

College Senate Meeting Minutes

5 April 2021

Attendance

Senators Attending via Zoom:

A. Balcom, T. Hamblin, E. Liberatori, S. Shoemaker, L. Frisbee, S. Jones, D. Gashler, L. Tessier, M. Wake, R. Celli, R. Piurowski, A. Calabrese, C. Rossi, D. Krzyston, D. Aikens, D. Cutting, D. Holub, E. Ericson, E. Wagner, J. Fishner (proxy via Rob Piurowski), M. Fields (proxy held by Rob Piurowski), A. Krause (proxy held via Lindsay Walker), L. Ciafardoni, J. Cash, W. Shaffer, L. Jones, S. Babcock, D. Conklin

Senators Absent: D. Green, J. Warren, L. Aleksa, M. House, J. Lindsay

Guests: Desiree Keever, Nii Teteh (Student Senate President), Bret Meckel, Carol Bishop, Monica Liddle, Karen Teitelbaum, Kelly Keck, Jack Tessier, Barb Sturdevant, Jackie Howard, Susan Deane, David Brower, Nancy Macdonald, Lauren Sloane, Will Warner, Heather Taggart, Jenny Lukovsky, Ted Martin, Dawn Sohns, Katie Bucci, John Padovani, Josephine Monaco, Joanna Brosnan, Thomas Jordan, Tomas Aguirre, Michael Sullivan, Simon Purdy, Kenny Fass, Erica McKee, Michael Laliberte, Dana Santos, Lori Tremblay, Lisa Kaschak

Meeting called to order at 4:32 pm by Presider, E. Frisbee via Zoom.

Reminder: please use the “raise your hand” feature. Guests can speak, but cannot vote.

Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the 3-22-2021 meeting minutes: Ward Shaffer made the motion, Doug Holub seconded. Ellen had a correction on page five. So noted. Motion approved.

President Laliberte

- Thank you for your service and commitment to the college and the Senate taking on leadership roles. I know everyone has a lot to do and taking this on is appreciated. I also want to acknowledge the difficult year we’ve had, individually and as a community. Our lives were turned upside down in this past year. Decisions had to be made quickly and they changed often. Because of the circumstances and directives we received outside of campus, we may not have operated in the best practices of shared governance. It was not always possible to be inclusive due to the nature of needing to make quick decisions, but the goal was to communicate accurately and timely. We recognize that we may have fallen short at times. Laliberte Live videos serve to communicate updates as they become available. If you did not feel heard or involved in the decision-making process, that was not my intent. Every decision was made in the

best interest of the campus community, with the health and safety of everyone as a top priority as well as ensuring that everyone kept their jobs. We might have done a better job communicating, but in the moment we did the best we could due to the constant changes happening and demanding immediate decisions and actions. And for that I apologize and I hope you can understand that we're all facing huge and unique challenges at the time. Most of you don't know the demands of modifications we faced due to SUNY. Nearly every time we made a decision it was changed or altered by SUNY, the state, or the health department. Our focus was on safety, our students, and made sure no one lost their job. Important to realize that through those decisions we fared better than other SUNY colleges. Our enrollment only dropped slightly and our infection rate was among the lowest last semester. We have not had retrenchment or layoffs; people kept their jobs. We have continued to offer our students in person classes and labs that are essential to their success. We continue to raise money and we have balanced our budget as of this Spring.

