STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL

Thursday, October 5, 2023

Ammerman Campus
William J. Lindsay Life Sciences Building, Room 114

MINUTES

Members in attendance:

Mary Lou Araneo	Lisa Hamilton	Dr. Patty Munsch-Eilbeck
Dr. Michael Boecherer	Dr. Carol Hernandez	Christina Vargas
Cynthia Eaton	David Johnson	Scott Votke
Sara Gorton	Dr. Liesl Jones	Carol Wickliffe-Campbell
Kaliah Greene	Theodore Koukounas	Dr. Helen Wittmann

Kaliah Greene and Theodore Koukounas began the meeting at 3:58pm.

- The membership was welcomed to the first meeting of the academic year.
- New members Dr. Michael Boecherer, Cynthia Eaton, Sara Gorton, and Dr. Carol Hernandez were recognized.
- There is a change in modality for the next meeting on November 2nd; it will be held via Microsoft Teams instead of in-person.
- Trying to make the meetings less of a report-out and more of a collaborative discussion.
- One of the goals of the SPC is to increase faculty participation, not just Governance chairs and representatives.
- The minutes from May 4, 2023, were reviewed, and there being no corrections suggested, a motion was made to approve them. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted as written.

Kaliah Greene briefly discussed the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan and 2022-2023 Operational Plan:

- The strategic plan is our guiding document for the College over the next five years; it has our values, institutional goals, and strategic objectives.
- In line with the strategic plan are the operational plans, which are taking what's in the strategic plan and showing how things will get done at the strategic objective level. This year we are trying to be more collaborative with our operational plans and how we will achieve them, and tying them more to budget to ensure success.
- Our guiding question for this year's operational plan is: *Is this something that needs to be done for the College to remain open?*

- Our operational plan is tied to the seven Middle States standards, our seven key performance indicators, and our six institutional goals.
- Some highlights from the 2022-2023 Operational Plan:
    - This was the first time that the President's Office included an operational goal.
    - Academic Affairs reviewed and revised college placement guidelines.
    - Financial Affairs helped with student debt and created continuity plans.
    - Information Technology Services implemented nine applications.
    - Institutional Advancement worked with Enrollment Management on key initiatives.
    - OPIE continued their work with dashboards.
    - Legal Affairs streamlined and improved hiring procedures.
    - Student Affairs worked on strategic enrollment management plans.
    - The three campuses had some initiatives that they worked on together in addition to a collaboration with Academic Affairs that included a five-year analysis of some programs.
- The charge of the SPC is to review plans and the progress made in effecting them; to communicate the status of strategic and operational planning; to provide input at various points of the planning process; to propose any changes to the process of planning; recommend revisions to the Strategic Plan; and provide counsel to the President as requested.
- The Strategic Plan should be a living document. Please go through the operational plan and ask questions to better understand how everything connects.
- In addition to strategic planning and operational planning, we also have assessment that is happening right now from both the academic side and the AES (administrative and educational support) side.

Dr. Patty Munsch-Eilbeck presented the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan:

- From December 2021 to December 2022, the College participated in a SUNY-led initiative to develop a strategic enrollment management plan. This was done in consultation with AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers), an organization that helps institutions develop strategic enrollment management and retention plans.
- A strategic enrollment management plan is a plan that helps us look at our mission and our students' educational goals. It is not just the work of the admissions and enrollment management offices nor is it just recruitment and marketing; it is supposed to be comprehensive. When thinking about this plan, we are not just looking at recruitment but also at retention.
- We didn't want to do an entire SEM plan until the Strategic Plan was done because they should align. Instead, a SEM lite plan was created using adult learners, a small subset of our student population, to test how a SEM plan will look. Now that the College's Strategic Plan is complete, we can build a more robust SEM plan and involve more stakeholders.
- There were a lot of conversations while developing the SEM lite plan that included admissions, marketing, curriculum, retention, and data.
- One thing that we learned about adult learners from looking at the data is that we have a huge number who are non-matriculated students. We have yet to delve into why that is but it will be one of the things we take on when we move into our next enrollment management plan.
- The six steps to building a SEM plan are:
    1. Setting the course
    2. Review the College's vision, mission, and strategic plan to identify key enrollment indicators
    3. Make a case for why a SEM plan is needed using data collection and analysis
    4. Set enrollment and retention goals
    5. Identify strategies
    6. Create tactical work plans
- In our next SEM plan, we need to spend more time on setting our goals and developing our infrastructure so that when we move on to developing our strategies and tactics there is a plan behind

it. Examples of infrastructure for student retention would be the Suffolk Rise program, early alerts, and assigned advising. Examples of infrastructure for bringing in new students would be enrollment initiatives, late start classes, micromesters, and potentially microcredentials.

