



UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING

April 16, 2024, 4:00 PM

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person

Chair Linda Dobmeier

Ms. Patricia Farrell

Mr. Pete Grum

Mr. Kevin Horrigan

Mr. Charles Naughton

Mr. Gary Siddall

Mr. Donald (DJ) Hardwick, Jr.

Virtually via Zoom:

Mr. Mo Sumbundu

Excused:

Mr. Robert Zak

FACULTY & STAFF PRESENT (in person):

Interim President Bonita R. Durand

Interim Provost Amitra Wall

Interim Vice President for Management and Operations, Lisa Krieger

Interim Vice President for Finance and Controller, Jim Thor

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Wayne Brumfield

Interim Dean of Students, Elizabeth Ching-Bush

Associate Vice President, Weigel Health Center, Rock Doyle

Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Jim Finnerty

Vice President for Enrollment Management, Randy Bowen

Associate Vice President for Development, Scott Burns

Dean, School of the Professions, Carol DeNysschen

Interim Chief Diversity Officer, Lisa Morrison-Fronckowiak

College Senate Chair and Head of Information Commons, E.H. Butler Library, Ken Fujiuchi

Director, Events Management, Bernadette Matre

Deputy Director of Commencement, Academic Affairs, Kimberly Jackson

Secretary to the University Council and President's Chief of Staff, LeVar Burke

Temporary Administrative Assistant 2, President's Office, Kristine Kaminsky

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dobmeier called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. She welcomed everyone both in-person and virtually to the first Buffalo State College Council meeting for the spring 2024 semester.

A quorum was established.

ACTION ITEMS

Chair Dobmeier called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2023, meeting, and the special meeting on March 28, 2023. The motion to approve the minutes was carried by unanimous vote.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Dobmeier recognized the College Council student representative, Donald (DJ) Hardwick. This was his last meeting. She thanked him for all his hard work. He will be hooded last at his 9:00 a.m. graduation ceremony, to make it special for him, as was suggested by Interim President Durand. He was given a name block with his years of service, and well wishes for his continued success.

The Chair received a letter from Donald (DJ) Hardwick. He thanked the dedication of each College Council member toward enhancing students' lives at Buffalo State.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The winners of the Chancellor's Award and the President's Award medals were reviewed. The bios for these students will be shared (please see attached.) Chief Diversity Officer, Lisa Morrison – Fronckowiak went to Albany with the students to receive their awards from the Chancellor. The Interim President thanked her for her attendance. It was mentioned that there are pictures on Instagram.

Interim President Durand expressed her honor in continuing to serve the Buffalo State Community. She has been a part of Buffalo State for over twenty years. She thanked Chancellor King, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Merryl Tish, and Buffalo State University's Trustee, Eunice Lewin, and the College Council for their confidence in her. She pointed out that this is not just a job for her, but also a labor of love.

Significant progress has been made over the past year, and despite the amount of work that still needs to be done, the Interim President is certain that the progress will continue. She assured the Council and the Buffalo State community that all difficult decisions will be made with the best interest of the institution in mind.

Dr. Durand also stated that any decisions will be made with humanity towards the staff, students, and the community that Buffalo State serves. It was pointed out that Buffalo State needs to prepare the students to serve behind us, and that they are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. Buffalo State cares about the community, and so is in control of its destiny.

The Vice President for Enrollment Management gave an update on the FAFSA (please see attached.)

There have been changes within Student Affairs. Dean Sarah Young's memorial was the previous Sunday. Associate Vice President, Rock Doyle was thanked for continuing to coordinate the efforts for the Dean of Students memorial. During this transition, Janelle Brooks, Officer in Charge of Student Affairs, and Curtis Brickhouse, Officer in Charge of Residence Life made sure that there was continuity of service for the students.

It was mentioned that Dr. Rock Doyle stepped up as Officer in Charge of the division following the reassignment of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Dr. Wayne Brumfield, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs was introduced. His first day was April 15th. Dr. Brumfield's experience includes serving as the vice president for student life and leadership program at the University of Louisiana Monroe and was instrumental in restructuring student life and leadership programs. He served as the interim vice president at SUNY, New Paltz. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in history from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, in Lafayette, and Southeastern University in Hammond. Dr. Brumfield's doctoral degree is in Educational Leadership and Research from Louisiana State University.

