



## **2024 State of the College** ***ESF President Joanie Mahoney***

Good afternoon, everyone. Can you please get seated? Well, good afternoon once again. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 State of the College. State of the College Address, traditionally delivered by ESF President Joanie Mahoney. My name is Sam Mukasa, and I serve as the Executive Vice President and Provost here at ESF.

I welcome the faculty, the staff, the students who have joined us this afternoon. I would also like to take this moment to welcome some of our distinguished guests who are here to take part in today's event. Assemblyman Al Stirpe, Senator Schumer's CNY regional director, Josh Pearlman, Onondaga County Legislator, Nodesia Hernandez. We are also pleased to welcome representatives from Chancellor Kent Syverud of Syracuse University and representatives from Assemblymember Pam Hunter and Senator Rachel May.

Next, we welcome members of our governing board, the ESF Board of Trustees, members of our Alumni Board, members of our College Foundation, members of the Syracuse Pulp and Paper Foundation and members of our Auxiliary Services Board. Thank you all for joining us today.

At this time, I want to acknowledge where we stand. We have the privilege of meeting today on the ancestral lands of the Onondaga Nation, the center of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy, who we honor for their many contributions, including the original philosophy and practice of environmental stewardship. This acknowledgment represents our commitment to intellectual and cultural pluralism, and it is meant to honor the significant contributions of the Onondaga Nation to Environmental Leadership.

It is now my pleasure to introduce ESF fifth President, my boss, Joanie Mahoney, to deliver her 2024 State of the College Address. Please join me in welcoming President Mahoney.

Thank you. Thank you, Sam. Welcome. Thank you. I would echo the welcome to our special guests. Thank you all for taking time to be here today. This is an important day for us.

I have the opportunity to look back with you on things that we've accomplished together in the last year since I delivered the State of the College Address and then look out on to the horizon. One of the things I can tell you for sure is that some of the things that we've done collectively in the last year, we absolutely could not have done this, any of us as an individual.

And so using as our theme that we are all in this together. And before I launch, I just want to say, Sam, thank you for that introduction. I want to thank Ragan and Lauren and the events team for putting this together. It really looks beautiful. Thank you so much. Matt Millea and Baylee got me prepared today. And again, thank all of you for being here.

So who are we? We'll start with a reminder that we are 1733 undergraduates. We are 195 master degree candidates and 155 Ph.D. candidates. We have 178 faculty and 438 staff. And together, we collectively launch climate warriors out into the world to help solve some of the world's most pressing problems. This is a picture of one of the commencement ceremonies, the one at Onondaga Lake Park.

We also graduated a wonderful class from the Ranger School in May of 2023. And then with just a very short moment for a breath, we welcomed 400 new first year students and 160 new transfer students. So now who we are is 2083 remarkable students. We are also 21,000 ESF alumni strong, many of whom are here with us tonight.

And I appreciate all you do for the college. And as I said, we are all in this together. But what do I mean by this? So let's reflect a little bit on the things that we've done together since I last had the opportunity to speak with you. Marshall Hall is one of the big accomplishments, and it took a lot of people many years to move all the moving pieces that resulted in us being able to have a complete renovation of Marshall Hall.

And at the same time, a really careful renovation that preserved some of the history of the building. And we now have students back in the auditorium in much the same way that we have since the college was founded. Here's a picture of some of the beautiful new space that we turned over to our landscape architecture students. And you will be happy to see that they've made themselves right at home. It's starting to look cozy in the building.

In addition to Marshall Hall, we have done a tremendous amount of important research on the campus and our our research expenditures. You see there \$20.4 in the fiscal year ending in 2023 on track for \$21.6. Our fiscal year ends June 30th. And that research includes far more than I can give do in a in a speech like this.

It includes things like Caffrey, sustainable energy production, sportfish restoration, and moving to final approvals to reintroduce the chest, the American chestnut. And there is so much work going on in the research arena that I've asked I've asked our VPR, our John Stella, to take College hour on April 23rd in just a few weeks and make a full presentation on our research operation, the Office of Research Programs. And so it'll be an opportunity for you all to have I've asked him for about a 20 minute presentation and then leave time for questions and answers so people can talk in more in depth about our research.

