COUNCIL MINUTES
September 22, 2017

Present from Council: Adam Wilkes, Anthony Fiala, Dennis McCabe (via phone), Kathryn Grant Madigan, James Orband, and Matthew Salanger

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Ms. Bennett, Vice President Broschart, Mr. Coker, Dr. Edouard, Mr. Elliott, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fatima, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Fiore Conti, Mr. Gantt, Ms. Hornbeck, Mr. Kane, Vice President Navarro, Provost Nieman, Ms. O’Neil, Mr. Parker, Ms. Pitt, Vice President Rose, Ms. Thompson, Dr. Smith, Professor Starks, Dean Tarhule, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, September 22, 2017 by chair Kathryn Grant Madigan. Ms. Madigan welcomed Adam Wilkes, the student representative to Council for 2017-18.

Chair Madigan suggested a change to the June 16, 2017 minutes. On page 6, under “Student Report,” she suggested to change “…student resolution” to “…Council resolution acknowledging his contribution to the Council.” A motion was made and seconded to accept the change. The vote to approve the minutes of June 16, 2017 with the amended changes was unanimous.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

President Stenger welcomed Adam Wilkes, the new student representative, stating, “We look forward to working with Adam and hearing his reports.”

We welcomed 2,660 new freshmen, 1,100 transfer students, and 1,360 new graduate students to campus in August. This brings our enrollment to nearly 17,500 for the 2017-18 academic year, which is very close to what our enrollment was last year. This is another outstanding class with SAT scores about 1360.
This past year we had a record 33,406 applications, up 4% from last year.

Among our new students are 69 graduate students who make up the inaugural class for our School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. They participated in the school’s first White Coat Ceremony in which students donned their “white coats” to mark their entry into clinical work as medical professionals. President Stenger appreciates the hard work of Dean Meredith and others in establishing this school.

This year we added about ten new tenure-track faculty, bringing our total number of tenure-track faculty to 620. This is a 31% increase in the size of our tenure-track faculty since 2011.

We have two new deans – Elizabeth Chilton, Dean of Harpur College, joined us in July, and Aondover Tarhule, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, joined us in August.

We became a tobacco-free campus on August 1. Our goal is to be a healthy campus that fosters health/wellness, safety, and sustainability.

We opened the new Smart Energy Building in August. This is the new home to our Chemistry and Physics departments. This will be the place for cutting edge energy research and development. During the opening, we recognized Dr. Stanley Whittingham for his work that is central to our smart energy efforts.

Our commitment to sustainability was on display as our Center for Integrated Watershed Studies hosted a conference in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and their work on natural resource management.

For Family Weekend, 1,329 families checked in and more than 4,500 individuals came to campus. This was an event-filled weekend with programs on our Vestal and Downtown campuses.

The Art Museum celebrated its 50th anniversary last weekend with a formal reception and tour of the Museum, showing their oldest collections to their newest.

Chabad celebrated Family Weekend with the installation of the new Binghamton Legacy Torah.

Also included in Family Weekend was a tour of our Koffman Southern Tier Technology Incubator. Sadly we learned that Bud Koffman, for whom the Incubator is named, died earlier this week. Bud has been a great supporter of the University and of entrepreneurs throughout the Southern Tier.
STUDENT REPORT

Chair Madigan introduced Adam Wilkes and welcomed him again to Council.

Mr. Wilkes told the Council that it is a great privilege to serve on the Council and he knows that the student seat holds an opportunity to advance a framework of truthful, inter-party communication.

With a median high school GPA of 94.6, the new freshman class of 2021 is the most academically competitive class in many years. They are breathing new life into the campus zeitgeist.

On September 7, crowds gathered in the Anderson Center for President Stenger’s State of the University address. A recap of the past five years tells our story of chaotic growth. The Class of 2018 has seen a significant increase in the amount of undergraduate and graduate students, and in the process of catchup, they have seen much-needed growth in faculty, advising staff, and healthcare resources. He noted that President Stenger deserves ample credit for steering the ship towards a brighter future, and reaction to the four Roadmap initiatives highlighted in the speech was generally positive.

However, students remain worried for their safety off-campus. While the university can only do so much to protect students off-campus, students are looking to the administration - and, as we know more specifically - the Division of Student Affairs for constructive future solutions. Many are excited for the conversations of off-campus safety to manifest within the framework of the Town Gown Advisory Board, an idea that is becoming a reality this month. The cohort of selected graduate students alone includes activists who are associated with groups like Justice and Unity in the Southern Tier and Citizen Action. Credit is due to Vice President Rose and Dr. Edouard for following through on the promises of ensuring legitimacy and a diversity of social-political perspectives.

