

COUNCIL MINUTES

February 18, 2022

Present from Council: Chair Kathryn Grant Madigan, Linda Biemer, Jennifer Lesko (via Zoom), Dennis McCabe, James Orband, Caroline Sandleitner, and Maureen Wilson

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Mr. Brhel (via Zoom), Mr. Cordi (via Zoom), Professor Craver (via Zoom), Ms. Curtin, Vice President Delviscio, Ms. Doyle (via Zoom), Dr. Edouard, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Gahring (via Zoom), Ms. Guanciale, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Huth (via Zoom), Vice President Jones, Interim Director Kalina, Professor Mijatovic, Ombudsman Mthombeni (via Zoom), Vice President Navarro, Provost Nieman, Dean Ortiz, Mr. Putman, Dr. Robinson-Perez, Vice President Rose, Ms. Reuther, Vice President Sammakia, Dr. Smith, Ms. Thornley, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:22 a.m. on Friday, February 18, 2022 by Chair Madigan.

The minutes of the November 19, 2021 Binghamton University Council meeting were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Stenger reported that the campus successfully began the spring 2022 semester on January 25th with all classes fully in-person. Things have gone very smooth academically. The move-in process was excellently executed by Vice President Rose and his staff who moved in 7,000 on campus students prior to the start of classes. Not only did they need to make sure that the students were tested before going into the residence halls, but they also had to make sure they were fully vaccinated and boosted if eligible. That was not a simple process, but it went smoothly. Things are almost back to normal on campus except that we are still wearing masks. We expect that the Governor will be reconsidering mask mandates based on changes to the CDC guidelines.

Earlier this month, we held the State of the University address. We talked about COVID, our response to it, and how we successfully opened campus for the spring semester. We also talked about our plans to develop a new School of the Arts that will be part of Harpur College, at least initially. It will be a way of organizing, encouraging, and supporting transdisciplinary work between the five departments in Harpur that surround the arts - cinema, theater, art, art-history

and music. We will be searching for an Executive Director for the School of Arts in the next few months. We have hired a consulting firm, CS Arch, and assembled a faculty and staff programming group to work together to devise a plan for renovating the Fine Arts Building to create synergies. This is a long-term task, estimated to be a 10-year process.

We received good news earlier this year that Binghamton University was re-designated, for the second year, as a R1 research intensive University by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. This places Binghamton University among the top 146 research universities in the nation. This is the highest measure of research by an independent organization.

We received word last month that Binghamton's New Energy New York proposal has been named a finalist for the federal economic development's Build Back Better regional competition. We won the first round, which provided a \$500,000 grant to further develop our proposal. This allows us to submit a final proposal and compete for up to \$100 million in federal funding. The proposal would help make the Southern Tier a regional hub for lithium ion battery research, development, and manufacturing and would most likely be located in Endicott. With Nobel Prize winning Distinguished Professor Stanley Whittingham's expertise, we have an obvious advantage. There are 64 locations in the country that have been asked to submit final proposals, from which they will select around 15. There will be 3 in New York and we are confident that we have the best idea, now we have to put together the best proposal.

Last month we also learned that the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator (KSTI) will receive \$1.6 million from the Economic Development Administration to support a Soft-Landing Program. The Soft-Landing Program will attract international businesses focused on smart and clean energy technologies to the region. The program will draw on the expertise at KSTI, Binghamton University, and Cornell University, to help support and bring international business and investments to the area over the next five years.

Professor Ping Yang, Associate Professor of Computer Science, was the driving force to win a \$3.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation. This grant will fund 24 CyberCorps Scholarships over the next five years to students who plan to join the workforce as cybersecurity professionals after graduation. In return for their scholarships, the recipients agree to work in government cybersecurity positions for a period equal to the length of their scholarship. CyberCorps Scholarships have been granted to fewer than 100 schools nationwide. Binghamton University received the award based on the strength of our computer science and cyber security offerings.

