



Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS & SUMMARY

Vol. 27, No. 1 | September 28, 2020

President's Report

President John J. Hurley commended the campus-wide efforts dedicated to safely reopening the campus to students this fall. He praised Dr. Daniel Dentino, vice president for student affairs, Dr. Sara Morris, vice president for Academic Affairs, members of the Academic Contingency Planning Group, and the Reopening Task Force for their planning work. He applauded the faculty for all of their additional work and preparation to teach their classes in potentially three different formats. He also thanked staff who made extensive changes to support students and to ensuring the health and safety of the campus. The infection rate, so far, has been manageable, he said, but the college is constantly monitoring the situation. Mr. Hurley reported on fall enrollment. He noted that the freshman to sophomore retention rate was 82.6%, but higher retention of upperclass students led to a larger-than-expected undergraduate population overall. Graduate enrollment for the fall was lower than projected due to the uncertainty in the marketplace and additional strains at home for many people, although the college achieved its target for summer enrollment. Covid-19 will continue to present significant recruitment challenges, but the college is working to refine its new practices to attract and engage prospective students and energize its marketing efforts, with a revival of the “Where Leaders Are Made” tagline in future campaigns. Mr. Hurley announced the excellent results of the most recent *US News and World Report* Rankings, which placed Canisius 19th in the US North Region and No. 1 Best Value school in all of New York State.

College Restructuring

Mr. Hurley shared a statement drafted by Fr. Tom Slon, S.J., Rector of the Canisius College Jesuit Community, who, on behalf of the Jesuits on the Board, affirmed that the restructuring did not represent an abandonment of the college’s Catholic, Jesuit mission and that Jesuit education takes many forms. A strong, Jesuit liberal arts core curriculum that defines Jesuit higher education, is compatible with all of the various institutions – from those that teach pre-professional programs to those limited to the liberal arts, or more commonly, some combination of the two. This continues to be vitally operative and present at Canisius.

Mr. Hurley also addressed the recent investigative actions announced by AAUP (American Association of University Professors). He noted that the “Canisius chapter” does not appear to be formally recognized as a chapter on the AAUP website and is comprised of a small group of faculty, who have not been elected to represent the Canisius faculty. The college’s Faculty Senate is the elected body of faculty representatives on campus. AAUP is a professional association, similar to the American Bar Association or American Medical Association, devoted to, among other things, the economic and professional security of faculty. AAUP has no legal or regulatory status on our campus and its investigations will not jeopardize our formal accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. AAUP may conduct investigations through voluntarily supplied information, and while Canisius is prepared to cooperate, it is not mandatory. The investigation of Canisius is not unique or unprecedented. In fact, AAUP is currently dealing with 7 simultaneous investigations, all involving schools hit hard financially by Covid-19.

Report on Strategic Planning

President Hurley provided the annual operating goals for the 2020-21 year and reported on the progress toward achieving the goals of *Canisius 150: Excellence, Leadership, Jesuit*, the strategic plan for Canisius College, which is now in its final year.

Strategic Plan for Racial Equity and Inclusion

Ms. Fatima Rodriguez-Johnson, Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, presented the new strategic plan to address the campus climate on race. The plan focuses on six areas: Community, Curriculum/Academic Initiatives, Educational Programs, Intersectionality, Recruitment & Retention, and Training & Skill Building. In the year ahead, the college will focus on capacity

building initiatives through educational programming, refinement of policies and practices, and cultivating a broader sense of belonging and community on our campus. Ms. Rodriguez-Johnson and her team were commended for the development of this important plan for Canisius.

Academics Committee

Dr. Sara Morris, Vice President for Academic Affairs, provided an update on the latest initiatives recommended by the academic contingency group formed in April to respond to the pandemic, including changes to the academic calendar, instructional methods, policies, and teaching/laboratory facilities. Approximately 30% of classes are being taught fully online. Dr. Morris also discussed the academic restructuring that began over the summer. This has been difficult for everyone, but the deans and department chairs have worked hard to address course coverage for faculty and staff who were no longer at the college. The Spring 2021 semester will begin on February 5, 2021 with no breaks except for Good Friday. The extended break will allow students to quarantine for two weeks prior to the start of classes and give faculty additional time to prepare for the semester. Changes to the spring calendar also allow us to introduce a five-week January intersession. Dr. Morris reported that she is working with the Deans to merge the School of Education with the College of Arts and Sciences and that the Wehle School of Business is working on its AACSB reaccreditation. Dr. Jenn Lodi-Smith, assistant vice president, reported on the success of online teaching workshops held over the summer by the Center for Online Learning & Innovation team with 65 faculty members attending 12 faculty-led webinars. Janet McNally, associate professor of English, was introduced as the new Director of the All-College Honors Program. Drs. Steve Chanderbhan and Jon O'Brien, representatives of the Faculty Senate, expressed concerns about the core curriculum resolution passed by the Board of Trustees and asked for clarification on the goals and timing of the required changes. Dr. Bob Nida, Chair of the Faculty Senate, reported that faculty are upset by the recent layoffs and concerned about future job security. He added that the Faculty Senate plans to work collaboratively with the administration to develop a plan to restore trust and move forward. President Hurley expressed his appreciation to Dr. Nida and the Faculty Senate and emphasized the importance of working together on a pathway toward greater stability.

Audit Committee

The Committee reviewed the FY2020 audited financial statements and results. Deloitte was able to complete the audit remotely and perform all the required analysis to provide an unqualified opinion. The committee discussed new disclosures in the financial statements to address Covid-19 related risks. Upon review and discussion the audited financial statements were unanimously approved by the committee and the full Board of Trustees. The committee also reviewed the status of A-133 reporting and NCAA agreed upon procedures. Those filings are nearly complete and will be submitted in the next few months.