Likewise, there's been big changes in what we now call our Office of Advancement, formally known as the College Foundation, but it now includes not only the alumni association, there's a group of some of our alumni enjoying themselves together in Atlanta, Georgia, but it also includes career services. And this is an example of a best practice that brings some synergy for having our college foundation, our alumni association, our career services offices together. One highlight from the career services this year is a visit from Basil Seggos, who's the New York State DEC Commissioner. And he was here for our DEC Day. And we're grateful for the work that Basil has done for the people on behalf of the people of the State of New York, but especially his commitment to ESF. He has been tireless in his advocacy of ESF, and I'm sorry to see that he's stepping down from that role at DEC. I haven't yet heard where he's going, but he does say he's staying in the fight, so I imagine we'll see more of him. And one thing he said to us and at the end of his term here as DEC commissioner is that he is grateful for 662 current ESF alumni that are employees at DEC. That has been very meaningful as I work my way through the halls of state government to talk about how we've really taken on an important role as workforce development for the state agencies.

The Office of Advancement still includes the College Foundation, Abbey Lane, Housing, all things Centennial Hall. And so similarly to what I've done in asking John Stella to make a presentation. I've also asked Brenda Greenfield to take the College Hour on April 25th. These addresses will be in Marshall 24, the old Nifkin Lounge, and you're all welcome, if you want to hear greater detail about the things that are happening in the Office of Advancement, and then also have an opportunity to ask some questions and have some interaction, I would encourage you to participate in these.

I've also asked Matt Millea to do the same at the college where on April 30th the Auxiliary Services Corporation. Thank

you to the board members that are here today. This is the first that ESF has had an Auxiliary Services Corporation. It takes a lot of work by a lot of people. I know Kelly Berger is somewhere here. She's helped with the state side of the legalities. And we have stood up this auxiliary Services Corporation. The board has met. Bylaws are in place and they're off and running. And Matt is going to give an overview of the Auxiliary Services Corporation.

And then finally, I've done the same and asked Mark Lichtenstein to give a college Hour presentation on facilities and capital planning.

So this will be 80 more minutes of presentations on what's happening here at ESF, and it furthers my commitment to be as transparent as possible. So it's a good opportunity for people to go into a little bit more depth on the important work that's been happening here.

Another area that has taken a tremendous amount of work in the last year is the Middle States process. So when I arrived here, I heard a term I had not heard previously in my life and it was interim itis. And I think ESF might be unique and the amount of interim leaders that were here all at the same time and in different roles and so what looks a little bit like interim itis happened to middle states, we knew that we were doing great work here and that our student outcomes are phenomenal, as evidenced by, among other things, the fact that I told you we have 662 DEC employees, but we weren't documenting properly and sharing evidence in a formal way. And so we went to work under Sam, our provost, Dr. Sam Mukasa's leadership with Valerie Luzadis and Jeremy Hall and everyone, everyone on this college campus participated in a meeting, in the plan, and preparing for the visit. And I want to thank all of you for a really great job, because the meeting that we had from the Middle States team on February 28 and 29 was very encouraging. Their report to us is confidential, and the next step is for that to go to the Middle States Commission for a formal vote in June. So I'm not allowed to share all of their recommendations, but I think it's important to share some of the comments that they made about their observations of our community as they visited us.

They said things like The institution should be recognized for building an assessment infrastructure in culture. We should be recognized for our enthusiastic collaboration, greater transparency, which makes me very happy. They highlighted that we pursued an inclusive strategic planning process that was unifying between academic and non academic units. And then importantly, they left us with the message that ESF needs to determine what success looks like and define it for our institution. And that's important because they're not telling us what we need to do or who we need to be. They're telling us that it's our job to define that, and then it's our job to put the KPIs in place and to measure how well we're meeting our own goals and how well we're able to demonstrate that to the outside world.

