



## **DECEMBER 2021 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** Tuesday, December 14, 2021

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

**Present:** Council Members:

RoAnn Destito-Chair, Darlene Burns, Mitchell Ford, Christopher Giruzzi, Nichole Hinman, 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 4:01 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the meeting, which was held via Zoom. She wished everyone a happy holiday season.

### **Approval of Minutes**

***A motion was made by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Thickstun to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2021, meeting as presented. All were in favor.***

### **President's Report**

Dr. Laursen provided an update on SUNY Poly activities via a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Laursen acknowledged the leadership team and advised they are working with stakeholders across campus to create a detailed plan for the spring 2022 semester. The plan will outline updated COVID-19 related protocols and guidance for students, faculty, and staff with an overall mission to support the health of our campus community, while we offer the best academic and research experience possible. Some of the initiatives for the spring 2022 plan include:

- All residential students and students taking courses on campus must be fully vaccinated, or they must have an approved medical or religious exemption.
- COVID-19 testing will continue biweekly for all fully vaccinated faculty, staff, and students; those who have not submitted proof of vaccination must test weekly.
- Face coverings are required for all individuals on campus except in limited situations, such as working alone in one's office.



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Dr. Laursen advised that all efforts will be clearly communicated before the spring semester, noting we have a dedicated webpage that includes our spring plan, an FAQ page, and a “What Students Should Know” digest. Employee and student testing scheduled and procedures will also be updated on this webpage and shared with the campus community.

Our Admissions Team is working hard to achieve enrollment goals and continue to offer on-campus in-person, as well as virtual, prospective student programs. The team will be hosting prospective students and new admits at a recruitment event in New York City on December 17 and 18. Both Drs. Laursen and Montgomery will be in attendance to meet with students and their families and, in some instances, present students with their acceptance packets.

Dr. Montgomery has been very active across both campuses and in the larger community, purposefully contributing to the recruitment of a diverse student body. He is also representing SUNY Poly as a member of the newly formed Mohawk Valley Community Action Association Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which is a collaboration of colleges, local community leaders and businesses with the purpose of giving a “voice to those traditionally marginalized by the American society.”

SUNY Poly is working to expand our faculty over the next year or two and is currently advertising for a large number of faculty positions, including the Wolfsped Endowed Chair position.

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

- The College of Business received approval to offer all of their undergraduate degrees online.
- Empire Innovation Professor of Nanobioscience Dr. Nathaniel Cady has been awarded \$5.5 million in funding from the Air Force Research Laboratory to demonstrate adaptable and reconfigurable neural networks.
- Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences continue to publish their research on quantum theory, particle physics, and high energy physics in elite journals such as *Nuclear Physics*, *Entropy*, and *Physical Review Letters*.
- Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Andrew Gallup’s research on why we yawn was recently featured on “CBS Sunday Morning.”
- As a response to the Governor and Chancellor’s calls to expand the number of nurses in New York State, the College of Health Sciences is working to create closer ties with community colleges to help build on our Doctor of Nursing Practice and Family Nurse Practitioner programs.
- Faculty in the Health Informatics program have created a series of research seminars that attract experts in the field from across the country.
- We have entered into an agreement with the University at Albany that allows undergraduate and graduate students of each institution to easily take courses at the other, as a visiting student.



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Congratulations to the men's soccer team, who on November 6 won the 2021 North Atlantic Conference (NAC) Championship game against UMaine at Farmington. The Wildcats won the game in penalty kicks 6-5 after tying 1-1 through two overtime periods. The team advanced to the NCAA Championship Tournament the following weekend. Four players were selected for the all-tournament team and Coach Peterson Jerone was selected as conference Coach of the Year.

SUNY Poly continues to gain strong recognition in a number of exciting ways, for instance Yahoo! Finance and GoBankingRates selected Poly as the "Most Affordable College in New York State 2020-2021."

Chair Destito thanked Dr. Laursen and the leadership team for their continued efforts throughout the pandemic while still prioritizing our academic mission.

## **Resolution on Philanthropic Gift to SUNY Poly Foundation**

Michael Frame, CEO of the SUNY Poly Foundation, discussed a gift recently received from the Francis A. Wilcox Trust, he noted this donation, in the amount of \$150k, is in addition to the two previous gifts and will be designated for the renovations of the Physics Lab located on the ground floor of Donovan Hall.

These gifts have been coordinated with the SUNY Poly Foundation through Mr. Wilcox's executor and nephew, Kevin Keehle, a '92 alumnus of SUNY Poly.

***A motion was made by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Thickstun to approve the resolution, as presented and to endorse the naming of the Physics Lab located on the ground floor of Donovan Hall as the "The Francis A. Wilcox Physics Lab," All were in favor.***

## **Student Representative Update**

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

The Wildcat Events Board hosted a full semester (32 events plus weekly bowling) of in-person events, such as comedians, mentalists, DIY events, movie trips, game nights and more.

The Campus Activities Board hosted a trip to Boston in October and a casino night in November and the International Student Association hosted Diwali (Festival of Lights) in November.

In celebration of Halloween, the Campus Activities Board sponsored numerous on-campus and off-campus activities, such as a haunted maze, haunted hayride and a costume party.

SGU (Student Government at Utica) has recently added some new director positions, noting they are still actively recruiting to fill some, they include:



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- Director of DEI – Mahi Shahel
- Director of Community Outreach – Lucas Nowlan
- Director of Public Relations – not yet filled
- Director of Development – not yet filled

SGU's Director of Community Outreach recently organized a canned good and coat drive to benefit local not-for-profits. Avenash advised that over 100 different food items and four full bags of clothes were donated on behalf of our students.

The SGU Wellness Committee recently coordinated the planning and distribution of de-stress goody bags to help our students alleviate some stress during finals week.

Avenash shared some highlights associated with Wildcat Esports, noting we have over 460 members with 53 players competing this season. In the SUNY league, one of Poly's team was runner up in the Guilty Gear Strive and Smash Ultimate competition.

Graduate Student Garrett Hassard has been working to facilitate and strengthen the relationship between the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and SGU. He has also worked closely with his fellow athletes to coordinate multiple fundraisers, such as a Toys for Tots toy drive and canned food drive, which collected more than 700 pounds of canned goods.

## **Faculty Representative Update**

Joint Governance co-chairs Drs. Bradley Thiel and Linda Weber joined the meeting.

Governance committees have been working hard to sort through some issues they have discovered with our current structure. One priority has been to create a process to increase the timeliness for actions pertaining to motions/resolutions. A flow chart will be created in the coming weeks.

Albany and Utica campuses have recently passed a resolution to create an emeritus status for staff members, this will provide an opportunity to stay connected to SUNY Poly into their retirement.

Governance bodies are working to create a permanent pass/no pass policy.

The student rating of instruction is done at the end of the fall and spring semesters. This gives students the opportunity to evaluate and share comments pertaining to their instructors. SUNY Poly currently uses the IDEA survey to complete these bi-annual evaluations, but this current evaluation tool is due to be renewed soon and they may be looking into additional options for student rating of instruction for the future.

Dr. Weber added this has been a very stressful semester for both the faculty and our students. She pointed out that while we are not yet back to normal, our faculty, staff, and students have worked diligently to reach the end of the semester.



**Adjournment**

***Chair Destito requested a motion to adjoin. A motion was made by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Thickstun. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

*Laurie M. Hartman*

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