

## **College Council Meeting April 22, 2021**

Voting Members Present: Mr. Basch, Dr. Venables, Mr. Law, Ms. Noble, Mr. Cozzolino, Ms. Hershenson (Student Association president), Dr. Scott-Childress (non-voting faculty representative), and Ms. Bishop (non-voting alumni representative).

Campus Administration Present: President Christian; Interim Provost Lyman; Vice Presidents Blaisdell, Gant, Halstead, Marks, and Wright; Tanhena Pacheco Dunn, Associate Vice President, Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion. Guests: Robin Cohen-La Valle, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students

### Interim Chairman's Report:

Mr. Basch called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Mr. Basch welcomed Council members and moved to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2021, meeting. Dr. Venables moved on the motion and Mr. Cozzolino seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Basch said that the meeting with the Middle States Reaccreditation review team went well.

### President's Report:

President Christian began his report with a COVID-19 update. He noted that active cases over the last several days are in the single digits, and that the College's positivity rate is about 0.6% with more than 32,000 on campus tests. The president added that students and employees are getting vaccinated and that these are positive signs for what the fall semester may look like. The president said that the College reached this point by advertising and adhering to a "we not me" philosophy and conducting lots of testing and tracing that included faculty and staff involvement, student health services and great volunteers to keep this all going.

The president said that the chancellor was on campus several weeks ago to announce the next round for SUNY's PRODiG program, which has the goal of hiring 1,000 underrepresented faculty, including women in STEM by 2030. He came to New Paltz for this announcement because of the College's success in this program and our other work in diversity, equity and inclusion. Eight of our new first-year faculty have been selected to participate in this program.

President Christian thanked Council members who met with the review team for Middle States Reaccreditation. The organization's preliminary finding is that the College will be reaccredited but that decision and any improvements we need to take on won't be final until the commission meets in June. The president noted several recognitions and commendations for the College's progress over the last decade, including:

- Continuous improvement model of strategic planning;
- Campus commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (e.g., establishing LGBTQ Coordinator position; formation of Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion to expand function; highlighted building renaming);

- Attention to faculty development in the pandemic and our management of COVID-19;
- Culture of assessment of student learning; and
- Commitment to sustainability.

The president updated the Council about commencement planning. The College will hold in-person ceremonies that will be outdoors, at a reduced gathering size and in compliance with state health guidelines. These will include many small, streamlined gatherings where students will be masked and socially distanced. The College will livestream the ceremonies for parents, as well as those students who cannot attend. This is not a perfect arrangement but will meet some of what students most want. The president said he hoped that next year we could have live ceremonies with Council members joining us.

President Christian said that the College is paying a lot of attention to campus climate, heightened by the Derek Chauvin trial for the murder of George Floyd. Also, the shooting deaths of six Asian women in Atlanta along with two others have heightened sensitivity of the Asian and Pacific Islander students on campus. The president said that campus leadership, including administrators, faculty and student governance leaders, met last week with the student organization, APISA. They listened to the group's concerns and steps the College could take to improve their experience on campus. The president shared news about other climate events, including the next Dialogue on Dismantling Racism, and a Distinguished Speaker Series presentation on listening. The School of Education also organized a forum where Ilyasah Shabazz was a panelist and spoke about diversifying the educational system, including K-12 and higher education. The president concluded this topic by noting that the University Police Department Advisory Committee is progressing well in its work.

The president said that the College is planning to have a great majority of fall courses on campus in a face-to-face format, as well as fuller residence halls. He added that the vaccines and people taking them will make a difference. The College is waiting to find out if CDC guidelines for reduced social distancing will apply to colleges and universities. Given vaccine availability, the hope is that the College can offer more in-person activities, including co-curricular experiences. The president said there is zero evidence of in-class transmission of COVID-19 with masking at New Paltz and other SUNY campuses.

President Christian shared that the College was included in several national, country-wide rankings that include: one of the Top 50 most affordable colleges, #25 in Best Value Colleges, and the highest-ranking SUNY campus on a list of top 100 best public colleges and universities.