And we're doing that because we did the hard work of putting a strategic plan in place called Meeting the Future. And as a reminder, we have as a collective set of priorities Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Social Justice and Sustainability. And for those of you that haven't yet memorized it, these are our three pillars: Teaching and Learning Opportunities, Resource Enhancement and Community Outreach and Engagement.

And we are laser focused on keeping the strategic plan in the forefront of the work that we're doing to set goals and to continue that assessment process. And before I move on, I just want to ask all of you to give yourselves a round of applause, because those were huge. Getting through the Middle States process as well as we have and this whole strategic planning process, it's been a lot of work for people on this campus. Thank you very much.

And so, while Middle States and the Strategic Plan did take a lot of our attention, it's important to celebrate some of the other wins we've had along the way. This is a big important one here, and that is the introduction of Timely Care. We have a great team of in-person counselors on the on the campus and our students have access to in-person counseling.

We don't have 24 hours a day, seven days available on weekends people and this augments our counseling, what our counseling office can do. And when folks do come to the counseling office, our counselors are recommending that they download this timely care app. And this provides that 24-7 access to virtual care, self-care, and well-being. We know we've heard it, and we see it that there is a big uptick in mental health issues, especially in the students that are making their way through now that have lived alongside us through everything COVID. And we now have a lot of students signed up and those that are using timely care are giving us good feedback. And I'm happy to report that everybody's call, everybody who's tried to get in touch with timely care for help has their call answered in less than 3 minutes. That's been a big help.

The other big technological introduction was this campus, ESP. This is the first time I think, that ESF has had a direct way to communicate to families. And so our families can download this app and we can continually be updating them with things that are happening on campus. Important information they should know about.

Another big win was simply published sizing the annual budget cycle timeline. This is part of the effort to bring promised transparency. It was a bit of a foggy process about how the budget was put in place and when things were happening and who's participating and when you have an opportunity to weigh in. And so this has been published and it will continue to be published. I want to thank Susan Head, our CFO, for making the process a lot clearer. And she's bringing a lot of discipline to the budget process. Now, with the information that we have, we can make much better-informed decisions and you'll see it culminates with an approved budget to SUNY by July 1st, which is the beginning of our fiscal year, which seems like something that we should have been able to do all along. But I'm looking at our board chair, Bill Fisher, who's been wanting a budget at the beginning of the fiscal year. And so, you will start to see that going forward.

And in the time that I've been here, I've heard a lot and continue to hear about ways that we can alleviate the shadow work that faculty endure. And we've had some wins in that arena. A lot of it has come from conversations that I myself have had. I want to thank our chairs for allowing me some time on your faculty meeting agendas. I've really enjoyed my conversations and hearing from faculty directly. I love the the opportunity to hear what people need, make myself available if they have any questions. And I look forward to doing more of these department meetings.

One of the things that's come is help in the purchasing arena. I know we still have work to do, but this is a big step forward. Digitizing the purchasing process. Before this, the process was that you had to download a PDF and print it and then fill it out and sign it and scan it and send it back. And that is in 2024. Not necessary. And so, thanks to Matt Millea, to Jim Som, to others, this now is a fillable form and one of the first people that used it came back to me and said it only took 30 seconds, so well done.

The other area that we've digitized to make the process better is in starting searches. There is there's a lot of steps in approvals in getting a search started. And our searches take a long time. But I would prefer, as I'm sure all of you would that that time be spent reviewing resumes, interviewing candidates, talking among yourselves as a search committee. So, this is going to really shorten the time that leads up to the beginning of a search when you're able to do that. And this is help that I got from Ragan, who put this together. So you should see a more streamlined version of getting a search started. And along those same lines, Ragan has convened all the executive assistants and administrative assistants across the college, and it's about 30 people. And they've met a couple of times. And the goal is for people to be able to share information, help each other, and then convene for purposes of some professional development. The new purchasing form was trained. You know, the folks were trained with that new purchasing form. And the next iteration is going to be a training on the business intelligence system, which is what we use for the budget. So you'll have 30 more people in support roles across the college that are going to be able to help do some of the work that

people have really been bogged down with in the last several years.

