

**SUNY Cobleskill College Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 29, 2025**

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

*Cabinet Members* - Marion Terenzio, Laura Gross, Anne Hopkins-Gross, Gus McGiver, Anna Miarka-Grzelak, Jason Politi, John Zacharek, Cynthia Zinzow

**Apologies:** Derwin Bennett, Anna Blinn Cole, Darcy Medica

Eric called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Marilyn motioned to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2025, meeting, Daniil seconded, and the motion passed.

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

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

**Federal Landscape Update / Impact on Higher Education**

- Federal grants frozen or delayed; affects the EPIIC grant
  - USDA grants are most likely to go through
- Estimated \$32 million cost to the SUNY system, impacting approximately 700 SUNY employees who are paid on federal grants
- Title VI and Title IX Compliance:
  - Emphasis on student safety, equity, and compliance following national campus issues.
  - Increased Title IX cases; being addressed per policy
- OGC is auditing all campuses for compliance gaps.
- Contract with Colleges (Federal Directive):
  - Federal “Contract with Colleges” mandating compliance on controversial issues discussed
- Financial Implications
  - Anticipate a mid-term budget cut

**SUNY Cobleskill Strategic Plan / Connection with SUNY Initiatives**

- Strategic, Facilities, and Stability plans being integrated into a single matrix:
- Aligns mandates, institutional priorities, and measurable outcomes.
- Connection to SUNY's Academic Momentum Campaign:
  - Retention and completion targets established for 2026 cohort.
  - Ambitious “aspirational” goals accepted;
  - Twenty-Two-month campaign planned

## **Facilities Master Plan**

- Athletic Fields: Top project priority
  - securing a turf field for SUNYAC membership compliance.
  - Currently, Cobleskill is the only SUNY institution without a turf field.
  - Exploring field relocation or elevation due to floodplain concerns.
- Home Ec. and Robotic Milkers are still on the docket

## **Chancellor Visit**

- Scheduled for November 17 with a major announcement.
- The College Chair requested to attend; information to be sent to Eric.
- College Council is invited

## **Budget Summary Report – Laura Gross**

### **Budget Submission & Revenue**

- Revenue projections were done in May
  - Now in a \$1M shortfall
- Current revenues do not fully support expenditures, and a review of the organizational structure is underway to identify efficiencies and streamline operations.

### **NYS Budget Call Letter**

- Budget requests expected to stay flat
- We will need to reduce the current budget

### **Immediate Measures**

- A 120-day hiring pause has been implemented for all new positions.
- Each Vice President is conducting mandatory budget reviews to evaluate necessity, mandates, and efficiency within their divisions.
- Payroll remains the college's largest cost at approximately \$29M annually;

### **Spending Controls**

- Credit Card Oversight: Stronger internal controls have been implemented.
- Non-compliance now results in penalties and may impact audit results.

### **Travel Expenditure Review:**

- Breakdown of FY24 travel spending:
  - Athletics: \$211K (team travel; essential for competition)
  - Admissions: \$77K (recruitment travel; essential)
  - SCPT: \$63K (funded by student fees; critical student support)
  - HR: \$17K (candidate recruitment)
  - Additional travel includes faculty/staff conferences and student-related travel.

## **Stability Plan**

- Campus of focus since 2023: Goal is to achieve a balanced budget by FY28–29 through an all-funds approach and continued cost
  - We must reduce payroll

- FY24–25: \$3M deficit.
  - Week 3 enrollment was at 1869
- No institution can run on tuition revenue alone, underscoring the need for diversified funding.
- Retention efforts are being strengthened to address manageable barriers, and new recruitment strategies are being developed to target additional markets

### **Athletics**

- The Athletics budget currently shows a \$1.6M deficit.
- National context: Approximately 75% of Athletic programs operate at a loss.
- Athletics remain a significant component of enrollment strategy, with 50% of out-of-state students participating in athletics.

### **Additional Context**

- Siena College buyouts have been announced, reflecting a broader trend across the region. They are restructuring facilities and reviewing space utilization in response to enrollment declines.

### **Student Development – *Anne Hopkins-Gross***

- Overview of departments:
  - Athletics, CAS, Community Standards, Residential Life, Leadership & Engagement, UPD, Veterans, Wellness.
  - Athletics: 20 varsity sports; transition to SUNYAC next fall.
  - CAS: Student-centered mission, reinvesting in student experience.
  - Community Standards: 30% increase in CARE referrals; strong intervention network.
  - Residential Life: 70% of students live on campus; “Intentional Conversations” program continues.
  - Leadership & Engagement: 96% retention for orientation participants.
  - UPD: 24/7 operation; DCJS accredited; strong local partnership with Village PD.
  - Wellness Center: “Better Minds” teletherapy expanded; 8 staff trained in Mental Health First Aid.
  - Veterans Affairs: Recognized as a “Military Friendly” campus.
- Community standards: low rate of return offenders.
  - All referrals are followed up on; over 500.
- Make this a standing agenda item

### **Enrollment Management Plan – *Anna Miarka-Grzelak***

- Fall 2024 census enrollment: 1,824 students (below 1,853 target).
- Loss of students not tied to one cause.
- Refocusing admissions operations and outreach territories.
- Developing a marketing investment strategy leveraging the new brand.
- New Retention Task Force prioritizing key barriers to student persistence.
- Tracking multiple cohorts: first-time, transfer, and readmitted students.
- Waiting on our new targets from SUNY, but planning to go with this year’s target number

### **Institute for Rural Vitality – *Scott Ferguson***

#### Value-Added Product Development Program:

- 44 new products developed in 2025.
- 24 participant slots for next cohort (free program).

