

**SUNY Cobleskill College Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 4, 2026**  
**DRAFT**

**College Council Members in Attendance:** Eric Stein, Linda Cross, Erik Hage, Theresa Heary, Martin Messner, Tracy Purcell, Susan Rightmyer, Marilyn Wyman, Daniil Usmanov

**College Council Guests:**

*Cabinet Members* - Marion Terenzio, Derwin Bennett, Nick DeCaprio, Laura Gross, Anne Hopkins-Gross, Gus McGiver, Darcy Medica, Anna Miarka-Grzelak, Jason Politi, Cynthia Zinzow

**Apologies:** Anna Blinn Cole, Erik Hage

**Welcome / Opening of Meeting**

Mr. Stein called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

The council reviewed the minutes of the December 3, 2025, meeting. Marilyn made a motion to approve, it was seconded, and the motion passed with Threase abstaining.

**Part I Information Sharing with On-Campus Contingencies**

**Student Government Update** – *Daniil Usmanov, SGA President*

Student Government reported a strong start to the semester, with the four previously vacant Senate positions filled quickly. Three students are running for Vice President.

Key updates included:

- 11 applicants for a club-related scholarship, with selections underway.
- Charity volleyball event planned for late March.
- Senate guest speaker schedule established for the semester.
- Recent visit from campus safety representatives presenting on IT security & cameras
- A student protest occurred the prior Friday
- Discussion of a new scholarship task force requested by students, with plans for student participation.

**President's Update** – *Marion Terenzio, President*

The president provided updates on the Governor's budget proposal and SUNY system priorities.

Key points included:

- \$54M proposed to maintain the SUNY tuition freeze.
- Additional funding proposed for SUNY Reconnect (community colleges), but tech sector colleges are excluded.
- Expansion of ASAP/ACE retention programs and EOP, including restoration and increases to previous funding levels.
- Significant proposed support for critical maintenance and infrastructure, noting SUNY buildings represent nearly 40% of state capital assets.

- Updates on agricultural initiatives, including the Blue Ribbon Panel for Education, SUNY AgTech Center, and efforts to highlight SUNY Cobleskill's leadership in agriculture statewide.
- Recognition of major regional investment through the Achieve Grant, with Cobleskill serving as a lead institution in agriculture-related components.

**Academic Momentum Plan** – *Darcy Medica, Provost/VP Academic Affairs*

An overview of SUNY's systemwide AcMO initiative was presented, focused on retention, credit momentum, and gateway course completion. The college's plan is due February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Key elements:

- Use of evidence-based practices and expanded use of student success dashboards.
- Priority KPIs: retention, graduation, gateway math/English completion, 30-credit accumulation, and financial aid compliance.
- Local data trends show students entering with 84% or lower high-school GPA are less likely to succeed.
- Increased needs in mental health support, financial challenges, and non-academic barriers.
- Ongoing work on advising enhancements, early alert systems, course scheduling improvements, and support for first-generation, commuter, Pell-eligible, and underprepared students.
- Faculty involvement in learning communities and development of a new writing center

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

Spring enrollment exceeded expectations with 89% retention from fall (target was 87%), totaling 1,622 students at the time of report. The spring new-student cohort was significantly larger than in recent years.

For Fall 2026:

- Applications up more than 15%.
- Acceptances and deposits up nearly 16% year-over-year.
- These numbers were described as encouraging but subject to change

**Budget Summary Report** – *Laura Gross, VP for Finance and Operations*

The campus continues moving toward fiscal stability. Key points included:

- A fall shortfall of ~\$1.2M in tuition revenue required a reduction of ~\$1M in spending authority.
- Overall campus deficit has been reduced from \$5.4M at the start of the stability plan to under \$700K as of December 31.
- Projected elimination of the deficit in FY 2027–28, pending spring census updates.
- Temporary savings from a 120-day hiring pause are helping, but are not long-term solutions.
- Budget planning for FY 2026–27 is underway using SUNY's target enrollment figure of 1,828.
- A zero-based budgeting approach is required for all units.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Update** - *Derwin Bennett, Chief Diversity Officer & Exec Dir of Edu Support Services*  
DEI efforts highlighted ongoing programming and student engagement:

- Campus hosted Martin Luther King Jr. Day programming and Black History Month exhibits in the Unity Center.
- Themed program framework: unity, world peace, social justice, civil discourse, and service.
- Applications opened for the Empire State Diversity Honors Scholarship (10 awards at \$560 each).
- Work continues on the next campus DEIB Plan, targeted for implementation in Fall 2026.
- BART (Bias Action Response Team) procedures were reviewed, including support protocols and follow-up for reported incidents.
- Discussion on campus policies for protests, free speech zones, and protocols for outside groups and media

**Faculty Governance Update –**

In the absence of the faculty representative, an update was provided, noting:

- Active work by faculty to update and streamline academic policies, including academic integrity standards.
- Progress toward full implementation of the revised governance structure by fall, including a newly combined Facilities/Space Committee and a new Student Well-Being Committee.
- High faculty engagement; seven seats on the Student Well-Being Committee drew 13 applicants.
- Reference to an upcoming discussion on faculty and administrator burnout based on a SUNY-wide study.

**Advancement, Foundation, and Alumni Updates** – *Nick DeCaprio, Interim Chief Development Officer*

Advancement staff reported positive momentum in donor engagement and fundraising.

Highlights:

- Creative annual fund outreach continues (e.g., Personalized Valentine's postcards).
- FY giving to date is ~\$1.6M, with the expectation of reaching ~\$1.9M pending paperwork.
- \$3.5–4M in the current pipeline.
- Strong performance from new staff, including large potential gifts in progress.
- Athletics fundraising program development is underway.
- Recognition of John Zaharek's retirement, marking four consecutive years of exceeding \$3M in annual fundraising

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

Members discussed:

- Anna Cole is stepping down from the Council at the end of the academic year. She has taken on a new role in Albany that begins immediately
- Interest in the Achieve Grant proposal
- Future agenda items, including a request to understand how faculty maintain academic standards amid declining student preparedness.
- Next meeting is April 1<sup>st</sup>

Theresa made a motion to end the meeting, Marilyn seconded, and the meeting ended at 9:45 a.m.