

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2018  
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman  
Leigh J. Benton, Barry J. Cheney, Thomas Faggione, Kevindaryan Lujan,  
Joseph J. Minuta, James D. O'Donnell, Rob Sassi

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader  
Peter Tuohy, Legislator  
John S. Vero, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Harold Porr III, Deputy County Executive  
Langdon Chapman, County Attorney  
Dr. Kristine Young, President, Orange County Community College  
Linda Dauer, Vice President of Admin., Orange County Community College  
Dr. Erika Hackman, Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Michael Worden, Director of Facilities, Orange County Community College  
Fred J. Brennen, Project Director, Orange County Community College  
Fred Watson, Chairman, Orange County Community College Bd. of Trustees  
Kevin Sumner, District Mgr., Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Ms. Tautel who was absent.

The first item on the agenda was Mr. Chapman and Mr. Sumner with a request for a resolution for the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Mr. Cheney moved the request for a resolution to amend the purpose of appropriation to the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District to permit uses for funding to relate not only to the Quaker Creek maintenance project but also the Wallkill River Flood Bench project, seconded by Mr. Minuta.

Mr. Chapman explained that they were trying to broaden the use of the funding which was previously appropriated. He noted that Mr. Sumner is doing a great job and he is wrapping up projects, including the important Flood Bench Project.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The next item on the agenda was Mr. Worden and Mr. Brennen with a request for approval for funding the 2018 Capital Projects for Orange County Community College.

Mr. Lujan moved the request for approval for funding the 2018 Capital Projects: Roof Recoats and Replacement, \$260,000, PE Building Bleacher Replacement, \$495,000, Replace PE Building Roof Top Units, \$330,000, South Street Sidewalk and Exterior Stair Replacement Campus wide, \$350,000, total \$1,435,000; bonding for one half of the cost \$717,500, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Worden explained that the projects they bring forward are considered critical, part of their master plan they did about five years ago.

Mr. Brennen addressed the various projects and maintenance that needs to be done at the college. He stated that the roof on the library is a polyfoam product and is approximately 28,000 square feet. The balance of the money would be put towards the tile replacement in Morrison Hall.

Mr. Minuta asked how old the roof is and Mr. Brennen replied that it was almost twenty years old and is about nine years over its life expectancy.

Mr. Benton asked for a breakdown of the projects.

Mr. Worden responded that they give them to the budget office, but they can send the breakdown to them.

Mr. Brennen described project for the replacement of the South Street curb and sidewalk from East Conklin to Grandview Avenue. They also want to replace the remaining section of the Grandview sidewalks along with several sets of concrete stairs in the campus.

Mr. Minuta asked about the sidewalk and curb replacement and if it was the college's responsibility, or the city of Middletown.

Mr. Brennen replied that it was their responsibility.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion on College and Career Readiness. Chairman Ruszkiewicz mentioned that Mr. Amo addressed this with him a while ago and last week sent him a report which explains the issue. He thought it would be a good idea to have Dr. Young come to committee to address in more detail.

Dr. Young introduced Dr. Hackman who can help respond to some of the questions. She first wanted to share that there was good news on enrollment and there has been an increase in Fall of 2018. She presented a power point display. Dr. Young noted that they are getting more students but taking fewer classes so that means they have more part-time students. She referred to a pie chart and announced that they are now a majority minority institution. The Hispanic population has grown rapidly over the past five years going from 27% to 32%. She referenced a high school "capture rate" and pointed out that the high school graduates in Orange County over the last 8 or 9 years has steadily gone down.

Some of the private schools, such as Mount Saint Mary or Marist have the capacity to lower their admission standards and compete for students. Other community colleges are in county recruiting now. She addressed the Fall 2018 New Student Profile and pointed out that students are working 20 hours or more so the notion of an 18-year-old going off to college and do nothing, but studying is almost a myth. There is about 45% of them that hope to earn a BA degree, some of them go into college thinking they will not do well and about 60% are placed into at least one remedial course. The national research compiled information and the number they are putting out there is 68% of incoming students at community colleges place into a developmental class, so they are not out of the norm, this is a standard.

Mr. Benton wanted to know what was being spent on these developmental classes.

Dr. Young replied \$950,000 was expended on faculty lines on developmental educations last year. That was on salaries.

Dr. Young stated that nationally only one in two students who place into a developmental class complete all the developmental classes that they have been referred to. In most colleges that means they are most likely not getting a degree because they are probably prohibited from taking college level classes.

Mr. Benton stressed that was not a problem with Orange County Community College, that is a problem with the high schools and the education system because then the college needs to compensate for them.

Dr. Young stated that today, if you have a high school diploma, you are welcomed into the community college. However, years ago in the "hay days" of community colleges, they offered excel classes to everyone. If someone wanted to take a Calculous III course, they were fine with that and signed them up. They are adults, they have the right to fail. It did not take too long to realize that may not be the best behavior for educators to have with their students. Maybe they should assist the students by determining what their capability is. In the early 1980s, they started mandatory assessments. They do not require S.A.T.s for entrance. They do their own assessing and their own placement for students. Dr. Young added that they owe it to the student to let them know they are not ready for that course yet, but this will help get them prepared, and recommend a course for them.

