



February 2024 COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2024*

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council Members:

RoAnn Destito-Chair, Darlene Burns, William Thickstun, Chris Giruzzi, Keith Levatino, and Nicholas Rossi

Administration:

Wole Soboyejo, Wayne Westervelt, Mark Montgomery, Andrew Russell, Andrea LaGatta, Jennifer Adams, Michele Kilburn, and Dan Sargent

Shared Governance: Ron Sarner

**The February 2024 meeting of the College Council was a virtual-only meeting on the Zoom platform. All participants took part remotely.*

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Destito convened the Public Meeting at 4:06 p.m. and welcomed all participants to the College Council meeting and wished everyone a happy Valentine's Day.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by William Thickstun and seconded by Keith Levatino to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting as presented. Approval was unanimous.

President's Report:

Dr. Soboyejo reported on the January 12th Strategic Planning Day event on campus that involved a large number of both internal and external stakeholders. He stated that it was a successful event and that there was a lot of good, positive energy in the feedback sessions he attended, as well as at the luncheon that capped off the day. An alumnus of the University, Charles Green, was among the speakers at the luncheon and provided a highlight for the day when he said that the education he received at SUNY Polytechnic Institute helped him build a tech company that now handles \$1Billion contracts with the federal government.

Dr. Soboyejo reported that the January 12th event was followed up by a student-focused strategic planning event on February 6th that was attended by over 60 students and that had a high level of engagement among those participants. As on January 12th, the February 6th event produced a great deal of valuable and useful feedback for finalizing the University's strategic plan.



President Soboyejo provided background and a timeline for the University's strategic planning process, starting with the initial phase back in December 2022. He acknowledged the foundational work led by Dr. Andrew Russell in his capacity as Officer-in-Charge for SUNY Poly during that first year of activities, which was so crucial for the success of the University's strategic planning efforts.

The President reviewed the plan for his first 100 days in office, noting the commitments it made to serving students, staff, the campus, and the community. He highlighted the collaborative work with SGU on identifying a space for creating a new esports arena on campus that was to be commissioned within the next two weeks. He referred to the hiring of new staff members, particularly in key leadership level positions, and team building activities to help further strengthen staffing, including the broad and consistent inclusion of staff in the strategic planning process. In the community, the President emphasized the ongoing development and nurturing of strong, strategic partnerships. In this latter area he highlighted in particular joint Cabinet/senior leadership meetings with MVCC, Onondaga Community College, and Herkimer College, and valuable meetings, site visits, and tours with Giotto Enterprises/Fiber Instrument Sales, Inc., Danfoss, the Griffiss Institute, and an upcoming meeting with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL).

President Soboyejo spoke to the Council about enhancing connections with regional community colleges and building structures to support their graduates continuing their education at SUNY Poly. He highlighted the "Path to Poly" initiative, and asked Chief of Staff/VP for External Relations Wayne Westervelt to provide some background in this effort. Wayne informed the group that the "Path to Poly" initiative was supported with funds out of the SUNY Transformation Fund and had the goal of building even more robust partnerships with four of SUNY Poly's main "feeder" community colleges: Mohawk Valley Community College, Onondaga Community College, Hudson Valley Community College, and Herkimer County Community College. This initiative will be promoted through a digital marketing and billboard campaign and is designed to impact the enrollment yield from these colleges for the fall 2024 semester. "Path to Poly" will also raise SUNY Poly's profile and increase awareness of our institution and its programs both regionally and throughout the state. There are two key events coming up: this spring semester there will be an on-campus session for staff from these community colleges to help clarify for them the pathways open for their students to enrolling in and successfully completing bachelor's level degrees at SUNY Poly; and in the fall 2024 semester there will be an inaugural annual symposium on campus, focusing on students from these community colleges meeting with SUNY Poly alumni to discuss pathways for their success. This symposium will serve as a recruiting event for SUNY Poly.

Dr. Soboyejo updated the College Council members on international student recruitment efforts, highlighting marketing efforts that are currently underway in Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria. He also reviewed an international recruiting trip to India that took place in January and February, which focused on revitalizing SUNY Poly's enrollment from that country, and also served as a mentoring/training opportunity for International Admissions Counselor Willjavian



Dawson. Dr. Soboyejo noted that international student enrollment efforts will have a special focus geared toward graduate programs.

The President raised the subject of this year's annual Day of Giving fundraising initiative being run by the Foundation. Updates for the College Council members included the date for this year's event, outcomes from last year's effort, and plans and goals for this year's outcomes. The aim is to surpass last year's fundraising results by \$15,000 - \$20,000, and to implement a robust outreach plan to encourage contributions and drive results toward those goals.