#### Business Development Boot Camp (BDB):

- Entrepreneurship training program
- 19 current participants; final presentations scheduled this week.

#### Partnerships:

- Chobani: exploring partnership opportunities.
- Positioning Cobleskill as an urban agriculture partner with Fordham University's Bronx Green Workforce Training Center.
- CAS: supply CAS operations with dairy products. (ice cream)
- Alumni weekend featured samples of caramel apple-flavored milk.

#### ACHIEVE program:

- Three awards.
- Multiple meetings with ESG and Carnegie House

#### REDC

- Meeting will be held on Monday
- The college plays a major role
- Out of 57 Projects, 14 are in Schoharie County

#### Empowers

- Workforce Development Program
  - Honey, Beekeeping, Maple Production, Heavy Equipment

#### Schoharie Broadband Event

- We were the only non-government entity asked to speak

### **SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech New Logo Roll-Out – *Jason Politi***

- So fortunate to leverage campus talent.
- Forward-facing logo finalized.
- Brand book link to be shared by Jason
- Open House: Successful event with strong campus engagement.
- Gradual rollout of new branding underway.

### **Faculty Governance Update – *Erik Hage – Presiding Officer of the Faculty***

- Campus Governance meeting 10/16 voted in academic policy
  - Classroom recording approved.
    - Protects intellectual property
    - Other campuses now want it.
  - Bylaws:
    - Curriculum.
    - Academic policy.
- Institutional Governance Committee:
  - Infrastructure Committee – Combines former Technology and Facilities/Space committees; now an advisory board for mandates and campus needs.

- Student Well-being & Engagement Committee – Provides oversight and coordination for student support initiatives.
- Governance Model Improvements:
  - More collaborative and transparent process since January.
  - Faculty representation increased; committees include faculty, staff, and VP leadership.
  - Governance assessment planned for both academic and institutional sides.

**Advancement, Foundation, and Alumni Updates** - *Nick DeCaprio for John Zacharek*

- Scholarship Luncheon: Scheduled for November 13. Significant positive feedback has been received from prior attendees; the event remains a highlight of the year.
- Caitlian Ogden appointed as Associate Director of Development for Athletics, focusing exclusively on athletics fundraising.
  - Expected to bring new resources and support to athletic programs.
- Annual Fund
  - Appeals have been distributed and are performing well.
  - Creative engagement initiative: Leaves mailed to alumni in states without fall foliage, generating strong responses.
  - Welcome letter from Nikio, new Development Officer and former student leader

**Student Government Update** – *Daniil Usmanov*

**Student Engagement**

- Student participation and activity levels are exceeding last year’s metrics despite smaller enrollment.
- Six new student clubs formed (three reactivated):
  - Wildlife Circuit Federation (revived by alumni)
  - Snow and Ski Club (rebuilding external sponsorships)
  - Jiu-Jitsu Club (filling gap in combat sports)
  - Drama Club (performing arts initiative)

**Events**

- Charity Mile: 12 teams participated; Ag Business team took the win.
- Community Halloween (Thursday, Oct. 30):
  - 25 clubs participating; 800–1,000 children expected.
  - Students hosting games and distributing candy.
- Leadership Conference (Sunday, Nov. 2):
  - Connecting student leaders across clubs and organizations.

**SGA Senate**

- Exceptionally active and engaged with administration and faculty.
- Students contributing ideas and solutions at Senate meetings.

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

**Chair’s Report** – *Eric Stein*

**ACT Conference Highlights**

- Attendance: Only about 30 council members attended this year, which is considered low. Members are strongly encouraged to attend future conferences for valuable insights and networking.
- Opening Session: Began with SUNY Office of Government Relations, providing guidance on legislative activities and engagement strategies.
- Council Survey Results: Vacancies and Expired Terms: SUNY system is actively addressing these issues.
- Orientation: Push for a standard SUNY-wide orientation template adaptable to individual campuses.
- Engagement: Mixed responses across campuses; Cobleskill noted for strong engagement between council members and the president.
- ACT Handbook: Last updated in 2022; a committee is being formed to revise and align content with current practices.
- Student Conduct and Title IX: Emphasis on council responsibility for oversight of student code of conduct and its connection to Title IX compliance.
- Upcoming ACT Business Meeting: Scheduled for November 13 at the SUNY Administration Building in Albany; details forthcoming.

#### College Council Budget Workshop & Dinner

- Wednesday, November 12, from 5:00-7:30

Martin made a motion to end the meeting. Marilyn seconded, and the meeting ended at 10:22.