

SNC Students Thrown a Curveball

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As students arrived on campus in beautiful De Pere for the new spring semester, it quickly became apparent changes were in the works regarding course offerings in the fall of 2025. After numerous emails from the administration during the fall semester, a formal invite was sent to the student body for a town hall meeting on Tuesday, January 28 to go over some of the changes underway.

As the meeting was preparing to begin, there were plenty of murmurs going about as students filed in. Admin panelist members Dr. Laurie Joyner, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, Fr. Matt Dougherty, Dr. Joe Webb, Dr. Luyan Li, Dr. Meghan Walsh, and Mr. Jose Mallabo were all seated in front of the students who sat in the audience. Once the town hall got underway at approximately 4:30 p.m., Fr. Dougherty approached the podium and led the crowd in the Michels Commons ballroom through prayer that touched on being good stewards at the college. This was followed by a slideshow by Dr. Joyner that briefly went over the possible changes that would be taking place at the college.

In the slideshow, the “why” of the college, or its unchanging mission towards the student body, was presented. Additionally, it was outlined by Dr. Joyner that while program eliminations would be proposed, the college would still embody the Liberal Arts traditions. Joyner explained that the enrollment of students had been on the decline for the last 10 years and the deficit that was inherited from the last administration was allegedly three times larger than originally reported. Before finishing her statement and having Dr. Joe Webb take over, Dr. Joyner remarked that all colleges were going through similar issues and facing similar decisions.

As Dr. Webb took to the podium, he reiterated the points made by Dr. Joyner and expanded on the actions the college is taking to increase enrollment and new developing initiatives. Some of these initiatives include a more efficient transfer process and an increase in online content.

As Dr. Webb closed out his talking points, Dr. Luyan Li spoke briefly regarding the previous projections for finances and where they currently are after the projected changes. Per the slides presented, the projection for FY24 was at a \$5 million deficit but has since been balanced. There is still concern for FY26 as the projection is down from \$15 million, but currently still sits at \$7 million.

Following the brief coverage of finances by Dr. Li, VPAA Dr. Martin Conley spoke about the proposed cuts that loomed for the fall of 2025, which contained the elimination of 13 majors and a “reimagined” process for four majors (the list of majors affected by the proposed changes is outlined below). Upon the list’s reveal to the audience, there was a collection of gasps in shock and awe. Dr. Martin Conley attempted to reassure that following the list being announced all affected students would be provided with customized teach-out plans.

Dr. Meghan Walsh had to then follow up and regather the student audience’s focus to speak on utilizing their options and connecting if they were to be potentially impacted by these changes. While brief, the stage was passed on to Jose Mallabo, who is serving as the interim CMO, to speak on the changes that will be coming to streamline the online presence at St. Norbert College.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation portion of the town hall, the Q&A portion began with clearly upset and borderline outraged students making statements and asking questions of the administration panelist who presented. Some of the questions asked regarding the quality of the education teach-out plans garnered disappointing reactions from the students who had asked them.

Questions such as “How will these [programs] be offered and will they be of the same quality?” received responses that promised high quality despite possibly being taught by adjuncts or moved online.

Another question regarding future cuts revealed that despite cuts in 2024 and now in 2025, there could be cuts next year in 2026, although they hope to minimize the pain, per Dr. Li.

At the conclusion of the event, sentiments of sadness, apathy, and extreme frustration were shared with the St. Norbert Times. While the town hall has ended, changes to the future of the college is a developing story and will continue to be covered as new information is released.

Proposed Changes to Programs

VP and VPAA recommended that the following should be eliminated:

- Art & Art Education
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Earth Science/Geology
- French
- History
- International Studies
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Engineering Physics
- Theatre Studies
- Theology & Religious Studies
- Psychology Education

VP and VPAA recommended that the following should be revised and reimagined:

- Mathematics Education
- Music Education
- Philosophy
- Spanish Education