- Building a robust SEM plan is a process; SUNY anticipates that it will take at least a year. Because we did such a nice job with our SEM lite plan, and the College's Strategic Plan is now finalized, SUNY has offered to allow us to continue working through this year with an AACRAO coach to build a full plan.
- A lot of the work involved in creating the SEM plan will be taking what we are already doing and putting it into a plan that supports the Strategic Plan.
- To develop key enrollment indicators, we need to look at our student type cohorts and our success metrics.
- Several enrollment goal examples were shown. Any goals we decide on should support the Strategic Plan. As we meet different benchmarks in developing this plan, the SPC will review and approve it before it is presented to the President for his review and approval.
- Next steps for the SEM Plan:
    - Build a committee
    - Incorporate our current work and projects
    - Demonstrate areas of success
    - Consider opportunities for retention
    - Build on the capacity we have in the foundational plan
- It was asked how students can build a reasonable schedule if they come in two days before the start of the semester and our classes are running at a high utilization rate. That is a piece that Academic Affairs is working on with the SEM plan.
- It was asked what is the benefit of adult learners being matriculated over non-matriculated. Being matriculated offers the students a path towards their goal and unlocks access to financial aid.
- It was asked if there is a credit restriction for non-matriculated students with the thinking that perhaps adult learners think they can't be matriculated because they think they have to be a full-time student to be matriculated. Prior to COVID, there was a restriction of 11.99 credits for part-time and non-matriculated students but that rule was loosened during COVID. Now we are looking to see if we should go back to that or not and how we can let adult learners know they can be matriculated and attend classes part-time.
- It was asked if it is part of the admissions process that students have to choose a goal. As part of the registration process, students have to select one of 10 different goals. These educational goals are reported to SUNY.
- It was asked if there is an increase in the number of Pell eligible students over the last few years and is there a correlation to students who register for classes but don't come due to a lack of funds or financial aid.
    - For a time, there was a decrease in the number of students who completed the FAFSA. From Fall 2022 to Spring 2023, there was an increase in the number of Pell eligible students but we normally look at the data from fall to fall.
    - Business and Financial Affairs reports that we have a large number of students who have a full or significant financial aid package but do not confirm their attendance. The Financial Aid offices do reach out to those students but we don't know if they are not confirming because of personal/work related reasons or they are attending somewhere else. It was suggested that we reach out to nearby schools that we have agreements with to see if those students are attending there and if so, how the financial aid was packaged.
- It was asked if cross-registration between schools is happening with the increase in online course offerings. We currently have a minimal cross-registration student population.

- It was asked if we knew how many students start a payment plan but then don't attend, don't finish the payments, or don't finish school in general.
    - A few years ago, we began offering payment plans that started earlier to give the students smaller payments over a longer period of time. That doesn't work for students who come in two days before the semester starts so they have to make larger payments over a shorter period of time. For students who start a payment plan in late spring for fall classes and miss a payment, they are notified that they either need to be back on their payment plan or pay in full before they can start in the fall; we don't hold their schedule if they're not current on payments. Students also may not be permitted to register for the next semester if they have a balance due so we might lose students between semesters because of that.
    - While we might not know if students leave due to financial or other personal issues, early alerts will help us know if students are potentially leaving because of grades. It might be helpful to find out how many students who were marked Not Attending had a last day of attendance before the census date.
    - Faculty need to be made aware of the financial resources available to students so they can help guide those who can't afford their course materials after paying for classes. Faculty would be more receptive to communication with this information from their colleagues instead of college-wide emails. Students also see their professors as the experts on all things College-related so faculty need to be aware of how they talk and what they say to their students.

Kaliah Greene reviewed the 2023-2024 Operational Plan:

- The document is a draft. We are still working on it because some areas reported their initiatives late.
- Each area has a condensed version as the Suffolk Rise program is a major initiative that the College is working on and will take a lot of financial and human resources.
- The seven key performance indicators are:
    - Enrollment
    - Course-level student success, including average GPA, withdrawal, and success rates
    - Success in college-level English and Math courses within the first year (momentum metrics)
    - Retention of fall students to the spring semester (persistence)
    - Fall-to-fall retention of first-year students into the second-year (retention)
    - Overall completion and graduation rate
    - Overall completion, graduation, and transfer rate
- In Fall 2022, the decrease in enrollment slowed down to 3%. At one point during COVID we were at a double-digit decrease. In Spring 2023 we were up in FTE and unduplicated headcount. FTE is determined by dividing the billable credits by 15. FTE is the money side and determines the operating budget.
- Enrollment goals were determined by adding 2% to Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer semester unduplicated headcounts and FTEs. Hopefully that will help close our budget gap. The Fall 2023 enrollment goal is 20,463.

