



## **December 2023 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Present:** Council Members:

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

Administration:

Wole Soboyejo, Wayne Westervelt, Marybeth Lyons, Mark Montgomery, and Dan Sargent

Shared Governance: Adam McLain

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Destito convened the Public Meeting at 4:07 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the College Council meeting. The meeting was held in-person with Zoom access available. \*Four College Council members participated in the meeting virtually.

### **Approval of Minutes**

***A motion was made by Mitchell Ford and seconded by William Thickstun to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2023, meeting as presented. All were in favor.***

### **President's Report:**

Dr. Soboyejo stated that it was hard to believe that 70 days had already passed since he began as President of SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly), and he provided an overview of highlights from the past two months.

Dr. Soboyejo reported on NYS Governor Hochul's visit to campus on November 17<sup>th</sup> to announce the State's \$44 million investment in SUNY Poly, which brought a large number of guests, state and regional elected officials, and media representatives to the campus.

SUNY Poly has been reaching out the next generation of college students and hosting programming to inspire them. In November SUNY Poly was the host site for the inaugural Women in Manufacturing Summit, which was organized with Utica's Proctor High School and the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY). This event brought 100 female students in grades 10 – 12 to campus to hear from industry professionals, tour the Danfoss facility adjacent to campus, and tour SUNY Poly's CGAM laboratory facilities in the College of Engineering in Donovan Hall. Dr. Soboyejo reported that Heather Hage, the Executive Director of the Griffiss Institute, made a very inspiring speech to these students at that event. He also



noted that through this type of collaborative work with MACNY and local and regional school districts, SUNY Poly is strengthening those partnerships.

President Soboyejo provided updates on other partnership development activities from the past two months, including meetings with leadership from the Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI) in Utica, and a joint meeting at MVCC between Presidents Soboyejo and VanWagoner and members of their respective cabinets that was very productive and provided action items and potential ideas for further collaborative efforts between the two institutions. President Soboyejo also updated the group on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> on-campus meeting with representatives of US Senator Charles Schumer's Syracuse office, a campus visit on November by representatives of Empire State Development regarding the potential for a \$10 million investment in SUNY Poly, and a session hosted on campus that was part of a series of state-wide meetings organized by Senator Schumer's staff to discuss the US CHIPS Act and how New York State is responding to opportunities under that act.

The President provided a breakdown of the components of the five-year strategic plan that SUNY Poly is currently working on, including an outline of next steps in the process of finalizing that plan and submitting it to SUNY. He clarified that the number of goals that form the main pillars of the structure of the plan had been streamlined down from five to four goals, and he emphasized the upcoming January 12<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning event on campus that will involve interaction with the campus community (faculty, staff, and students) and external partners from across the region and the state, to garner input for refining and finalizing an effective and inclusive strategic plan.

### Enrollment by the Numbers:

Dr. Soboyejo provided an overview of enrollment data, reporting that transfer applications for the fall 2024 semester are up by 19.6% from the previous year, noting that in particular the College of Engineering had an "uptick" in transfer applications of 54.5% from the previous year. The President also reported that first-year applications for the fall 2024 semester are up by 20.4% from the previous year, and made clear that the focus now is on maximizing the enrollment yields from those increased numbers of applications.

Dr. Soboyejo updated the Council on collaborations and communications with regional community colleges, specifically Onondaga Community College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Hudson Valley Community College, and Herkimer County Community College. He described the joint pathways initiatives being developed with these schools to enhance their capacities as feeder institutions for enrollment at SUNY Poly. The President stated that the key to strengthening these partnerships and to creating an elevated "Path to Poly" seamless transfer program lies in relationship building and raising the visibility of these partnerships, and in backing these initiatives up with marketing and scholarship funds. He referred to an integrated strategic marketing plan the College is working on for the spring semester that will support and promote these transfer pathways, and led the Council in reviewing a 20-second promotional video on seamless transfer pathways to SUNY Poly.



Investing in Our Workforce:

Dr. Soboyejo reviewed some ongoing and upcoming searches:

- Provost
- VP for Student Affairs
- VP for Human Resources
- Dean of the College of Engineering
- Dean of the College of Business
- Dean of the College of Health Sciences
- Director of Athletics
- Director of University Marketing and Communications
- Assistant VP for Business Affairs
- Associate Provost for Enrollment Management

He also reviewed recent promotions and appointments:

- Dr. Andrew Russell, Interim Provost (appointment)
- Dr. Mark Montgomery, VP for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (promotion)
- Jennifer Adams, Interim VP for Student Affairs (appointment)

The President expressed his appreciation for faculty members' input during the process for making these appointment and promotion decisions. Dr. McLain thanked the President for asking the faculty members to be a part of that process and provide their perspectives and input.

Dr. Soboyejo also noted the retirements of two senior administrators after considerable tenures at SUNY Poly:

- Marybeth Lyons, after 33 years of service
- Maryrose Raab, after 28 years of service

Responding to the Closing of the College of St. Rose:

Dr. Soboyejo stated that SUNY Poly was responding to the announced closing of the College of St. Rose (COSR) through multi-pronged outreach. The team is reaching out to COSR students to see if they are interested in opportunities here. In particular, coaches from Athletics are reaching out to COSR coaches and student athletes to offer support for those students in taking advantage of such opportunities. SUNY Poly is also reaching out to COSR employees to make them aware of employment opportunities here they may be interested in applying for. The President assured the Council that he will keep them posted as these efforts continue.