Enrollment Management Committee

Dr. Danielle Ianni, Vice President for Enrollment Management, reported on fall 2020 enrollment and discussed the declines. Canisius welcomed 415 freshmen, 77 transfers, and 15 readmitted students. Approximately 72% of the class is from the primary Western New York market, 74% of the incoming class is a non-represented minority, and the gender split between males and females is exactly 50%. She reported that the discount rate remained relatively stable and average net tuition revenue per student increased slightly from the prior year. Dr. Ianni noted that the decline in enrollment was due partly to the decline in the applicant pool, including declines among females, from our primary market, and from students with GPAs in the range of 80-84. To address these concerns, the admissions team will refine its recruitment efforts, review the allocation of scholarships, and evaluate the marketing message delivered to students. Dr. Ianni also touched upon the new graduate admissions recruitment efforts, focusing on digital lead generation, virtual events, and partnership initiatives with the Office of Alumni Engagement. Summer enrollment saw some increases with 129 new graduate students enrolled; however, the fall 2020 graduate numbers came in lower than the prior year, with a new student fall headcount of 283. When combined, fall and summer new graduate student headcount is down approximately 1% from the previous year.

Finance & Facilities Committee

The committee reviewed final FY2020 results and discussed the FY21 budget. Mr. Marco Benedetti, Vice President for Business & Finance, reported that summer enrollment goals were met, and the declines in the fall enrollment were offset by better than anticipated retention among returning students. Room and board projections were adjusted down, as a smaller percentage of freshmen and returning students decided to reside on-campus. Operating expenses were running in-line with the budgeted projections. Mr. Lee Wortham, Chair of the Board, reported on behalf of the Investment Advisory Committee and announced that the college's endowment was valued at \$131.3 million as of August 31, 2020.

Mission & Identity Committee

Rev. Jack Mattimore, S.J., newly appointed Chief Mission & Ministry Officer, introduced himself and the newly created office. Under the new structure, the Office of Mission & Ministry will oversee the Office of Mission & Identity, Office of Campus Ministry, and the New Buffalo Institute and facilitate collaboration and communication among these entities and with the greater Canisius community. President Hurley discussed the statement drafted on behalf of the Jesuits on the Board of Trustees in consultation with Rev. James Miracky, S.J., the Provincial's Assistant for Higher Education in Jesuits East, which affirmed the Jesuits' commitment to sustaining Jesuit education in Buffalo at Canisius College. The committee discussed the dynamic nature of the Catholic, Jesuit mission and its adaptability to changing and challenging circumstances. Mr. Hurley also updated the committee regarding the future of the Mission Priority Examen (MPE). The next round of the MPEs will be delayed a year while the collective experiences among the 27 schools can be analyzed. Ms. Sarah Signorino, Director of Mission & Identity, discussed proposals to host a yearlong, virtual formation experience for the Trustees, which was enthusiastically embraced. Ms. Signorino also provided other program updates from the Offices of Mission & Identity, Campus Ministry, and the New Buffalo Institute. Finally, Dr. Robert Nida, Chair of the Faculty Senate, addressed the committee about challenges facing the work of the Senate, concerns among faculty, and reiterated his commitment to continued collaboration.

Institutional Advancement Committee

Ms. Marya Propis was introduced as the new chair of the committee and discussed goals and priorities. Ms. Kimberly Venti, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, highlighted the accomplishments of the FY20 fundraising campaign. She said more than \$7.2 million was raised, and the Canisius Fund 150 Campaign, chaired by Mr. Martin Berardi, realized the goal of \$2.2 million in unrestricted current-use support. The Sesquicentennial Society, comprised of donors who make gifts or pledges of \$150,000 or more toward the Canisius 150 Campaign, reached 28 total members by fiscal year end. Ms. Venti also reported that the Emergency Relief Fund raised \$170,000 in support of our students facing financial difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Board of Regents members Tim Balkin and Michael Christiano were commended for their work on the Blue and Gold Gala. Although the event was cancelled, \$140,000 was donated back to Canisius from event sponsors. Ms. Erin Zack, Director of Alumni Engagement, updated the group on the "Connecting with Canisius Lunch and Learn Series" and the "How You Can Help" initiative. Ms. Summer Handzlik, Director of the Canisius Fund, announced that the FY21 annual campaign has kicked-off and alumni and friends should be receiving a letter from President Hurley soon. Ms. Mary Ellen Bakowski reported on planned giving results and Ms. Sandra Miller gave a brief overview of the new physician assistant (PA) graduate program. Approximately \$1.5 million has been secured for the PA program, including commitments from the Vincent and Harriet Palisano Foundation, James H. Cummings Foundation, M&T Bank Charitable Foundation and Dormitory Authority of the State of New York. A proposal to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for support of the PA program is pending.

Student Life Committee

Dr. Daniel Dentino, Vice President for Student Affairs, announced that Dr. Mark Harrington, Assistant VP of Student Success, received the Ignatian Medal for Outstanding Achievement in Jesuit Student Affairs from the Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Dr. Dentino introduced Mr. Bennie Williams, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Multicultural Center to the committee. Mr. Williams provided an overview of the vision and goals of the newly branded Multi-Cultural Center. The committee heard an update on the college's response to Covid-19 from members of the Recovery Task Force Team. Dr. Paola C.

Fajardo-Heyward, chair for the Faculty Senate's Student-Faculty Liaison Committee commended the Center for Online Learning and Innovation for their professional development programs designed to assist faculty with multi-modal instruction. Mr. Patrick Eugeni, President of the Undergraduate Student Association updated the committee on the student living and learning experiences this semester.

**Future Board
Events**

2020 - 2021 MEETING DATES

December 7, 2020

March 1, 2021

May 3, 2021