



## **February 2023 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday, February 15, 2023

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Present:** Council Members:

RoAnn Destito-Chair, Darlene Burns, Mitchell Ford, Christopher Giruzzi, Nichole Hinman, Keith Levatino, Nicholas Rossi, and William Thickstun

Administration:

Nate Cady, Bonnie Davis, Mark Lemire, Marybeth Lyons, Andy Russell, and Zora Thomova

Guests:

Michael Fasullo and Linda Weber

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Destito convened the Public Meeting at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the College Council meeting. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, the SUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution naming one of the individuals we put forward, Dr. Andy Russell, as our new Officer-in-Charge. Both the Council and Poly at large are pleased with his work and excited about his inclusive leadership as he moves the College forward with enrollment and programs. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

### **Approval of Minutes**

***A motion was made by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Thickstun to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2022, meeting as presented. All were in favor.***

### **Chairman's Report**

Chair Destito – On January 6<sup>th</sup>, SUNY's Chancellor, John King, gave the charge to the search committee members to begin the next Poly presidential search. Although there have been three searches already, it was noted that this search is different as there is not the CNSE component. Each member of the Council was asked if they would be able to serve, and those who agreed are RoAnn (Search Chair), Mitch, Keith, and Bill. The remainder of the committee members are Faculty Representatives: Kristina Boylan, Ph.D., College of Arts and Sciences and Emilio Cobanera, Ph.D., At-Large Representative (Untenured Faculty), Robert Edgell, Ph.D., College of Business, Zhanjie Li, Ph.D., College of Engineering, Jerome Niyirora, Ph.D., College of Health Sciences, Linda Weber, Ph.D., Faculty Assembly/Senate Chair; Student Representative: Nicholas Rossi; Alumni Representative: Scott Shyne, '88, G'89 Airforce Research Lab; Foundation Representative: Heather Hage; Academic Dean Representative: Arthur Lu, College of Business; Professional or Support Staff Representative: Melissa Prest, Director of EOP and



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Multicultural Affairs; Chancellor's Representative: MVCC President Randy VanWagoner, Representing Member of the Chancellor's Senior Staff; Non-Voting Representatives: Zulaika Rodriguez-Awoliyi, Chancellor's liaison representative (non-voting), and Poly Campus Liaison Andrea LaGatta. The Committee has put together a mission statement, advertisement, website information, prospectus, and job description with everyone willing to contribute. RoAnn is very positive concerning the future of SUNY Polytechnic Institute.

## **President's Report**

Dr. Russell is thankful to the College Council for this special opportunity, and their support is vital to the ongoing success of Poly. This evening he will brag on the successes of students and faculty, share an overview of where SUNY Poly is, including enrollment numbers, recent accomplishment, the new strategic plan process, the transfer of CNSE to UAlbany, and will touch on the president search should there be any remaining questions on what RoAnn shared. He shared highlights from his resume, and provided insight of his previous experience working on a successful strategic plan.

**Future Enrollment update:** Our enrollment trends are strong, with first year application up 88%. There are double the amount of acceptances this time last year. SUNY had a waiver of application fees across the System and it was most helpful. Our enrollment and admissions staff remains a fantastic team. Our increase for Fall enrollment is up 25%, and is the highest throughout the System.

**Recognition for staff/faculty:** Dr. Carlie Phipps has most graciously accepted the role of Interim Dean of College of Arts & Science to fill in for Andy while he leads the college. Dr. Megan Dischiavo, a wizard in teaching anatomy and physiology, agreed to serve as Chair of Biology & Chemistry Department and Dr. Narayan Sharma will be the chemistry coordinator. Mary Ellen Burdick was appointed Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration. She is directing all but academic, student personnel, and research affairs on campus. Robb Stapf is doing an excellent job serving as Interim Chief Information Officer. He is directing, planning, organizing, and controlling all activities relating to administering computing, telecommunications, networking, and IT systems used by students, faculty, and staff. Thank you to each of these individuals for stepping up and taking on added challenges to support our growth and progress.

## **Recent Accomplishments:**

- In the College of Health Sciences, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked SUNY Poly in the top 100 in the nation for Best Online Bachelor's Programs (Health Information Management). The College also announced the addition of a brand-new state-of-the-art simulator to its nursing program. Procured through a SUNY Performance Improvement grant meant to help address the urgent nurse shortage, this high-tech \$57,000 simulator will provide real-time feedback to students and faculty, enabling on-demand training.