Mr. Basch asked about the pandemic's toughest challenges for the campus. President Christian said these would include:

- the stress that students have experienced with remote instruction and other guidelines;
- supporting faculty teaching remotely, who also often provide care to young children and in many instances serve as teachers to their own kids in K-12 schools; and the
- uncertainty about this semester and fall, and how we respond to shifting guidance.

Mr. Basch asked what the fall would look like. The president said that COVID-19 will still be with us in one form or another and that there are mixed emotions about what it will be like to be back on campus again. He added that managing shifting expectations is part of what we're preparing to do.

Mr. Basch asked Ms. Hershenson what it's been like for her senior year. Ms. Hershenson said that students have appreciated the campus's efforts to create an in-person commencement, as students find that just stepping foot on campus is meaningful.

Ms. Noble asked what role vaccines would play in the College's strategy moving forward. Vice President Blaisdell said that the College will have a portal for confirming vaccination status soon, and then we would have a sense of vaccination rates in the campus community. Anecdotally, the president said that he has spoken with many students who have all been vaccinated and that regionally people are seizing vaccination opportunities as they become available. The president added he expects SUNY will have a requirement that even if vaccination is not mandated, every campus must have vaccination capability for students at the start of the fall.

#### Student Code of Conduct Updates:

See attached, "Proposed edits to the Student Handbook, Academic Year 2021-22 (effective July)."

Mr. Basch said the governor signed a new state law that legalized the possession and growth of marijuana to a certain extent. As a result, he said that the Student Handbook needs a few edits. Assistant Vice President Cohen-La Valle agreed that this is a new state law and added that the College is still bound by federal law. The College receives federal funds and institutions of higher education are covered by different regulations. The assistant vice president said the recent media coverage announcing that marijuana is now legal in New York is separate from the fact that it is prohibited on college campuses. She added that SUNY sent basic information to the campus community from Counsel's Office about marijuana regulations.

Assistant Vice President Cohen-La Valle said that today's discussion is focused on how this change in state law impacts the College's Student Handbook and Code of Conduct updates.

The assistant vice president said that the current code includes a category titled, "Narcotics, Illicit Drugs and Controlled Substances." Marijuana and its derivatives fall under illicit drugs within that category. Today's handbook updates would extract this excerpt out of the College's illegal drug policy.

Assistant Vice President Cohen-La Valle said the College is also creating a new code titled, "Marijuana/Cannabis." While marijuana/cannabis are legal, the assistant vice president said that it is subject to regulations, including on college campuses. In some ways, she added that these new guidelines are akin to how alcohol is regulated on college campuses. This new category would prohibit persons from marijuana/cannabis use or possession on campus and the assistant vice president walked the Council through the category's new provisions. Again, see attached proposed edits for further information.

Mr. Basch asked when the new updates go into effect. The assistant vice president said that the updated Student Handbook is published in June/July and is effective beginning with the fall semester. The handbook is sent to all students in August and they sign off that they're responsible for abiding by its contents.

Ms. Noble asked how CBD falls under these handbook updates. Vice President Blaisdell said that technically, CBD is a derivative, but it is also legal. She added that additional state guidance is still in the works and more information may be forthcoming. Mr. Basch said that it is not necessary to be more specific about CBD in the handbook.

Mr. Basch asked for a motion to amend the Student Code of Conduct and accept the proposed updates. Dr. Venables moved on the motion and Mr. Law seconded. The proposed updates were approved unanimously.

#### Budget Update:

Vice President Halstead said that the upcoming enacted state budget includes contractual faculty and staff salary increases retroactive to April 2020. These will start to be paid soon and while the state provides spending authority, the campus must pay for these increases out of its own budget.

The vice president said that the College received withheld direct state taxpayer support (about \$2 million) for last fiscal year in March and that it was added to the College's cash balances. She noted the five percent held back for this year still stands, but that it will be restored for next year. The vice president said that the state budget closes the TAP/GAP in phases over a multi-year period, which will be of great assistance to the campus.

Vice President Halstead noted that the state decided to hold tuition flat for Undergraduate in-state students over the next three years. While this is great news for students, the vice president noted the increases in tuition rates enabled the campus to keep up with expenditures, like collective bargaining increases.