It was mentioned that Dr. Rock Doyle, Janelle Brooks, and Curtis Brickhouse will all continue to lead.

The appointment of Elizabeth Ching-Bush (ECB) to the position of Interim Dean of Students was announced. She has over 21 years of student affairs and higher education experience. Previously, she was the assistant vice president and dean of students at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts. This university is one that Buffalo State is benchmarked against. Elizabeth Ching-Bush has a master's degree in social work from Adelphia University, and has held positions at Stony Brook, Manhattanville College and Florida Southern College.

Members of the College Council were gifted bags from the 2024 Eclipse Fest. It was pointed out that despite the clouds, the experience was amazing. There were 1300 people in attendance at Coyer Field, and there were food trucks and a band. The Chancellor, Trustee Eunice Lewin, the Mayor, Shawn Ryan, college council members and alumni were there, as well. Interim President Durand took the Chancellor around campus to show him what needs to be repaired.

Associate Professor Dr. Kevin Williams was thanked for such a successful event. It was pointed out that he knew the scientific and educational aspects of the eclipse and led the committee to organize everything for the day. It was a very positive experience.

With the help of M&T Bank and Highmark, 50,000 eclipse glasses were given out to Buffalo State faculty, staff, students, and Buffalo Public school students. FeedMore WNY and Meals on Wheels delivered eclipse glasses to the community around Buffalo State. All of this was capable due to the

support of sponsors, including the Ferguson family from the Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium. The previous programs that were held at the Planetarium were a great lead-in for the actual event.

The Bengala was on Saturday during the same week as the eclipse event. It was arranged as a cocktail party with dancing, student performances and an auction. The poet laureate and Buffalo State Alum, Aitina Cooke, read a poem that she wrote specifically for this occasion. Students worked the function by greeting, serving, and cleaning up. The catering was done by Chartwell's. All did a great job, and a round of applause was given to Jim Finnerty, Vice President of Institutional Advancement.

The Bengala traditionally has an auction. This year, it was moved online, and more money was generated than in previous years. People are asked to "Stand for Students" by contributing amounts between \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00. The donations were robust. It was pointed out that donations could still be made via check or QR code.

There were 330 in-person attendees, and the event was live-streamed. People were viewing from Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Washington, D.C., and more areas. The current total is \$250,000.00, and money is still being donated.

It was mentioned that Buffalo State's 152nd Commencement will be happening on Saturday, May 18. The schedule will be as follows:

- School of Professions ceremony – 9:00 a.m.
 - Chair Dobmeier, convener
 - Anne Constantino, keynote speaker
 - Shenese Patterson, student speaker, President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student recipient
 - Sister Charlene Fontana, President's Distinguished Service Award recipient

- School of Arts & Sciences ceremony – 1:00 p.m.
 - Chair Dobmeier, convener.
 - Sheila Rayam, keynote speaker, Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient
 - Zoe Gonez, student speaker, President's Medal for Outstanding Undergraduate Student recipient.
 - Cindy Abbott Letro, President's Distinguished Service Award recipient.

- School of Education and Individualized and Multidisciplinary Studies – 5:00 p.m.
 - Mo Sumbundu, convener
 - Darren Brown-Hall, keynote speaker, Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient
 - Leslie Lawrence, student speaker
 - Sharon Belton-Cottman, President's Distinctive Service Award recipient.

The SUNY approved honorary degree individuals were unable to attend this year. Buffalo State has requested that the awards be given away during a three-year period.

Professor Jennifer Toohey and Chief of Staff, LeVar Burke, were thanked for revising the honorary degree process and making it a much smoother and more efficient process. The commencement advisory committee was thanked for their unwavering dedication. Dr. Howard Reid, the first university marshal, Kim Jackson, Deputy Marshall, Bernadette Matre, Director of Events Management, and the campus volunteers were recognized.

Donald (DJ) Hardwick was praised for representing the college council at the academic convocation.

