COUNCIL MINUTES
April 20, 2018

Present from Council: Linda Biemer, Kathryn Grant Madigan, Dennis McCabe, James Orband, and Adam Wilkes

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Ms. Benner, Mr. Delviscio, Mr. Edouard, Mr. Elliott, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fatima, Ms. Fauci, Chief Faughnan, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Kane, Prof. Karp, Mr. Parker, Mr. McClure, Ms. Mthombeni, Ms. O’Neil, Provost Nieman, Vice President Navarro, Prof. Pitarresi, Vice President Rose, Ms. Sager, Ms. Scarlett, Prof. Starks, Ms. Thompson, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:20 a.m. on Friday, April 20, 2018 by chair Kathryn Grant Madigan.

The minutes of March 9, 2018 were approved.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

President Stenger reported that this has been the most difficult month in Binghamton University’s history. On March 9, student Haley Anderson died in a homicide in an off-campus apartment. On April 15, student Joao Souza was stabbed to death in the Mountainview residential community. A memorial service will be held for Joao on Monday, April 23. We have lost two very special students. We have provided a FAQ page on the University’s website to answer questions about the incident.

At a special event held in New York City, we recognized some of Binghamton’s most accomplished alumni. Two local individuals were honored – Binghamton City Mayor Richard David, and Dr. Charles Aswad.

On March 14 President Stenger attended the Graduate Student Excellence Awards to recognize the University’s best graduate students for their work in teaching, research, and scholarship, and service and outreach to the community.
The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities held a special ceremony to recognize 15 faculty and staff for their work helping students with disabilities succeed in their academic careers. At the ceremony, students with disabilities spoke about their experiences and the relationships that they have established with their faculty mentors and advocates.

We will hold nine commencement ceremonies this May. We have added a ceremony on Friday morning for students celebrating Shabbat who are unable to attend their regular ceremony.

Admitted Students Open Houses are being held. Last weeks’ event saw a record attendance with more than 3,700 students and family members in attendance.

We are ahead on student deposits as of this time last year – we expect 2650 freshmen and 150 transfer students this fall. The quality of this year’s class is good; SAT scores are ten points higher than last year at 1370.

Last week the Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention held its inaugural conference at the SUNY Global Center in New York City. The Institute was established thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor. The conference brought together scholars from around the world and was led by the institute’s co-directors Professor Nadia Rubaii and Professor Max Pensky.

Plans were unveiled last week for the new Living Building at Nuthatch Hollow. This living building will be a place for research and collaboration that will employ smart energy technology, and will be a “passive house,” meaning that it will be net positive in terms of energy and water usage. Once completed, this building will be among a handful of certified “Living Buildings” worldwide.

The end of March, a number of local business leaders were invited to take a look at the businesses working out of the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator, and to learn about the economic development programs that are in place to help them grow. The Incubator has gotten a lot of interest from local entrepreneurs and is currently about 90% full.

The University continues to move forward on the proposals identified during the Road Map Renewal last year.

We are making progress on the new Presidential Diversity Post-Doctoral Fellowships designed to attract minority faculty to campus. We have added four fellowships so far this year and these may move to full-time appointments.

STUDENT REPORT

Mr. Wilkes reported, “This has been a trying semester for both administrators and students alike. Haley Anderson, of Westbury, New York, was a diligent med student and a trustworthy friend. Joao Souza, of Rye Brook, New York, will be remembered as a talented soccer player and an
engaged engineering major. In the aftermath of such tragedies there will be calls for more security and guaranteed safety for our undergraduate and graduate students. Those conversations are important, but equally so is the understanding that we will never be immune to the darkest impulses of humanity.

Binghamton University has grown tremendously over the past few decades; we are now a microcosm of a larger society. And like any society, the capacity for distress and violence is as inevitable as it is internal. Michael Roque hails from Massapequa, New York - a Long Island suburb ten minutes from my own home, just down Merrick Road. The passions that could compel a BU student to murderous and criminal activity are likely complicated. We don’t know if Mr. Roque is a psychopath or a sociopath. We do know he is human; we know he is a living, breathing member of our complicated society. And we must know that the conversation regarding campus security cannot exclude Mr. Roque. I don’t know if he was isolated, or if he lacked outlets to express himself, or if his upbringing promulgated resentments he could not understand or control. But if any of these is the case, as it often is in instances of murderous violence, addressing these problems is intricately linked to the safety and well-being of our community.

It is also important that the administration responds to incidents of violence not just promptly, but with accuracy and focus. It is appropriate that they inform the community of what is most pressing while simultaneously preventing irrational panic. If you look at the events of the past week, that’s exactly how Vice President Brian Rose and Police Chief Tim Faughnan handled this situation. They and their team were swift, informative, and resourceful - in this matter, exemplar of an engaged public university administration.

A California-based rock band, Foster the People, is performing at Spring Fling. They are playing on May 5 in front of the Student Wing.

The Student Association had its elections on March 20th. Next year, the SA President will be Jerry Toussaint. I voted for him believing he is most prepared for the balancing act I may have never understood in the context of my time at Binghamton; he is likely most prepared to continue friendly relations with administrators while simultaneously promoting a robust student agenda. I say the same for the new Vice President of Finance, Kevin Darrel, and the new Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, the energetic and cunning Andy Jean-Baptiste.

A community of students believes that the administration’s response to incidents of racism has been inadequate. It's not clear whether that is the majority opinion. After flyers criticizing the administration were hung up at the University Downtown Center, police officers approached the student activist and asked that they follow proper poster policies. It is important that the administration respects free speech and ought to evaluate its poster policy to ensure it is constitutional.”