- Now to address the Consultation Report. The decision to move to Consultation was made after the Leadership team designated three delegates to work with the Senate eboard to improve shared governance, communication, and the campus culture. Once the report was provided to both the presider and I, we were instructed to "correct any factual errors" in the report. I followed those instructions and did just that. I understand that some of you have questioned the style of my comments, but I was not asked to give narrative, just to provide corrections to factual errors, not correct implied or biased remarks. I have, however, always been willing to provide that narrative.
- I also feel the need to explain my personality and defend my character. I am not an extrovert or a micromanager. Some may view this as being distracted or disinterested. I see it as letting my professionals do their job without my interference. We all have different styles and ways of doing things. I have found success as a leader when I place my trust in the colleagues to make decisions. However, I hear that you want to see more from me, hear more from me, and have me attend more meetings so my voice and opinion can be heard. If that is what you want, then please invite me and include me in your plans. Just let me know.
- I have to also acknowledge that at times I may have come across as serious, firm, or less than friendly. And at times I probably was. I am human. The pandemic has made the difficult job of running a college all that more difficult. I have been frustrated and may have shown that frustration. I'm sorry if anyone took my passion or frustration as anything more than that. My intent was often to be efficient, objective, and not involve myself in the politics of the pandemic. It's not persona. We're all human and trying to strive to do what is best for the students, faculty, staff, and community and dealing with our most complex situation which we have ever faced in our history. I made mistakes. I am not perfect. I have learned from my experiences and I am committed to moving forward together. I hope you can do the same.
- I also possess an impenetrable belief and value system that is unwavering. I am honest and loyal. I am as committed today as I was five years ago when I joined SUNY Delhi. My goal has always been the continuous improvement of SUNY Delhi. I was initially drawn to the commitment to students and to the close community culture that makes SUNY Delhi so amazing. I was eager to be welcomed and accepted here.
- Our campus must always be a place where employees are free from abuse, bullying, and harassment. To that end, I find it prudent to outline the processes bringing forth any complaints

of untoward behaviors by any members of our campus community. Detailed information on SUNY Delhi's campus Workplace Violence Prevention Policy is on our website. These policies are in place to protect us all. They are fair and consistent across SUNY and NYS. It is important to know that HR and SUNY Police are the appropriate areas who lead these processes. It is not the role of the university Senate or any other body on campus to gather and share unsubstantiated claims or to comment on or decide on their validity. That behavior is not only against SUNY policy, but it is also slanderous, defamatory, and cannot be tolerated by this or any group on our campus. If any of you experience an action or interaction that you find unsettling, it is imperative that you use the official, established reporting mechanisms. Don't assume, don't take someone else's explanation, and don't make false accusations. There are other resources available including our Employee Assistance Program. I am personally available as is any member of the leadership team to assist you in this process. I cannot fix or address things I do not know about or that are rumors. We all have to operate under the procedures of the place that protect us all.

- I have taken the consultation report very seriously and read it several times. I look forward to using the recommendations to move us forward. Our leadership delegates and eboard are working on the plan of action so we can begin this work right away. As I said in my Spring opening address, we want to move forward. I look to the future and see us working collaboratively and in a culture of support and positivity. However, we need your help to do that. I need us all to forgive each other and move forward. We need to move past hurts or frustrations, work together in order to move forward. Any unwillingness to engage in this process only perpetuates our challenges and creates rifts and divides within our community.
- I too have been hurt, felt misunderstood by numerous campus members. I have been working hard to let go of this hurt and more than willing to do so. I hope that you are too. The only way we can move forward is together. It won't be easy. Growth never comes without pain, but in the end we all know our campus will be better for it. I'm sorry if I unintentionally hurt any of you or if you ever felt wronged by me in any way. I take responsibility for those times.
- I acknowledge things could have done better in the past and I am committed to working on the recommendations from the consultation report to move toward a brighter future. I encourage everyone to remember that the student is the most important person at SUNY Delhi and we must lead with this and choose this every day.

Questions for President Laliberte

- Liz – question we had planned at our Leadership meeting two Fridays ago but you were unable to attend. The report identified retaliation, bullying. You, other members of the campus were identified. We understand that there's an HR process. This is a serious concern. Can you address that serious concern of workplace violence and what your plan is to address this?
 - ML - Document didn't identify any one individual. This is a community issue. Report made broad statements; difficult to follow up. Time for broad education to address this within the community.
 - Liz - It did identify upper level administrators in the document. Folks don't know where to turn because it can get back to you as the President.

