

## **COUNCIL MINUTES**

September 15, 2023

Present from Council: Linda Biemer, Kathryn Grant Madigan (via Zoom), Acting Chair Dennis McCabe, Nora Monasheri, and Maureen Wilson

Present from the Community: President Stenger, Professor Beedle, Ms. Bello, Mr. Brhel (via Zoom), Vice President Delviscio, Mr. Ezor, Dean Falcone, Dr. Fatima, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Fiori Conte, Mr. Fornara, Ms. Gahring (via Zoom), Provost Hall, Ms. Gurrarn, Ms. Ignarri (via Zoom), Ms. Johnson, Vice President Jones, Vice Provost Lees, Ms. Legette, Director Marshall, Dean Nagaraju, Vice President Navarro, Ms. Pollack Drake, Ms. Reindl, Vice President Rose, Ms. Reuther (via Zoom), Dr. Smith, Dr. Szymanski, Mr. Winston (via Zoom), and Mr. Yarosh

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Binghamton University Council meeting was called to order at 9:15 AM on Friday, September 15, 2023 by Acting Chair Dennis McCabe.

The minutes of the April 21, 2023 Binghamton University Council meeting were approved.

Acting Chair McCabe welcomed the new Student Representative to Council, Ms. Nora Monasheri. Nora is a first-generation American and college student, and she is pursuing her MBA this year. She earned her undergraduate degrees in Finance and Management Information Systems (MIS), and was awarded the Student of Distinction Award last semester for her dedication to the university. She has also worked with President Stenger to restart the University's Road Map Internship Program.

### **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Stenger reported that Council last met in April, and a lot has happened on campus since then.

In May we held Commencement ceremonies for the class of 2023. Many Council members were present as we recognized the achievements of more than 4,500 students during multiple days and commencement ceremonies. We awarded 3,400 baccalaureate degrees, and 800 master's

degrees. In addition, 130 doctoral and 81 Doctor of Pharmacy candidates were hooded. This is impressive since the number of doctoral degrees awarded has increased by 70% compared to a decade ago.

In August, we welcomed 3,000 first-year students, 1,500 new graduate students, and about 750 new transfer students. The new class was drawn from 49,500 applications, which is up 19% from last year, 4,000 transfer applications, and over 4,900 graduate applications. One place where we significantly saw an increase is in international students. We welcomed 585 new international students, 125 are undergraduates and 460 are graduate students, from over 50 countries with the greatest numbers coming from India, China, Turkey, South Korea, and Iran. Many of the transfer students, about 240, came from SUNY Broome Community College. This is the largest number coming from any other community college. The average GPA of transfer students is 3.4, and they are an outstanding group of students.

This is the ranking season, and Binghamton University has been named the #1 SUNY in Forbes' prestigious, "Top Colleges in America" list. Forbes also ranked Binghamton University #52 on its annual list of the top 500 colleges in America; a 13 point jump from our position at #65 in 2022. This ranking puts Binghamton above Tufts University, Florida State University, and Michigan State University.

Over the summer we formed a partnership with a group of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in collaboration with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. There are participants from six different HBCUs: Alabama A&M University, Central State University in Ohio, Tuskegee University in Alabama, Prairie-View University in Texas, the University of the District of Columbia, and Virginia State University. The schools brought students, faculty, and administrators to our campus for a retreat to discuss how we can work together. We are already seeing relationships being built from the retreat, and will help in our efforts to support diversity and inclusion on campus.

We recently announced a \$5.6 million gift from Martha and David Ho through the S. H. Ho Foundation. This is one of the largest gifts that Binghamton has received to support faculty research. \$5 million of the gift will go into an endowment that will generate more than \$200,000 annually, and \$600,000 is spendable right away to get the program started. We are asking for faculty proposals now and we will award grants from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each. We expect to award grants every year to support faculty who are looking for ways to expand their research and build their programs. This gift will also generate a 50% match from New York State. The \$5 million endowment will be matched by a state investment of \$2.5 million. The \$2.5 million matching state funds will be used to further research and scholarship in non-STEM areas. The S.H. Ho Foundation requested that the funds focus on biotech, and we have specified that the matching money will be going to the Social Sciences Humanities programs.

The gift from Martha and David Ho was one of the key gifts that helped us meet and exceed our \$220 million Excelerate Campaign goal. With 1 year left in the Campaign, we decided to raise our goal to \$250 million. We are confident that we will meet the new goal by the end of the Campaign, June 30, 2024.

In August we announced the new \$2.6 million state-of-the-art functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scanner (fMRI) that was recently installed at UHS' Vestal campus across the street from the University. This is shared use equipment between UHS and Binghamton University. The machine will be used to study patients, but also to do research for our faculty in psychology, biomedical engineering, and physical therapy. UHS will use the equipment during the day for clinical studies and diagnostics for patients. In the evening, our faculty will use it for research. This is a great partnership between the University and UHS.

