

COUNCIL MINUTES

November 21, 2014

Present from Council: Kathryn Grant Madigan, Esq., Linda Biemer, Patricia Cummings, Esq., Thomas Doty, Sarah Glose, Dennis McCabe, Esq.

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Delviscio, Ms. Ellis, Dean Gal, Ms. Griffin, Mr. Kane, Professor Mischen, Vice President Navarro, Provost Nieman, Ms. O'Neil, Vice President Rose, Vice President Sammakia, Ms. Barbara Scarlett, Esq., Professor Stamp, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER:

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:27 a.m. on Friday, November 21, 2014 by Kathryn Grant Madigan, Esq., chair.

The minutes of the October 17, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Senator Tom Libous and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo were on hand for the dedication of the Center of Excellence in Small Scale Systems and Integrated Packaging (S3IP). Research in the Center will focus on energy-efficient electronic systems, systems integration and packaging, flexible electronics, autonomous solar power, advanced materials and sensors, and healthcare/life sciences.

Our new Admissions Center opened on November 13. The Center serves as a one-stop shop for all things admissions related -- from visits and financial aid, to transcripts, and of course, student admissions.

At Homecoming, we celebrated the opening of the new Steven '91 & Judy '90 Fleishman Career and Professional Development Center in the University Union. According to the Center's new director, Dr. Kelli Smith, the Center has seen an increase of more than 15% in terms of student usage, compared to last year when Career Development was housed in the Library basement.

We also have had a successful change in the way we are teaching some math classes, having recently hired Professor William Kazmierczak as Director of Calculus. Professor Kazmierczak has introduced “flipped classroom” pedagogy into how we teach calculus. Students receive a video to watch outside of class that introduces them to a topic, and in class the students work in groups on problems.

Earlier this month, Provost Nieman held a reception recognizing the achievements of our faculty who had been promoted to associate professor with tenure, as well as those being promoted to full professor. This year nearly 30 faculty were promoted, including Ralph Garruto, named SUNY Honorary Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, and John Tagg, who was promoted to Distinguished Professor of Art History. All these promotions are very important for the entire university, as they indicate both the quality of their research and scholarship, as well as their engagement with the University.

We also are working to bring in new faculty with 64 searches underway (35 net new hires). Searches are weighted towards our trans disciplinary areas of interest and are distributed evenly between Harpur and our professional schools.

President Stenger attended the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities conference with fellow presidents and University leaders and learned of trends out of Washington, DC.

Binghamton has become a charter member of the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), which is a partnership of private firms and academic institutions; First Lady Michelle Obama is PHA’s honorary chair. Binghamton University is one of 20 schools participating. The goal is to provide for healthier choices in food, academic and co-curricular programming, and increased physical activity for students, faculty, and staff.

In an effort to meet with students in a more informal way and to encourage healthy behaviors, President Stenger spent time earlier this month participating in a yoga session at Mountainview’s Appalachian Dining Hall. President Stenger has done this for the last three years and believes it is a great way to network with students.

President Stenger and Sarah Glose have been working together to try to discover better ways for the administration to communicate with students, to convey information about class closings, weather alerts, etc. President Stenger commended Sarah for identifying the problem and for working with the Administration to solve it.

President Stenger thanked Interim Dean of Libraries Susannah Gal for inviting the Council to see the new Study Lounge. Dean Gal thanked the Library faculty and staff for giving up their former lounge so this student study space could be created. This was in response to a demand for more student space and is an opportunity to give back and provide additional space. There are new lights, new furniture, it is newly painted, and has pictures from Jonathan Cohen’s collection displayed. Dean Gal thanked Provost Nieman for helping to make this space possible.

STUDENT REPORT:

Ms. Glose recently met with Residential Life on how they communicated the rollout of the new housing process. This was a good meeting where they discussed how this communication can be improved in the future.

Homecoming was a success. Despite the poor weather, there were lots of students at the tailgate and other activities.

The Student Association held a question-and-answer session hosted by the Black Student Union in an effort to connect students with the leaders who represent them. It is realized that the Student Association needs to grow and respond to the growing student population and be ready for 20,000 students in 2020.

Giancarlo Esposito (Gus Fring from Breaking Bad) will be on campus tonight to speak on race in the television/movie industry and the challenges associated with being a minority in a white dominated industry. Students are excited about this important talk.

The Student Association's "Project SAnta" gift drive is underway and set to have a record breaking year in terms of total donations collected. The gifts will be distributed to local middle and high school students in need.

The Graduate School town hall meeting was held where graduate students voiced their concerns about student fees, student worker wages, and how the flipped classroom affects GA's.

November 3 was Graduate Student Worker Appreciation Day where graduate student workers received a thank you from the Graduate Student Organization.

There will be graduate student representation on a new committee started by Professor Mischen by which various stakeholders come together to create a strategic plan for the Triple Cities area. The intent of this process is to create a "college town" feel where students can contribute back to their communities.

Binghamton Mayor Rich David will be visiting the MPA GSO on November 25.

Ms. Glose then reported on her communications project:

- Ms. Glose reported that students are experiencing issues related to our growth. Registration for next semester started two weeks ago and on the first morning, BU Brain crashed and did not come back up until that afternoon. The problem was caused when students were all trying to register at one time.
- There is an advising overload in Harpur as they have lost a few advisors. A lot of students need advising and there are not enough advisors to delivery those services. Ms. Glose hopes that Harpur Advising is working to hire more advisors.

- There is also a lack of classroom space since the Student Wing will be off line next semester. Many classes will be held in different spaces and at new times. There is, however, more access to classes but some may be at less than desirable times.
- Ms. Glose noted that communications between students and the university needs to improve. For instance, there was no timeline indicated as to when BU Brain would be back up after it crashed. When there is no communication, students don't know if there is a plan. Our students are understanding but information and communication is needed so they can be understanding.
- Students were not told that some classes would be held at later times. This is another example of the way things are being communicated or not communicated at all. Ms. Glose wants to work on these areas to improve communications and how students can help. The Pipe Dream is a good way for students to hear information, but it is not always exact. We need more proactive communication and increased customer service to students.
- During our recent power outage, the emergency response system and the quick message was great. Students were thankful to hear quickly about what was happening. It could be suggested that we use a system such as this to communicate to students so they are notified regarding problems and the plan for fixing it. This system could help to improve relations between administration and students.

REPORT ON ACADEMIC INNOVATIONS:

See attached report from Provost Nieman. In addition, Professor Nancy Stamp, Biological Sciences, reported on the new "Freshman Research Immersion" program.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Madigan recently attended the ACT conference in Lake George. Melina Martin, a BU student, was awarded the ACT Excellence award. Ms. Martin is a BU Scholar and is working on the Magic Paintbrush project. She also coordinated a campus-wide clean out drive to reuse and recycle 15,000 pounds of furniture, etc., that will go to local charities.

The ACT conference provided workshops on budgeting, enrollment, marketing, the Open SUNY concept and what it means to students, and the enhanced role of Council members in advocacy with the state legislature.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.