This semester, for the first time, Binghamton University has agreed to pay the broad-based fees for full-time doctoral students. These fees include charges for transportation, healthcare, technology and academic excellence. Over the past five years, the University has invested \$2.3 million each year to enhance PhD stipends, while also adding \$750,000 per year to support Provost Summer Fellowships. PhD students are very important to Binghamton University as they provide important research and teaching support.

At the end of this academic year, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Don Nieman, will step down. A search for his successor is underway and the candidate review process will begin soon. We are also searching for a new Dean for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. That search is underway and going well. Additionally, a search will be underway very soon for the School of Management Dean. Dean Dhillon announced that he will step down in the summer 2022.

STUDENT REPORT

Ms. Sandleitner reported that when Binghamton University Council met in November, we talked about finals week as we moved into winter break. The vast majority of students were able to complete finals week without disruption, which was a huge success in the face of daily COVID spikes.

Before break, the Student Association hosted many events to encourage student awareness in the Binghamton area. The Vice President of Student Success and President of the Student Association hosted an event where students could ask questions of local attorneys and housing protection agencies about tenant rights. As many of our students live off campus, this event was incredibly helpful in educating students and protecting their interests.

Ms. Sandleitner thanked the administration as she shared a few success stories:

In the fall, a student reached out asking for support to enable him to visit his family over winter break. The student's dad was very ill and the student wanted to make it back home to see him, since he hadn't been home in over a year because of COVID restrictions. With the help of Dr. Edouard, Dean of Students, and his staff, the student was directed to the CARE team. With support from the CARE team and funding from emergency funds, which help students in times of need, the student was able to fly home for the holidays to be with his dad. Thank you, Dr. Edouard, for your guidance and thanks to the CARE team for caring about every student they meet!

Thank you, President Stenger, for your help in creating a scholarship for ROTC Cadets at Binghamton. The scholarship covers ROTC Cadets' memberships to FitSpace on campus, and allows the Cadets to train indoors instead of outside on the track. The need was originally brought to Ms. Sandleitner's attention by a freshman, Jack Kralik. President Stenger was a tremendous help in determining the best way to meet the Cadets' needs. Since the scholarship was created in early January, the Cadets have been able to do their 5 a.m. workouts in a comfortable space, safe from the snow. The Binghamton ROTC Cadets are so grateful that they have a space to train thanks to President Stenger!

When the University announced the change in the academic calendar to increase COVID resources before the Spring semester, many graduating students were upset that the University was changing commencement weekend. However, since the spring semester has taken off with such success, students feel reassured by the expansive COVID resources available. Students are also happy that spring break was spared in the academic calendar change.

One COVID resource that stood out to students is the mandated surveillance testing. Students feel comfortable being in class with regular testing, and they appreciate that the University scheduled the dates well in advance.

Currently the Student Association and Graduate Student Organization are coordinating elections for the next e-board and BU Council Representative. Last night we found out that there will be over 16 candidates across 7 positions, further highlighting the large increase we've seen in student involvement on campus.

Student organizations have been meeting regularly and are seeing great success in their programming. In the multicultural space, a number of organizations came together to host Tamasha, showcasing traditional and modern dances from South Asia. The show sold out, which was a great success given this was the first showcase since COVID interrupted programming in 2020.

Student organizations are planning large events in the near future. One event that students are excited for is Spring Fling, which will mimic those that we've had in years prior to COVID. The Student Association's Programming Board is hard at work organizing artists for the day, and they expect to announce the performer by the end of the month.

REPORT ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Donald G. Nieman, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost presented the report, "Building the Health Sciences at Binghamton University." Mr. Gerald E. Putman, Executive Director of the Decker Foundation, spoke about the Decker Foundation's history of supporting the Decker School of Nursing and why they continue to support the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences today.

REPORT ON DIVERSITY

Dr. Karen A. Jones, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Dr. Ada Robinson-Perez, Affirmative Action Officer; and Ms. Anne Guancia, Director of Intercultural Affairs, presented the report, "Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion."

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

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