COUNCIL MINUTES
September 21, 2018

Present from Council: Linda Biemer, Kathryn Grant Madigan, Jennifer Lesko, Dennis McCabe, Matthew Salanger (by phone), Maureen Wilson, and Harry Bittker

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Mr. Alpaugh, Ms. Bennett, Dr. Bodur, Mr. Darrell, Mr. Delviscio, Ms. Doyle, Dr. Edouard, Mr. Elliott, Ms. Ellis, Dr. Fatima, Chief Faughnan, Ms. Fiore Conte, Ms. Gahring, Prof. Karp, Prof. Klin, Ms. Legette, Mr. Mastana, Dean Meredith, Mr. Mess, Ms. Mthombeni, Provost Nieman, Vice President Navarro, Prof. Pitarresi, Ms. Puma, Vice President Rose, Vice President Sammakia, Prof. Santos, Ms. Scarlett, Dr. Sirju-Johnson, Dr. Smith, Prof. Starks, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:18 a.m. on Friday, September 21, 2018 by chair Kathryn Grant Madigan.

Chair Madigan welcomed and introduced the new Council members Jennifer A. Lesko, Maureen D. Wilson, and Harry P. Bittker to their first Council meeting.

The minutes of April 20, 2018 were approved.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

President Stenger reported that the fall semester is off to a great start. At the end of August, the campus welcomed 2,913 new freshmen and 1,099 new transfer students, bringing the total enrollment to over 17,700, with nearly 14,000 undergraduate students and more than 3,700 graduate students. The campus has a way to go to reach the goal of 20,000 students by 2020. We are working hard to reach our graduate student goal of 6,000, and have some new programs which we hope will help to boost graduate student enrollment.
This year’s freshman class represents Binghamton’s largest incoming class, with a record-breaking average SAT score of 1370, and an average high school GPA of 95. The class of 2022 was selected from more than 43,350 applications.

The University’s improvement in public rankings helps to attract great students. Recently, the US News and World Report ranked Binghamton University 80th overall, up from 87th last year, and 32nd among public Universities in the country, up from 38th last year. After many years of suggestions, the US News has changed their rating methodology and now gives weight to the “social impact” a campus has in terms of producing social mobility. This metric is based upon Pell eligible student graduation rates, and in this regard Binghamton does very well. They have also lowered the peer reputation ranking, which is a survey of university presidents and guidance counselors. Binghamton does not do well in the peer reputation ranking because we do not have a football team.

Over the summer we celebrated the opening of the new School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences building in Johnson City. The first and second classes of students are in the new building taking classes. There were 70 students in the first class, 80 students in the second class, and we hope to have 90 students in the next class. Our goal is to have 360 students, total, by the fourth year. Earlier this summer, the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences achieved candidate status from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. This will make it easier to recruit top students and top faculty to the School.

We will soon begin construction on a new Research and Development facility which will be adjacent to the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences building. The building is currently in the design phase and we hope to open the new building in 2020.

Across the street from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the old Endicott Johnson building is being renovated for the Decker School of Nursing. As the School moves into that building, we will be transitioning the School of Nursing to a larger school, perhaps as a college, that will not only have nursing programs but will also have physical, occupational, speech and audiology therapy programs. The new programs are in the process of being approved by SUNY and the State Education Department, and we have received permission to hire directors for these initiatives.

The School of Pharmacy not only has great students, but they also have great faculty doing research. In the last two years of active research, the faculty acquired close to $4 million in research grants. Their specialties are in drug discovery and drug delivery, but they also have expertise in muscular dystrophy and they are in the process of adding two new research centers, one in Lyme Disease and the other will tackle Opioid use.

In addition to the Johnson City construction projects, the campus is also upgrading existing buildings. This past year, the Science 4 building received much needed maintenance, new elevators, and changes to improve energy efficiency. Next year, similar work will be done on the Science 2 building with improvements to include new laboratories, classrooms, and upgraded
electrical, plumbing and cooling systems. In 2019, the campus will begin critical maintenance in the Engineering Building.

Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga Halls, which are residential buildings in the College-in-the Woods, have also been renovated and spruced up.

We have made significant improvements to campus safety and to our emergency communication systems this summer. The campus installed 160 new cameras and replaced 190 existing cameras on campus. New buildings have cameras, but the old residential halls were not designed with cameras. Cameras have been installed on all of the older building and others have been added to the new buildings so that there is a camera on the front and side entrances and also at the elevators. We have also installed 60 new panic buttons and have enhanced the B-Alert emergency notification system to speed messaging to the campus. Now students, faculty and staff must specifically opt-out from the system, instead of opting-in.