- ML – There are two reporting officers and you report them. Not an anonymous process. Doesn't report to any one individual, but rather to Mary Morton or Martin Petit. They would investigate. Accusers have to face the accused. Difficult to say who or what they were talking about in the report. There are many layers to the areas.
- Liz - If someone wanted to report someone from the leadership team, they wouldn't have to report that to you ultimately?
- ML – May end up coming to me, but it would go to HR. If there's an investigation going on, we don't see if until it's resolved. Investigation goes to find the evidence to the claim.
- Ellen – Member at large on the senate, represent the campus as a whole. I am saying on behalf of many that I've spoken to – thank you, Michael, for coming the Senate today for speaking and addressing us. It's difficult. I see the effort to move forward. Want to acknowledge and honor what you've said today.
- Lisa T. – Thank you for coming and meeting us today. One of the concerns we've been hearing is about our reserves. Can you share with us your plan to sustainably manage the reserves?
- ML – Carol can address this. We have federal and state money coming in. We've had to rely on our cash for payroll and to continue functioning. We know we'll be in the positive, but not to what degree. Need to grow enrollment. Payroll, our largest expense, has increased. To continue to put money in reserve, we need to gain enroll. Rob P and his folks have been doing a great job. But we need to continue to do a great job with this. And we need to continue improving our retention rates. Budgeting went to quarterly instead of yearly. We don't have a budget going forward from the state. We've been living quarter to quarter. Increase retention and enrollment. Dr. Jordan is chairing the retention piece. We need to look at our programs that are under enrolled. Can we shift some of these resources to other areas that can grow. SUNY hasn't defined how we can use the federal money yet. Testing has cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. And starting this week we'll be looking at vaccinating students.
- Dan G. – I was so excited when I read the consultation report. It was clear, direct; it offered solutions. Thank you, Lisa, for bringing up budget concerns. Two big issues on campus are issue of money. I commend Carol for the work budgeting and sharing budget information with us. Great that we have balanced things and yet we're still concerned about the future. As we deal with these existential problems of enrollment, the whole theme of the report is that we have a zoom room full of intelligent, capable people. They don't feel like they've had a seat at the table to do innovative, amazing things. We can set up structures to move forward together so that people feel like they have a say. Cautiously positive.
- ML – concerned about the future. Higher ed has gone through many changes over the last 20 months. Students have taken a different approach. We need to deliver a valuable commodity to them. Students have made their decisions: they want the highest value for the lowest cost. Most families can't afford a big school. Legislatures are finally talking about increasing TAP. Incredibly talented work

happening as we switch to online. Students want to know that their individual needs are being met. I'm very optimistic about the future. The future is the students who are coming to us now.