Even though there is a sad cloud over the campus at this time, Mr. McCabe wanted to share some good news about the great things the students are doing on campus.
• Ra’Vynn Waters, a BU sophomore nursing student, has been elected to the National Board of the NAACP, which is quite an accomplishment.
• Sigma Alpha Epsilon is working with the City of Binghamton Police to clean up the downtown area.
• BU students with NYPERG collected food and personal items to be delivered to local food pantries.
• BU students addressed the food shortage situation by establishing the Bear Necessities Food Pantry in the University Union. Mr. McCabe congratulated Qiana Watson and everyone in the Dean of Students office for their work.
• The Student-Athletic Advisory Committee arranged the St. Baldrick Foundation head shaving event which raised $83,000 for childhood cancer research.
• Simone DeBellis, who is studying to become a dentist, found time to organize a chapter of Best Buddies on the campus, which is the first chapter here. This group is for volunteers to have one-on-one friendships with individuals with development disabilities. Jennifer O’Brien, Executive Director of Life is Washable, said about Simone, “I can’t think of a BU student who I’ve worked with in the last 10 or 11 years who has created an impact or changed lives the way this young person has.”

Mr. McCabe stated that we should be very, very proud of our students.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

Ms. April Thompson, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and Ms. Jazell Johnson, Associate Director of Student Conduct, reviewed the 18 recommended changes to the 2018 Code of Student Conduct. Dean Thompson noted that these changes were to either correct general errors or create alignments with state policy and law.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the changes to the 2018 Code of Student Conduct. After no discussion, the 2018 Code of Student Conduct was approved with one abstention.

Chair Madigan thanked the students and the committee for their service.

**REPORT ON SECURITY AND SAFETY**

Chief Timothy Faughnan reported on security and safety of the Binghamton University campus.

**REVIEW OF RESOLUTIONS FROM MARCH MEETING**

Chair Madigan reviewed the three resolutions that had action items from the March 9 meeting.

**Bill #2: Encouraging Student Engagement**
Mr. Wilkes had agreed to meet with Mr. Yarosh to discuss ways to better publicize the Council meetings. Mr. Wilkes met with Mr. Yarosh and it was agreed that meeting announcements should be advertised on B-Line and Dateline.

Mr. Wilkes suggested that meetings be held in a more inclusive space and at a more convenient time for students; Mr. Wilkes said that it seemed that Mr. Yarosh was not interested in changing the location. Mr. Wilkes stated that on one hand students are apathetic, but on the other hand, it is not known how active they would be if this culture was changed. Mr. Wilkes had hoped that this culture would change, but he sees many barriers to this.

Chair Madigan reminded Mr. Wilkes that he had agreed, at the last meeting, to look for ways to further publicize the meeting so more students could attend. Since there was no proposal, no members wanted to move this motion.

Mr. McCabe stated that he had been ready to support any action that came out of the meeting between Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Yarosh. Mr. McCabe recommended that Mr. Wilkes present a resolution at the next meeting for the Council’s consideration, noting that resolutions should be sent to all Council members in advance of a meeting, not created during the meeting.

**Bill #3: Restoring Oversight to the Conduct Review Process**

Chair Madigan noted that Council members heard an excellent report from the Dean of Students and the Associate Director of Student Conduct. A collaborative process was shown between the Student Association and the Graduate Student Organization, and open community sessions were held in the fall so that all students had an opportunity to weigh in on the process. Chair Madigan stated that past procedure has been that the Council chair would meet with the Vice President of Student Affairs on any changes, and if there were any controversial changes, further meetings could be held. There were no controversial changes today, and Council has voted favorably on the changes.

Chair Madigan does not feel there is a need for an ad-hoc committee at this time. Mr. Wilkes stated that he did not believe Council is interested in regulation (“this is just a show”) and feels that this Council is just an oversight body. Chair Madigan stated that Mr. Wilkes’ role is to speak on behalf of the students if he or any students have questions about the changes to the Code of Conduct. There was no motion to move this bill.

**Bill #6: Collaborative Council Reports**

Chair Madigan stated that annual reports are required by each Council. This was discussed at length at the 2017 ACT Conference. Chair Madigan referenced §356 of the State Education Law (item 3i) which says Council is to “make an annual report to the state university trustees on or before September first of each year, and report to them from time to time on any matter it believes requires their attention.” Chair Madigan stated that the SUNY Association of College Trustees and Councils convened the Council chairs on a conference call in January 2018 for an
update on happenings at SUNY. During that call, Chairman McCall asked that the practice of Council chairs providing annual reports on the activities of the colleges they represent be reinvigorated.

Prior to the meeting, a proposed resolution was distributed to Council members as follows:

“WHEREAS, under §356 of the State Education Law, SUNY Councils shall make an annual report to the SUNY Trustees on or before September first of each year, and report to them from time to time any matter the Council believes requires the Board’s attention; and

WHEREAS, the SUNY Association of College Trustees and Councils convened the Council Chairs and SUNY Trustee Chairman Carl McCall in a conference call in January, 2018 for an update of happenings at SUNY and during that call Chairman McCall expressed his desire to reinvigorate the practice of providing annual reports relating to the activities of the Councils and the colleges and universities they represent; and

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Binghamton University Council Chair shall, on or before September 1 of each year, or as soon thereafter as may be practicable, submit to the Council, a draft report to the SUNY Board of Trustees regarding the activities of the Binghamton University Council during the prior academic year, including but not limited to the number of meetings held, the agendas and minutes from all meetings, and all Resolutions adopted by the Council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Binghamton University Council shall, at its first Council Meeting in September of the following academic year, review, revise as appropriate, and then approve by a majority vote, the final annual Council Report for submission to the SUNY Board of Trustees.”

A motion was made and seconded to approve. After no discussion, it was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.