The growth everyone at this university can be proud of has undoubtedly put a strain on resources. Transportation infrastructure has been a unifying concern of graduates and undergraduates for years. Too often the OCCT buses on the Main Street and Leroy Street lines are filled to capacity or don’t show up. And when the buses are filled to capacity, drivers either take illegal and safety risks by over-packing the bus, or drive past stops, leaving frustrated students behind. Commuters with automobiles too often find themselves late to class. If they slog to the top of M-Lot on a Tuesday or Thursday between the hours of 11 and 3, they may find with frustration every single space filled. They can try their luck at the Mountain View lot, but if that’s full, as it has been in the past, time was wasted because their only hope was at the bottom of Newing College all along. There is to be more stress on transportation resources in the future with the Johnson City campus set to open less than a year from today. Transportation and Parking Services is best prepared to work towards a solution in this area, whether that solution relies more on automobiles or buses. The status quo is tolerable, but not for the premier public university of the northeast.
The unjust and un-American decision on behalf of the White House to retract the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, will lead to struggle and insecurity for hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants. This may include hundreds of BU students. On September 7, a coalition of multicultural organizations held a town hall to discuss the implications of the retraction and collective efforts to distribute resources and politically mobilize. The coalition then referred students at risk to the Office of University Council and the Dean of Student’s Case Management team. Too many students of color on this very campus have suffered discrimination and exclusion. But the flares of injustice ignite a generation more conscientious, mobilized, and proactive in the fight for justice than any in American history. President Stenger’s statement on the DACA retraction was commendable and well-received by students. Not only did he join a choir of university presidents calling on Congress to swiftly pass the DREAM Act, but he reaffirmed the administration’s commitment to student confidentiality, and therefore a crucial line of defense for students fearing deportation.

The new BU Brain function that allows students to download their transcripts is an excellent new resource that is sure to be a hit.

The Student Association has kicked off the new year with the most genuine commitment to promote racial justice in recent memory. On gender, racial, and ethnic lines, it is the most diverse Executive Board yet. Jermel McClure might be the SA’s first African-American President (not yet confirmed) and the E-Board is striving to empower students of color with a new leadership conference and a new Cultural President’s Council, in conjunction with a blossoming Multicultural Resource Center. At a more technical level, its new Executive Vice President Glenn Avisado is working tirelessly to reform B-Line, and its new Vice President of Finance Rebecca Ho has hammered out ideas with her predecessor attempting to streamline the financial process for clubs. This year Adam is an assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs Raul Cepin to help him steer students towards research and internship opportunities and restore the SA Advocates program. Having held this position in the past, Adam has good expertise to share with him.

University Fest was a success this year.

The Graduate Student Organization is bouncing back from a contentious presidential election last year to a smooth start in their first three meetings this month. Former E-Board members Shengsheng Zhou and Joy Li are returning. There will be a new presidential election before the end of the month to determine who their new President is going to be.

Adam looks forward to a great year of robust dialogue about the future of the university.

ACT Report
Mr. McCabe attended the ACT meeting in Albany September 15-17. Representatives from 21 SUNY campuses attended in addition to state legislators and representatives from Higher Ed Services and the Construction Fund.

Mr. McCabe spoke to the new Chancellor and invited her to visit BU.

Mr. Carl McCall, chair of the SUNY Board of Trustees, and Chancellor Johnson spoke to the group. Both emphasized the priority of access to our university and completion of degrees. The Board of Trustees wants to strive for 100% graduation rate. They are using the acronym AEIOU -- Access, Excellence, Innovation and entrepreneurship, Outreach, Us (helping the world and impacting it).

Ms. Christine Fitzgibbons, executive director of the SUNY Impact Foundation, reported to the group. The SUNY Impact Foundation is a new foundation to augment the SUNY Foundation to reach out to larger foundations to make sure they are aware of the work of SUNY and to find ways to increase contributions to the SUNY System. Their May 2017 kickoff celebrated the 50th anniversary of EOP. Our alum, Sunny Hostin, received a Distinguished Alumni Award. This kickoff event raised $1 M. In August, RFP’s were sent to SUNY campuses with EOP programs to apply for grants. Deadline is November 1.

The Excelsior scholarship program is fully implemented and was instituted very quickly. SUNY thanks the efforts and incredible work of each campus. This program contributes to the access to our campuses.

Mr. McCabe noted that this was an invigorating conference for Council members who serve in an advisory capacity to their campuses and are ambassadors to their campuses and their communities.

**REPORT ON COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS RELATIONS**

Dr. Randall Edouard, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, presented a report on community and campus relations.

**REPORT ON STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Vice President for Student Affairs Brian Rose reported on the Division of Student Affairs.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.