The Financial Sustainability Plan was discussed. There is a structural deficit that must be rectified by 2027 and 2028. Buffalo State continues to make progress and is on track with SUNY's expectations. The focus remains on increasing enrollment, expanding revenue sources, and optimizing the workforce. There is a multi-year plan to achieve this goal. An extension request was denied by the Chancellor. The previous Thursday, Vice President Bowen, Interim Vice President Thor, and Interim Provost Wall went to Albany and presented Buffalo State's strategy.

Interim President Durand thanked the college foundation, the senate, and the collective bargaining units.

Report concluded.

COMMITTEES

- **President's Community Advisory Committee (Bonita Durand, Interim President)**
Will be meeting on Friday, April 19, 2024
- **Naming of Buildings and Grounds (Robert Zak, Chair)**
Summary given by Scott Burns.

A meeting was held on March 25, 2024. Vice President Finnerty reported on the obligatory formation of a committee under SUNY and Buffalo State policy. It will evaluate the value of certain campus assets to provide a naming format. Vice President Finnerty and Provost Wall met to identify campus members to serve. The committee was formed and will be meeting on April 25, where they will be charged according to these policies. There will be an update of relevant values by the next meeting. The values will be established at the first meeting of the academic year.

- **Facilities (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**
Will be meeting Monday, April 22, 2024
- **Government Relations (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**
No report
- **Nominations & Presidential Advisory Committee (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**
No report

- **Budget (Robert Zak, Chair)**

Summary given by Provost Wall, Vice Presidents Bowen and Thor.

The committee met on March 7, 2024. The following items were discussed:

- Setting the academic affairs department's tone of empowering students to desire a lifelong learning experience.
- Establishing a framework that inspects the structural, human resource, political and symbolic nature of a comprehensive university.
- Key performance indicators including pedagogy, curriculum, and research.

The provost has met with different groups of students, faculty/staff, and directors, and plans to have more conversations over the fall semester.

Vice President Bowen spoke on the intentional and delivered academic and student programs aimed at student success:

- Roar 2 Success's SUNY ACE.
- EAP Navigate (to be implemented in the spring).
- Pass/Fail policy change (implemented fall, 2023).
- SUNY/Financial Sustainability approved strategic enrollment management plan.
- Graduate students being moved into the Grad Ed program (fall, 2024)

Vice President Thor gave a brief overview of the 5-year sustainability plan. This is a work in progress based on campus expenditures vs. incoming revenue. SUNY approved the enrollment plan on April 7, 2024, which includes tuition and dorm. This year is not tracking as well as the plan.

The increase in dorm occupancy has led to the stabilization of the student population. The outcome will be based on employment reduction through attrition, retirement, and separation.

- **Student life (Charles Naughton, Chair)**

Please see attached.

RESOLUTION

Chair Dobmeier called for a motion to move put forward a resolution to rename the College Council to University Council.

Interim President Durand and College Council Secretary Burke researched the renaming process. The Chair confirmed that everyone had read the draft. The College Council Secretary was asked to read it aloud to the council to open it up for discussion if necessary (please see attached).

Chair Dobmeier asked for any comments. Interim President Durand made the following points:

- An associate who works with the Foundation and various areas within SUNY Legal's council office was conferred with regarding the process.
- Currently, a procedure does not exist within SUNY.
- There are two or three other councils investigating the same action.
- General Council decided that a name change can be completed if the council submitting a resolution gets an affirmative vote.
- This process may change in the future.
- Everyone did their due diligence in researching this process.

Chair Dobmeier asked for a motion to vote for the resolution.

Gary Siddall motioned.

Seconded by DJ Hardwick.

To ensure that each members' vote was recorded, a roll call vote was completed, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chair asked the University Council Secretary, LeVar Burke, to send a copy of the resolution to the Senate Chair, Ken Fujiuchi.

Announcements:

Secretary of State, Robert Rodriguez, made his first visit on campus for the Downtown Revitalization Council meeting. Interim President Durand invited him back for an introductory tour of the campus. It was mentioned that every year the governor distributes 100 million dollars for downtown revitalization. Each community gets 10 million dollars. Then, another 100 million dollars is to be awarded to communities up to 4.5 million dollars, bringing the total up to 10 million dollars.

