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University inaugurates 12th president



President Joe Bertolino holds the university Mace next to Board of Regents President Mark Ojikian and Student Government President Kalie Menders. PHOTO | PALMER PIANA

By Josh LaBella

Hundreds of people filled the Lyman Center to observe the inauguration of Southern Connecticut State University President Joe Bertolino on Friday.

Among the crowd was a delegation of students and faculty from President Joe's previous universities and colleges. President Joe was "late" for the ceremony and through a Skype video was seen singing "Don't Stop Believing" via carpool karaoke.

The invocation was presented by Imam Zakir Ahmed, who said he gave many thanks to Bertolino for all he has

done and will continue to do. He then said a prayer, first in Arabic and then in English.

"We ask the almighty to grant President Joe wisdom and guidance," said Ahmed.

Lawrence DeNardis, a member of the Board of Regents, said it was very challenging to pick a new president for the university. He said they interviewed over 100 applicants from all around the country but, in the end, President Joe was the best choice.

"We chose wise and well," said DeNardis. "Dr. Joe has boundless energy and a great sense of purpose."

One of the next speakers, Kalie Menders, the president of the Student Government Association, said the day

marked the beginning of the next chapter in Southern's 124 year history. According to Menders, President Joe has already made a mark on the university since he started working at Southern.

"In the eight short months he's been working here," said Menders, "I think President Joe knows more students than I do."

Jordan Jones and Maria Diamantis, from the administrative faculty and the faculty Senate respectively, gave their remarks together.

"We are here together, working in our community to bring students the resources they need to be successful," said Jones.

According to Diamantis, when it comes to President Joe, one thing is clear:

students come first. She said she asked previous students of his to describe him with three adjectives.

"Caring, sincere, proactive, humorous, loving, compassionate," said Diamantis, "These are the adjectives that kept coming up."

The inaugural presentation was given by Mark Ojikian, president of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. Before swearing Joe in, he said when looking for a president for SCSU, there was really no other option than President Joe.

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Alcohol, drugs dominate campus Clery Reports

The following analysis reviewing Clery Reports at Connecticut public universities was put together by News Writing students Jeniece Roman, Sandra Gomez-Aceves, Melissa Nunez, Sherly Montes, Ali Sorbara, Alex Palmieri, Lynandro Simmons, Karlie Borges, Megan Grabowski, Britany Howard, Dan Zumpano, Adrianna Rochester, Chris Kuczo, Mihai Tripp, Jared Klim and Abigail O'Keefe.

Drug and alcohol use lay among the the largest numbers reported by the five public universities, their 2016 Clery Reports showed.

Connecticut's largest public university, UConn, drew attention when an underage student, whose blood alcohol content was more than three times the legal blood alcohol content limit, was run over by a university fire truck and killed earlier this year. A few months later another intoxicated underage student died, this time from Central, after she fell off a Hartford bar's roof.

Those incidents prompted statewide attention to the topic of alcohol use by underage students and on campus settings by both media outlets and government agencies.

Journalism students in the News Writing course at Southern Connecticut State University took a different approach to the instances, questioning whether alcohol consumption was more prominent at those universities when compared to SCSU. The journalism students analyzed the 2016 Clery Reports released

by each the five public universities, comparing and contrasting the crimes on each campus. (See Chart on p.2)

Over a three-week time frame, the students conducted interviews with administrators from each of the schools' police, judicial affairs and counseling services departments. The students then surveyed 200 Southern students who live or have lived in on-campus housing and asked them of their experience, or lack thereof, with the two largest crime contributors at SCSU: alcohol and drugs.

Early on, all the Clery Reports, released by universities yearly and by law, detailed alcohol consumption and other crimes were relatively low or stagnant in 2015 at Southern, Eastern, Western, Central and UConn, when compared to those reported years prior.

During a requested press conference, Southern's Police Chief Joseph Dooley, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Student Conduct Christopher Piscitelli, and Director of Residence Life Robert DeMezzo addressed issues pertaining to the 2016 campus Clery Report and how they, in their differing roles, treat and process campus crimes.

"This formula works," Dooley said of the trio's interdepartmental efforts. "I've watched the success over the years. But this includes counseling, res life, judicial affairs. It is a very fair and balanced system that keeps people safe."



PHOTO | ADRIANNA ROCHESTER

(Left to right) Southern's Police Chief Joseph Dooley, Director of Residence Life Robert DeMezzo and Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Student Conduct Christopher Piscitelli addressed issues pertaining to the 2016 campus Clery Report and how they, in their differing roles, treat and process campus crimes.

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