

SUNY OLD WESTBURY SUNY OLD WESTBURY COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: December 15, 2023

Meeting Time: 12:30 PM

Location: Student Union Multipurpose Room C and Zoom

Present from the College Council:	Chair Mili Makhijani, Ms. Melissa Archbold, Dr. Phillip E. Elliott, Dr. Nicolette Fiore-Lopez, Hon. William A. Hohauser, Ms. Martha Maffei, Ms. Theresa A. Regnante, Ms. Amira
Representatives of the College:	Crystal T. Richardson, Mr. Scott D. Reich President Timothy E. Sams, Dr. Kyle Anderson (via Zoom), Dr. Ed Bever, Dr. Randall M-J Edouard, Dr. Dorothy Escribano, Ms. Teseria Bryant Ezzell, Ms. Denee Jenkins, Ms. Lisandra Ramos, Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson, Ms. Angela Wambugu Cobb, Dr. Cheryl A. Wilson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mili Makhijani called the College Council meeting to order at 12:43 p.m. on Friday, December 15, 2023.

Acknowledging that everyone received a copy of the September 29, 2023, College Council meeting minutes, the Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Phillip Elliott motioned to accept, seconded by Mr. Scott Reich. The Council approved the by unanimous vote the minutes.

Acknowledging that everyone received a copy of the October 27, 2023, College Council meeting minutes, the Chair proposed the following amendment "In response to the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack. President Sams issued two successive messages to the campus community. Two council members that were deeply concerned about those messages, Council Member Hohauser and Council Member Reich, elected to issue two responsive statements thereto. Thereafter Mr. Reich read Council Member Hohauser's statement into the record in his absence, and then Council Member Reich read his own statement into the record. The President's messages, along with Council Member Hohauser's and Council Member Reich's statements can be found in appendices A, B, C and D."

Ms. Theresa Regnante motioned to accept, seconded by Ms. Melissa Archbold. The Council tabled the approval of the minutes at the next meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, DR. TIMOTHY E. SAMS

The President welcomed the College Council members and then started his formal report on the following items:

Budget Headwinds

The President shared that the university is doing well this year and is on target to break even. He then highlighted future budget and pending increaes over the next 5-6 years in the budget which include the following:

- 2024-2030, approx. \$11M increase in salaries (*required raises*)
- 2024-2030, approx. 200 student/year increase approx. 5400 in 2030

To maintain the trajectory of a 200-student increase per year, the university is focusing on the following five areas:

- Retention and Success
- Academic Programs
- Student Experience
- Admissions and Recruitment
- Add Value

Ms. Teseria Ezzell added that the new contract includes 3% increases (2% in years past). Additionally, the President added that even with the projected 4.3 billion budget shortfall, SUNY is asking for an \$80 million increase to cover these expenses.

Governor Hochul's Letter and Chancellor's Guidance

- The President shared that Governer Hochul, called for all SUNY school to ensure that their conduct policy addresses the following:
 - Calling for genocide is against conduct policy
 - Addressing such incidents in inherence with the NYS HR Laws & Title VI of OCR 1964
- Non-compliance with the above can lead to ineligibility to receive state and federal funds. The university response has been the following:
 - Ensuring full compliance
 - Monitoring the campus for violations while supporting students through challenging period-non hostile environment
 - Campus notification-early next week emphasizing the following:
 - Community standard
 - Zero-tolerance
 - Swift response & adjudication (appropriate)
 - Contacts

Dr. Anderson asked about the definition of a call for genocide because he is concerned it would become overly broad to encompass things that could be questionable. Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson answered by sharing insights from a discussion that was sponsored by SUNY's General Counsel, which included

- Title XI includes that the university has an obligation to create a non-hostile environment and to respect the rights of its students
- The first amendment has limitations, which include if someone states that they're going to harm someone, you cannot default to free speech
- If a student feels that they are unwelcome or it's a hostile environment, the university is obligated to act

Ms. Melissa Archbold asked about what the university does when it encounters a student that displays threats/signs of violence or harm against others. Dr. Jo-Ann Robinson stated that any statement that is made that creates a hostile environment or makes somebody feel uncomfortable, the university is obligated to investigate with the support of SUNY legal counsel. Dr. Edouard added the campus often brings in their professionals from the counseling center when they're dealing with cases that have mental health implications.

