

College Council Meeting
April 29, 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 3:28 p.m.

Mr. Basch thanked everyone for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and this extraordinarily difficult time. He extended sympathies to those families touched by the crisis and acknowledged the medical personnel who have worked hard to support the community.

Mr. Basch proposed adoption of the minutes of the November 20, 2019, meeting. Dr. Venables moved to accept the minutes, Mr. Law seconded the motion, and they were approved by voice vote.

Speaking about the pandemic, Mr. Basch said that the College will get through this hard and trying time. He recognized the impact on the senior class, but noted that campus leadership and the community have come together to provide the best experience they can for students, including graduates, under these circumstances. Again, Mr. Basch thanked everyone for their continued efforts.

President's Report:

President Christian talked about the amazing way people have come together to create the best experience we can for students this spring under very difficult circumstances and keep College operations running. He expressed his gratitude to the members of the campus community who have risen to the occasion to support and educate New Paltz students and fulfill the College's mission during the crisis.

President Christian noted that the College has made careful and thoughtful communications a priority during this time. He said that we've communicated frequently to keep the community apprised of key developments and impacts on the campus. The president recognized Vice President Wright and Office of Communication and Marketing staff for the thoughtful and creative way they've structured institutional messaging and communicated with constituencies. At the end of March, the College instituted a "Daily Digest" to share all COVID-19-related news in a single daily announcement. (Note: College Council members receive this daily along with other major communications.)

The president said that the College has been thoughtful about sharing stories that demonstrate the ways SUNY New Paltz continues to serve the broader community and region. Those include the

now nearly 17,000 3D printed face shields that the College's Hudson Valley Additive Manufacturing Center created for frontline workers. He added that the Institute for Disaster Mental Health is providing support for the campus and broader community in the area of mental health. And student teachers and other students in the School of Education are working remotely to teach k-12 children in the region and faculty in several departments have been making fabric face coverings.

The president said he heard from the Executive Director of the New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce about the great work that several New Paltz students are doing (virtually) to support area businesses at this difficult time, helping them to learn digital tools to communicate and operate remotely.

On another bright note, President Christian said a recent appeal by Development and Alumni Relations raised now close to \$20,000 for the Student Crisis Fund and the Crossing the Finish Line Fund in the SUNY New Paltz Foundation. Both funds provide support for students encountering unexpected financial challenges. He added that the Foundation has now raised \$21.13 million through "Soaring Higher: The Campaign for SUNY New Paltz" (<https://www.newpaltz.edu/soaringhigher/>), 92% of the campaign goal of \$23 million.

President Christian said that current-year fundraising stands at about \$2.8 million, 94% of the annual \$3 million goal. Vice President Marks updated the Council and noted that by tomorrow morning the Foundation will meet and surpass its fundraising goal for this year. The president said that campus leadership continues to be awed by the commitment of the many donors to SUNY New Paltz – including many faculty, staff, and administrators – and their support for our students and programs, even in these trying economic times.

The president shared that he and other campus leaders have been trying to stay connected with students (virtually) throughout this semester, including through continued meetings with student leaders. He said he speaks with Student Association (SA) president Pink regularly and Interim Provost Lyman talks weekly with the SA Vice President for Academics, Haley Hershenson. The president said that he has conducted two virtual "Hot Chocolate with the President" sessions, joined a conversation with international students, and will be holding a virtual conversation with alumni and friends later this week.

President Christian shared a few updates about the College's budget in lieu of Vice President Halstead's usual report to the Council. He noted it is clear that the economic and financial impact of COVID-19 will have major consequences on SUNY campus budgets and that of other New York State agencies. The state enacted budget for 2020-21 provides the same direct taxpayer support to the campus as last year, but gives the state budget director unprecedented authority to make downward adjustments in budget allocations on a quarterly basis. The president said that the College and other state entities are in a period of extremely tight controls and limits on spending, and expectations to curtail hiring for all but a few categories of positions. The president said that the College and other SUNY campuses have provided analyses and projections of how we would manage our budgets in the face of different hypothetical funding reductions. The campus reports are now being synthesized by SUNY to develop a clear picture of the SUNY system budget situation and the president said he expects to have further and more specific guidance on budget planning in the coming weeks.

President Christian said that campus leadership has been spending a lot of time planning for the fall semester. It is the College's goal and hope to have students, faculty, and staff back on campus for the fall semester teaching seated courses. However, like state and national planning for "reopening" the economy, this timing will be driven by the virus, the course of the pandemic in the coming months, and concerns about human health and disease containment -- not by the College's academic calendar. The president said that any decision we make will follow guidance and directives of the Governor and the New York State and Ulster County Health Departments, and will likely be coordinated across campuses by SUNY administration.

