

University Council Minutes - December 8, 2023, 1:00pm

*Three publicly noticed locations were used:

4 Park Ave. New York, NY 10016

2875 Union Road, Suite 34, Cheektowaga, NY 14227

2 Union Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Presiding Meeting: Chairperson John Maggiore and President Lisa Vollendorf

Members Present*: John Maggiore, Donna Luh, Patricia Salkin, Naomi Campbell

Administrative Staff: Anthony Amiano, Xiomara Giordano, Douglas Gruse, Rebecca Flinker

**We did not have quorum, so the meeting was not officially called to order and minutes from the previous meeting were not approved.*

- I. Report of the University President – Dr. Lisa Vollendorf
 - a. Welcome Anthony, Xiomara, and Naomi!
 - b. Report out from SUNY regarding enrollments was focused on first-time, full-time enrollments. Since this is not the main demographic we serve, the lack of context makes Empire present very poorly.
 - i. Empire is beginning to frame for others what it means to serve students at all stages
 - ii. And we are advocating to SUNY to recognize our uniqueness
 - c. Significant increase in raising our public profile with interviews/articles
 - d. Recently opened Veteran and Military Resource Center (VMRC) at 111 West Ave in Saratoga Springs
 - i. We are advocating for government recognition to be designated as a Veteran Resource Center as part of the Vet Success on Campus (VSOC). We would be the third in NYS
 - e. Launched crowd-funding campaign for lab kits for students
 - i. This would cover what would be considered a “lab fee” at other institutions
 - f. SUNY is due to submit a financial sustainability and enrollment outlook report on 1/6/23
 - i. We submitted our portion of that report (academic portfolio, modalities, shared services)
 - ii. Projecting out to 2029, Empire would have a \$13M deficit if nothing changes
 - iii. SUNY is hoping to use this information as a tool to examine potential increases to tuition
 - iv. 9 SUNY campuses have been identified as financially distressed
 - v. Rational tuition policy expired in 2016/17 and is not on SUNY’s legislative agenda currently
 - vi. SUNY’s focus is on Veteran Tuition Award (VTA) program, TAP, and state-negotiated raises to be funded
- II. Report of the Senate Chair – Thalia MacMillan
 - a. See attached written report
 - b. Senate has met twice since our last meeting, including this morning (12/8/23)
 - c. Two policies came up:
 - i. Graduate time limit for PhD program
 - ii. Revision to graduate admission policy
 - d. Bylaw revisions will be brought to the assembly in March 2024
 - e. SUNY Transfer Path Working Group will have more to share soon
- III. Report of the Student Government President – Em Wasserman
 - a. See attached written report
 - b. SGA is still relatively new, and they just created a bylaws committee and handed in articles of association and bylaw amendments for approval

- c. There is a struggle to meet with everyone in one space but there is increased student engagement in general and we are seeing opportunities to grow leadership skills
- d. SGA is currently looking for a secretary and treasurer and is creating an elections committee

IV. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Xiomara Giordano, Chief Diversity Officer

- a. Xiomara has been visiting campuses (8 so far, 2 more next week) and creating opportunities to meet staff and faculty online as well
 - i. Strategize how we can work together to create an inclusive environment for our students
 - ii. Xiomara will share executive summary with Chief of Staff and President upon completion of meetings
- b. Interim CDO and DEI council created DEI action plan
- c. Xiomara has requested 3 actionable items from each sub committee of the DEI Council

V. Marketing – Douglas Gruse, Chief Marketing Officer

- a. A PowerPoint presentation was shared, including videos from the “How you do University” campaign
- b. Doug’s work started with a Marketing Assessment and creating baselines for tracking effectiveness
- c. Marketing has been prioritizing using data to make decisions
- d. Website
 - i. We have noticed an increase in stealth applications (no communication with the institution beforehand, students are doing their own research) – it is important to make it easy for prospectives to find what they need
 - ii. Focus on homepage, military/veterans, explaining the prior learning assessment, Autism/neurodiversity, and transfers
 - iii. **User Testing** - samples of target audiences to review and react to our resources
 - iv. **BRIGHTEDGE** - Search Engine Optimization, how we connect to Google, competitive analysis
 - v. RFP out for brand new website that will be predictive and customized to each visitor
 - vi. Assessing our target audiences
 - We are skewing younger
 - Millennials and Generation Z
 - Students who attended high school online during the pandemic
 - vii. Geodemographics – putting more money into population centers (without ignoring rural areas)
 - viii. **Miller Advertising Agency**, raised to \$1.5M from last year’s \$1.3M (digital media buy)
 - ix. Reserving \$100,000 for Military/Veterans community
 - Reviewing plan with VMRC Director – strategizing to best reach this demographic
 - x. Additional funds for Community College Transfers
 - xi. Owning that we are SUNY’s leading online university
 - xii. Authentic story-telling: How YOU do University campaign - 19 interviews so far

VI. Notice of Upcoming Events

December 9, 2023	Winter Commencement, Albany (252 students RSVPed)
May 3, 2024	Spring Commencement, Albany
May 9, 2024	Spring Commencement, Rochester
May 17, 2024	Spring Commencement, Manhattan/HVASLS

VII. **Members: please send availability to Anthony Amiano for 2024 meetings**

All University Council meetings are webcast live and archived for viewing on the Empire State University website in accordance with a December 2015 mandate from the Office of the Governor of New York. This month’s recording is cut off at the beginning, missing the start of the President’s report. Thank you.