The President offered his congratulations to College Council chair, RoAnn Destito, on her being re-elected to the Executive Committee of the SUNY Association of Council Members and College Trustees (ACT).



## Additional Highlights:

Dr. Soboyejo noted a number of faculty and college highlights, including:

- Drs. Boylan, Yucel, and Jofre co-authored a chapter in a recently published book that details the Collaborative Interactive Tabletop for Education (CITE)
- Dr. Robert Edgel of the College of Arts and Sciences coordinates the Mohawk Valley Region's annual business plan competition.
- The College of Engineering received a \$10,000 SUNY IITG Grant for facilitating the development of Civil Engineering Tech courses in Hyflex Model, allowing instruction in these courses to be offered simultaneously online and in-person.
- The College of Health Sciences in collaboration with AmeriCU and with support from the SUNY Poly Foundation received scholarships for nursing students.
- The Foundation coordinated the Kevin Grimmer court dedication ceremony, which was a very moving event.
- The Foundation also worked with Student Government to create the "Career Closet" that provides professional apparel for SUNY Poly students who lack the resources to purchase their own for job interviews and employment situations.

Dr. Soboyejo provided some updates on Athletics, congratulating the men's soccer team on their outstanding season and winning the NAC Championship. He also announced that starting in the 2024-2025 academic year, SUNY Poly Athletics would compete as a member of the Empire 8 Athletic Conference. This change will allow our student athletes to continue to participate in high-level competition, while competing against teams that are closer to our campus community, which will help enhance their college experience at SUNY Poly.

The President debuted for the Council a new holiday video that the Communications team worked with him to create that would be distributed soon. He thanked the Council for all its support over the past two months and stated that he has truly found community here at SUNY Poly. Council Chair Destito thanked the President for hitting the ground running and for getting things moving.

## Middle States/Reaccreditation Update:

Dr. Montgomery reported that the working groups that are developing the College's self-study document are actively meeting and are, in fact, ahead of schedule for the outcomes they identified and targeted. He reported on focus areas that were covered at the Middle States annual conference in Philadelphia that he had attended earlier in the month, including discussions regarding microcredentials and certification programming, the pros and cons of different learning platforms, such as hybrid instructional platforms, and current key trends in higher education. Dr. Montgomery also noted that the development of the self-study was being implemented at the same time that the college is working on finalizing its new five-year strategic plan, and that the two processes are complementary to one another.



**Student Representative Update:**

Nicholas Rossi reported on activities the SGU organized, including the ABC Career Clothing Closet, and Professional Development Day and Leadership Development Day events for students. Mr. Rossi reported that there had been strong representation from SUNY Poly at the fall SUNY SA Conference, with 15 SUNY Poly students attending. He also reported on SGU's involvement in campus initiatives for establishing an e-sports arena, and for purchasing Wellness Vending machines for the campus.

Mr. Rossi also provided updates for on-campus and off-campus activities offered for students to take part in. These included organized trips to Salem and to New York City, free movie showings, Winter Fest 2023, Casino Night, the traditional Late Night Breakfast the week before final exams, Diwali 2023 celebration/observance, the Walk to End Domestic Violence, and a fall Career Fair that featured 90 local and regional employers for SUNY Poly students to network with.

Student highlights presented during the meeting focused on Dr. Ibrahim Yucel and students from his Interactive Media and Game Design program Representing SUNY Poly at the Video Game Developer Expo in Albany, NY, and Electrical Engineering student Isaac Martin's travel to Venice, Italy, to present his group research at the 2023 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Conference.

Mr. Rossi also reviewed athletic updates from the fall semester, highlighting the dedication of the basketball court to Kevin Grimmer, the men's soccer team's North Atlantic Conference Championship and historic 13-6 record, the women's soccer team's first place in the West Division, and the hiring of men's volleyball head coach, Daniel Short.

**Shared Governance/Faculty Update:**

Dr. McLain reported that updates to the faculty governance by-laws reflected SUNY Poly's split from the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE), and that the Governance Council, which had been been a joint body with CNSE, was dissolved. Dr. McLain also reported that the faculty governance website was also being updated accordingly.

Dr. McLain informed the College Council members that a streamlined reporting form for classroom technology problems was being worked on to allow for such issues to be addressed more quickly, and that he was talking with Auxiliary Services in regard to prices for food on campus to make sure they are fair. He reported that this year's Holiday Luncheon had a record number of attendees – 152 – which he took as a good sign of the current positive spirit among faculty and staff.



No executive session was called during this meeting.

Chair Destito reminded the College Council members that there would be a joint holiday reception following adjournment of the meeting with the members of the Foundation Board. Chair Destito also reminded the College Council members that the February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting would be entirely virtual. She asked for a reminder of the date of this year's Commencement (Daniel Sargent: Saturday, May 4, 2024).

Keith Levatino asked SUNY Poly leadership to consider visiting the Little Falls School District, which is a STEM and STEAM aligned district. President Soboyejo responded that they would be happy to come out there and discuss partnership and collaborative ideas with LFSD. Chair Destito commented that SUNY Poly should engage in such outreach and connections with other local and regional school districts as well. She stated that both the Utica and Rome city school districts were going to be hiring new superintendents, so the timing was good to act on such opportunities. Nicholas Rossi added that SGU could help identify and recruit students from appropriate academic programs to be part of these visits and outreach.

**Adjournment**

***Chair Destito requested a motion to adjoin. A motion was made by Bill Thickstun and seconded by Mitchell Ford. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Sargent