

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 19, 2021

Present from Council via Zoom: Kathryn Grant Madigan, Linda Biemer, Anthony Fiala, Zachary Herz, Jennifer Lesko, Dennis McCabe, James Orband, and Maureen Wilson

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Ms. Bello, Ms. Benner, Dr. Bodur, Mr. Cordi, Prof. Craver, Vice President Delviscio, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Edouard, Director Elliott, Ms. Ellis, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Fiore Conte, Mr. Hubeny, Mr. Johnson, Vice President Koch, Ms. Legette, Ms. Mthombeni, Dr. Moose, Vice President Navarro, Provost Nieman, Ms. Oaks, Ms. O'Neil, Ms. Peak, Vice Provost Pitarresi, Vice President Rose, Vice President Sammakia, Prof. Sayama, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Yarosh

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:16 a.m. on Friday, March 19, 2021 by Chair Madigan with all attendees participating via Zoom.

The minutes of February 19, 2021 were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Stenger's remarks followed the PowerPoint presentation attached.

STUDENT REPORT

Zachary Herz reported that the student body has been hard at work, academically and beyond.

Soon after the last council meeting, the University saw increased positivity rates at the surveillance testing site. This sparked worry and frustration regarding how to proceed in the coming weeks if our numbers reached the threshold determined by the Governor. From the student perspective, there was a lot of outrage regarding this quick shift in event-policy with little information given prior. With no breaks, the stress of academics this semester has been at an all-time high. Students rely on the small in-person events to gather with their friends and wind down. Zachary is personally involved in the event approval process for the Student Association and an avid student leader on campus, and he understands the fluidity of these last two semesters

more so than the average student. However, the student body, specifically those who are on executive boards of their own clubs/organizations, are not as informed regarding changes in university policy. After two weeks of strictly virtual events, the student body was thrilled to be able to go back to the event guidelines originally given to them before the start of the spring semester. In an effort for the student body to become more informed regarding decisions made by university administration, President Stenger will talk about his decision and answer questions at the next Student Association Congress meeting. It is our hope that congressional representatives will take this information back to their communities and students can have a better understanding of university decision making.

Regarding the percent positivity rates that we have seen over the last couple of days, these numbers are much lower than previous weeks. It is believed that this goes to show that the majority of students are following the rules, ensuring safe social distancing and mask wearing during their in-person events and understand the significance of the words, "We are all in this together."

At the end of February, there were certain racial incidents that occurred targeting members of our campus community. Also, recently across the country, we have seen an increase of Asian-American and Pacific Islander hatred. The university has addressed both of these instances and reminded students that acts of discrimination, hatred, and bigotry do not belong at Binghamton University. As a student, Zachary reiterated the importance of creating safe spaces where students who are marginalized feel that they are able to express their feelings and concerns towards any acts. Zachary will remain a key advocate for those of the student body who feel that this is crucial to the prosperity of the university.

This past weekend, the Student Association put on a Winter Wonderland themed event at the ice rink. Students got to enjoy the ice skating rink with a twist, and some treats as well. It's great to note that the infamous ice-skating rink will be at Binghamton for an additional two weeks, allowing for students to enjoy it for a little longer.

The Student Association has been working on an Insights show for Monday, March 22, as well as a comedy show and a music show for all undergraduates. Additionally, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority life conducted its first ever virtual recruitment for the Panhellenic Council, having 457 women sign up and 365 women receive a bid to one of eight sororities. These numbers show how normal in-person activities could be conducted in a virtual format.

This past week, Binghamton students got to enjoy the first of three Rejuvenation Days! The timing of this first Rejuvenation Day could not be more symbolic as we commemorated one year since the beginning of the pandemic.

Zachary along with President Stenger and Dean of Students Randall Edouard spoke to the Binghamton University Interfaith Council's COVID Commemoration ceremony on March 17. Zachary had the opportunity to discuss how his group of friends have adapted to the pandemic by bringing in Friday night Shabbat dinners in a more intimate setting and celebrating the Jewish holidays together.

On March 16, Zachary had the opportunity to tour the newly established VARC center located in Old Johnson. It was encouraging to see the actual center along with meeting many of those who will be working there day-to-day. Zachary thanked Johann Fiore-Conte for letting him see the space. It is great to see how centralized all the personnel and resources are going to be for victims who seek help from the VARC Center. He spoke to those who will be working in the center about their feelings and aspirations towards this step to providing resources to victims. It is felt that the student body will be pleased seeing that the university administration has taken progressive action in creating the VARC Center and combatting sexual assault on campus.

Looking forward, students will be able to enjoy two more Rejuvenation Days on April 8 and April 20. The Student Association and GSO will begin running their elections in March and April where the next group of student leaders will be elected.

REPORT ON PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PLANNING

JoAnn Navarro, Vice President for Operations, and Sally Oaks, Business Affairs Director, Physical Facilities, presented.

REPORT ON ADVANCEMENT

John Koch, Vice President for Advancement, Tenley Peak, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement, and Rebecca Benner, Associate Vice President for Advancement reported on the Division of Advancement.

Sheila Doyle, Executive Director of the BU Foundation, reported on the BU Foundation.

Chair Madigan reminded all about the March 28 TEDx event
<https://www.binghamton.edu/events/tedx/index.html>

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

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