Interim President Durand met with the Greeks after the University Council meeting at 6:30 p.m. during their introduction of new members.

Honors Convocation is on Friday, April 19, 2024.

“Take Back the Night” will be on Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

“Runway” fashion show, put on by the Fashion and Textile Technology department will be on Saturday, April 26, 2024. Tickets are available online.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chair called for a motion to move into Executive Session: In accordance with section 105.f of the New York State Public Officers Law to discuss a topic that requires confidentiality. Mr. Charles Naughton moved that the council enter executive session. Mr. DJ Hardwick seconded the motion.

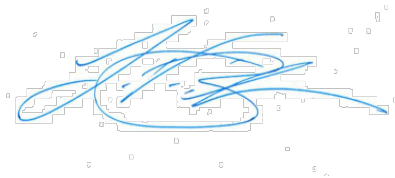
The Chair proceeded with a roll call, and everyone was to respond yes, no or abstain. The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Interim President Durand was asked to remain.

ACTION ITEM:

No action was taken.

Chair Dobmeier asked for a motion to move out of Executive Session. Mr. DJ Hardwick moved to end the executive session. Mr. Chuck Naughton seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LeVar Nathaniel Burke', is written over a faint, light blue grid pattern.

LeVar Nathaniel Burke, JD, MPA
Secretary to the University Council

SUNY Buffalo State University
Student Bios

Undergraduates

Zoe E. Goñez
Buffalo, NY
Theater

Ms. Goñez serves as president of Casting Hall Productions, the university's student-run theater company. She played the lead in *Medea* in spring 2023 and assistant-directed *On the Verge* in fall 2023. She also wrote a 60-page television pilot, *Echoes of Dolls*, for which she received Writers Guild of America certification. She auditioned, was accepted, and is now eligible for the highly selective National Theater Institute residencies at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut. She trained younger students as a summer teaching artist at Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo and professionally stage-managed a production for a local high school.

Seth G. Rueger
Depew, NY
International Relations

Mr. Rueger balances academics with his service as an intelligence analyst for the New York Air National Guard. His research interest is the relationship between political and economic institutions and conflict onset. He helped organize a Model European Union simulation at the SUNY Global Center in New York City in 2023. He is a teaching assistant for political analysis and statistics courses and a student representative on the School of Arts and Sciences Dean's Student Council. He is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa international college honor society and the Pi Sigma Alpha national honor society for political science.

Catherine J. Sarich
Columbia, MD
Psychology

Ms. Sarich is a member of the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program and the Hulicka Scholars Program. A co-captain of the women's hockey team, she earned Spring 2023 Academic All-District Team status. Her research in burnout and retention in athletics led to a research assistant position with David McDuff of the Baltimore Orioles for a study analyzing burnout in athletic trainers. She is a teaching intern for research methods and senior seminar courses. She has volunteered to raise funds for children's hospitals and promote women's hockey abroad. She is a member of the Psi Chi international honor society in psychology.

Graduate

Uttam Lakshmi Mounika Goruganthu

Andhra Pradesh, India

Data Science and Analytics

Ms. Goruganthu has transitioned from her career in experimental biology to data science. Her independent study project, “AI-Driven Data Access Solutions,” showcased the real-world application of her data science and analytics (DSA) degree. As a graduate assistant, she provides academic support to DSA students and started a Discord server to foster communication among students. She revitalized the DSA program’s website and secured funding to develop a GPT-powered data retrieval system, democratizing data insights regardless of technical expertise. She conducted an analysis of study abroad and international student survey data that will lead to improvement of key programs at the university.

Shenese K. Patterson

Buffalo, NY

Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration

Ms. Patterson serves as president of the Graduate Student Association and graduate representative of the College Senate. She has worked as a peer mentor, orientation leader, resident assistant, student ambassador, and election worker for student government. With a research interest in student concerns and political tension, she volunteered on the university’s Social Justice Subcommittee. She serves as a Residence Life graduate assistant and assistant complex director and completed a summer internship as residence director for the Summer EOP program. A Thomas J. Quatroche Memorial Scholarship recipient, she advocates for more accessible and inclusive spaces to foster student success and retention.