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- Researchers in our College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering continue to perform at an exceptional level and were major contributors to a newly published, thematic issue of *Experimental Biology and Medicine*. This issue included an introduction by Interim Dean Dr. André Melendez, highlighting technological research progress enabled by the National Nanotechnology Initiative in 2001 and opportunities presented by the recently passed CHIPS Act, in addition to six mini-reviews and two original research articles by researchers, alumni, graduate students, and Drs. Nate Cady, Janet Paluh, Yubing Xie, Michael Fasullo, and Susan Sharfstein.
- In the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Shing Chi Leung, SUNY Poly assistant professor of physics, published a review article as the leading author on the origin of Type 1a supernovae. His research area is in astrophysics, he submits grants, and has more publications on the way.
- Under the direction of Arthur Lu in the College of Business, SUNY Poly has been ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in the nation among the 2023 Best Online Graduate Business Programs (excluding MBA) by *U.S. News & World Report*. We are also ranked in the top 100 in the nation for Best Online MBA Programs.
- Michael Carpenter is doing well in leading the College of Engineering. Dr. Zhanjie Li, Associate Professor of Engineering, has been extremely active, including a publication on "Free-Form Shape Optimization of Advanced High-Strength Steel Members." He is a Civil Engineer. We've also seen a banner year for sponsored research in the College of Engineering, including significant awards for Sivapalan Gajan, Asif Ahmed, and an interdisciplinary team led by Carolyn Rodak. Their work has applications in a number of high-technology fields, as well as support for degree completion and workforce development. SUNY Poly also ranked in the top 100 in the nation for Best Online Information Tech Programs (Network & Computer Security: Cybersecurity MS program) by *U.S. News & World Report*.

**Alumni Events & Foundation update:** The entire Russell Family will attend the alumni night to see the Utica Comets game on Sat., Feb. 18 with a meetup at Swifty's prior to the game. Andrea LaGatta has led some great events including a January 22<sup>nd</sup> reunion in South Florida (Ft. Lauderdale), hosted by an anonymous alumna. In addition, SUNY Poly Foundation has a new endowed scholarship that was established by alumni Steve and Gina Surace (*Pronounced: Sir-Ace*). The SUNY Poly Foundation raised nearly \$10,000 on the year-end fundraising campaign, which is invaluable to the students.

**Strategic Plan:** One of Andy's primary assignments is to develop a plan for the future of SUNY Poly. Typically, a strategic plan takes 18-24 months, and it has been stated that the product is important but the process is more important. Our challenge is to invert that, and when completed, have both. A strong, robust plan needs to be in place in a few months. This will be accomplished by working closely and transparently with all campus stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners, elected officials, and SUNY. His goal is to focus on this Strategic Plan intensely over the next few months. He started this process over the



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winter break, immediately after being named OIC, by reviewing past strategic plans from SUNY Poly, as well as community-driven, forward-looking documents created under the leadership of Interim Presidents Sammakia and Wang. He consulted Faculty Governance and others to embark on a plan. He also read strategic plans from other polytechnics – public and private – as well as SUNY campuses.

The key term for understanding our SUNY Poly strategic plan comes from the BoT: “Resolved that the Officer-in-Charge of SUNY Poly be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to begin the process of creating a robust strategic plan along with local stakeholders strengthening the future of SUNY Poly Utica as the premier public Polytech school in the state and nation.” He has been personally tasked with overseeing the creation of a strategic plan that will lead to a successful future for SUNY Poly, and, by extension, the Mohawk Valley. He identified four strategic priorities: Academic programs and educational experiences, impactful meaningful research and scholarship, an all-campus approach to student success, and dynamic external partnerships that serve the Mohawk Valley and New York State. The next steps he took was to identify and appoint three accomplished and trusted leaders for the steering committee: Jennifer Adams, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at SUNY Poly; Timothy Busch, Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Chair, UFA Planning & Budgeting Committee; and Heather Hage, President & CEO of the Griffiss Institute (GI). Crucially important is that all three of these individuals have extensive experience in strategic planning which has already proven immensely helpful.

The timeline established began in January with researching and doing the ‘homework’ part and established structure, scope, process and timeline. On February 10<sup>th</sup>, approximately 150 people made up of students, staff, faculty, alumni, community partners from Rome, Utica, and beyond, helped to dream a big dream and define our future. Andy added that Assemblywoman Buttenschon participated and she was able to see firsthand the energy and action, and it was noted by many that she is committed to our success. Much data and goodwill were collected that day, and the next step is to reconvene on February 17<sup>th</sup>, with the Cabinet, to review the summaries and produce the first draft of this strategic plan. He has already been in contact with SUNY System Administration regarding the wish list. RoAnn added that we have engaged all of our elected official team: County Executive Anthony Picente; Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon; Senator Joe Griffo who are all behind this process, timeline, strategic plan, and capital requests for this year’s budget consideration. She reiterated that we have the support of SUNY’s Chancellor and Aaron Gladd, who is now in the strategic planning role at System. He spent time helping to guide the process.

**President Search:** RoAnn added that there have been many listening sessions, and the webpage will be updated biweekly: <https://sunypoly.edu/about/office-president/presidential-search.html>. The goal is for the search process to take approximately two months – possibly into June, and while this may be ambitious, it would facilitate our bringing candidates to campus while students are here. RoAnn is very grateful and thankful to everyone involved in the search, and it is important to take time to choose the best person for this important job.