- Liz – are you planning on asking for more funding from the state?
- ML – not how it works. Funding from the state is very formulaic. If we get more money, everyone gets more money. Not a lot of free money right now. Unclear what will be in the final budget. If we need money, we can get money. We don't need it because we are able to meet our expenses.
- Liz – what is your plan to address this report with the campus?
- ML – That is a message that needs to come from Liz and myself. Team was working with the eboard was working on this. There needs to be a joint effort as well. We need to show that we aren't a split house.
- Liz – what is your vision for shared governance.
- ML – every campus I've been at has defined shared governance very differently. Some have four different governing bodies and some have one giant body run by the president and everything in between. Need a way to work together. It's not the role of upper admin to define it. It's the role of faculty. We're waiting for a definition of shared governance by this body. At this point, we don't have a definition. We've never had one. We need one that we can embrace.
- Liz – they wanted your vision of shared governance
- ML – working together as a team. Governance is a misnomer. It isn't limited to governance. It's a shared vision. There's one person who is ultimately responsible. Input from different positions, but we need to define input. Everyone's not going to be happy. Everyone's going to think your idea is the best idea. But we need to be flexible enough to know their neighbor may have a better idea. We need to do more education around different areas like budget.
- Tomas – Liz, can you tell me what your vision of shared governance is?
- Liz – I envision it as us all working together, collaborating, where we allow everyone to come to the table regardless of how long it takes. It takes time. We know that in emergencies we don't always have time. But hearing everyone's input, finding patterns, finding themes, coming up with a solution and having consensus is important.
- Liz – entreaty to come to these meetings as we move through this process. You haven't attended since August 30. Eboard met with you in October, then we were designated to meet with delegates. More recently, we met with you regarding how to release the consultation report in February. But it felt like you were not engaged, you didn't say a lot. Last two meetings we had with delegates, you did not attend. We want to know that you are with us if you want to move forward. We know that you're saying that, but the lack of engagement and not coming to meetings, it's hard to think that you are with us. We've been working with the leadership team members, but not with you.
- ML – if you want me, invite me. Dr. Jordan and Dr. Deane are my representatives. My history of Senate meetings is that it's under the guise of the Provost to attend. Don't know who instructed the eboard to meet with the leadership. Meetings with

the eboard have been arranged by eboard and George. Those meetings stopped some time in the fall. As for the other meetings, they were set up and if you could attend, you could. I had a President's meeting and a doctor's appointment. I am there to support them, but these meetings are about the leadership team. I'm fine with attending, but I need there to be a role for me. I find people expect me to opine on everything. You need to have your debate without my input. Let me know what you want me to do. Dawn is working on a statement to go to the campus – that was her original role and why she was added to that meeting.

- Liz – You are invited to every senate meeting. We feel that you are really important. We need buy in from the campus as well as you. Eboard, per our bylaws, it says we meet with the president regularly. We need to define this better.
- ML – Every eboard has done this differently. You should work with George.
- Liz – it was George who instructed us that you said if we have questions, we should address our concerns to the delegates.
- ML – That was a miscommunication then.
- Shelly pointed out in the chat that calendar invites were sent to President Laliberte for every Senate meeting. For the last four meetings, he declined three and did not respond to one. President Laliberte replied in the chat "I do not consider the mass email that goes out to a large group "an invitation". I consider an invitation to include the reason for the invite—perhaps even being on the agenda, or being asked to speak on a topic, otherwise I do not have role/reason other than to observe. Thomas &/or Susan are there to observe."

Eboard Update – Liz

- Eboard has written a statement draft against Workplace Violence. If you have any comments, please let us know. This is coming from the Senate body so it isn't something that needs to go out to the different areas.
- We had a meeting with the Leadership on March 26th. President couldn't be there. We discussed recommendation priorities. We discussed a plan moving forward.
- Liz met with the bylaws committee to look at the recommendations that are relevant to the bylaws.
- Liz reached out to Nii regarding meeting with the Student Senate to see if there's anything we can help with.
 - Nii – having difficulty with Student Senate making quorum at meetings
- Liz will reach out to Bruce Simon – willing to do shared governance education.
- Three volume books at the library – on reserve. Thank you, Amanda for your help ordering these.

