



**Meeting of the Morrisville State College Council
5th Floor Board Room, Whipple Administration Building
Saturday, May 17, 2008 – 9:00 a.m.**

Council Members Present: Chairman Matthew Morgan; Lawrence Baker; Arnold Fisher; Judith Noyes; Alexander Herzog, student representative

Excused: Susan Dietrich; James Dunne; Hugh Riehlman

Morrisville State College Staff Present: Ray Cross; Jessica DeCerce; Jo Ann Godfrey; James VanRiper; and Jason Zbock

Chairman Matthew Morgan called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Minutes:

The minutes from the April 18, 2008 meeting were approved. Motion by Mr. Lawrence Baker; seconded by Mr. Arnold Fisher.

President's Report:

Budget

Dr. Cross explained that the SUNY system has been cut about 2.9% which amounts to roughly \$350,000 for this campus. About eight days after the state budget was approved, the Governor issued a bulletin focused on revenue accounts (dormitory funds - DIFR fund, IFR's - the dairy operation runs through revenue accounts, etc.). Dr. Cross explained that the Governor wants to get the NYS budget under control and revenue accounts are a quick way to help. By freezing revenues, the Governor will be able to skim those accounts. Dr. Cross indicated that nothing has been settled yet, but the unfairness of this is overwhelming. CUNY's cut in revenues is \$2.7M and Morrisville's cut alone is \$2.8M. The SUNY Board of Trustees met and issued a directive to all of the College Presidents to "stand down" while they are attempting to negotiate. The Division of Budget interprets the Governor's bulletin a little differently so we are receiving mixed messages. Dr. Cross indicated that Morrisville will move forward with a plan related to the \$350,000 that we have to cut and will do nothing more at this time. We are just going to wait. One of the problems the college faces is the difference between the state fiscal budget year (April 1 to March 31) and SUNY's fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). In order to reach this excessive savings by the end of March, we would need to cut staff. Dr. Cross indicated that this would be extreme and he doesn't feel that cuts of that magnitude will happen. Hospitals have the highest revenue accounts and they are being hit the hardest.

Mr. Fisher asked if the Governor had new budget staff working for him. Mr. Morgan responded that there had been no change in staff. He indicated that Morrisville is very fortunate to have Ray Cross. He is the person that was able to explain to others what this proposed budget really means for SUNY.

Mr. Baker acknowledged that once the state moves in this direction, it can be a way in the future to look at these funds as a way to help balance the budget.

Dr. Cross indicated that he does compliment the Governor on his efforts to try to bring about change in the budget situation. He indicated that his expectation is that something will come out of this that will be fair. Morrisville will have additional cuts – how much, we don't know. Dr. Cross indicated that he really thinks that the cuts will not be as large as projected or as severe. However, the longer they wait to decide, the more difficult it will be to meet the savings deadline.

Mr. Fisher questioned whether the capital improvements money would also be frozen. Dr. Cross responded that Morrisville did receive \$7M for Equine Rehabilitation which will be coming through Economic Development and not through the SUNY Construction Fund. This money will come through the Morrisville College Foundation which will allow for much more flexibility. There is over \$8M in critical maintenance money to begin the process of designing the rehabilitation of STUAC and Bailey and one other. \$5M for upgrading the athletic fields with a stadium, new lighting and turf. Mr. Fisher asked if artificial turf would be used. Dr. Cross responded that the same turf that was used in the Rec Center would be used. \$1M of the \$4M that was requested has been allocated to Morrisville for campus landscape beautification to make improvements to the academic quad at the other end of the campus.

Dr. Cross indicated that some remodeling will be done in Bicknell Hall. Construction on the new Design Center could start this fall, but probably it will be next spring. The existing barn will be torn down, but the trusses will be saved, and a basement will be built under the new Design Center.