All-American Athlete

Natalia Sawyer

Schenectady, NY

Psychology

Natalia Sawyer finished an exceptional indoor season for Buffalo State that saw her earn a pair of All-America honors and her second national title, claiming the championship in the 60-meter hurdles. She also finished as the national runner-up in the 400-meter dash, scoring 18 points to help Buffalo State finish in a tie for 10th-nationally. In both events at the national meet, Sawyer broke the school and conference records, finishing in 8.47 seconds in the 60 hurdles prelims, and 54.86 seconds in the 400-meter dash final, with that time also marking the sixth-fastest time in NCAA Division III history.

In addition to her national success this season, Sawyer won a national title in the outdoor 400-meter hurdles in 2023 and was an All-American at the 2023 indoor championships in the 400-meter dash. Through three national championship meets, Sawyer now has been an All-American four times.

The sophomore also excelled at the regional and conference level. Sawyer earned U.S. Track & Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) All-Region honors for top-five marks in the region during the pre-national championship season in three events; the 60-meter hurdles, 200-meter dash, and 400-meter dash. At the conference championship meet, Sawyer won all three of her events, and took home the SUNYAC Most Outstanding Performance and Most Valuable Performer awards at the meet. She also repeated as the conference's Athlete of the Year, having won the award in each of her three seasons at Buffalo State.



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FAFSA UPDATE

(As of April 16, 2024)

Randy Bowen
Vice President for Enrollment Management

www.buffalostate.edu

FAFSA “Simplification” - 24-25 - Overview

- Most significant changes with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in over 50 years
- Scheduled to be released to families in October 2023 - Delayed until December 31, 2023
- Previously the data from the FAFSA linked and populated with the New York State TAP application - given the challenges this year, that is not happening
- Students in NYS will need to complete a separate TAP application



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FAFSA - Update as of 4.16.24

- To date, schools are experiencing several data issues
- Student Aid Index (SAI) - PELL eligible but income exceeds \$200,000 per year
- 6,756 student aid records have been loaded in the test database - about 50% to date
- 1,729 records have been rejected (26%)
 - 42 students no IRS consent; 701 parents no IRS consent
 - 514 missing student signature; 802 missing parent signature



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FAFSA - Update as of 4.16.24

- 2,325 students have a SAI Index (formerly EFC) of - 1,500; 2,676 less than or equal to a SAI of “0”
- Less than 2% have been picked for Verification
- 315 students chose - Unsubsidized Loan Only
- 24 parents reported foreign income exclusion - may need to request additional documentation
- Buffalo State will be packaging on the most recent transaction available
- Packaging is set to begin near the end of the week of April 22nd - barring any unforeseen technical issues



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**College Council Student Life, Conduct, Housing, and Safety Committee Meeting
Report
1/4/2024**

Committee members: Charles Naughton (chair)-Present
Kevin Horrigan -excused
Patricia Farrell-excused
Donald Hardwick-Present

Staff: Timothy Gordon, Vice President, Student Affairs-Present
Amy Pedlow, Chief of Police-Present
Jeffrey Hammer, Senior Director, Environmental Health and Safety-Present

College Council Student Life, Conduct, Housing, and Safety Committee

AGENDA

DATE: 3/07/2024

TIME: 12:05 pm (began)

Campus House, Board Room

Student Affairs, Student Life, and Housing

1. Residence Life

Gordon shared that the search for the Director of Residence Life has launched, and screening interviews would begin later in March or early April.

2. Dean of Students

Gordon reviewed the OIC structure for residence life noting that Curtis Brickhouse was OIC for residence life and Janelle Brooks is OIC supervising the Dean of Students portfolio.

3. Student Conduct

4. Weigel Health and Wellness

5. Athletics

It was shared that Acrobatics and Tumbling had their inaugural home meet on 2/24 and Cross Country/Track and Field were heading to NCAA Championships.

6. Childcare Center

7. Career Development Center

8. Student Leadership and Engagement

Safety

9. Campus Environmental Health and Safety

Pedlow reviewed the incidents that occurred a recent basketballs game at the beginning of the month.

10. University Police

11. Other Items

12. Adjourn @ 1:07p