And Sam Mukasa continues to convene the new faculty cohort, similarly, bringing folks together, community building, sharing information. I think he has a speaker at every one of these monthly groups and introduces people to opportunities in the community, opportunities for research. More and more of these groups coming together are, I think, making things easier for everybody.

And last year, I was remiss in not specifically highlighting how valuable the graduate students and the graduate school office are to everything that happens here. Our grad students are teaching our classes, they're supporting faculty, they're supporting research. And I want to specifically highlight this. Emme Christie, I don't know if he's here, but he's president of the Graduate Student Association. I get to meet with him and this is a initiative of his that's in its second year. And I recommend anybody who can participate. I want to thank Emme and the graduate school and all of our graduate students for all that you do to contribute to everything that happens here at ESF.

And lest you think I've forgotten; I am going to talk about the budget and enrollment. And the budget conversation can be a little bit more sobering. So here goes. I will start with some high-level numbers. The revenue generated at ESF on an annual basis is \$54.6 million. That comes from tuition from our state allocation, from support from our foundation through philanthropy. That's our revenue. Our expenses are \$63 million. And lest you think I said that backwards, I'll remind you that our revenue is \$54 million. Our expenses are \$63 million. And I'll even do the math for you and show you that we have budgeted an \$8.4 million deficit. As I stand here today, that deficit is about \$5.4 million. And that takes out the budget, takes us through June 30th. So were we as a group to not spend more money between now and June 30th? And I'm not even counting payroll or some of our larger, already encumbered expenses like our contract with Syracuse University? We could reduce that deficit to \$5.4 million. But that's something that this college community has been doing for over a decade. And there's a lot of deferred maintenance, there's a lot of underinvestment and that is not a way that we're going to thrive here as a college. And it's exacerbated by the fact that we have a loan from SUNY of \$6.45 million, and they've asked us to pay it back over five years. So, in addition to that deficit, we have a \$1.6 or \$1.7 million loan payment for the next four years because we made one already.

Which is why I have spent a lot of time in Albany recently advocating for our mission. A mission adjustment, I guess, is the word I'm using here. But ESF use to be recognized financially differently in the New York State budget and it recognized our status as a specialized college in the SUNY system where all our classes are small. We have labs with a lot of those classes. It's research intensive. We have 25,000 acres of forest properties. We have a different set of needs here and that was recognized. But when that mission adjustment went away, I will say that there's a letter in my files from Dr. Neil Murphy, who was president at ESF at the time, who wrote to Albany and said, If this new model goes through, this college is going to be in financial trouble down the road. And pretty much from that change through the depletion of the fund balance, all the way to now, I if any of you see Neil, you can tell him he was right. So, we have, I have, visited with members of our state legislature and I am reminding our our legislature, members of our crucial role in helping the state meet its goals under the CLCPA. New York State has staked a position as a leader in this arena, and we are the public college that's going to help them meet that goal. And we're reminding state government of our role. So we've asked for restoration of that mission funding. And I've personally met with Senators Rachel May, John Mannion, Toby Stavisky, who is the chair of the Higher Ed Committee. Pete Hachem, who's chair of Environmental Protection. And I met with Liz Krueger, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee. I've also met with Assemblymember Bill Magnarelli, Pam Hunter and Al Stirpe. And to a person they are supportive. Everybody is supportive of what ESF is doing and they do recognize our need. And I just heard today that Senate Finance staff has reached out to SUNY to talk about our request. I still think it's probably a bit of a long shot because of the state's own fiscal situation, but they're not going to be able to say they didn't know where we are. And I'm encouraged by the ongoing conversation. And I'm also encouraged and want to

acknowledge and I see him here in the audience. Spencer, I didn't know you were coming, but I'm glad. there you are! When I was in the Capitol, I ran into Spencer, who's down there, one of our students advocating for ESF. And it really, Spencer, you're a really great example of the kind of students we have here at ESF that goes above and beyond. Thank you.