Various council members expressed a desire to be informed about serious incidents on campus, even if there is no action for them to take. Additionally, the liability insurance role of council members was discussed and clarified, stating that they are not employees but serve as advisory members under the governor's office.

Progress on Yearly Strategic Efforts

The President provided some updates and progress on two of the items that were introduced to the Council at the beginning of the semester. The updates included the following:

- Student Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation
 - The President reported a significant increase in applications for Fall 2023. There are 1,113 more applications, reflecting a 21.8% increase compared to the previous year.
 - The number of admitted students has also risen, with 1,028 more students admitted, representing a 38.8% increase from the previous year.
 - Top 5 Majors and Choice of Path Among Applicants:
 - Undeclared
 - Business Administration
 - Psychology
 - Biology
 - Computer Science
 - Approaches to Welcome on Campus:
 - Conducted 2 open houses, attracting a total of 1,300 visitors to campus during the semester
 - Held daily campus tours and offered Saturday tour options throughout the semester
 - Hosted 20 group tours
 - Conducted 160 high school visits, including onsite decision days

• Approaches to Reach Out:

- Attended 36 other events, including transfer fairs, college & career fairs, and counselor events
- Partnered with the SUNY NYC Recruitment Office to provide group tours to schools from NYC
- Hosted the Long Island Counselors Annual Conference (LICAC), bringing over 100 school counselors on campus
- Building Relationships with Future Students:
 - Set up visits to speak with accepted students at high schools.

The President noted that these efforts have resulted in recruitment numbers that surpass those of most other campuses across the state.

• Student Experience & Student-Centered Focus

- Dr. Randall Edouard began the discussion by highlighting collaborative efforts across various divisions to enhance the student experience. The following key points were addressed:
 - Transportation Assistance and Multicultural Center Events:
 - Collaborative efforts with the United Way provided Nice Bus Metro cards to the community, amounting to over \$2,000.
 - The Multicultural Center hosted 25 large events and numerous small events, engaging over 1,300 students.
 - Office of Students with Disabilities:
 - Welcomed a new testing coordinator, Rachel Friedman, who has been actively administering exams and accommodations.
 - Successfully secured grants worth \$250,000 to enhance support services for students with disabilities.

Career Planning Center:

- Relocated to the academic building, strategically meeting students where they are.
- Experienced a 78% increase in student appointments and contacts in September 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.
- Athletics and Student Engagement:
 - Athletics activities returned in person, witnessing increased student participation in games and intramural activities.
 - Regular events were organized, including badminton, flag football, soccer, walks, runs, and off-campus activities, contributing to a vibrant campus life.
- Health Services:
 - Expanded services and introduced gender-affirming care for transgender and gender nonconforming students, promoting inclusivity.

- Provided a safe and welcoming environment, resulting in increased access and engagement.
- Residential Life:
 - Welcomed students with a big barbecue, fostering a sense of belonging, particularly for first-year students.
 - Implemented residential colleges and living learning centers, with over 100 students participating.
 - Despite a waitlist, the fall semester saw 1,782 appointments, indicating increased student engagement and support.
- Dr. Edouard emphasized the collaborative nature of these efforts and their positive impact on student affairs. The division's commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and engagement was highlighted throughout the update.

The President then closed his report.

CHAIR'S REPORT/OLD BUSINESS, MS. MILI MAKHIJANI

Chair Mili Makhijani allocated the time for her report to the New Business segment of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Panther Community CARE Center

Mr. Jean Telfort presented an overview of the services provided by the Panther Community Care Center, highlighting key aspects of its approach and operations. The main points of the report are as follows:

- Introduction and Student-Centered Approach:
 - He, along with his colleague Jennifer, are licensed social workers that joined the team approximately four months ago.
 - Emphasized the student-centered approach to services at the Care Center, formerly referred to as the Food Pantry.

• Wellness Care and Advocacy:

- Introduced the concept of Wellness CARE, standing for "Consultation, Advocacy, Referral, and Education."
- Described the team's commitment to advocating for students and connecting them to internal services for their needs.
- Single Stac Platform and Beyond Financial Services:
 - Utilizes the Single Stac platform to identify additional needs beyond financial concerns.
 - Goes beyond financial services to address various needs, including mental health, wellness, and more.
- Food Pantry:

- Operates a food pantry on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from twelve to four, providing meals to students without turning anyone away.
- Located near the library, across from the mailroom, with microwaves available for student use.

