



October 2023 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council Members:

RoAnn Destito-Chair, Mitchell Ford*, Nichole Hinman*, Keith Levatino, William Thickstun*, Chris Giruzzi, and Nicholas Rossi

Administration:

Wole Soboyejo, Andy Russell, Wayne Westervelt, Mary Ellen Burdick, Marybeth Lyons, Mark Montgomery, and Dan Sargent

Shared Governance: Adam McLain

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Destito convened the Public Meeting at 3:59 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the College Council meeting. The meeting was held in-person with Zoom access available. *Three College Council members participated in the meeting virtually.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Keith Levatino and seconded by Mr. Nicholas Rossi to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2023, meeting as presented. All were in favor.

Chairman's Report

Chair Destito's comments are throughout the meeting. She noted that this was the first in-person meeting the College Council had convened since the COVID pandemic, and asked Dan Sargent to poll the College Council members to see if the remaining meeting dates in the 2023-2024 academic year would work for their schedules, and also to see if they would be in favor of alternating in-person and virtual meeting formats. Chair Destito remarked on the happy occasion of having the new President, Dr. Winston "Wole" Soboyejo, in attendance at the meeting, and reported that his campus address on the Monday prior (10/16/23) had been excellent and very well received. She also reported that the ACT Conference the previous weekend that she and Nicholas Rossi had attended in Albany had been a valuable program. She referred to SUNY Chancellor King's "four pillars" for moving SUNY ahead that had been a theme for the conference, and stated that the resources are in place for promoting growth in the Mohawk Valley and supporting our region's students' success.



President's Report:

Dr. Soboyejo stated that it was a pleasure to be at SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly), and he commended everyone who was involved in the search process for how smoothly it was conducted. He also said he had spoken with the Chancellor about resources for SUNY Poly, and that the Chancellor had been encouraging in his response.

We have hit the ground running:

Dr. Soboyejo reported that prior to his official start date as President of SUNY Poly he travelled to Washington, DC, for the SUNY Day DC event, where he met with Dr. Andy Russell, Dr. Mike Carpenter, and Mr. Wayne Wetervelt, who were also there representing SUNY Poly. He has been engaging in meetings with students and with representatives from the surrounding region, and in all his meetings he felt a positive energy and support for SUNY Poly.

Earlier this week SUNY Poly hosted a visit by a delegation of eight scholars from Ghana, who came to learn about our program and facilities, and to discuss opportunities for scholarly exchange programs and collaborative research. He was pleased by the enthusiasm and engagement across the institution he saw for these discussions and these opportunities.

On Monday of this week (10/16/23) Dr. Soboyejo had his first opportunity to deliver a Campus Forum presentation to faculty and staff, where he outlined his goals and vision for SUNY Poly. As we look to the future, however, it is important to remember where we come from and how we got here. SUNY Poly started in 1966 a two-year upper-division college. From our beginning we produce people who are strong technically and we help drive the economy. Dr. Soboyejo stated that he saw great potential for SUNY Poly to become "the premier public polytechnic," as evidenced by our students and the jobs they get, and by our partnerships with local and regional industries.

Emerging profile:

The Mohawk Valley has potential for growth and development. We can look at how Silicon Valley developed as a precedent: the President of Stanford University initiated a program of building connections between tech industries with the university to spawn innovation. The co-location of companies like Wolfspeed and others involved in biomedical engineering represent this same potential locally/regionally. Dr. Soboyejo stated that the Mohawk Valley community could be described with one word: resiliency. This region demonstrates "true community": our students report that they included as we build diversity.

Dr. Soboyejo referred to the pending announcement of the investment of \$44 million by the State in SUNY Poly, primarily in tech. We must continue to be distinctive. We have to have



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research and scholarship that matter and make a difference in the world, and use our resources to develop new programs.

Our strategy will be to align our efforts with the SUNY Chancellor's "four pillars": student success; diversity, equity, and inclusion; research and scholarship; and economic development and upward mobility. Dr. Soboyejo thanked everyone who was involved in the previous year's strategic planning efforts at SUNY Poly and noted the identification of five key thematic areas for further strategic planning development: human capital; external partnerships; campus infrastructure; academic excellence; and building SUNY Poly's identity. He stated that we are working with external stakeholders on these efforts and that we will release this plan within the next 100 days.

In speaking of his first 100 days at SUNY Poly, Dr. Soboyejo reported that his first task is to listen, and he stated that he has been very impressed with his interactions with student government representatives. When they met with him the first time, they presented focus points they had identified and that they were prepared to invest in. The first 100 days will involve taking time to get to know our students "one student at a time." He has been touring SUNY Poly's facilities as well as those of our local partners, to help inform how we must invest in ourselves and in our initiatives. Our objective is to be a community and industry partner. Our community has been waiting for SUNY Poly to fulfill this role.