Dr. Soboyejo reviewed recent personnel updates. Internal updates included Andrea LaGatta's promotion to Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Dr. Rafael Romero's acceptance of the role of Interim Dean of the College of Business; and Alicia Foster's acceptance of the role of Interim Associate Provost for Enrollment Management. New hires included John Czarnecki as Director of Athletics; Michele Kilburn as Vice President/Chief Human Resources Officer; Katelyn DeCastro as Director of Student Accessibility Services; and Sara Furlong as Director of University Marketing and Communications.

Enrollment by the Numbers:

Dr. Soboyejo provided an overview of enrollment data, noting that year-to-year undergraduate transfer increased by 26% from spring 2023 to spring 2024 (80 vs. 101, respectively). 18 out of 25 SUNY Transformation Fund scholarships were offered and deposited, a 72% yield, and the total combined undergraduate/graduate spring 2024 headcount was 2,530.

The President reviewed dates in the spring semester for Accepted Student days and plans for a bus trip to bring potential students from New York City to campus, and discussed some issues connected with the rollout of the FAFSA Simplification Act that are resulting in delays in that process that SUNY is working to address.

Dr. Soboyejo provided updates from the University's four colleges, including faculty research publication in the College of Arts and Sciences, grants awarded to faculty members in the College of Engineering for their research pursuits, and the College of Business's extended accreditation for another five years by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). He noted that AACSB accreditation is "the hallmark of excellence in business education" that is achieved by only around five percent of business schools around the world. He also referred to the White Coat Ceremony in the College of Health Sciences, in which approximately 90 graduate nursing students participated to mark the completion of the instructional phase of their degree program and the start of the clinical practice phase.

The President concluded his report with announcing the date for the spring 2024 Commencement ceremony (Saturday, May 4th at 10am for the College of Engineering, and at 2pm for the other three colleges), encouraging all College Council members to attend and join in the celebration of our students' accomplishments, if they are available.



Council chair, RoAnn Destito, asked for an update on SUNY Poly's applications for new graduate programs. Interim Provost Dr. Russell provided the Council with an update on the status of the new graduate programs the colleges are working on establishing.

Middle States/Reaccreditation Update:

Dr. Russell informed the Council members that the subcommittees and the steering committee for the University's reaccreditation efforts have been reinvigorated with new personnel and are making good progress toward the goal of completing the rough draft of the self-study document by May. He reviewed the timeline for the self-study/reaccreditation process, noting that the self-study draft would be refined over the summer and the start of the fall 2024 semester, with a due date to Middle States in October, and a spring 2025 campus visit by a Middle States-appointed review team. Dr. Russell highlighted the good work and contributions to the self-study process of the Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Carlie Phipps, and the Administrative Assistant to the Provost, Wendy Lansing.

Shared Governance/Faculty Update:

Due to Dr. Adam McLain being unavailable to take part in the meeting, Dr. Ron Sarner agreed to take his place and provide the updates for this portion of the meeting. Dr. Sarner spoke to the group about transfer credit policy, noting that SUNY did not have a strong record with transfers historically, but that the numbers have grown over the years, and that the funding formula now "treats transfer students well." He also reported that general education credits transfer well, but that there were still some "glitches in the margins" that were being addressed. One particular example he noted was that the Academic Affairs division was looking again at the policy regarding the transfer of credits for courses completed with a grade lower than a 'C.' Council chair Destito noted that transfer credit is a problem throughout the state.

Student Representative Update:

Nicholas Rossi reported on the SGU's work with President Soboyejo to establish an esports arena on campus (in the 24-hour computer lab in Kunsela Hall across from the UPD office), and the SGU's work on stipends and roles for the positions on its Cabinet. Nick stated that they were looking to meet with the Interim Provost about proposed changes that are intended to make those positions more "flexible." Nick stated that SGU President Bailey Wadsworth was leading efforts to update and improve the Welcome Center in Kunsela Hall to make it a more effective programming space, and said that this was still a work in progress. Nick announced that executive elections for the SGU would start on February 15th, and reviewed a list of activities and events for students, both on campus and off campus, that were organized by the SGU.



College Council chair Destito thanked Nick for the consistent thoroughness of his reports.

Council member Chris Giruzzi asked Nick if he thought any SUNY Poly students would be interested in observing mental health court proceedings on Tuesdays. He thought that it could be valuable for students in certain programs to be able to see how the court team functions. Council chair Destito stated that Interim Dean of the College of Health Sciences Dr. Joanne Joseph would no doubt be interested in getting this information to students in her college in the psychology and sociology programs. President Soboyejo and Interim Provost Russell both agreed that Dr. Joseph would be glad to receive this information and this opportunity for students in her college.

No executive session was called during this meeting.

Adjournment

Chair Destito requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Darlene Burns and seconded by William Thickstun. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Sargent