And they also want to acknowledge that we do receive a lot of funds from the state outside of the operating dollars that we got. The Environmental Protection Fund is about a \$400 million annual fund, and we participate through the Center for Native Peoples, Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute, CAFRI, the Center for Sustainable Materials Management, Empire State Development Corporation funds the Centers of Excellence, and we have one in Healthy Water Solutions in a partnership with Clarkson. That money is crucial to us fulfilling our mission here at ESF. But it doesn't help us with the operation, with keeping the lights on in the facilities in the condition we need. But it's still really important. And I'm grateful to our state legislature members who have helped us get those monies. At the bottom you'll see the approved by New York State residents on a public referendum, \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act. And you know all about the IRA, the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes first ever huge pot of money for issues that ESF is perfectly poised to be helping with and so we are laser focused on how to participate more in those funds. In addition to trying to help us with our bottom line, this is all going to culminate in my visit to the principal's office on April 17th, 2024, when John King, our Chancellor, has asked me to come with Susan and with members of the Executive Cabinet, to talk about how we are going to give him a budget that shows us in the black in five years and we can't do it without SUNY's help. So, I am thrilled that they are going to sit down with us and talk about options for us to get into the black.

So, I'm also thrilled with Chancellor King's support for our enrollment growth. Again, we're an outlier in the SUNY system in terms of our growth. We have healthy growth, and the Chancellor wants us to continue to grow, which I think is good news for all of us here. And to that end, we've had a couple already this spring accepted student days where this room is jam packed and Sue Sanford, who's in that picture, and Kitty and all the enrollment team, they do such a great job of getting a high caliber group of people accepted in sitting in this room. And then it's up to all of us. Everybody who's here has a role in our effort to enroll the classes that we continue to enroll. So whether you're a part of the team that's sprucing up our grounds for us so that we put a nice welcome mat out, whether you're somebody who's giving a tour to the students when they arrive or whether you're just stopping to say hello to families when they're on the campus, we're all playing a role in enrollment and we are continuing to succeed because we recognize that we're all in this together.

Here are our recent enrollment numbers with first year data, and just having data has really been great. So thank you to everybody who's helping us put the data together to be able to show you things like this. This is first year new students. Sometimes you see different numbers because as Kitty told me as recently as today, sometimes a student is classified as a first-year student if they have fewer than 30 credits.

So they're really a sophomore, but they have 29 credits and they'll show up in the first year numbers. These are new students that are showing up on campus as first year students. And you'll see what's happened in the recent past is that number is continuing to grow. It's important to put it in this context right here, though, which is total enrollment for the college, and we are not anywhere near where the college has been historically. So, we have a lot more room to grow enrollment before we're in any kind of really difficult situation. And I'm pointing that out because we are continuing to hire faculty. We will continue to stay ahead of these enrollment trends. But I think it's important for people to see that people who have been here for a long time have had a lot more students than we currently have here, and we are still recovering from the pandemic.

And so those numbers that you see that really went down abruptly, those should recover pretty quickly, I hope. But in

addition to the numbers having decreased, we also have readiness issues. And I know that's caused a lot of work for faculty here because we're having students come with fewer AP credits or ESF in the high school credits and not prepared to jump in at the same place that previous students have been able to jump in. So, we are keeping an eye on that. We will continue to make sure that our infrastructure, our faculty numbers, our support services, stay kept up with our projected enrollment growth, and also remembering that umbrella that we have for this strategic plan. We're also deliberate in our efforts to reach out to the local community.

We created this summer science. Damian, thank you very much. I just realized you're sitting right there, and you were very instrumental in helping us put this program together to bring local students here to ESF. These are students that are interested in science. They're rising eighth or ninth graders. And I know you participated in putting a whole program together to introduce yourself and this world to these students.

And for the first time since 2019, we're bringing the Summer Science Corps back. So you will see middle school students and high school students on campus over the summer. I know that's been a priority of our Provost, and I'm sure he's happy to see that. ESF in the High School is playing a big role in helping us build these classes, I appreciate you can see some of the, there's Russ Briggs, faculty that do great work.

