COUNCIL MINUTES
December 15, 2017

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

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Vice President Broschart, Mr. Coker, Mr. Delviscio, Ms. Doyle, Dr. Edouard, Mr. Elliott, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fatima, Ms. Fauci, Chief Faughnan, Ms. Gahring, Mr. Gantt, Ms. Hampton, Ms. Ignarri, Mr. Kane, Ms. Mthombeni, Provost Nieman, Dean Ortiz, Mr. Parker, Prof. Pitarresi, Vice President Rose, Ms. Scarlett, Dr. Smith, Ms. Wen, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:20 a.m. on Friday, December 15, 2017 by chair Kathryn Grant Madigan.

The minutes of November 17, 2017 were approved.

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

President Stenger reported that he had just returned from Xian, China to attend the annual Confucius Institute meeting. President Stenger was asked to give a report on Binghamton University’s Confucius Institute of Chinese Opera at that meeting.

Confucius Institutes are established by the Chinese government to teach Chinese language in other countries. There are 450 Confucius Institutes in 100 countries, and Binghamton University is home to one of them. Binghamton University’s Institute is unique in that most institutes are designed to teach elementary and high school students Chinese through faculty on campuses. Binghamton University’s Institute is designed to educate our students of the Chinese language and culture through Chinese Opera. Our Institute is the only institute in the world that focuses on Chinese Opera as a way to expand the language and culture of China into the United States. Binghamton University has had over 4,000 of our student participate in our Chinese Opera classes and over 35,000 people have seen the performances of our faculty and students in over 26 states in the country.
Today is the last day of finals for the fall 2017 semester. As we have done every year for the last six years, we held several de-stress December events for our students. The Student Affairs Office along with the Dean of Students’ Office do a wonderful job of offering stress-reducing activities to build resiliency in the students, help them burn off some steam, and feel comfort. Some of the activities offered include bringing puppies to campus, comfort foods, and offering free yoga and open gym classes. University Police are also handing out University Dining gift cards to random students that they observe studying and working hard.

Binghamton University is on track to have a record number of applicants for fall 2018 enrollment. We are 20% ahead of where we were last year at this time. We are being much more proactive in early admissions and early decisions. We offered admissions to 3,000 outstanding applicants and we are hearing back from those students already. We believe that this will help us increase our yield among the top students and we hope to have our incoming class filled much earlier this year.

The State University of New York Board of Trustees recently promoted two of our faculty to the Distinguished Professor rank. Jean Quataert has been promoted to Distinguished Professor of History, and Gary James from the Anthropology Department has been promoted to Distinguished Service Professor. We are very happy to see these two deserving faculty members receive their promotions.

Distinguished Professor William Isbell and his wife, Judy Siggins, recently provided a generous gift to Binghamton University to establish the Andean Archeology and Anthropology Faculty Support Fund. This Fund established an endowment to help hire and retain faculty who share Professor Isbell’s interest in Andean cultures. Assistant Professor of Anthropology, BrieAnna Langlie, was hired in the fall and is supported by this Fund. Professor Langlie and Distinguished Professor Isbell will be leaving for Peru this summer to do research in Andean cultures.

The Regional Economic Development Council presented awards in Albany on Wednesday. Binghamton University was awarded a $1.5 million Consolidated Funding Award to help fund the demolition of properties surrounding the Health Science campus in Johnson City. The region was not a top performer this year, but still did quite well. Next year, we will work on building a better program for that competition.

The School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences recently established a new articulation agreement with SUNY Broome. Under the agreement, eight qualified SUNY Broome students each year, who are pursuing a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, will be guaranteed acceptance into our School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and can earn a Doctor of Pharmacy degree in six years. The students must meet all of our prerequisites and have at least a 3.0 GPA in math and science as well as a composite score of at least 50 on the Pharmacy College Admission Test.

We have been carefully following the proposed tax legislation and have been proactive with our congressional representatives and senators about the devastating tax implications to higher
education. We are specifically concerned about the provision that was to make employer-provided tuition payments taxable income to graduate students and to employees, and the repeal of the student loan interest deduction and reduced tax credits for tuition. Fortunately, the bill that was passed by the Senate does not include those provisions.

This month, we recognized the achievements of some of our very best student athletes at our annual Athletics Hall of Fame dinner and ceremony. We inducted three stellar athletes and the entire 1983 women’s cross-country team into the Athletics Hall of Fame. The individual inductees were: Mollie Lehman (softball); Brendon Hitchcock (baseball); and Josh Patterson (wrestling). During the ceremony we also recognized the accomplishments of the broader athletics program, both on and off the field. This year the athletics program set a record for academic success with more than 400 athletes who have a combined average GPA of 3.23.

