

SUNY Cobleskill College Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 19, 2025
Upper Champlin

College Council Members in attendance: Eric Stein, Hannah Case, Anna Blinn Cole, Linda Cross, Erik Hage, Martin Messner, Tracy Purcell, Susan Rightmyer, Marilyn Wyman

Apologies: Theresa Heary

College Council Guests:

Cabinet Members - Marion Terenzio, Derwin Bennett, Wendy Gilman, Anne Hopkins-Gross, Gus McGiver, Darcy Medica, Anna Miarka-Grzelak, Jason Politi, John Zacharek, Cynthia Zinzow,

Special Guests – Karina Benninger, Chief William Henn

Eric called the meeting to order at 8:28

Susan motioned to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2024, meeting, and the motion passed.

Part I Information Sharing with On-Campus Contingencies

Introductions:

Chief William Henn, University Police Department, has a passion for environmental conservation and law enforcement, which drew him to the campus. He appreciates the campus culture and is committed to community policing, with officers actively engaging in various campus activities. He emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship with students and the community, highlighting the police department's role in maintaining campus safety and supporting the local village when needed.

Martin Messner, the newest member of the College Council, has been a teacher for 22 years and has served in various roles, including significant involvement with the teachers' union at both local and state levels. Martin has spent considerable time in the classroom and is passionate about higher education and critical thinking. He values the partnership between the school district and the college and looks forward to continuing and strengthening the relationship.

Erik Hage, Presiding Officer, started his role on the council just over a month ago, but he is not new to the campus. He has been a full professor for 24 years and has served as the chair of four different departments since 2009. His specialty is journalism and communication, and he is committed to ensuring that student life and faculty governance are well-supported on campus.

President's Update – *Marion Terenzio, President*

- Mentioned the \$500,000 grant from KeyBank for neurodiverse students.
- Announced the \$2.6 million award from the Mohawk Valley REDC for workforce development and agribusiness projects.
- Shared the success of the \$977,000 grant for Project SEARCH, supporting neurodiverse individuals
- Announced the implementation of conflict management plans for senior leadership.

Strategic Planning

- Discussion on strategic planning and community partnerships.
- Focus on vibrant community partnerships.
- Engaging council members in strategic planning discussions.

SUNY Climate and Sustainability Action Plan Update - *Karina Benninger, Director of Sustainability and Compliance*

- Karina serves on this council and co-led the sustainable operations working group.
- *SUNY Climate and Sustainability Action Plan* - The Board of Trustees recently approved. Includes initiatives in climate and governance, education, research, workforce development, buildings and facilities, sustainable operations, and engagement in justice
- *Single-Use Plastics Reduction Policy* - Enacted in March 2024; Phased approach through 2027 to reduce single-use plastics, starting with plastic bags and balloons
- *SUNY Cobleskill Sustainability Action Plan* - Tailored to campus-specific needs while remaining aligned with SUNY and state goals. High interest from students in sustainability, with many studying in sustainability-focused majors.
- *Current Projects:*
 - Food Scrap Collection and Compost Project
 - Share Shop
 - Empire State Service Corp
 - Sustainability Mentors
 - Earth Day Campus Clean Up
 - 10,000 Trees

Enrollment Management Plan – *Anna Miarka-Grzelak, VP Strategic Enrollment and Innovation*

- Spring 2025 Enrollment: 1,644 students, a 2.4% increase over the previous spring.
- Fall 2024 Enrollment: 7% increase compared to the previous year.
- 9% increase in continuing students persisting from fall to spring.
- 10% growth in new students for spring, particularly in transfer students.
- Up 2% of accepted students

Governor's Budget Update - *Wendy Gilman, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration*

- Significant portion of SUNY Cobleskill's budget comes from state support, which is just over one-third of the operating budget.
- Second year in a row with an increase in base operating aid from the state.
- Includes close to \$215 million in additional funding for SUNY campuses.

Faculty Governance Update – *Erick Hage, Presiding Officer of the Faculty*

- Academic Policies Committee: Approved a policy revision on final grades, removing the restriction related to financial obligations.
- In Progress Policies: Developing policies on classroom recordings, AI usage, and student attendance for college-sponsored events.
- Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning: Working on key data to support evaluation of programs, known as academic prioritization.
- Professional Development Committee: Reviewing applications and allocating funds for faculty and staff development.
- Other Committees: Academic Personnel Policies Committee and Curriculum Committee are actively reviewing reappointments, promotions, new course proposals, and program changes.

Advancement, Foundation, and Alumni Updates - *John Zacharek*

- Fundraising Achievements: Raised about \$2 million this year, aiming for a \$3 million target.
- Implemented a separation incentive program, resulting in significant savings for the college.
- Strengthening relationships with existing donors and attracting new ones.

Student Government Update – *Hannah Case, President - Student Government Association*

- Welcomed four new clubs: Anime Club, Service Dog Association, MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences), and Design Club.
- Hosted "Pizza with the Police" during finals week, with around 70 students attending. The event featured K9 Rex and facilitated interaction between students and university police.
- Upcoming elections for the next executive board. Six candidates applied, and the debate is scheduled for tonight. Elections will be held next week.

Part II – Council Reports, Discussion, and/or Actions

Chair's Report – *Eric Stein, College Council Chair*

- Encouraged council members to attend a webinar with Will Schwarz, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, to discuss SUNY's current advocacy efforts. The webinar is scheduled for Monday, February 24, from 4 to 5 PM via Zoom.