

FARMINGDALE STATE COLLEGE
College Council Meeting - In person Quintyne Hall room 100
or
Virtual via TEAMS
December 6, 2023

Councilmembers present in person: Patricia Hill Williams, Jim Durant, Robert Sweeney, David Curry, Paul Caroleo, Destini Buchanan

Councilmembers attending virtually: Randi Shubin Dresner, Ralia Polechronis

College Administration: John Nader, Laura Joseph, Greg O'Connor, Matt Colson, Kevin Jordan, Carolyn Fedder

Guests: Frank Rampello, Lloyd Makarowitz, Sarah Gross, Brett Southard

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 10:00am. She entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/20 and 10/30 meetings. Councilmember Durant made a motion and councilmember Sweeney seconded.

Motion carried.

Chair's Report: Dr. Williams said she was disappointed with the turnout at the October ACT Conference. She appreciated that Councilmembers Sweeney and Durant were there to represent FSC. Chancellor King spoke at the opening and gave a presentation on the goals and mission for SUNY as it approaches its 75 year anniversary. Friday's morning session was related to how SUNY and New York State are responding to the national attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion. After that, a panel on mental health services addressed the issues that many campuses are facing as a result of COVID and the impact it has had on students. In response to councilmembers' requests, a panel on veterans' affairs presented on the programs and services that SUNY has for veteran students. Chair Williams pointed out that the Chancellor King visited FSC to meet with veteran students recently and Newsday did an article on it. A Farmingdale student was one of five who received the ACT scholarship, and Chair Williams said his speech was very well received. To address concerns about the lack understanding that councilmembers have of their responsibilities, a slide presentation was shown and the ACT handbook was distributed once again. Dr. Williams emphasized the important advocacy and advisory roles that council members play. She added that the ACT Executive Board sent out a survey for feedback around topics and location for the next conference and asked council members to respond to it. In concluding her report she asked councilmembers to try and attend campus events to show support for the students, faculty and staff.

President's Report: President Nader informed the Council that the State of New York owns an 8 acre parcel of land at the intersection of Route 110 and Melville Rd. There is growing interest in identifying space that can be used for appropriate forms of housing where there is demand. Empire State Development, the SUNY construction fund, and representatives from the Governor's office have discussed addressing housing shortages for people who work in our area and serving the interests of the College. The Town of Babylon and Senator Martinez are in support, but we are in very early

conversations. There is a possibility that some units would be reserved for new faculty and staff and that income will be brought to the College. It is not planned that students will be housed at this site. Currently, only a barn and a lot of undergrowth and brush exists at the location. A survey is being done of the area. Chair Williams inquired as to whether this is related to the Governor's affordable housing initiative. Dr. Nader replied that money might be available from the Long Island Investment Fund (LIIF), and that certain guidelines on income eligibility and minimum number of units must be met, and that LIIF money would be for infrastructure not the actual building. Should the project move forward, the Farmingdale Development Corporation would be utilized to set up a prime ground lease and a then a private developer would build on the land. As this is public land we are exempt from some requirements so that permission isn't needed from the town or neighbors.

Councilmember Caroleo inquired as to the status of the lease agreement with Dynamic Lacrosse. VP for Administration and Finance, Greg O'Connor said that SUNY general counsel is reviewing the draft ground lease and we are working to get insurance for the parcel itself and also directors' and officers' coverage. Once the ground lease is approved at the state level we can start to have conversations and negotiations about what we will be paid to us.

Dr. Nader reported that Chancellor King has agreed to attend and speak at the Legislative Breakfast in January. Dr. Nader will give an abbreviated presentation as well.

Mr. O'Connor and VP for Development, Matt Colson have been making arrangements to move the foundation and alumni staff into the Smart Energy House. Improvements have been made and offices and restrooms have been added. It will provide a welcoming space to meet with alums and donors and is accessible and has ample parking.

Dr. Nader informed that some SUNYs are facing significant financial and staffing challenges. He cautioned that we cannot take our strong enrollment and ability to make investments for granted. A new Vice President for Enrollment Management, Rowan Howell, has been hired. He is coming to us from SUNY Maritime effective January 31, 2024.

The Student Code of Conduct was distributed to the Council earlier in the fall. Dean of Students, Frank Rampello and VP for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence, Kevin Jordan and have worked along with legal counsel for about three years to update this document. Mr. Rampello said that the representational task force tried to do away with unnecessarily adversarial processes and provide opportunities to make referrals for lower offenses. There was emphasis placed on sexual violence and prevention response and attention was paid to more contemporary behaviors like social media harassment and zoom bombing. It is written in a less confusing style, defines unfamiliar terms, and links to relevant procedures and resources options within the appendices. Mr. Caroleo asked how students will get exposure to the Code of Conduct and if there was a way to share just the highlights on a placard as a quick reference for students. Mr. Rampello replied that it is shared at orientation as part of onboarding and is readily available on the website. Unfortunately, most students don't bother familiarizing themselves until after they have an issue. Dr. Nader said a summary on laminated card stock or flipbook might be made available. Councilmember Dresner suggested distributing the Table of Contents with a little more information about the different sections so at least students view that. She also asked if we had an Ombudsman office or somebody to stand with students while they are going through the procedures. Mr. Rampello said that much is de-escalated by his office staff by having a culture of empathy and understanding. There is a college prevention specialist and an addictions counselor on staff and an MOU in place with Suffolk County Crime Victims Center where money is set aside for advisors of choice for accused students and alleged

victims. The more serious accusations are adjudicated by a board of volunteers who have been trained by the SUNY Student Code of Conduct Institute. Students have a prehearing meeting with a staff member so that they are aware of the procedures and the resources available to them. Ms. Dresner said she thought that procedures and resources available to accused students should be provided in the document and reiterated that having an impartial officer on campus to advocate for students would be beneficial. Councilmember Polechronis had concerns about confidentiality breaches especially in incidents of sexual assault. Mr. Rampello said that the Department of Education does require that a single hearing board officer make acknowledgement of confidentiality. Student councilmember Buchanan said that perhaps referencing the Code of Conduct on the E boards and social media would get the word to students. She recommended that the Dean of Students staff put their pictures on the website to become familiar to students so they feel more comfortable reporting an issue. Dean Rampello said that there is a new conduct reporting portal that all members of the campus can use to report a concern electronically. Issues would then be funneled to the appropriate area for response. This tool will be available in spring of 2024 and allow us to have centralized data and a record of all reported incidents.

Dr. Williams entertained a motion to accept the Student Code of Conduct as presented. Mr. Durant made a motion and Ms. Dresner seconded.

Motion carried.

Ms. Polechronis, being a lawyer and litigator, volunteered to act as an advisor and as such, would be able to push on the Council's concerns when reviewing documents with our counsel. Ms. Dresner asked for follow up at upcoming meetings on the suggestions and comments made today regarding the Student Code of Conduct. Mr. Rampello expressed that he believes that moving forward the document should be reviewed annually and amended with any necessary updates.

Other Business: Chair Williams expressed condolences on behalf of the Council to Council member Curry on the passing of his father, Thomas Curry. Mr. Curry extended his family's gratitude to the councilmembers for their kindness and thanked them for sending food to his home.

Dr. Williams reminded all about the presidential search. RPA has been conducting listening sessions and has distributed a survey so all have opportunities to share input and participate. There is also a webpage set up that provides additional information.

Chair Williams reminded all about Commencement on December 19 and asked all to try and attend. As there was no other business, she asked for a motion for adjournment. Mr. Caroleo made a motion and Mr. Sweeney seconded.

The **meeting adjourned** at 11:07 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Fedder

Approved February 7, 2024