• Commitment to Student Well-Being:

- Reiterated the commitment to supporting students and addressing their diverse needs.
- Encouraged engagement and communication to better serve the student community.

Ms. Regnante provided information regarding a two-one system operated by the United Way. She explained that dialing 211on any phone connects individuals to a federally licensed service that provides accurate referrals. This system covers the region and extends across the state.

Ms. Maffei highlighted the provision of free immigration services through SEPA mujer, emphasizing the commitment to bringing these crucial services to the local community.

Faculty Senate Chair Report

Dr. Kyle Anderson presented a detailed report on various matters impacting faculty, committees, and the strategic direction of SUNY Old Westbury. Key points discussed during the report are as follows:

• Budget Headwinds:

- Acknowledged the challenges posed by budget headwinds, emphasizing the impact on faculty and staff morale.
- Highlighted concerns about the size and pace of salary increases, which, when compared to inflation rates, are perceived as inadequate.

Committee Activities:

- Discussed ongoing efforts in drafting a faculty handbook to establish consistency and predictability in professional obligations.
- Consideration of creating a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to support professional development in pedagogy, with a current focus on the selection of the center's director.

Student Success Equity Intensive and Classroom Emphasis:

- Addressed concerns about the institutional transformation assessment survey, emphasizing the need for attention to classroom dynamics in discussions about student success.
- Advocated for a commitment to high standards of professionalism and academic excellence inside the classroom.

Faculty Morale Survey:

• Discussed the faculty morale survey in partnership with Indiana University, with results to be analyzed to determine priorities for advocacy.

Provost Search and Strategic Planning:

- Provided updates on the ongoing provost search, with the expectation of an announcement in early January.
- Discussed the establishment of subcommittees for strategic planning, expressing confidence in meeting the goal of finalizing the plan by the end of the spring semester.

Handling of Israeli-Palestinian Crisis:

- Commended the President for handling the Israeli-Palestinian crisis on campus with measured statements and support for educational initiatives.
- Emphasized the importance of engaging in conversations without succumbing to competing protests or hate speech.
- The Faculty Senate Chair expressed gratitude for the partnership with academic affairs, acknowledged challenges faced, and provided insights into key initiatives impacting faculty and the campus community.

Dr. Kyle Anderson closed his report.

Alumni Representative Report

Mr. Chitty was not present to report.

Student Government Association Report

Ms. Amira Richardson provided a comprehensive report on various activities and initiatives undertaken by the Student Government Association (SGA). The key points discussed are as follows:

- Advocacy, Outreach, and Entertainment for Advocacy:
 - Collaborated with Facilities to streamline the shuttle bus service, enhancing transportation for students.
 - Confirmed the spring launch of Hmart, addressing a repeated request from students.
 - Exploring the addition of a Dollar Tree stop to further cater to student needs.

• Outreach Efforts:

- Conducted DEI canvassing, surveys, and tabling to engage with the student community.
- Noted success in survey responses, with one in four students passing by the table having already participated.
- Ongoing efforts to fill vacancies for board positions and representatives.
- Internal Outreach and Leadership Development:
 - Emphasized the importance of internal outreach to ensure SGA serves as a valuable resource to all students.
 - Focus on bolstering the skills of student leaders on campus for effective representation.
 - Regular Council for Clubs and Organizations (CoCo) meetings held every other week, fostering engagement, information sharing, and team-building exercises.
- Entertainment and Successful Events:
 - Highlighted successful events contributing to a vibrant campus atmosphere.

- Emphasized the importance of entertainment as a means of fostering community and student engagement.
- The SGA President expressed excitement about ongoing efforts to fill vacancies, enhance internal outreach, and create a fulfilling experience for student leaders. The commitment to providing entertainment and addressing student needs through initiatives like shuttle bus improvements and new stops was evident throughout the report.
- Ms. Amira Richardson closed her report.

OPEN MEETING

Chair Mili Makhijani opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no comments from the floor, Chair Mili Makhijani asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Theresa A. Regnante moved the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Scott D. Reich seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 PM.

ACTION ITEMS

- Providing the council members with the most recent clergy report.
- Panther Community Care Center to explore the immigration services provided by SEPA mujer and the 211

Submitted by:

Benee Jenkins

Denee Jenkins Executive Assistant to the President, SUNY Old Westbury