The battery project with New Energy New York (NENY) has been moving along. We are also in the process of being evaluated for a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NENY grant was \$113 million from the Economic Development Authority as well as the State of New York. We are well on our way of spending that money to build a prototype manufacturing facility in Endicott. The NSF Innovation Engines Grant could bring as much as \$160 million over 10 years in economic development funding to the University. The NSF grant would allow Binghamton to greatly expand the battery project. More than 180 applications were submitted to the NSF for the funds, and our application was selected for a virtual site visit in July. The virtual site visit was very successful and we have now been selected and are preparing for an in person site visit in October. We are one of 16 finalists nationally, and we know there are two finalists in New York State. We hope we will be selected for the grant, but we know we face tough competition.

Campus construction updates include the Kramer Welcome Center which is expected to be completed by February 2024. Renovations to Old Rafuse Hall should wrap up in November, and we expect to move students into the building in January 2024. We are starting projects in Science 3 and the Greenhouse, and we continue work on the renovations to the Bartle Library's 3<sup>rd</sup> floor which is scheduled for completion in September 2024. We opened the Ford Family Wellness Center in Johnson City, and we are wrapping up construction on the Research and Development building.

The State University of New York has given all SUNY campuses additional funding. Binghamton received an additional \$15.6 million of recurring base funding, in addition to the \$45 million that we traditionally received from SUNY. We have a \$500 million budget, so it is helpful to have the additional funds. We put together plans to invest the funds and are looking to hire 12 – 14 new senior faculty in areas of excellence. We will also be hiring 28 – 30 new faculty/staff to help improve student success. We plan to add another 18 staff to improve student success in specific areas including mental health support, and we will be hiring 7 new counselors, 5 new disability advisors for our Students with Disabilities Office, and 6 new staff members to help find and manage internship opportunities for undergraduate students.

There are a lot of great things happening, and it is an exciting time for Binghamton University.

### **STUDENT REPORT**

Ms. Monasheri thanked Council for welcoming her and for letting her share the students' concerns. She hopes to bring a positive change to the Binghamton campus in her role.

At the end of last semester, she worked with the prior Student Rep, Avery Benzaken, to transition into her new role. She has worked with Vice President Delviscio to finish Avery's project and provide pamphlets outlining mental health and other important resources for students on campus.

During the year, she hopes to work on two projects as Student Representative to Council. One project will be a student advisory group with both undergraduate (3 students) and graduate students (2 students). This will be to inform the group about what the Student Representative to Council does.

The second project involves the class syllabus; an important document that students use to guide them in their class. She noticed that other top schools include a section that might also be beneficial for Binghamton students. She is looking into that project and hopes to meet with Faculty Senate to pitch the idea soon.

She is working closely with the GSO and the SA President. The Grad students have been working on a mental health program with Watson Career Services that will showcase all of the resources available. Together they are working on some great things and on building relationships.

The semester is off to a great start. On the first day of classes there was a networking issue with the campus' network provider. She learned that they usually prepare for 10 times the typical logins for students, and this year the campus was hit with double that amount. The campus has 2 main servers, and they just added a new one. Everything was brought back quickly thanks to the campus' network team who worked hard to get everyone back online.

Traditional events are back in full swing. The freshmen class gathered for a "B" photo when they arrived. The photo is great, and is getting a lot of social media attention.

The annual University Fest was held on August 26. The Fest provides an opportunity for groups to table and for students to explore the various clubs, organizations, and Greek life available to them. The location of UFest was moved slightly to be more accessible for students and so everything was on the same level.

Resident Halls moved away from the traditional Resident Assistant (RA) roles. This opened up 300 new paid student positions to support students in various areas. Everyone has a specific role which will spread the workload, provide assistance for students, and make them feel welcome and safe.

She noticed that the School of Management (SOM) and Watson College both provide students with great career preparation. This past week was Career Week, and on Tuesday over 900 students attended SOM's Networking Night. Wednesday was the University-wide fall Job and Internship Career Fair with over 145 diverse employers on campus to meet with students. It was really exciting and great to see students dressed in suits. 2,402 students attended this event.

Homecoming Weekend will be held October 13 – 15. The Athletics Department is hosting their first ever “Midnight Madness” on Friday, 10/13, at 6:07 PM. It will be a pep rally for community members, alumni, and students to see the season’s first official NCAA practice of the men’s and women’s basketball teams. They will have raffles and lots of free swag in an effort to encourage more attendees at games and build more pride. We expect about 5,000 students to attend.

### **REPORT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Mr. Brian Rose, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Kelli Smith, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Director of the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development; Dr. Christen Syzmanski, Director of Students with Disabilities; and Ms. Johann Fiore-Conte, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief Health and Wellness Officer, presented the report.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 AM.

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