Dr. Soboyejo referred to the development of K-12 programming as part of a "360-degree vision" that we must achieve together as "team SUNY Poly."

Dr. Keith Levatino commented that the Little Falls School District that he is Superintendent of already has many connections with SUNY Poly in both STEM and health sciences areas; and he thanked Dr. Soboyejo and the institution for this vision.

Dr. Soboyejo stated that all programs at SUNY Poly must understand artificial intelligence and how it relates to them, and this must be done in a way that will help prepare work-ready graduates.

CNSE transfer:

Dr. Soboyejo reported that the transfer process is now legally complete. The budget transfer is done and the technical details of the transfer are completed. The completion of this transfer allows us to focus on the identity of SUNY Poly. Dr. Soboyejo thanked Dr. Andy Russell for his leadership and excellent work as Officer-in-Charge throughout the transfer process.

Dr. Russell stated that the CNSE transfer process involved a great deal of work, and he thanked Mary Ellen Burdick and Rhonda Haines for their work on the transfer process and for helping uphold the guiding principle of "hold harmless." He also thanked Dr. Mark Montgomery as Interim Provost for his strong focus on students and his pragmatic approach during the CNSE transfer process.



Dr. Adam McLain stated that faculty members and faculty governance would like to be involved in the search for a new full-time Provost. Dr. Soboyejo noted this request.

Dr. Soboyejo also reviewed some new hires and titles:

- Wayne Westervelt, Chief of Staff and Vice President for External Relations
- Mary Ellen Burdick, Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Kathie Artigiani, Title IX Coordinator
- Dr. Mike Carpenter, Associate Provost for Research

Dr. Soboyejo reviewed enrollment data and noted that the decrease in graduate enrollment was due in part to the CNSE transfer, where SUNY Poly had a lot of graduate students enrolled. He commended the enrollment team, especially for getting the institution through the COVID period.

Additional Highlights:

- Dr. Soboyejo noted the event for dedicating the basketball court in the Campus Center to long-time and much-beloved former SUNY Poly basketball coach, Kevin Grimmer. Marybeth Lyons commented on how the campus community came together to support Coach Grimmer at that ceremony.
- Wolfsped has shown significant support for SUNY Poly with investment of \$500,000 in the institution.
- A recent career fair on campus drew 423 student participants and representatives from over 90 local and regional employers.
- There are currently 175 students registered for the October 28th Open House, which is a significant number of participants expected on campus.

Student Representative Update:

Nicholas Rossi reported on activities the SGU organized, including: the annual blood drive; leadership development activities; WEB: Late Night @ Poly; Welcome to the Wild; a trip to Lake George; Glow Volleyball; "Chalk the Block;" a trip to the Fort Rickey Game Farm; "Aquariums & Luminaires;" Cayo Industrial, free admission day at the Utica Zoo; the "monoPOLY" Fair; Alumni & Athletics Weekend; Fall Family Weekend; the Saranac Series; Walkie-Talkies w/ Ben Yung; Actualize Autism Lunch & Learn; Hispanic Food Festival; and sundry events with Residential Life. Nick also reported on the SGU resolution that was passed to dissolve The Factory Times and place all its former positions and operations under Wildcat Media.



Shared Governance/Faculty Update:

Dr. McLain reported that he had been elected as the Chair of the Faculty Senate in May. He offered his welcome and congratulations to Dr. Soboyejo, and stated that faculty concerns echo the focus points Dr. Soboyejo spoke about, having sufficient staffing in place being key among them. Faculty feel the critical thing they and the institution need now is stability, and that the institution seems to be on its way to achieving that.

Chair Destito expressed her appreciation for Dr. Kristina Boylan's participation as a faculty representative in the presidential search process.

Dr. McLain stated that faculty at SUNY Poly were involved in some amazing initiatives and that they are working on getting word out about this work. He also noted that nominations were open for SUNY Chancellor's Awards and that he was hoping for some faculty nominations.

Middle States/Reaccreditation Update:

Interim Provost, Dr. Montgomery, shared an update provided by Dr. Carlie Phipps that explained the reaccreditation process, which is a two-year process. We have just completed the first phase, that of developing a structure for our self-study. The September review by the Middle States representative acknowledged the strength of SUNY Poly's review design. We are expecting to receive final approval on that design soon. The self-study will be developed over the course of this academic year and into next summer. The review visit by the team from the Middle States Commission will take place in the spring 2025 semester.

Dr. Levatino commented that he found the interview with the Middle States representative during her visit to campus in September very informative.

No executive session was called during this meeting.

Adjournment

Chair Destito requested a motion to adjoin. A motion was made by Dr. McLain and seconded by Dr. Levatino. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Sargent