As for the capital budget, the vice president said that funding is the same as last year with an additional \$100 million to SUNY that campuses can compete for beyond the "lump sum" allocation that campuses can compete for already. The new funding could be used for new initiatives/construction, not just critical maintenance. However, the funding applies across the entire SUNY system.

Vice President Halstead said that the College is putting together its enrollment targets for next year. The College is seeking to enroll a good-sized incoming first year and transfer class. She added that we are putting together a revenue plan based on those enrollment sources and direct taxpayer support and will come up with a budget for next year.

Mr. Basch asked about the College's fiscal challenges. Vice President Halstead said that the College's challenges continue and that the operating gap will be widening because revenues won't be keeping up with expenses.

Wrap-Up:

Mr. Basch thanked everyone for participating. He also thanked faculty and staff for what's been a challenging year and for meeting those challenges with the help of the student body.

Ms. Hershenson said that the Student Association recently passed a referendum for next year's Student Activity Fee. The referendum passed with a voting threshold of 10% of the student body, as required by SUNY guidelines.

Mr. Basch adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Winters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Winters  
Director of Community and Government Relations

## Proposed edits to the Student Handbook, Academic Year 2021-22 (effective July)

### Campus Rules

Proposed edits of marijuana-related references from existing Drug-related Campus Rule 12.00 (highlighted in gray are the parts of the current code which need to be deleted due to new laws)

#### 12.00 Narcotics, Illicit Drugs, and Controlled Substances

##### .01 Possession of Illicit and/or Controlled Substances

No person shall use, possess, manufacture, or have under their control any narcotic, illegal drug, or controlled substance not prescribed to them by a licensed physician, including but not limited to: cocaine and its derivatives, heroin, opiates, barbiturates, amphetamines, organic or synthetic, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens; marijuana and its derivatives, including hash and hash oil, plants, seeds, resins, etc., or any other substance specifically prohibited or controlled by Federal or State law.

*(Penalty: Disciplinary Probation, Suspension Held in Abeyance, Suspension or Expulsion. Special conditions include: educational and/or clinical intervention, possible Denial of Campus Residency and parental notification if applicable.)*

##### .02 Sale and/or Distribution of Illicit Drugs and/or Controlled Substances

No person shall sell, offer for sale, or otherwise attempt to distribute any narcotic or illegal drug or controlled substance, as described above, including by specific reference, marijuana and its derivatives.

*(Penalty: not less than Expulsion, Academic Transcript Notation, and where possible, the imposition of criminal charges.)*

Proposed addition of a new code which separates marijuana/cannabis

#### Campus Rule 25.00 Marijuana/Cannabis

No person shall use, possess, sell, purchase, cultivate, process, manufacture or give away marijuana/cannabis or its derivatives (tinctures, topicals, edibles etc.) in any form, anywhere on the college campus. This includes SUNY property: public spaces, residence halls, office buildings, university-owned and leased buildings, parking lots, and at all SUNY events or while conducting university business, except for approved academic research. Medical marijuana is prohibited on campus property as well.

*(Penalty: Warning Probation, Disciplinary Probation, Suspension Held in Abeyance, Suspension or Expulsion, and possible special conditions)*

##### 25.01 Sale, Distribution or provision of Marijuana/Cannabis to those under 21 (on or off-campus)

No person shall sell, offer for sale or otherwise attempt to distribute marijuana/cannabis to any person under the age of 21

**25.02 Sale, Distribution or Provision of Marijuana/Cannabis (on or off-campus)**

No person shall sell, offer for sale or otherwise attempt to distribute marijuana/cannabis to any person

**25.03 Driving While Ability Impaired or Smoking Marijuana/Cannabis**

No person shall drive on the college campus while ability impaired by or while smoking marijuana/cannabis.

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The following two Appendices to the Student Handbook will be updated this June when anticipated Federal and State laws, related fines and prescribed policies for campuses are finalized and provided to the campus:

Institutional Response to the Use of Illicit Drugs and Alcohol (will be renamed) ***Institutional Response to the Use of Alcohol, Marijuana/Cannabis and Illicit Drugs***

Information Regarding Title IX (Sexual Violence), Stalking and Interpersonal Violence (Intimate Partner, Dating or Domestic)

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