**Transfer of CNSE:** The Board of Trustees resolution and charge to UAlbany states, “Resolved that the President of UAlbany, in consultation with the Chancellor or designee and the Officer-in-Charge of SUNY Poly be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to create a detailed master plan, timeline, and accounting of debts to effectuate the transfer of CNSE to UAlbany, to be completed no later than December 2023.” From the time this was issued, we have embarked on an expedited process and have had a single-minded focus on this directive. Currently, we are planning on the transfer effective at the start of 23-24 academic year, well ahead of the Board’s December request. All have agreed to the importance that all students, faculty, staff are to be held harmless and be allowed to continue their chosen career paths. RoAnn noted for clarity that the debts that CNSE has will be transferred as well. The process has been with lead architect, UAlbany’s President Havidan Rodriguez and they meet every other week, at the very least, in addition to multiple phone calls. Transparency is important, and we are reminder that we all work for NYS. The discussions are vibrant and ongoing. We are on very strong footing for a bright future, and Andy very much appreciates RoAnn’s strong advocacy.

## **Middle States Commission on Higher Education:**

Interim Provost, Dr. Zora Thomova, provided an update on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The steering committee is engaging the community in identifying institutional priorities for the self-study, and forming the working groups to address individual standards. Plans are underway for a visit of the Middle States visiting team in the spring of 2026. Additionally, as we are growing the campus and SUNY Poly Utica programs, we have successfully submitted a letter of intent to System for offering a master in civil engineering and master in mechanical engineering program. We received permission to grow the programs and they are under development, and may take 18 months to be fully approved. In another set of initiatives, we are working with SUNY to update our micro credential policy. This will hopefully strengthen our community engagement and provide pathways for needed coursework for professional development. Credit bearing specialized courses help in creating that pathway to get students who stepped away, and employees, who can get specialized skills through the micro credentials. She has weekly call with Middle States as issues arise.

## **Student Representative Update**

Nicholas Rossi, Student College Representative to the College Council, presented. One goal for this semester is increasing transparency between the student body and student government. SGU held an open house event to help facilitate questions to increase transparency. Meet your Reps Social Media Campaign was designed to familiarize students with current senators and board members. Game room additions include neon sign to game room and two new arcade games that students have been enjoying. Money was donated by SGU to help with renovations the library and student center. Aunt Flow has arrived and is ready to be installed with a work order already submitted. Recent campus activity and events include: Winterfest, laser tag, Bob Ross painting, movie night, Super Bowl Watch party, Anti-Valentine’s Day, Spread the Love, and



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the slide snow globes, love potion, and gingerbread houses DIY events were very popular, as were the live events. Additional events including the Involvement Fair, Women Who Mean Business with speaker Shawnice Meador, mental health screenings, blood drive, Smash Bros Weeklies, and multiple Residential Life events were well attended with the mental health screenings becoming contagious with other SUNY campuses! It was also noted that the blood drive beat their previous record. Concerning Student Highlights, several students were able to attend the Legislative Breakfast hosted at Hart's Hill Inn to meet local elected officials. Eight students met on SA's Advocacy Day to join with students across the SUNY System and met with more local officials. The students enjoyed sharing their Poly pride! Student Athletics Highlights include: the men's basketball team is doing really well, Feb 17<sup>th</sup> is the Atlantic Conference Western Division Semi-Finals against SUNY Cobleskill, woman's basketball held their Annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day Celebration, and are hosting the NAC Divisional Playoffs this weekend. All are welcome! Our men's volleyball hosted 2023 SUNY Poly Invitational featuring eight teams from three different states.

Albany Campus Updates: These include hosting a virtual academic success event partnered with the Director of Student Academic Success in Utica, collaborating with UAlbany's peer counseling group Middle Earth, they co-hosted a bowling event between USGA & GSGA. There are students in need, and these concerns spurred the purchase of common use items for student to borrow, such as calculators, computer mice, charging cords, etc. Nick shared that the graduates shared their enthusiasm for the graduate hall renovations. Additional events include a pancake dinner, holiday events and qualifiers review sessions. Nick enjoys speaking with enthusiasm when speaking about Poly and is very much enjoying his role on the Poly president search committee.

## **Faculty Representative Update**

Dr. Linda Weber's report included an update that SUNY indicated it will implement in Fall 2023, a new general education plan. A committee has begun to review all of our general education courses in preparation of this implementation. We are transitioning to the new learning management system from Blackboard to Brightspace under D2L. Our Micro credential Policy review and revising efforts are underway, as is the Consensual Relations Policy. Federal regulations distance learning committee is working to show substantial progress in meeting the standards.

Dr. Michael Fasullo's report included thanks to Dr. Russell who covered the transfer update fully. Both the Faculty in Albany and Utica are continuing collaborations in many areas. Paul Kutcha, who headed the undergraduate academic group has left Poly. He fulfilled many roles as general laboratory manager roles and went well above what was asked of him. Yubing Xie and Mike will participate on the Gen Ed Committee, chaired by Daryl Lee. A ransomware attack happened at Albany and there are lingering issues, but the students were not affected.

RoAnn offered an Executive Session should the Council Members request it, and none were raised.



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## **Adjournment**

***Chair Destito requested a motion to adjoin. A motion was made by Mr. Levatino and seconded by Mr. Thickstun. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Davis