productive discussions about the policies needed to recruit top faculty, support top faculty and keep top faculty. Dr. Kavic and Dr. Hillery are co co-chairing that task force.
  - Enhancing STEM on the OW campus and integrating it into a residential college model is a growing priority.

## **V. Alumni Representative's Report:**

Mr. Chitty reported:

- The most recent annual meeting of the Alumni Association of SUNY Old Westbury was recently held and three new board members have been appointed.
- Strategic planning is underway for the Association and for its individual committees. Main goals include increasing collaboration with the College, especially with the Office of Alumni Affairs; reaching out more to the community at large; and connecting with the alumni and fundraising during COVID-19.
- Work was conducted with the SGA for the virtual awards ceremony held this week.

- Process leading to the winner of the annual MLK Award is complete. The 2021 winner is Kalief Metellus.
  - Ms. Makhijani thanked Mr. Chitty and invited him as part of the Alumni Association to be on one of the subcommittees.

**VI. The SGA Report:**

- Mr. Metellus reported that new SGA leadership is transitioning into position. The new team has met with Dr. Sams several times to discuss fall planning.
- Mr. Metellus thanked the College and Ms. Makhijani for making him a better leader

**VII. Open Meeting**

- Ms. Makhijani motioned to open the meeting for any comments from the public.
  - Ms. Regnante asked if Mr. Metellus had any future employment opportunities and Mr. Metellus shared he had applied to for a two-year student advocate fellow position with SUNY.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Metellus, and seconded by Dr. Elliot.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Submitted by:



Lisandra Ramos  
Executive Assistant to the President, SUNY Old Westbury