



Vol. 27, No. 2 | December 7, 2020

## President's Report

President John J. Hurley welcomed Dr. Howard Stanger, professor of management, as the new Faculty Senate Chair, who will serve as a consultant to the Board in his role. He also reported on the search process for the interim-vice president for business and finance. He said some excellent candidates were interviewed, and that Timothy P. Balkin '81, CPA, was selected as the interim vice president to succeed Marco Benedetti, who will leave Canisius at the end of the month. Mr. Hurley said Canisius came within four days of completing the on-campus instruction period before Erie County was designated as a Covid-19 "orange zone" microcluster, which led to the decision to switch to remote learning for two additional days. As of December 7, Canisius reported 139 positive test results among students since the start of the semester, no hospitalizations, and all have recovered. While most students had returned home for the last two weeks of the semester, approximately 200 students requested to stay in residence halls through the end of the term. Only a small group of students plan to remain on campus through the winter break. The spring 2021 semester will begin February 5 to minimize classes in January when there is likely to be a higher rate of infection. The later start will also provide time for the college to offer a January inter-session. Athletics has been greatly disrupted by the pandemic and is currently going through some rescheduling. Men's and women's basketball and hockey have all been paused at times, and the MAAC is attempting to complete an abbreviated fall sports schedule in the spring. Mr. Hurley highlighted results of a student engagement survey that sought feedback from students about their experience this past semester. Many reported they felt burned-out and complained about the lack of breaks in the semester. The spring schedule will address this concern and more will be done to try to identify safe places for students to gather on campus but still remain physically distanced. On enrollment matters, he said the college looks forward to welcoming its first cohort of 30 students to the new Physician's Assistant program next month. He said the inaugural class is diverse and academically strong. Undergraduate applications are approximately 5 percent behind last year, but trending ahead of national statistics that show applications lagging by 16 percent. He emphasized that yield events are very important for the spring, but they will continue to look different amid Covid-19. Likewise, many alumni engagement activities are being conducted virtually, but have been well-attended.

## Committee on Trusteeship

Dr. Mark Lema, committee chair, reported on the process for electing the next Board Chair when Lee Wortham's term expires on June 30, 2021. He reported that after inviting nominations at the September Board meeting, conversations were held with suggested nominees and eventually a shortlist of three excellent candidates emerged. Mr. Wortham spoke with each of them about the position, and ultimately, a sole candidate arose from that process. Dr. Lema announced that the Committee on Trusteeship recommended that Martin J. Berardi be elected to a one-year term as Chair on the Board of Trustees effective July 1, 2021 and the motion passed with one abstention. Per the Board of Trustees bylaws, the chair shall be eligible to serve four one-year terms.

## Academics Committee

Dr. Sara Morris, vice president for academic affairs, reported that escalations of Covid-19 in the region caused Canisius to move classes fully online November 23, 2020, just two class days earlier than scheduled. She discussed plans to offer an online winter inter-session from January 4 to February 4, 2021, in which Canisius will offer six graduate and nineteen undergraduate courses, most of which will include core attributes. As of this meeting, students had registered for nearly 600 credit hours in total. The spring academic calendar is under review to identify opportunities to provide additional days off during the semester to address some of the burn-out experienced by students and faculty this fall term. Dr. Morris discussed the AACSB accreditation for the Wehle School of Business (WSB) and said she expects it will be renewed in January 2021.

following a positive site visit this fall. She reported that the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) is working to revise the BA in Communications to Strategic Communication and is also developing a BS in Data Science. The WSB is working to develop advanced certificates for the MBA concentrations. Dr. Morris shared that Fatima Rodriguez Johnson, associate dean for diversity and inclusion, has offered several diversity-training sessions on inclusive conversations and microaggressions and is currently working on an initiative to advance inclusive hiring practices. Faculty workshops to support online teaching will also continue through the winter break. Drs. Tom Chambers, dean for CAS, and Nancy Wallace, interim dean for the school of Education and Human Services (SEHS) reported that a committee has been formed to begin evaluating the process for consolidating the two units of the college. Dr. Graham Stowe, director of the Writing Center, and student, Valeria Marquez Luna '21, shared information on the new center and its commitment to help students to improve their writing skills. Dr. Steve Chanderbhan, chair of the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), reported that the committee worked with Academic Affairs to streamline core course offerings in response to the Board's resolution from July. Drs. Bob Nida and Jon O'Brien reported on behalf of the Faculty Senate and discussed the Senate's special elections recently held. Dr. Nida, whose term on the Senate has just concluded, thanked committee chairs for their hard work throughout his term as chair.