Sara Gorton gave a presentation on the 2023-2024 budget:

- A budget is an estimate of revenues and expenditures and is a road map using historical data, current trends, and projections of anticipated events that provides funding to help us achieve our strategic goals.
- The three steps of the budget process were explained:
    1. Budget preparation
        - Evaluate everyone's needs
        - Create a budget
        - Submit for College BOT review and approval
        - Submit for County Legislature and County Executive review and approval
        - Submit for SUNY approval

2. Budget monitoring
    - Monitor day to day transactions
    - Track revenues and expenditures
    - Make changes as needed
3. Budget analysis
    - End of fiscal year analysis to see what changes need to be made for the next budget

- Fiscal year 2024 saw cost factors and revenue challenges:
    - Cost factors:
        - Contractual increases in collective bargaining units
        - Increase of 12% in employee medical health plan ($4.1million)
        - Increase of $400k in NYS employee retirement (TRS 9.8–10.29% and ERS 8.2–14.9%)
        - Increase in utility costs (12–15%)
        - Ongoing mental health, basic needs, and socioeconomic challenges to students
        - Operating costs impacted by inflation
    - Revenue challenges:
        - No increase from SUNY (because of decreased enrollment)
        - No more HEERF
        - Projected decrease in high school graduates
        - Increased competition of other schools and labor shortages causing higher paying jobs
- Overall revenue by fiscal year:
    - FY‘19 – $214,020,724
    - FY‘22 – $192,587,820
    - FY‘23 – $191,728,298
    - FY‘24 – $197,893,895
    - From FY’19 to FY’24, we saw a 4% increase in County funding, a 1% increase in State funding, a 3% increase in Student Financial Aid, and an 8% decrease in Tuition and Fees.
- Enrollment has decreased from 26,789 in Fall 2011 to 18,981 (as reported yesterday). We currently have late start and Beacon students coming in so hopefully that will boost our enrollment. Last year we saw an increase in part-time students and a decrease in full-time students. So far this year we have seen an increase in full-time students and now we are looking to see if that means we have less part-time students.
    - It was explained that the enrollment numbers are based on census. Our goal this is year is 20,463 by the time we hit census. Last year we hit census based on some back-end things from SICAS (Student Information and Campus Administrative Systems) where 500 students were not counted in census; that may be the case again this year. The number we really should be focusing on is End of Term (EOT), which is where we end up at the end of the semester.
    - Spring and fall census numbers are the litmus tests for colleges and universities.
    - The annual budget is based upon EOT numbers, not census numbers.
- From 2011 to 2021, there was a decline in enrollment at community colleges while state operated colleges seemed to stay even.
    - It was explained that census numbers include new first-time, transfer, continuing, and dual enrollment students; they do not include continuing education students. Many community colleges are focusing on their dual enrollment students, which includes high school/early college students.
- Overall cost data per FTE by fiscal year:
    - FY‘19 – $12,404
    - FY‘22 – $15,781
    - FY‘23 – $17,056 (projected number pending audit)
    - Cost of FTE increased due to annual increases of 2.24% (1.6% in salaries and 0.64% in benefits), increased operation and maintenance costs, reduction in FTEs, and inflation.

- It was asked about how SUNY, NYS, and Suffolk County decide funding for us.
    - SUNY funds us by FTE. They have an FTE rate and a commitment for continued support. They would multiply our FTE by that rate and then look at what they gave us the previous year. We would always get the minimum commitment but if our FTEs went up, we would get more. When COVID happened and everyone's enrollment dropped 20%, SUNY realized they couldn't cut funding by 20% so they have continued funding at the 2019 rate. Even though our enrollment is up, if SUNY uses our current FTE, we would lose $10 million. SUNY is waiting to see what they are going to do; they may raise the FTE rate.
    - Suffolk County funds us based on what they gave the previous year and, based on their budget at that time, they may provide a small increase. That is something we negotiate with them.
    - The rest of our funding comes from tuition and fees.
- Fiscal Year 2024 revenue and costs projections:
    - Revenue:
        - Flat funding from SUNY
        - 2% increase in County funding
        - 3.1% tuition increase
        - $2 million increase in fee and other state support
        - $800k increase in auxiliary revenues (workforce development, special events, and interest income)
    - Costs:
        - 1% increase in personnel services costs (contractual increases, separations/vacancies, etc.)
        - 7.8% increase in benefits
        - 12.8% reduction in other costs (equipment costs, postponement of computer refresh, 10%+ campus costs)
- Budget comparison:
    - We currently have a projected budget deficit of 5.4%, which is $12.8 million. Last year our budget deficit was $13.6 million.
    - Our Fund balance serves as a buffer between the money we have and the money we owe. In 2021-2022 we had a big increase in our Fund balance from all of the HEERF money we received. This was money given to us for anticipated losses due to COVID.
    - Knowing we had a big budget gap, we didn't want to ask our students to pay 20% more in tuition so we made a conscious effort to spend down our Fund balance over the next couple of years so we can right-size ourselves. With this year's deficit, that brings our Fund balance down to $20.1 million.
    - While $20.1 million is a lot of money, our annual budget is $210 million and we spend about $15-17 million a month ($10 million on payroll and $3 million on health benefits to start), so that money goes fast.
    - We are looking at areas where we can cut costs. We know we can't cut supplies, materials and utilities, which is about $24 million, because we still need to provide our students with the education they are paying for. Finding areas we can cut will be a difficult conversation that needs to be had over the next few months.

There is a lot of planning going on at the College. The SPC has a lot of work to do in terms of operational and budget planning, and tying that all together to provide recommendations to the President. Looking at the Fund balance, we have about another year or two to right-size ourselves. Last year there were some recommendations to do more aligning with operational and strategic master planning. We should also start working on succession planning institutionally and in departments and offices because that will inform things moving forward.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:18pm.