

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 20, 2020

Present from Council via phone: Kathryn Grant Madigan, Linda Biemer, Jennifer Lesko, Dennis McCabe, James Orband, Matthew Salanger, Maureen Wilson, and Franklin Richards

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Ms. Doyle, Interim Vice President John Koch, Vice President Navarro, Ms. Oaks, Ms. O'Neil, Vice President Rose

CALL TO ORDER

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:22 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2020 by Chair Madigan with all Council members participating via teleconference.

The minutes of February 21, 2020 were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Stenger reported that as of Tuesday, March 17, as part of Gov. Cuomo's state-wide declaration of emergency, all non-essential employees have been asked to work from home and requiring no in-person classes. As a result of the Governor's announcement, we cancelled all classes on Wednesday and Thursday, March 18 and 19, to allow time for students who wish to return home the time to do so, without interrupting their classwork.

Of our approximately 3,000 staff members, about 20% are classified as "essential" and they will be ensuring that all vital services continue.

After some discussion, we've determined that students who have decided to leave the residence halls will receive prorated refunds or credits for the unused portion of the semester. Students have been asked to notify Residential Life of their intentions so that we may be able to better plan for the remainder of the semester, with the chance that some students may be asked to relocate to optimize campus services in light of reduced staff.

Our Help Desk is working with faculty and staff who need technical assistance. Faculty can come into offices to conduct classes with doors closed and leave after their class is over.

We are discussing grading and how our exams will be delivered. President Stenger will be discussing the pass/fail option with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

We continue to plan for the future with construction continuing on Hinman, Science 2, the Engineering building, the Nursing building; all are moving along on schedule and within budget.

We hope to open the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences building in the fall. The addition of their new programs of physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy is going smoothly.

STUDENT REPORT

Mr. Richards reported that as the situation and Governor Coumo's orders to move to online classes became clear, students knew the rest of their academic year would be completely changed. This became a sad reality for a lot of last year students.

On March 17, 2020, some seniors, graduate students, and students transferring at the end of this semester had their last in-person class at Binghamton University and did not know it. With classes being cancelled on March 18 and 19 and classes officially moving online on March 20, we saw a mass exodus of students. There were a variety of reasons why students left -- refund for on campus housing, fear of getting locked down in Binghamton if their hometown or city were to go into a shelter-in-place or full quarantine, to help loved ones that were back home, and parents who were demanding that they return home.

At the moment, a lot of students are struggling with grasping the world of online learning. Provost Neiman and the Deans of each college are working with professors to be accommodating for students because this is a situation, to some degree, that students could not have planned for.

In that same vein, students have started an online petition that requests the university to change classes to pass/fail and allow for those classes to count towards the degree. The writers of the petition point to the impact this transition has had on people's mental health and access to resources. These resources include printed books, textbooks that were on the library reserves, printers, and study spaces. At the time of writing this, almost 1,000 students and parents had signed the petition.

Overall, students remain confused and uncertain about this whole situation. Most students understand the situation but still pose questions about the whole ordeal. Is there a confirmed case on campus or within faculty and staff? We are continuously reassured that there is no confirmed case, but it is understandable that there is still some fear and panic from students and parents.

In times of fear and disarray, hate often makes its way back to the forefront of our daily existence. Many students of Asian descent at Binghamton have faced many hurtful comments

about their culture and identity. This unfortunate rhetoric has caused many students great pain. It is important that as a community we reassure all students of their right to exist in this space. This virus does not see race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or any other identifiable characteristics. It is up to all of us to ensure that we are kind to people, keep ourselves safe, and try to help vulnerable populations, if possible.

In terms of student activities from the GSO and the SA, they are all cancelled or postponed indefinitely. The GSO and the SA, however, continue to operate. Congress meetings, senate meetings, and executive board meetings are all happening via Zoom, Google hangout, or FaceTime. Some projects are being put on hold as everyone continues to react to the virus.

Mr. Franklin is still working with Linda Salomons, Deanne Ellison, and Randall Edouard on food insecurity, in particular the food pantry. At the moment, the food pantry remains open under emergency hours. As per the Governor's command, all non-essential staff should work from home. Should the Governor move to allowing only critical services, we urge the University to look into ways that would allow for the food pantry to remain open.

Election season is over. The Vice President of GSO and the Election Officer are working on their results which will be advised.

The current Vice President for Multicultural Affairs Khaleel James will take the role of SA President for the 2020-2021 school year.

Sophomore Willa Scolori will be the student representative to the BU Council for 2020-2021. Mr. Franklin will be helping her transition into the role.

PROPOSED PARKING FEES AND FINES FOR 2020-2021

Vice President Brian Rose presented and discussed the Parking Transportation Services proposal for changes to four different fees and fines. This proposal has the support and endorsement of the Parking and Transportation Stakeholders Group (PTSG).

Vice President Rose suggests that Council is advised, on an annual , on parking charges and fines.

Chair Madigan asked for a motion to approve the change in fees for guest passes, maximum charges for the garage and paid lot, overtime charges at meters, and fee increase for commuter lot overnight. A motion was made and seconded. After no discussion, the proposed parking fees and fines changes were unanimously approved.

REPORT ON PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PLANNING

Vice President for Operations JoAnn Navarro and Physical Facilities Business Affairs Director Sally Oaks reported on Physical Facilities projects.

REPORT ON DIVISION OF ADVANCEMENT

Interim Vice President Koch reported on the Advancement Division.

REPORT ON THE BINGHAMTON FOUNDATION

Binghamton Foundation Executive Director Sheila Doyle reported on the BU Foundation.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

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