### **Enrollment Management Committee**

Dr. Danielle Ianni, vice president for enrollment management, reviewed the findings from the recently released National Student Clearinghouse, which includes data on students who were admitted but did not enroll in the fall 2020 freshman class. She found that a large percentage of students ultimately enrolled at other local institutions, with a higher percentage of students attending SUNY institutions, particularly the University at Buffalo and Buffalo State College. The college's top 20 competitors have not changed over the last four years. As a result of the findings, the admissions team is implementing new yield and messaging strategies to highlight the strengths of specific academic programs, career outcomes, and student life experiences. Dr. Ianni also provided an overview of the fall 2021 applicant and admit pool. The early action deadline was extended to December 1 to respond to some of the challenges presented during the pandemic and to coincide with the visit and apply grant deadline. As of December 3, applications were down by 3.43 percent, or 57 applications, from the prior year at this time. Trends across the nation demonstrate that many students and families are delayed in their college search. Canisius is currently outperforming the national trends and Dr. Ianni expressed that she is cautiously optimistic at this point. The admit pool is also up by 5 percent and she praised the Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Offices for prioritizing application review and packaging. Dr. Ianni also reported that graduate applications are trending in line with the previous year at this time.

### **Finance & Facilities Committee**

The committee reviewed the updated FY21 projections. The college reported that fall undergraduate revenue exceeded the budgeted amount, but that the impacts of the pandemic and increased remote learning had a negative impact on room and board revenue. Mr. Benedetti reported that expenses continue to remain under control due to limited activity occurring on campus. He reported that the college completed the sale of properties at 23 Agassiz and 9 Florida Street, which generated \$550,000 in net cash and a \$300,000 15-year note.

### **Mission & Identity Committee**

Dr. Morris presented to the committee on the vitality of mission in the curriculum, particularly in the Core Curriculum. She also illustrated the ways in which the CCC has been working to streamline and realign core courses to provide a more consistent experience for students and to improve the number of courses being taught by fulltime faculty. Mr. Bennie Williams, the new assistant dean of students & director of the Multicultural Student Center, introduced himself and discussed priority initiatives aimed at supporting the students of color, international students, and other underrepresented student populations. He discussed his role in helping to advance diversity and inclusion efforts on campus, including programs for students of color, virtual educational workshops on privilege and microaggressions, and new student orientation initiatives. Rev. Jack Mattimore, S.J., chief mission and ministry officer, reported briefly on the work of Campus Ministry and the New Buffalo Institute, and Ms. Sarah Signorino, director of mission and

identity, gave updates on her work to advance spiritual formation and mission integration through a series of virtual programs this semester.

### **Institutional Advancement Committee**

The committee heard reports on fundraising activity to date. Nearly \$3 million has been raised towards the goal of \$6.9 million in cash collected for FY21. Ms. Kimberly Venti, vice president for institutional advancement, discussed the impact of Covid-19 on fundraising and major gift cultivation efforts in the absence of special events and face to face meetings with donors. Ms. Summer Handzlik, director of the Canisius Fund, reported on a new texting platform employed to improve outreach, stewardship, and annual giving. She reported that the year-end gift appeal is in the mail and Mr. Anthony Limina, Alumni Association President, announced that Giving Day will be held Wednesday, March 3, 2021. Trustee James McNicholas also reported on the activities of the Planned Giving Committee. Ms. Erin Zack, director of alumni engagement, provided an update on the successful *Connecting with Canisius* webinar series and the alumni letter writing campaign designed to attract prospective students. Ms. Sandy Miller, director of corporate and foundation relations, highlighted new initiatives underway to support priority projects. Dr. Ronald Rivas, professor of management, discussed special ways in which faculty can help cultivate donor engagement.

### **Investment Advisory Committee**

Chair Cindy Vance described the committee's recent recommendations to change the college's investment consultants from Colonial Consulting to Cambridge Associates and alter the college's investment model from a non-discretionary model, where the Investment Advisory Committee must approve all trades and changes, to a discretionary model where Cambridge can make investment decisions without needing approval for each trade. A resolution ratifying the recommendations was approved. The endowment is currently valued at \$143 million as of the end of November, up 8 percent over the targeted index and an all-time high for Canisius.

### **Student Life Committee**

Dr. Daniel Dentino, vice president for student affairs, who has been leading the Covid-19 Task Force, provided an overview of the college's overall handling of the coronavirus response plan. Ms. Patricia Creahan, director of student health, reported specifically on the Student Health Center's response strategies and discussed key learnings. Mr. William Maher, director of athletics, informed the committee that the division of athletics will be undertaking a study with Collegiate Consulting to conduct a program review of athletics with an eye toward improving the student experience. Dr. Mark Harrington, assistant vice president of student success, discussed the impact of the virus on the students and how the Griff Center is offering support. Dr. Harrington also discussed the results of the student engagement survey that the Undergraduate Student Association (USA) distributed at the end of the semester. Mr. Patrick Eugeni, president of the USA, and Justin Brown, vice president of marketing for USA, further described the concerns experienced among students during this semester, including the limited breaks in the academic calendar and food service quality, and discussed the pandemic's impacts on mental health.

### **2021-22 Tuition Rate**

The Board approved a resolution to increase tuition by approximately 2.4%. The college's sticker price will remain below \$30,000, which is below most of our regional competitors.

### **Future Board Events**

#### **2020 - 2021 Meeting Dates**

**March 1, 2021**

**May 3, 2021**

**Submitted by Erica C. Sammarco, secretary**