Academic Planning Update – Lisa Tessier & Dan Gashler

- Thoughts on going back f2f? lessons learned? Questions that you want academic planning committee to answer?
- Any feedback from areas?
 - Lindsay W. – Comments from Liberal Arts and Sciences: excited about going back f2f. Students have started to check out and want that f2f interaction. Some expressed that they want to education students on vaccinations. Want to make sure there are accommodations for folks who have medical concerns. Questions: how will social distancing happen in some of the classrooms? What will happen with ventilation? Extra measures for cleaning? Will vaccinations be required for staff and students? How will the daily/weekly screening happen? Will vans be available for field trips? Questions regarding around childcare and accommodations. Best practices – more use of Vancko Hall in their f2f classes.
 - President Laliberte – as of this time we cannot mandate vaccinations as a state institution because it is not fully approved by FDA. If that changes over the summer, we may be able to. We are offering a single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Polling of our student: 25% of our students are already vaccinated. 25% said they will not be vaccinated. 50% said they don't know.
 - Cheri – regarding a possible mandate of the vaccine, what is your plan to address folks who won't get a vaccine? ML – the decision will be made by the state and whatever processes are put in by the state we will follow. The more people who are vaccinated, the more herd immunity we have. Masks will be part of our life for at least a year.
 - Ericka – Feedback for the planning committee: Concerns over prohibitive suggestions or mandates for teaching where we don't have the technology to manage (e.g. hi-flex modality – teaching in the classroom and online at the same time). Also need to take accessibility and equity into account. The sooner we can plan, the better. Use of VH will increase and continue. Need to remain cognizant of work loads and other concerns.
 - Andrea – In vet sci, we have been f2f all year. Even though students aren't f2f, students are still disengaged and lost. Skills are not there. We have a lot of difficulty social distancing in our classes/labs. Masking worked well. Hand washing and sanitizing was good. We did have several cases where folks were quarantined. Students who contracted covid did so through social situations rather than in class. Depending on the amount of testing/vaccinations, we didn't anticipate how hard it would be to have students and faculty in quarantine. We've spent so much extra time having students make up work. If back f2f, do small, consistent groups and try to stay organized. Next year the reality is still very questionable.

- Mary – Positive side of students vaccinating, if they are in contact with a positive, they don't need to quarantine. Hopefully this will be a carrot for students and there will be less disruption. Trying hard to minimize their stress with quarantining.
- ML – question about students being exempt, we have two weeks to work on that. Two weeks before they are considered fully vaccinated. Same rule for the faculty/staff as well as for the students.

UFS Consultation General Feedback and Discussion – Liz Frisbee

- Thank you to the Senators who participated in the anonymous feedback tool on VH.
- If folks didn't get a chance to do this, please do so.
- We matched our prioritized recommendations with the leadership. Many of them were very similar.
- We also wanted to discuss with everyone if we should send this out to the campus and see what the campus at large thinks about the recommendations.
- Not wanting to slow down organizing our next steps.
- Katie B. – wanted to mention the plan we've proposed. We want to be mindful of survey fatigue especially when the survey from Senate and leadership match. Leadership is committed to every recommendation.
- Liz – everyone has the plan; this was posted in VH. Leadership team came up with spreadsheet – proposal for how we should work on these recommendations. This is their proposal to the Senate. Important for us to discuss this and that the Senate and your constituents would be comfortable with.
- Katie – happy to answer any questions. Middle States Self-Study process has been commended for running smoothly. This is modeled after that process.
- Doug – I'm confused. There appears to be different people proposed from the leadership team within the same group. Confused on the organization.
 - Katie – Model is an overall task force. Campus Effectiveness Task Force – under this there would be specific work groups with leadership and senate members. Then additional campus members. Some of the issues cross boundaries. We selected people based on functional areas and area of oversight. A lot of the campus culture says "ALL" – of course we can have policies, but all need to commit to such a thing. Wanted to be action oriented. It's good to prioritize, but we feel that every recommendation needs to be acted upon. I don't believe surveying the campus for prioritizing makes sense. They all need to be done.
 - Doug – The proposal is to have five different working groups (listed in column F).
 - Katie – Yes and in column G list the names: Shared Gov, Campus Culture, Communications, Institutional Finances, Search Committee/Hiring. It's an idea

that will move us forward swiftly. We must all move forward and stop with the “gotcha” rhetoric. Our community depends on it.

