

## **COUNCIL MINUTES**

March 11, 2022

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

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Ms. Bello, Mr. Brhel (via Zoom), Dr. Bodur, Ms. Cosovic (via Zoom), Professor Craver (via Zoom), Vice President Delviscio, Dr. Edouard, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Fiore Conte, Ms. Gahring (via Zoom), Mr. Hayden, Mr. Huth (via Zoom), Vice President Jones, Interim Director Kalina, Vice President Koch, Ms. Legette, Professor Mijatovic, Ombudsman Mthombeni, Vice President Navarro, Ms. Oaks, Vice Provost Pitarresi (via Zoom), Ms. Reuther (via Zoom), Vice President Sammakia (via Zoom), Ms. Thornley, and Mr. Yarosh

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, March 11, 2022 by Chair Madigan.

The minutes of the February 18, 2022 Binghamton University Council meeting were approved.

### **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Stenger reported that spring break begins this afternoon and some students have already started to leave campus. The students are really looking forward to this well-deserved break.

Even though Broome County is currently in a state of medium COVID transmission, we decided that we would remain masked on campus until March 26, five days after the students return from break. This will give us a better sense of where the campus and the community are in terms of infection rates, and we will decide whether to continue with mandatory masking. At this time, the number of positives every day is less than 5, and well below where we need to be to maintain the mask mandate.

The Provost search is nearing conclusion. We interviewed four outstanding candidates on campus this week. The search committee will be meeting with me this afternoon to discuss the finalists. We had great candidates and we hope to have a successful outcome of the search within the next week or so.

The admissions process is going really well. Every year Binghamton sets a new record in the number of applications received and, so far, we have received more than 41,300 applications for the class of 2026. This is the first time that any SUNY campus has gone over 40,000 applications. That means that we have a lot of students to choose from, but also a lot of work to do. Because of COVID restrictions, students were unable or chose not to take the standardized SAT tests which became optional. In the past, SAT scores have been one of the key measures used to determine student quality and to quickly sort applications. Without the scores, admissions will need to read applications more carefully. This may lead to a more equitable outcome, but it will take more time. We will hold several open houses this semester where families and students who have been admitted will be on campus as they make their final decisions.

The School of Pharmacy had their first graduating class in 2021. The Association of College of Pharmacy and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education conducted a Graduating Student Survey where they asked 70 questions of 2021 pharmacy graduate students. The survey found that 97.8% of our School of Pharmacy graduates would choose Binghamton again, compared to only 80.4% of those from peer institutions and 82.4% from all schools nationwide. This is a huge benefit for the University and shows that we have an excellent program.

Last week we attended a groundbreaking for the renovation of the “Victory” building on Lester Avenue in Johnson City. While it was the official groundbreaking, renovations on the 6-story, 40,000 square-foot building have already started and one floor of the building is almost completely renovated. In January 2023, they expect to have occupants for the apartments in the building. This will really change Johnson City and will provide needed housing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.

The \$125 million New Energy New York proposal will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration next week. If funded, this will provide the resources, equipment, facilities, and operating expenses to create a battery manufacturing pilot plant in Endicott, NY, where companies and work forces can come to learn how to make lithium batteries. This is critical because 9 out of 10 of the largest lithium battery manufacturing companies are outside of the U.S. We are in the final round and if we win this round, we will probably start renovating and building the pilot manufacturing facility this fall in a former IBM building.

Next Friday, weather permitting, our baseball team will face off against the University of Maine Black Bears at our new baseball stadium. Construction is on schedule for the new stadium to be open for the game. It will be chilly in the 50s, but we hope everyone will come out and enjoy the game.

Congratulations to the Men’s Basketball team for their quarterfinal victory in the American East Championship last Sunday, beating the University of New Hampshire by a score of 72-69. That win set them up to play the University of Vermont on Wednesday. The Bearcats played well on but had a tough loss on Wednesday. Congratulations to Levell Sanders for a great first season as Coach. Coach Sanders led the team to more conference game wins than they had in the last twelve years.

While the search for the Provost is wrapping up, we are moving forward on searches for the Deans for the School of Pharmacy and the School of Management.

### **STUDENT REPORT**

Ms. Sandleitner reported that it has been a quick 3 weeks since the last Council meeting, and she is very excited about spring break.

She honored fellow student, Kelli Russo, who recently passed away after a long battle with cancer. Kelli was bright, resilient, determined and funny and she made a profound impact on the BU student community. The whole student body mourns her loss.

Last night the unofficial results of the Student Association and GSO elections were announced. The results will be certified in the next few weeks, and each organization's e-board will be busy on-boarding the next generation of student leaders.

Mr. Avery Benzekan was selected to be the 2022-2023 student representative to BU Council. He spent the last few years as a SA Congress Representative and this year he was SA Congress Chair. He will be an MBA student in the fall as he serves as the student representative to Council. Congratulations to all of the candidates.

While Title IX exists to protect all students, there is a need to elevate the voices of those who are traditionally marginalized. A few weeks back Professor Candela, from the Sociology Department, was reported for a Title IX violation in her syllabus. Dr. Candela has since removed the language, but has been threatened and harassed by others privately and publicly. The Student Association, Women's Student Union, Latin American Student Union, Asian Student Union, and HDEV Department have all made statements condemning the threats made against Candela, and reiterate the need for progressive stacking in classrooms, especially those focused on unpacking social inequities.

On a lighter note, spring break is upon us. Students are excited about the time off and many will be traveling home or on vacation. As we return to campus the following week, students understand the importance of wearing masks until March 26th. Since the announcement to keep masks mandated at the University until Administration sees consistency in the number of positive cases on campus, students have come to accept and support the decision. At the most recent SA election debate, the candidates for SA President were asked questions about this policy. Every candidate echoed the importance of masks to the 100+ students gathered. Students won't be upset to see the mask mandate lifted sooner rather than later.

Spring Fling is scheduled for April 30th, with the performer to be announced soon. They've also rescheduled the comedy show featuring an actor from the Broadway Musical "Hamilton," so students will have lots of events to stay busy once they are back from break.

The past few weeks Ms. Sandleitner has been a member of the Search Committee for the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, representing and communicating with students about their needs and wants. Students were excited to meet the four candidates selected

to visit campus this week including Dr. Tofade, Dr. Carlson, Dr. Rosen, and Dr. Hall. The student leadership was very impressed by all of the candidates and they anxiously await a decision on who the next Provost will be.

**REPORT ON PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PLANNING**

Ms. JoAnn Navarro, Vice President for Operations, and Ms. Sally Oaks, Business Affairs Director, presented the report.

**REPORT ON ADVANCEMENT**

Mr. John Koch, Vice President for Advancement, presented the report.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

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