

**College Council Meeting
May 20, 2020**

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

Campus Administration Present: President Christian; Interim Provost Lyman; Vice Presidents Blaisdell, Eaton, Halstead, Marks, and Wright; Tanhena Pacheco Dunn, Associate Vice President, Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion.

Interim Chairman's Report:

Mr. Basch called the meeting to order at 3:17 p.m.

Mr. Basch proposed adoption of the minutes of the April 29, 2020, meeting. Mr. Law moved to accept the minutes, Dr. Venables seconded the motion, and they were approved by voice vote.

Mr. Basch asked Vice President Blaisdell to introduce recommended updates to the Student Handbook.

Student Handbook Updates:

See attached Student Handbook recommended updates for the 2020-2021 edition.

Vice President Blaisdell walked the Council through six proposed changes to the handbook, including edits to campus rules and administrative regulations regarding fire equipment and alarms, alcohol, compliance with official requests and candles and incense. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the vice president noted that following public health guidelines is included within the compliance regulation.

Mr. Basch said all of the proposed changes seemed reasonable, appropriate and reflective of the current times. Mr. Basch proposed adoption of the Student Handbook recommended updates. Mr. Law moved to accept the updates, Dr. Venables seconded the motion, and they were approved by voice vote.

Budget Update:

Vice President Halstead said that before the pandemic the College had an estimated budget shortfall of about \$2.5 million that would have to be covered by campus reserves. Since that time, the vice president noted that many students, faculty and staff have been off campus and the College has not incurred normal expenses. However, while there have been some savings in utilities and supplies, among other areas, the College has also incurred expenditures due to the pandemic.

The vice president said that it is difficult to forecast what the College's actual state budget outcome may be for the year but she is preparing for the same \$2.5 million shortfall that would need to be closed with campus reserves.

Mr. Basch said that the next year is obscured by the virus. Vice President Halstead responded that the College is planning on a multitude of scenarios, as the College works to mitigate the pandemic's financial impact.

Mr. Law asked if there was an issue with tuition refunds. Vice President Halstead said that the College is not refunding any tuition currently and that spring 2020 partial refunds for room, board, and certain fees would be mailed to students shortly.

Mr. Basch said that this is a really challenging time for everybody. He praised students, faculty and staff for standing strong in dealing with such an unforeseen situation. Mr. Basch added that things have been managed extremely well, given the current circumstances.

Mr. Basch recognized Vice President Eaton and thanked him for his service to the College and decision to postpone his retirement to the end of the calendar year.

Dr. Venables asked for an update about applications for the new academic year. Vice President Eaton said the College is doing well and has received about 17,000 applications. The vice president noted that we accepted almost a record number of students and that enrollments for summer and fall are ahead of last year, which is especially striking. He noted that New Paltz students are undeterred in pursuing their degrees.

President's Report:

President Christian echoed Mr. Basch's comments recognizing Vice President Eaton and his decision to continue in his role through the fall semester, as we work through this challenging period. He also acknowledged Associate Vice President for Student Affairs Linda Eaton for postponing retirement and continuing in her position.

The president expressed his gratitude to Dr. Balant for serving as presiding officer of the faculty these past four years. The president said Dr. Balant has done a marvelous job guiding the faculty through a change in governance structure to a faculty senate model. He said he was grateful for Dr. Balant's work there and what she brought to the Council as well.

President Christian said that the College has gotten through a difficult spring semester, with final exams ending last Friday. While no one liked the abruptness of the changes the College had to make and the disruption of normal life, the president said he believes things went fairly smoothly. He noted that we have received feedback from students on their learning experiences and how we can make them better if we need to teach and learn remotely in the fall or at another

time. The president said students learned time management and research skills in ways they never had to when they were on campus.

President Christian said that College leadership has continued to engage with student and governance leaders and to try to sustain relationships with students, employees, alumni, and other members of our campus community – all remotely.

The president said that planning for fall semester continues and the College will be submitting draft plans to SUNY for review and comment next week. He noted that the College is still dealing with many unknowns and still operating with the understanding that reopening and what the fall semester will look like will be coordinated with key stakeholders, namely SUNY and the Governor and both state and county health officials. Additionally, reopening will be consistent with regional approaches to restarting the New York economy. The president noted that the Mid-Hudson region is not yet authorized to begin phase 1 of the state's reopening plans.

The president said that the pre-recorded virtual commencement ceremony will launch at 1 PM this Friday, May 22, and be available for a year thereafter. Vice President Wright said that the College will be sending out instructions widely, including to the Council, about how to view the ceremonies within the next day. The president noted that more than 1,000 graduates are registered to participate in the programs. The ceremonies include comments and welcomes from the president, Chancellor Kristina Johnson, Senator Charles Schumer, an outstanding alumnus, student leaders, and at the graduate commencement ceremony from Interim Provost Lyman. The president will formally confer degrees on the graduates. He said that the College is planning live commencement ceremonies for the 2020 graduates in May 2021.