President Stenger thanked Jim Broschart, Vice President for Advancement, for his service to Binghamton University. Jim will be leaving in early January to take a position at North Carolina State Foundation as Associate Vice Chancellor for University Development and Vice President. Jim’s role at Binghamton, over the last three years, has been stellar in helping to move our development and alumni engagement efforts forward and doubling both our alumni engagement numbers and the annual philanthropic donations to campus. We will begin a national search immediately to replace Jim.

The university will also say goodbye to Valerie Hampton, Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, who is retiring. Nicole Sirju-Johnson has been appointed as Interim Chief Diversity Officer and Interim Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We will be conducting a national search for a permanent replacement for Valerie in the fall. This position will be relabeled as a Vice President position moving forward. We will miss Valerie and her contributions to campus but we wish her well in the next phase of her life.

**STUDENT REPORT**

Mr. Wilkes reported that in follow-up to discussions at the last Council meeting, he has two suggestions for revisions to the Code of Student Conduct - adding a due process component and the possibility of rolling back the penalization of drugs and marijuana. Mr. Wilkes brought his suggestions to the attention of the SA President, Jermel McClure, and they discussed ways to work together. He also met with Vice President Rose and discussed the practicality of these revisions. After discussions with Vice President Rose, it was determined that it might be a challenge to remove drug violations from the Code given both the state and federal laws. He would like to continue these discussions in regards to how much we penalize students who are involved with a marijuana violation as he believes that it is not the most damaging thing to a University community when someone is making the decision to engage in the potential self-harm of consuming or possessing marijuana.
Chair Madigan asked Mr. Wilkes if he would consider putting together a task force of students to analyze this and bring it back to the Council before they evaluate the changes to the Code in the spring.

Mr. Wilkes agreed to do so. He asked Vice President Rose if the Division of Student Affairs would be interested in having a combination of administrators and students on a task force to look into drug policies, specifically.

Vice President Rose indicated that Student Affairs would be happy to work with students to look at how Binghamton University’s policies compare to other institutions and to start there.

Regarding due process, Mr. Wilkes has been working with a number of students involved in the conduct process. He questioned whether or not, in the conduct process, hearing boards are notified of administrative agreements that are offered to students. He explained that administrative agreements are like plea bargains. If a student is accused of a conduct violation, they could sign an agreement that would put it to rest and finalize the case before it goes to a hearing board of either students or administrators. If an administrative agreement is very aggressive in penalizing the student, and if the hearing board knows about this, it could set the framework for how they think about the individual situation. Mr. Wilkes believes that we need to look into whether or not the hearing boards have autonomy from the administrators who run the conduct office and whether they hear about administrative agreements offered to students.

Chair Madigan suggested that Mr. Wilkes put together a group of students who are interested in due process issues along with some pre-law students and come up with a proposal, along with the facts to back it up, and to then bring the suggestion forward to the Council. Mr. Wilkes agreed to do so.

Mr. Wilkes stated that New York State Education Law 356 indicates that Council is supposed to put together a subcommittee to review the Code of Conduct and it appears that the Binghamton University Council has not done that in the past.

Chair Madigan stated that this has been a topic of conversation at ACT meetings and every Council handles it differently. Because we are a small body, we have had one Council member who has taken ownership of this in the past and this has worked well. Chair Madigan asked Mr. Wilkes if he would like to make a motion that the Council creates a subcommittee to review the Code.

Mr. Wilkes stated that he may make such a motion at the next Council meeting, after he has had a chance to put together a presentation. He believes that Student Affairs has done a solid job of putting together student input, filtering it, and bringing it to the Council.

Mr. Wilkes reported that the campus is currently full of stress because it is finals week. De-stress December events have been very constructive and helpful.
The Post Malone concert in November was a huge success with many students attending.

Mr. Wilkes is excited to hear Ms. Hampton’s presentation on faculty diversity because it is important. A lot of students have been critical of the administration’s response to incidents of racism in the past. Students have seen growth in this regard, and the administration has been responsive to instances of bigotry or hateful things seen on campus. The administration’s response to the swastika found on a post-it note was very quick and he believes that the efforts of the administration over the past years have been commendable. Mr. Wilkes hopes that students who are concerned about these issues will look for ways or policies that will make our campus more inclusive and promote pluralistic values.

Regarding parking and transportation, it was concluded that there is not much that the Council can do regarding parking on campus. Vice President Rose sent information to Council members regarding the parking and transportation office so that they could see more data, including OCCT ridership information. The busing situation is much better than it was thought to be and the data shows that. There is also a lot of good work going on regarding parking and shifting the campus to a more multi-model approach in transportation. Mr. Wilkes will be working with the SA President, the SA’s representative to the parking and transportation stakeholders group, and Michael Wuest to present the student concerns and student ideas to the new director of parking and transportation once that position has been filled.

**REPORT ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

Dr. Donald G. Nieman, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, reported on Academic Affairs.

**REPORT ON DIVERSITY**

Ms. Valerie J. Hampton, Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, reported on Diversity.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.