Cayuga Hall has been remodeled and looks great. Dr. Cross indicated that one of the indicators that retention is improving is housing and those numbers are way up. Construction has started on the new Commons II apartment complex.

Dr. Cross indicated that new Morrisville State College signs have been installed as you enter Morrisville. Ms. DeCerce acknowledged that the new signs are a great improvement and help to make a positive impression as you enter the Morrisville community.

Dr. Cross indicated that he would like to acquire a portion of the village to remodel homes or tear down and build new ones through Residential Construction Program projects. He indicated that there have been some initial conversations, but formalizing anything is still a long way off.

Mr. Fisher asked about the possibility of a hotel in Morrisville. Dr. Cross responded that another developer is still looking at the possibility of building a 30-40 room hotel with a swimming pool and banquet area for 250 people. Dr. Cross indicated that he was not optimistic that this developer will decide to build in Morrisville.

The 30-day permitting process for Empire AgriFuel should be over by June 1. Once that is done and the money ready to access, then the banks will be working with us. However, the State has changed the program and we need to start the application process all over again. The bank has indicated that we need a partner so we have been speaking with three different companies and one very seriously. We need a partner to manage this operation as well as to potentially be a financial partner. We should be in construction by this fall, or at least by next spring.

Mr. Morgan commented that many people are asking about the algae project as more information comes out about it. Dr. Cross responded that some funds have come through from Economic Development. Algae is being produced already (located by the methane digester), but it is not doing quite what we want it to yet.

Dr. Ben Ballard is leading the research on the “greenhouse project.” Dr. Cross indicated that John McHugh has made this project his number one priority for funding.

There is a company in New York State that wants to produce Kosher milk for the New York City market. Another Kosher milk company has gone out of business so this company wants to get started right away. Mr. Morgan suggested that there might be a place available in Wooster, NY. Dr. Cross responded that this company would like to build in this area and they are currently working with a local farmer that wants to produce Kosher milk. They would like Morrisville State College to house the Rabbi’s in the dorm.

Mr. Fisher asked about the Styrofoam Replacement project. Dr. Cross responded that Morrisville State College is composting food waste now – which is going very well. He indicated that he has not heard anything from New York City regarding the proposal. Dr. Cross has had discussions with O’Brien & Gere about setting up a meeting with a school in New York City to talk about this project.

NPR (National Public Radio) is doing a story on SUNY’s relationship with China and will be including Morrisville’s partnership with Dalian University. Ms. DeCerce indicated that Larry Abramson (NPR Education Correspondent) spent an entire day here touring the Automotive facility, talking with many students and faculty. He was very impressed with Morrisville State College when he left.

Student Government Report:

Mr. Herzog gave a brief report of recent SGO activities. He outlined the discussions regarding two clubs that had wanted to become part of the Student Government Organization; however they were considered exclusive clubs. SGO responded that in order to be part of SGO, clubs must be open to the student body. The clubs responded that there were clubs already part of SGO that are considered exclusive. SGO reviewed each club. SGO decided to allow clubs that are currently exclusive to remain but they will need to change their policy by the time their constitutions are due. There was only one club that could not be considered open and that was Phi Theta Kappa. PTK has until 2010 to figure out what to do. The Assembly has not decided if they are going to give extra funding to honor societies yet. Dr. Cross commented that he was not sure that PTK should be considered as a club because it is an honor society and it is a National organization.

Mr. Morgan thanked SGO President, Alexander Herzog for everything he has done for Morrisville State College, and on behalf of the entire College Council, wished him good luck. Alex informed the College Council that he has decided to attend Cornell University and he will be majoring in Civil Engineering.

Cabinet Reports:

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Mr. VanRiper indicated that Academic Affairs has been very busy wrapping up the semester concluding a number of academic program reviews which include an external review team. The teams review a self-study that has been prepared by the faculty in that particular program. Another end of the year detail is academic review. Mr. VanRiper meets with each Dean to review the actions recommended by the faculty for each student. It is clear from that review that there is a tremendous difference between the levels of accomplishment and commitment of the two-year students and the four-year students. This certainly speaks to the growth and change of this campus.