President Christian said that one of the big questions colleges and universities are facing is whether students will continue their educations in the fall. Right now, we are seeing encouraging signs. As Vice President Eaton mentioned, the president said summer enrollments – all courses online – are ahead of last summer. Course registrations for fall by continuing students are also slightly ahead of last year, for both undergraduate and graduate numbers. The president noted that Admissions moved the deposit date for new first-year and transfer students from May 1 to July 1 to give prospective students and parents more time to deal with the ongoing uncertainties. As such, the president said that we expect those numbers to lag behind last year, as they are, but they are growing steadily. The president noted that we are encouraged by these indicators of student interest in our fall semester offerings.

President Christian shared that economic and business recovery in the wake of the pandemic is increasingly a topic of discussion at all levels in New York State and beyond. The president has been part of these discussions in the Mid-Hudson Region through his role as co-chair of the Regional Economic Development Council. While residential college and university campuses present special challenges to be managed if we are to operate safely in traditional teaching/learning modes in a continuing COVID-19 environment, the president noted that it is also the case that we are major economic engines in our regions and across the state. This is a primary reason – beyond sustaining our core educational purpose – that higher education must be included in the priorities for regional recovery. The president said that our State leadership recognizes this: Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul emphasized that point in a recent presentation, and during his April 25 press briefing, Governor Cuomo included “teachers, educators, and

professors” in a long list of personnel categories that would be priorities for testing as testing becomes more available and steps are taken to foster economic recovery. At his daily briefing on May 1, the Governor noted that schools and colleges should be working on reopening plans that factor in social distancing and reduced density.

The president reminded the Council, as institutional governance leaders, that SUNY New Paltz is the largest employer in Ulster County and we have a \$380.5 million annual economic impact on the Hudson Valley economy. College leadership wanted to be sure the Council is aware of these impacts as they advocate with elected officials, business leaders, and members of the public that SUNY New Paltz is an economic asset, not a drain. The president said that he hopes Council members might consider writing to federal elected officials in support of including public higher education in stimulus funding legislation.

Mr. Basch asked if the fall semester will begin in August or may be subject to change. The president said that the College’s planning is predicated on a typical start date. He added that some campuses have talked about earlier start and end dates. The president noted that the College has discussed those options but we have not deviated from the long-planned August start date.

Mr. Basch asked about the status of fall housing for students living on campus. Vice President Blaisdell said that the College has received 850 housing deposits and the portal is open for both new and returning students. Mr. Basch asked if accommodations will be made for more separation between students within residence halls. The president said that the campus is planning that approach as part of ongoing discussions, including helping students understand the importance of continuing public health guidelines regarding the pandemic.

Mr. Basch asked if there are contingency plans for athletic events. President Christian said the NCAA is having discussions about whether fall sports will happen or not.

Mr. Law asked if student orientation will still take place. President Christian said that there will be a virtual orientation and that the work being developed for this program is really impressive.

Mr. Law asked if construction has been impacted on campus. Vice President Halstead said that the College has seen significant curtailment of construction projects. Many projects are on hold due to bonding issues at the state level. All construction activity on residence halls has also been put off until further notice. The vice president noted that there are a few projects moving forward in the Lecture Center, Old Library, and Student Union but we are concerned that we may see disruptions in those projects, too, due to the virus.

Mr. Law asked if there is capacity to do emergency repairs. Vice President Halstead said yes and noted that the work may be handled in-house or contracted out, depending on the issues.

Wrap-Up:

Mr. Basch thanked Dr. Balant for her service as presiding officer.

Mr. Basch adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Winters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard Winters
Director of Community and Government Relations

Student Handbook - Recommended updates for the 2020-21 edition

KEY to colors for reference:

Green highlight = Code Category

Gray highlight: Proposed edits

Page 2 Following last paragraph of the **PREFACE**

Please note that all rules and regulations of the State of New York cited within portions of this document cannot be edited or modified. This includes reference to gendered language, including pronouns. This document has been edited to utilize inclusive language wherever possible.

Page 19-20 **Campus Rules, 23.02 Fire Equipment and Alarms**

No person shall, without authorization, operate or tamper with any fire safety equipment, including but not limited to fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and sprinklers, except for use in emergency situations, and for such purposes for which the equipment was intended, including failing to report or remedy a situation where they have knowledge that someone tampered with fire safety equipment.

Page 21 **Administrative Regulations, 1.09 Alcohol** (new)

Games of chance, drinking games, contests, and other activities that induce, encourage, or result in the rapid consumption of alcohol are prohibited. (e.g. Beer pong, flip cup, etc.)

Page 21 **Administrative Regulations, 2.00 Compliance with Official Requests**

No person shall fail to comply with a legitimate, reasonable, and lawful request or direction by members of the faculty and administrative staff, other employees of the college, or officially recognized volunteers acting in accordance with their official duties, including but not limited to expectations of behavior to ensure public health.

Page 23 **Administrative Regulations, 13.00 Candles/Incense**

The possession of candles, incense (including sage or other burnable products), or plug ins or making candles or open flames at any time are prohibited in all residence halls. Possession of decorative, wickless candles are permitted.

Page 34 **Special Conditions** insert as #3 and adjust other numbers (4-12):

3. Being placed on Disciplinary Probation upon return from a period of Suspension