



FEBRUARY 2022 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council Members:

RoAnn Destito-Chair, Darlene Burns, Mitchell Ford, Charles Greco, Christopher Giruzzi, Avenash Kemraj, and William Thickstun

Administration:

Michael Frame, Laurie Hartman, Susan Head, Tod Laursen, Mark Lemire, Marybeth Lyons, Mark Montgomery, Steven Schneider

Guests:

Bradley Thiel, Linda Weber

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Destito convened the Public Meeting at 4:02 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the first College Council meeting for 2022. 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 14, 2021, meeting as presented. All were in favor.

Chairman's Report

Chair Destito briefly discussed the proposal Governor Hochul mentioned in her State of the State Address in January regarding the separation of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering from SUNY Poly. She has been actively engaged with SUNY leadership and local government leaders in both the Mohawk Valley and Capital Region to convey her support of maintaining the current organizational structure, noting both communities have benefited from the merger. She also addressed that there is some confusion being circulated and that she will work with SUNY Poly leadership to monitor and correct any misinformation through the media.

The College Council will continue to support the current organizational structure.

Student Representative Update

Avenash Kemraj, student representative to the College Council, shared updates from the SUNY Poly students.



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

The executive cabinet of the Student Government at Utica (SGU) is currently full and they are working diligently to fill the senate. SGU committees are running and active on campus, some examples of the student-run committees are Food, Academic Affairs and Technology, Safety and Facilities, Class Gift and Student Wellness. Also, committees are actively working with faculty and staff to identify and establish initiatives in their areas.

Students are very active with a variety of campus activities, they include:

- Winterfest 2022 - includes ice skating, live music and a painting event
- Comedians and magicians
- Trips to DestiNY USA and Philadelphia
- Game shows and BINGO events
- Free bowling Thursday and free ski Friday
- Spring Involvement and Club Fair

Avenash provided an update on ESports, noting a new Wildcat Esports president has been appointed, following the graduation of the previous president. Our students are participating in a variety of leagues including SUNY, ECAC and NACE. The most popular games the students are competing in are Rainbow Six Siege, Monday Smash Tournaments, SUNY Rocket League, Valorant East Division, Halo Infinite and Overwatch.

Updates on behalf of the Undergraduate Student Government at Albany (USGA) were shared. Avenash advised that for fall 2021 semester 10 clubs were reactivated, materials were provided for club activities, and several successful student events were held, including a club fair, Halloween party, holiday celebration, and pancake dinner

For the spring 2022 semester, USGA is planning to reactive 11 additional clubs, a Valentine's Day ice cream social, movie night in celebration of Black History Month, and a trip to the trampoline park.

Chair Destito thanked Avenash for his report and acknowledged the increase in student activities on campus.

President's Report

Dr. Laursen thanked the Council for the opportunity to share updates on SUNY Poly activities that have occurred since our last meeting in December.

An updated campus COVID plan was created to help guide the safe return to campus for the spring 2022 semester; initiatives included a mask and social distancing requirement, boosters for all students with an on-campus presence, surveillance testing of our campus community, daily health screening required for all faculty, staff and students, and a dedicated quarantine/isolation space on campus for student needs.



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

SUNY Poly welcomes more than 700 residential students back to campus for an initial week of remote classes; students were required to pre-arrival test and were testing again upon arrival. The campus also instituted takeout dining for this first week to help encourage a safe and successful return.

On January 24, Senator Charles Schumer, Governor Hochul and U.S. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Don Graves toured the Albany Nanotech Complex, seeing first-hand the incredible research and workforce development capabilities that make it an ideal location for the nation's first National Semiconductor Technology Center. Sen. Schumer's U.S. Innovation and Competition Act calls for the creation of the Center and he believes Albany is an ideal location .

The Admission's Office is focused on recruitment activities and are in the midst of planning 6 in-person spring accepted student days, they are also supplementing these in-person events with weekly virtual session. They are also working closely with the Development Office to launch the application for the first round of awards for two new scholarships: the Francis A. Wilcox Scholarship and the Dr. Naseem Qazi and Dr. Salahuddin Qazi Scholarship. The Enrollment Management team is working with educational consultant EAB on financial aid optimization, focusing specifically on first-year yield.

Dr. Mark Montgomery, Chief Diversity Officer, is developing a newly formed DEI Advisory Committee. He is also working with student organizations at both campuses to provide DEI related support, which includes attendance at a variety of campus events. Also, he is collaborating with multiple community-based organization and colleges to promote DEI awareness and programming.

U.S. News & World Report's recently released their "2022 Best Online Program" rankings listing the top online colleges and university programs in the nation. SUNY Poly's online master's program in Network and Computer Security: Cybersecurity ranked 48th in the U.S. Also, SUNY Poly ranked in the Top 20 for "Best Online MSN Nurse Educator Degrees 2022 in the Nation" by TopRNtoBSN.

The SUNY Poly Foundation recently received a commitment of \$250,000 from Wolfsped for curriculum development for the College of Engineering. The Foundation also received an endowed scholarship in memory of our late faculty member, Dr. Michael Hochberg, funded by his family and faculty and staff at SUNY Poly. The Michael and Valorie Hochberg Scholarship fund of \$25,000 will provide awards for undergraduates enrolled in biology, associate's degree to bachelor's degree in nursing, and/or the dual degree (1+2+1) nursing partnership program with St. Elizabeth College of Nursing. In support of cross-curricular educational opportunities, we also received two gifts from NYSTEC and an anonymous alumna for the creation of the STEM Writing and Communications Center.