Dr. Hackman explained that they have some students that come to the college that already took college courses and were successful, therefore they do not need to take an assessment test. There are students who transfer from other institutions who have already been successful in college Math or English, they would not need to take the assessment test. Those who take the assessment test, about 25% of those students test into one developmental course. About 30% of the incoming students place into two or more developmental courses. They have a responsibility to serve these students, so the faculty and leadership have been trying to reform the way they teach courses. They have a course they offer over the summer which is like an intensive writing boot camp. When the students apply and take the assessment test, when they do not do well, they offer this boot camp/acceleration program and they see that about 70% of the students who enroll do succeed and move on to college level English. They offer a summer institute which offers reading and writing. The fee is \$75

and this does not require the student to purchase a book. They offer a course to assist with students who struggle with math. It is focused on life skills, that people need for mathematical reasoning to function in their workplaces. They started to offer this last fall semester of 2017 and they had about 80 students enroll. They have not seen big outcomes yet, but it has only been a year.

Dr. Young addressed the Excelsior Program and noted that the first year of the program just came to an end. Orange County Community College saw 115 students who were fully enrolled in the Excelsior Scholarship through the state. They received money through the state for the Fall Semester. There were 62 students who were certified and paid for Spring 2018 and 13 students waiting for certification for Summer to get up to the 30 credit hour mark. There were 40 students who just went away and did not do what they were supposed to do. The State owes them approximately \$41,997. This was a \$318,253 program from the state.

Mr. Minuta stated that kids are graduating high school and are supposed to be college ready but when they head off to begin college, it appears, they are not ready. Are colleges trying to make money or are the high schools just covering themselves. This has been going on since the 1980's. The kids should be tested at the end of the eleventh grade to see how they are doing. They need to figure something out because this is all state funded. It is a state funded system, state funded college and someone needs to address this.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz pointed out that was the reason for the discussion today because there appears to be a disconnect between the college and the high schools.

Dr. Young had a conversation with the Superintendent of Middletown recently and was given an update. She is aware of the standards that the high schools are being held to and what do you do if a student in the eleventh grade does not perform well and what can be done in the twelfth grade to help. What the students accomplish in the eleventh grade might not interact with the material again until they get into college, so there is a gap in knowledge. Then there are students who did not comprehend the material in the eleventh grade very well so there is another issue.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz asked Dr. Young if the school districts show concern about this.

Dr. Young responded that the k-12 world is very separate than higher education.

Mr. Benton stated that he was shocked at these numbers and he felt that it starts in Albany. There is a State Education Department that deals with the unions and the governor. They should change the education law so that they have chargebacks to the high schools of students that graduated who are not capable of doing basic college courses. Mr. Benton further stated that he had been discussing this with Mr. Amo since springtime and it will be an issue discussed at NYSAC because they know it is occurring across the state in all 67 counties.

Mr. Sassi pointed out that this problem is nationwide, it is not just in Orange County, not just in New York State. There has been a lot that has changed since the 1960's and 1970's. The work that the college does is remarkable. He handed out copies of regents

exams and he encouraged fellow Legislators to take them home and take the exams because he was pretty sure most of them would not do well. The Special Education Department in all the school districts is the largest department nationwide. Kids graduate from high school and are not prepared for any college whether it be SUNY Orange County Community College or Mount Saint Mary College. New York State says that the students must pass the regents. They might pass with a 65 or 66 and the grading is done by a committee of teachers, not just one teacher. When he first started teaching, he used to take a stack of exams home and grade them on his own. If he noticed that a student received a 64, he would find that extra point for the student so that they would pass the exam. It is not done that way anymore, it cannot be done that way anymore. When these students graduate high school and go off to college, they do qualify because they can read and write. He has seen first-hand, since he taught some college classes, when he gives his first test to these college students in the fall, and an essay is only two lines, he realizes, because he was also a high school teacher. It goes back to the same question, what are they doing in high school. Younger people today do not have the same work ethic as they did years ago. He has two young kids at home and when he sits down to do math homework with them, he does not understand it and needs to hire a tutor. Not everyone can afford a tutor. It has become a fact of life no matter where these students graduate from, nationwide, some of them cannot read and write. It is not necessarily the schools, he wished there was a way to tackle this. He shared that when he was a kid, when he got home from school and off that bus, his mom was home, and they sat and did his homework, nowadays, the kids do not have that luxury.

Mr. Minuta mentioned the grading system and how it is farmed out and has many mistakes, big mistakes that are made. Special education has changed so much over the years. When he was in school there were some special education classes and there were a few teachers that specialized in it and they were in confined rooms. New York State changed those standards and moved those students out of special education self-contained classrooms and put them in a regular classroom, which is the "mainstream" of schooling. Now they need to have a special education teacher in each classroom.

The committee thanked Dr. Young and Dr. Hackman for the great discussion they had and they will continue to have active conversations and do a follow up.

Last on the agenda was a monthly report on Economic Development. Mr. Porr announced that Mr. Fioravanti was dispatched to an economic development emergency and was not able to make the meeting today, however he will be available if anyone wanted to speak to him individually. Mr. Fioravanti planned on being at the meeting next month.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz understood and request that Mr. Fioravanti submit a written monthly report to the committee. (on file)

On the motion of Mr. Sassi, seconded by Mr. Benton, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.