The president noted that the College is developing plans for different scenarios for the fall so that when the picture does become clearer about viable forms of instruction, we are in position to move more quickly to provide the best teaching and learning experience that we can. The options may include having a full complement of students on campus, being totally remote as we are now, or one of several hybrid situations with some students back on campus and some instruction live but some remote. As described in higher education press coverage, the president said most other campuses are in the same situation -- hoping to resume normal operations in the fall but planning for multiple contingencies.

President Christian reminded the Council that a large fraction of the College's revenue comes from tuition and student fees, so the College is heavily enrollment dependent. And there is great uncertainty about what the fall semester will look like, and what factors will drive the decisions that students and parents will make. The president said that the College is seeing some positive signs in its enrollment picture. Our summer enrollments are similar to last year, and graduate enrollments for fall are above last year. The president said that the College delayed the start of fall semester registration for current undergraduate students, so we do not have a good picture yet of returning students. Similarly, we don't have a good reading on numbers of new undergraduate students. The president noted that the enrollment deposit date for fall semester was moved from the traditional May 1 to July 1, so we expect a lag in those numbers. He added that we were forced to cancel the on-campus accepted students open houses, but have developed very compelling and engaging virtual open house materials that were sent recently to nearly 6,800 accepted students. And we are seeing great interest in our virtual general information sessions and individual consultation with accepted students.

The president closed his report by sharing that the faculty have developed and faculty governance has approved a new Bachelor of General Studies online degree program. This is designed as a flexible degree-completion program for those who have completed some college credits. The president said that we began developing this option well before the pandemic, as a way to reach non-traditional age prospective students and help them achieve their educational goals if they are unable to attend a residential campus. Given the COVID-19 disruption that has led so many to lose jobs and alter their personal and professional plans, the president said that we believe this degree completion pathway, with its primarily online delivery model, will be an even more important way for the institution to live its social justice values and meet the educational needs of our communities.

Vice President Wright asked President Christian to clarify that this program is not yet live. The president confirmed that a number of steps remain in the approval process through SUNY and the state and that we're hoping for prompt review of the program. Mr. Basch asked about

program design and its targeted market. For program appeal, the president said we were thinking about people who have moved around in their lives, attended some college, and just never finished their degree. This program offers a convenient online way to earn the degree.

Mr. Basch asked if summer classes would be held on campus. The president confirmed that all classes will be remote via distance learning and instruction.

Mr. Basch asked if there has been any fall semester pre-planning for the layout of residence halls, lecture spaces, etc. The president said that the College is preparing for multiple scenarios for the fall semester. He noted that the College's residential capacity could support 394 rooms with individual bathrooms, if in the extreme case the College needed to provide individual rooms for all of its students. Vice President Blaisell added that the College has a very limited number of housing available for the summer session, including for about 30 international students and other students who may have no safe place to go. She said this housing will be made available through a vetted process.

Mr. Basch asked how many students are living on campus this semester. Vice President Blaisdell said 173 by last count.

Mr. Basch asked how many students, faculty and staff have been impacted by the virus. President Christian and Interim Provost Lyman said there are 29 positive cases across students faculty, and staff.

Mr. Basch asked Ms. Pink about her spring semester experience and how she is staying connected with friends. Ms. Pink said that she is feeling the loss of this semester and not being able to finish out senior year with her friends. Ms. Pink shared that she participates in a video call every Friday with her friends to stay connected virtually. While it's not the same as in-person interactions, she noted that everyone is trying to do the best they can with the situation. Ms. Pink said that the College's decision to hold a rescheduled in-person Commencement celebration in May 2021 brought relief to many graduating seniors, as they felt that a virtual ceremony this year would not replace a future in-person gathering.

Mr. Basch asked President Christian to provide details about the virtual commencement ceremonies. The president said the College is planning virtual undergraduate and graduate commencement ceremonies and is working with a third-party company to help support these. The virtual ceremonies will not replace a rescheduled in-person Commencement celebration in May 2021 for the August 2019, December 2019 and January 2020 graduates, and May 2020 and August 2020 candidates. Each virtual commencement ceremony will include brief, pre-recorded Commencement speeches broadcast in accessible formats, verbal announcements of each individual graduate's name, and customizable slides featuring personal recognition, photos and messages from each graduate. The president said that he will preside over the ceremony in full academic regalia and confer all degrees virtually. He noted that the valedictorian will provide a video for the undergraduate ceremony, and Interim Provost Lyman would provide remarks for the graduate ceremony.

President Christian said that the ceremonies will be made available on May 22 to give graduates more time to submit information for their individual slides. Vice President Wright said that First World Graduation opted to not hold a virtual ceremony for their program but the president of the

student organization will be speaking and plans to submit a video for the undergraduate ceremony. She said that there will also be a special greeting from Ed Carroll, a 1985 New Paltz alumnus and COO of AMC Networks, who will return in May 2021 to give a more traditional address to the Class of 2020.

Wrap-Up:

Mr. Basch said that the next Council meeting is scheduled for May 20.

Mr. Basch adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Winters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Winters
Director of Community and Government Relations