



Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS & SUMMARY

Vol. 29, No. 1 | September 26, 2022

President's Report

President Steve K. Stoute began his first meeting with the Canisius College Board of Trustees with remarks on the opening of the academic year. He reported on enrollment and noted that students are increasingly engaged with campus events and activities. He discussed plans for Family Weekend and announced that the State of the College Address was set for October 4, where he will report on the external pressures facing higher education, the current state of the college, challenges and opportunities. President Stoute also gave an update on the financial situation and reported on the progress of capital projects. President Stoute reported on the inauguration, including plans for the installation ceremony and other campus events surrounding the weekend of October 22. There is still time to register for the event on the college's website [here](#). President Stoute also led the trustees in a discussion about the prospect of changing the college's name to Canisius University, the timeline and anticipated costs. The Board endorsed the plan as presented and authorized the administration to continue with its plans and preparations.

Board of Trustees Bylaws

The Canisius College Board of Trustees approved an amendment to the bylaws to reduce the minimum number of Jesuits serving as Trustees from five to three. Canisius has historically had a higher number of Jesuits on the Board compared to peers and this change places Canisius more in-line with service expectations for institutions of Canisius' size. The reduction is also reflective of the declining number of Jesuits available to support the numerous ministries of the Society of Jesus. Mission formation for Trustees and lay members of our community remains a priority.

Strategic Visioning

Each of the Board of the Trustees committees allocated time on their meeting agendas to engage in a strategic visioning exercise with President Stoute as an integral component in the development of the vision for Canisius College. Trustees explored questions such as *Where will Canisius be in the year 2035? Who will our students be and what will they expect? What will distinguish us? What should be preserved about Canisius and what must be fundamentally different?* At the meeting of the full Board, Trustees heard a presentation about the shifts in the higher education landscape, including information about the enrollment environment, fiscal realities, attitudes and perceptions. Committee chairs shared the major takeaways from their committees' visioning discussions. The Trustees' input will be used, together with similar insights from other constituent groups, to help inform the vision for Canisius.

Academics Committee

Sara Morris, PhD, vice president for academic affairs, reported on preparations for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study, which will occur in 2023-24 prior to the MSCHE site visit in the 2024-25 academic year. Dr. Morris also discussed efforts to increase enrollment and the needs of our current and future students through the development of programs that combine undergraduate and graduate degree programs, enhance experiential learning opportunities, and increase flexible learning modalities. Dr. Morris announced that Nancy Wallace, PhD, has accepted the position of Dean of the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) and recognized new faculty members joining Canisius. She reported on upcoming campus events, including the Contemporary Writers Series, the Borders and Migration Initiative and the presidential inauguration. Jonathan Lawrence, PhD, chair of the Faculty Senate, acknowledged the inclusion of faculty raises in the budget this year. He also announced that the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) is working on updates to the diversity attribute and in the process of reviewing all courses to ensure compliance. Steve Chanderbhan, PhD, chair of the CCC, added that the proposal from academic affairs to include the First Year Experience (FYE 101) and Business X (BU 101) courses in the core has been approved by the CCC and will be forwarded to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) for review. He also explained the new core assessment plan, which will be implemented this fall 2022 and maintained on a two-year cycle of review.

Audit Committee

The college has concluded the FY 22 audit process with its auditors, The Bonadio Group. There were no material findings and the Board accepted the Audit Committee's report and approval of the audited financial statements.

Enrollment Management Committee

Danielle Ianni, PhD, vice president for enrollment management, reviewed the results from the fall 2022 recruitment cycle. Dr. Ianni announced that the college met the first year student goal with a total of 478 new students. She highlighted certain facts about this class, including increases in the number of residential students, enrollment by students from the college's primary market, the gender distribution, and net tuition revenue per student. She commended the team for their execution on a range of elements from the recruitment plan. Canisius also met its transfer and re-admitted student goals, which yielded 73 transfer students and 11 re-admits. Graduate enrollment fell short of headcount and revenue goals and the college is working to offset that decline in spring. The committee also had a detailed discussion on a proposal to move to test-free undergraduate admissions beginning in 2024. Under this proposal, Dr. Ianni explained, Canisius would no longer require or review standardized test scores as part of the admissions process. She reported on the extensive research conducted to evaluate students' standardized test score and performance both in high school and at Canisius. The research results pointed overwhelmingly to the work that our students did in high school as a strong predictor of success at Canisius, while standardized test scores were less predictive. This internal assessment aligns with national research that indicates high school performance is the single greatest indicator of a student's performance in college. Dr. Ianni emphasized that Canisius currently uses a holistic review process for applicants and regularly reviews both academic and non-academic experiences of students. She expressed confidence in our ability to evaluate applications effectively in this way. Dr. Ianni also commented that this policy allows Canisius to shape the class and the learning environment and select students that meet our profile and goals. Ultimately, she stated, a test-free policy reflects Canisius' commitment to our Jesuit values, care for the whole person, and is a differentiating factor in the market.