Faculty and staff received good news this month when the United University Professions (UUP) agreed to a new contract. This contract is similar to the contracts which were ratified by the CSEA and the PEF Unions last year. The new contract provides 2% increases over the next three years, as well as retroactive 2% increases for the last two years. These raises will have an impact on the University’s budget as Albany has not appropriated funds to cover the cost of the negotiated increases. To fund these increases, we will increase revenue by growing enrollment, particularly among graduate students, and seek moderate increases in tuition and student fees. Binghamton University has been preparing for fiscal challenges since the recession of 2008, setting aside a portion of our operational funds. This will give the campus flexibility in meeting the retroactive expenses. As we move forward, each Division will be asked to find ways to fund the increases of their faculty and staff salaries by increasing revenue, reducing expenses, and/or using reserve funds.

Last Friday, the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) held its second annual fundraising Gala at the University Downtown Center. Approximately 175 people were on hand to learn about the school’s programs and they raised more than $46,000 for the school to develop more community partnerships, to help faculty in their research and scholarship, and to provide student support.

**STUDENT REPORT**

Mr. Bittker thanked the student body for entrusting him with the responsibility of serving on the Council, and he thanked the entire Council, President Stenger, and others who have reached out to him to help him in this position.

Mr. Bittker remembered two students lost over the summer. Blake Lucas was an incoming freshman who died just days before move-in. On a GoFundMe page set up for the family, friends recalled Blake’s exceptional musical talent, his sense of humor, and his kind-hearted nature.
Sophie de Tournemire was a rising sophomore, a member of Hinman's Public Service Learning Community, the Emerging Leaders Program, the Triathlon Club, and she was the younger sister of a good friend. She has been described as someone who was kind yet determined, spiritual, passionate, and a great athlete who brought a positive energy to everything that she did.

Blake and Sophie both embodied the best of our student body through their drive, talent, and their generosity towards others. Without them, it is now on each of us to shoulder a bit more responsibility to make our community the best that it can be.

Mr. Bittker ran for the Binghamton University Council Student Representative position with the hope of not just impacting policy, but changing the way the Student Representative position operates. Most years, the Student Representative had a project or two that they focused on and their direct contact with the SA and GSO varied from year to year and didn’t necessarily go beyond the basic updates about what they were working on. Mr. Bittker hopes that the SA and the GSO will see the BU Council Student Representative as an important strategic partner – a quarterback for their advocacy efforts – whose perspective and relationships could be used to their advantage and, as a result, could be much more integrated with the project that they are working on.

On the SA side, those projects include efforts by the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, Andy Jean-Baptiste, to improve student health and well-being both physically and mentally, by working to connect student organizations with each other and university services, and by facilitating a dialogue about how to better address students’ needs. The SA Academic Affairs office, led by Doug Wehbe, is working on proposals to make classes or workshops on technical skills more accessible to students in non-technical majors. His office is also diving deep into the Student Code of Conduct and Sanctioning Guidelines and looking for possible improvements, and his team’s insight will be immensely helpful when Council reviews the Code later this year. SA President, Jerry Toussaint, is piloting a new mentorship program for freshmen looking to get involved on campus, which we hope will build stronger pipelines for the SA over the next few years.

The GSO President, Tarun Mastana, is focused on identifying ways to address graduate students’ safety concerns off campus, as well as working with departments to ensure greater transparency in their TA/GA selection processes.

The SA Congress and the GSO Senate have been elected and held their first meetings over the past week and a half. Mr. Bittker hopes to get to know them better over the next few months and throughout the year.

In addition to supporting the SA and GSO in their efforts, Mr. Bittker’s work has been centered on improving student health and wellness. He met with Assistant Vice President Fiore-Conte where discussions ranged from increasing awareness of the resources available, to learning more about how the funding mechanisms work for the campus health services. Mr. Bittker is hoping to see things improve following various efforts that Vice President Rose will elaborate on in his
report. The most important step is to continue engaging students, promoting resources to undergraduate and graduate students alike, and gauging feedback on how we can improve. Mr. Bittker will be working with various student leaders and organization over the next month and hopes to make inroads on some other goals including allowing students to enter their preferred name into the University's databases where possible, and working with the Town-Gown Board on strengthening our relationship with the local community, among other things.

In August, we held a very successful University Fest with participation from a wide variety of SA and Greek organizations. Hundreds of students attended the job fair, and many of them have already started interviewing with employers. Acapella groups packed the lecture halls at the Dollar Show, and just last night the SA Programming Board hosted its first concert of the year in the undergrounds, featuring JPEGMAFIA.

The Black Student Union's 50th Anniversary Banquet and annual Fashion Show will be held on October 5th at 7 pm at the Broome County Arena. They will be welcoming students, alumni, and community members to celebrate the organization's impact since its founding in 1968.

**REPORT ON STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Vice President Rose reported on Student Affairs.

**REPORT ON COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS RELATIONS**

Dr. Randall M-J Edouard reported on Community and Campus Relations.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:39 a.m.