Dr. Laursen shared some recent achievements from our faculty and academic colleges, they include:

- Assistant Professor Dr. Hisham Kholiday's research has been published by *Sensors* in a special issue. The paper studies methods to accurately analyze the vulnerabilities in 5G networks.
- Assistant Professor Dr. Arjun Singh provided insight to the local public when WUTR interviewed him to explain 5G service rollout and concerns regarding potential impact to airlines.



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

- Associate professor of Civil Engineering, Dr. Sivapalan Gajan has received \$198,000 in funding as a result of an Engineering Research Initiation award from the National Science Foundation.
- *Structural Engineering* published collaborative research by Associate Professor of Engineering, Dr. Zhanjie Li, which aims to "investigate the bolted end-plate beam to column joints with different strengthening strategies under fire through a parametric study by using a validated computational model."
- Gannett featured Professor Kathryn Stam in: "The town that loves refugees': Utica's newcomers bring transformation upstate." The article highlighted her work as a founder of the Midtown Utica Community Center and how many refugees worked as essential workers during the pandemic.
- Professor of Nanoscience Dr. Serge Oktyabrsky has received \$300,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to further develop state-of-the-art scintillating detectors, which, upon the detection of fast, charged particles, or X-ray photons, emit measurable light.
- The Times Union featured TEL Innovation Scientist Dr. Christophe Vallée in, "Tokyo Electron brings Albany Nanotech to Next Level with French Scientist."
- Professor of Technology Management Dr. Robert Edgell is leading SUNY Poly's efforts as we resume leadership of the New York Business Plan Competition's Mohawk Valley regional semifinal. The event is scheduled to be held virtually this year at the end of March.

The Student Affairs team has been focusing on ways to improve the student experience. Recently the Offices of CSTEP, Disability Services, and EOP have collaborated to bring their students together for study and self-care events. Also, the CSTEP students have been active in community outreach by supporting mentorships and workshops for the Proctor Raider Bots, a FIRST robotics team housed under Proctor High School. The Counseling Center is planning a robust schedule to expand programming and outreach. The "Poly Leads – leadership Institute 2022" will take place this spring with a focus on peer-to-peer leadership, with mental health as a focal point.

The Washington Post featured SUNY Poly student, SUNY EOP Ambassador, and former SGU President Giovanni Harvey in: 'When a sudden, small expense threatens an entire college career.' The article, seen by as many as 59 million readers, showcased the difference *On Point for College* and similar organizations make in students' lives. This in turn empowers students like Giovanni to make a positive impact on campus. Notably, this article stems from SUNY Poly's inspiring partnership with *On Point for College* since 1999. *On Point* serves students here and in a number of surrounding counties by providing access, helping them to stay in college, as well as offering career services.

Dr. Laursen shared highlights from our Wildcat Athletics teams, noting the men's volleyball team recently kicked off their season. The men's and women's basketball teams are gearing up for post-season play. The Athletics Department recently celebrated National Girls & Women in Sports Day in conjunction with games played against SUNY Canton on Saturday, January 29th. Also, he shared some details pertaining to the academic success of our student athletes, average GPA for fall 2021 students athletes is 3.16, there are 29 student athletes with a GPA between 3.8 and 4.0 (President's Excellence),



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

another 29 with a GPA between 3.6 and 3.79 (President's Achievement) , and 41 additional students with a GPA between 3.2 and 3.59 (Dean's List.)

New York State Department of Labor is producing a series of inspiring videos highlight career opportunities across New York. Dr. Laursen shared the most recent video, which showcases Emma Rocco, a Poly Ph.D. candidates in nanoscale engineering. The video shares how Emma defied her grade school teachers who had told her she should not pursue a career in STEM and how she found success at SUNY Poly.

Faculty Representative Update

SUNY Poly Joint Governance co-chairs Drs. Bradley Thiel and Linda Weber provided an updated to the Council on faculty activities.

Dr. Weber acknowledged that due to the holiday break, the Utica Faculty Senate has not met since December. At that time, a reappointment policy and a pass/no pass policy had been submitted to the Provost and President. The Faculty Senate is also working to develop a general education plan to coincide with the criteria SUNY has put forward, one of the big changes is a new DEI and social justice requirement. The new plan will need to be implemented by fall of 2023.

Dr. Weber outlined a number of faculty concerns regarding the separation of CNSE from SUNY Poly, including:

- Support for research at Poly Utica - There are a group of Utica faculty who have established research collaboration with CNSE faculty and have accepted these faculty positions because of the current collaboration opportunities. Faculty feel there is a need for a research office at the Utica campus.
- Financial Stability at the Utica campus – Dr. Weber shared concern specifically related to debt/financing due to projects with NY CREATES and that the Utica campus be held harmless.
- Interlinking programs – There are several programs links between the two campuses and faculty want to ensure they remain strong and the faculty are protected. Also they are concerned with the fate of PhD programming in Utica.
- Vision and stability – Dr. Weber shared the faculty concern with a new vision for the Utica campus, if a separation does occur.
- Technical issues - There are concerns with technical issues and faculty would like to be involved with discussions pertaining to split, if it does happen.
- Miscellaneous - many positions, such as HR and Research, are based primarily on the Albany campus and are critical to the academic success of the campus. There is also concerned related to the lack of details and a timeframe.

Dr. Thiel stated that all faculty at the Albany campus approve of the realignment of CNSE with University at Albany. He noted some Albany staff are not in support of the realignment. He also stated



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Albany faculty are sensitive to the feelings of the faculty at the Utica campus and would, of course, like to keep relations and collaborations that have been formed.

Adjournment

Chair Destito requested a motion to adjoin. A motion was made by Mr. Greco and seconded by Mr. Thickstun. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie M. Hartman

Laurie M. Hartman