Finance & Facilities Committee

Timothy P. Balkin, vice president for finance and facilities, reported on various initiatives planned to enhance financial planning, reporting and analysis and to support revenue growth and enrollment activities. He updated the committee on the sale of Demerly Hall and explained that the prospective purchaser is in the process of completing their due diligence. The transaction is expected to close by the new year. He also reported on the completion of the parking ramp demolition, increased costs associated with the project and plans to complete the construction of the surface lot, which will provide more than 200 parking spaces by the end of October. He noted that discussions with the Buffalo Sewer Authority (BSA) have restarted now that the BSA has revised its preliminary design of the storage tank. At this time, it is not expected that any BSA work would begin until the spring of 2024. The committee reviewed the financial statements, and Mr. Balkin reported that the FY22 actual deficit came in slightly above the budgeted deficit. The FY23 forecast was also revised downward primarily due to lower than anticipated graduate revenues. The cash flow deficit is expected to increase from budgeted levels, in part due to the increases in the budget deficit, but also because of the additional costs associated with the demolition of the ramp. The committee had a detailed discussion of the extension of the 2012 bonds and also reviewed FY23 capital expenditures. The endowment report was reviewed and it was noted that the market value at the end of August was \$153 million, down from \$159 million at fiscal year end in May.

Mission & Identity Committee

Following a substantial discussion on strategic visioning around matters of mission, the committee heard a presentation by Rev. Michael Tunney, SJ, assistant provincial for higher education for the USA East Province, who had recently concluded his annual visit to the college. The visit focused on Characteristic Two of the AJCU document, *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, which focused on academic life. Father Tunney reviewed the four Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus and the committee discussed the ways in which these are connected to the concepts identified in the previous visioning discussion. The committee discussed that the college's understanding that justice must be grounded in our faith, that the Spiritual Exercises are central to mission at a Jesuit university and that the declining number of Jesuits on campus will force the college to be creative and intentional about embracing its Catholic Jesuit identity. Canisius is not alone in this as the number of Jesuits in all of the Society's ministries are declining, but the college could serve as a model for others. Sandra Estanek, PhD, professor *emerita*, discussed her part-time appointment as Special Assistant to the President for Mission in 2022-23. She reviewed the priorities of the 2018 Mission Examen, the progress that had been made, and how they will continue to serve as a roadmap

for the college's strategy on mission. Priorities of her work this year will include reinvigoration of the Canisius Colleagues program of faculty/staff formation and a pilot program for Board formation.

**Institutional
Advancement
Committee**

Kim Venti, vice president for Institutional Advancement, reviewed the FY22 fundraising results and announced that \$8.6 million in cash was collected. The goal for FY23 is to raise between \$8.5 - \$8.8 million, with a primary focus on support for the Canisius Fund and increased membership in the Rev. James M. Demske, SJ Society for planned giving. Ms. Venti discussed staffing issues and reported on staffing changes. She introduced Cece Gotham as director of Alumni Engagement, replacing Erin Zack, who moved to the position of senior director for Annual Giving & Stewardship. Sharon Frederico has been selected as the new director of Advancement Services, replacing Katie Huck who moved into the role of Prospect Research and Management Coordinator. She also announced that Dianna Civello would be returning in a consultant role to support the college's major gifts efforts. The committee also heard a report on President Stoute's transition and onboarding schedule. Since his arrival, he has met with over 400 donors, alumni, government officials, and community leaders through individual meetings and special event activities hosted by Advancement.

**Student Life
Committee**

Harold Fields, PhD, vice president for Student Affairs & dean of students, who began his position in July, introduced himself to the Student Life committee. He reported on the college's current Covid-19 policies and provided an overview of the demographics of the class of 2026. Dr. Fields also reviewed the upcoming year's operational goals for the division of student affairs and discussed efforts to engage and support students through New Griff Orientation and Welcome Week events. He also discussed the Griff Center for Student Success and new initiatives aimed at supporting, orienting and engaging commuter students, international students and students of color. Athletics Director William J. Maher, reported on changes in MAAC membership, the NCAA transformation committee, and plans to improve coordination between athletic events and other campus activities to support recruitment and student engagement. Finally, Undergraduate Student Association (USA) President Jahare Hudson '24 shared some of this year's goals for USA.

**Future Board
Meetings**

2022 - 2023 Meeting Dates

December 5, 2022

February 27, 2023

May 8, 2023

Submitted by Erica C. Sammarco, secretary