- Doug – Each of those five categories, they are going to address all of those concerns/topics within as a committee. Correct? Yes.
- Liz – We want a positive outcome from this. One of the concerns that the eboard came up with: do people feel comfortable having the leadership team as a co-chair of these work groups, or could this impact participation?
- Ellen – I’d like to amplify what Katie said and the folks who put this plan together. Not in favor of surveying again. That feels superfluous. We’ve gotten feedback from our constituents. We should move forward. You’ve only gotten 50% of the senate to take the survey.
- Don C. – I’ve been to quite a few leadership meetings in the past few months. I have a concern that we need to work collaboratively. Sometimes people have a thought and like to express them. Everyone who comes to the table needs to be able to have time to digest their thoughts without being rushed into a decision.
- Ward – Concerned that those members of faculty and staff who are not tenured are going to feel reserve at the very least. The people coming from Senate need to be people with permanent appointment. They need to be able to help non-permanent people’s ideas expressed and discussed. Lots of places where folks disagree and you find common ground – but difficult if someone thinks their job/future is in peril. Co-chairs coming from non-leadership must be people with permanent appointment.
- Dawn S. – Has to be collaboration between leadership and Senate. How can we move forward without a representative from leadership on these task forces? Then we aren’t being collaborative.
- Doug H. – Need to have leadership in the process. Agree with Ward that the co-chair should be tenured for the security factor and able to speak freely. Agree with Don that people need to have time to digest, discuss with others, ideas and proposals that have come up. Something that frustrates me is that when a proposal comes up and folks want to act right away. Academics are deliberative and thoughtful (sometimes too slow) – but we like to think through the processes. We want to try to do our best and understand things.
- Lisa T. – I don’t see this as polar opposites of we have to be all apart or all together. But that we have different meetings where smaller groups can come together to discuss and then have a larger group with the leadership and report what was proposed. People feel uncomfortable asking a question to leadership about their areas. As Doug says, things take time. We do want to move forward, but it’s not realistic that we can get through all of this by June. I don’t think we should rush; we should do it right. If we can do some of this right away, great.
- Terry – Thanks to the eboard and Katie – this is a great start. But I want to echo what Doug and Shelly said in the chat. This has been a lengthy process, but it

needs to be done deliberatively. We can't just throw work groups together tonight. I'd like to hear a motion to put this on the agenda for the next meeting to think about how to go forth with this. We need to see if our constituents would like to be part of this. Unrealistic to ask the Senate and Leadership to do all of this. We need to let this marinate. A lot has happened today. We need to take a breath and come back to this. We need to be deliberate. Folks are checked out. We shouldn't just rush something just to rush through it.

- Liz – Eboard didn't put this spreadsheet together. This was put together by the leadership team; put together based on the middle states model. We have some thinking to do.
- Lori – Like to echo what's happening in the chat as well. A lot of this has not been something that's happened in three months. To try to fix something so quickly that took longer to break will not be productive. There are emotions and feelings on both sides of this. There's a lot of emphasis on forgiving and forgetting. We need to have a safe space for everyone even if everyone disagrees with them. Without shareholder buy in nothing is going to happen. We can't just forgive and forget. The damage goes a lot deeper. It may take more than just saying we want to move forward. We all want to do that – otherwise we wouldn't be here each week. The labor is what is important, not what we call it.
- Liz – Thank you, Katie and the leadership team for getting this together. Please think about this plan. We need to be open and frank. If this isn't going to work, we need to explain how/why. We don't want to push leadership away, but want folks to be able to say what they want to say. Is everyone okay with the work groups? Seems like yes (folks were nodding on Zoom). Need to establish ground rules.
- Eboard has another meeting with the Leadership team on April 7.

For next time:

- Please look over the Workplace Violence Statement, which is posted in VH. Send any comments or edits to Liz or the e-board.
- Look over proposal for next steps, spreadsheet with working groups, etc.
- If you have any feedback on academic planning, send those to Lisa.
- Please take the survey on prioritizing the consultation feedback if you haven't already.

Adjourned at 6:35pm

Next Meeting: Monday, April 19, 2021 @ 4:30pm (Zoom)