Mr. VanRiper indicated that he had attended the Phi Theta Kappa induction ceremony. A number of students were inducted and it was a very nice ceremony.

Dr. Edward (Ted) Nichols, Dean of the Norwich Campus has accepted a Vice President's position at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College and will be leaving by the end of June. Mr. Morgan congratulated Dr. Nichols and Mr. Fisher commented that Ted had done a very good job in Norwich.

Morrisville State College is partnering with SUNY Oswego, Cayuga Community College, the Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology (IAGT) and the Auburn/Cayuga Development Corp. (A-CDC) to form the Center for Energy Education and Economic Solutions. Morrisville has begun working on projects (algae and other energy related projects) associated with the \$300,000 grant.

At the next faculty meeting, Ms. Jessica DeCerce will be discussing the Emergency Communication Plan which is a part of the Emergency Response Plan for Morrisville State College. Mr. VanRiper indicated that in June the College plans to have the first of a series of exercises to train staff in how to respond in an emergency. Ms. DeCerce commented that the College has always had a communication plan, but current events at other campuses has changed the way we need to approach this. Information will be distributed to parents and available at open house that explains how Morrisville State College handles disseminating information in an emergency situation. Mr. Morgan commented that the Department of Ag and Markets is doing the same thing for Agriculture Terrorism.

The Xiang Li trial has concluded. Mr. VanRiper indicated that faculty and staff were called to testify. Final statements and the verdict will be on Monday, May 19. Dr. Cross provided an overview of the situation that led to the arrest of Xiang Li.

Public Relations/Government Affairs

Plans are underway for the 2008 State Fair. The exhibits will all be in one building. Faculty are being contacted for exhibit proposals. Dr. Cross commented that the College will also be featuring Nelson Farms with the Pride of New York in the former lottery building. The Pride of New York did not have a way to generate sales so they have joined with Nelson Farms at the Fair.

In an effort to save money and resources, Ms. DeCerco indicated that her office is working on ways to get the word out to the campus community about conserving. Feedback has been solicited from faculty on suggestions for ways to conserve on campus.

Faculty Speaker Report:

The 2009-10 and 2010-11 academic calendars have been approved by Faculty Congress. The extended finals week provides more time for the students to resolve conflicts. Winter term, as it relates to online courses and the start of the spring semester, will be under review for the next two years.

In the spring of 2005, Mr. VanRiper charged Faculty Congress to examine the academic review process. Mr. Zbock indicated that Faculty Congress has done that for the last year and a half and there is still disagreement within Faculty Congress. There was a vote at the last Faculty Congress meeting to not endorse the current Structured Semester program. The faculty wants to improve retention with some preventative measures such as looking at the admissions process, and offering five-week courses during interim. Mr. VanRiper commended the faculty for wanting to strengthen the process of advising students. Mr. Zbock has met with Dr. Cross and Mr. VanRiper to discuss some of these issues. He indicated that he was compiling feedback from faculty and staff and would be making a presentation to the faculty at the last faculty meeting in May. Meetings will continue over the summer and Mr. Zbock indicated that he hopes to have something ready for the faculty in early fall. Dr. Cross commented that what the faculty has struggled with over the last year and a half was something that this institution needed to do. He indicated that there needed to be debate over this issue. The establishment of the Structured Semester program was a reactive approach to retention and not a pro-active approach. Dr. Cross complimented Mr. Zbock for his leadership and the way he approached this issue.

Mr. Morgan commented that he hoped that Mr. Zbock could continue to maintain his high level of energy and keep his common sense approach as he deals with the various issues in Faculty Congress.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am. Motion by Mr. Arnold Fisher; seconded by Ms. Judith Noyes.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Godfrey
Temporary Secretary to the College Council