I know Neal Abrams is here. I saw you sitting there, and I know Neal does a lot of great work in this. It's up in the high school and I would like the provost to maybe look in to how our P&T guidelines can recognize and give credit for the work that people do in this important arena. And I'm also asking yourself in the high school to pay particular attention to the Syracuse City School district. We're in two of the high schools now, but there are five with the steam school coming online soon. And I'm challenging our ESF in the High School team to be in every one of our Syracuse city high schools. I will give a specific shout out to my alma mater at Corcoran High School. ESF in the High School is not yet in Corcoran High School, and one of my fellow alum, Jeanette Epps, is now in the International Space Station. And so I think there's really an appetite at Cornell, I mean at Corcoran. Wow. How about that, at Corcoran for ESF in the High School.

Here's a couple other initiatives that are helping us with our pipeline and to be more deliberate about diversification of our student body, and that is Timbuctoo. This is an effort led in large part by Paul Hai. It is a partnership with Medgar Evers College, and we had three cohorts come through two-week stints where they spent time in New York City, here in Syracuse and then up in the Adirondacks. And we're asking Paul to track this effort and see what happens to the students in terms of applications to ESF down the road.

We're also looking to in expand our pipeline through international students, and we're ramping up the effort to attract international students. Here's our international student cohort from there. The this picture was taken at their orientation, and here's Sam and Tom Carter visiting colleagues in South Korea. And we have heard the support for this effort to increase the number of international students we've had, tempered by a concern that we not put all of our eggs in one basket. And we have heard you, Sam, has also visited Cuba, Taiwan, and China in the last couple of months. And the conversations that he's had have really yielded a lot of fruit. And I'm hoping, I saw your email yesterday, I'm hoping that faculty and chairs find ways to seize the opportunities to partner with some of these institutions that are anxious to partner with us.

In addition to that international work, I myself was able to go to Puerto Rico with Chancellor John King there. Two of our students standing next to me, and Albany's President, Havidán Rodríguez. As Chancellor King signed an MOU with the University of Puerto Rico. So there's a lot of irons in the fire to continue to diversify our student body.

So turning now to the horizon, what to expect in the next. Little while here at ESF. First and foremost, please expect that we're going to foster this assessment culture that we're building. It was a successful visit from Middle States, but it's just the beginning of the work that we have to do. We will not take our eyes off of assessment and our success is going to be based on a lot of the work that's going to be done by the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee. And they if they haven't met, are planning to meet very soon. I know they were waiting for their budget worksheets to get started. They're going to help us pick the goals out of the strategic plan that we want to work on first, and then we're going to continue to align our budget with our strategic plan. My goal is for somebody who picks up ESF budget to be able to tell by looking at the budget what our priorities are. We're going to fund the things that the college thinks are important to us, and we're going to make those decisions collectively.

One of the priorities that we're talking about is data science. There is currently a healthy conversation going on about data science. I know there are some faculty lines that already exist, and there's talk of perhaps beginning with certificates or minors. I yesterday in my meeting with the provost, heard that the State Department puts out data about the academic programs that international students come to the United States for. And data science is among the top. It is the top. There's there's three of the top and its data science or computational science, and then engineering and business. And then there's a big drop off after that. So, we are looking at the data to justify the move into data science. And in the meantime, we're really happy that SUNY is investing in this alongside us. And this will give us this will give us some resources to do some of what we need to do to get started in data science. It's certainly not going to cover everything, and I think there's an additional ask out there. But this is really encouraging that SUNY is supporting us moving in this direction.

Also on the horizon, if you're not familiar, CSTEP is a program for STEM for underrepresented minorities. ESF used to participate in it and for the last couple of years, has not. And Kitty McCarthy has agreed that with the appropriate resources did I say that right, Kitty? With the appropriate resources, we are going to jump back into CSTEP, because it's really important that we have see step here and Darshani Roopnarine, I hope I'm saying it right. Darshani, our new head of our Open Academy, is a proud participant, graduate, of the CSTEP program, and she's going to take the lead on STEP, which is a similar program for high school.

I hope you will all be happy to hear that this is finally on the horizon. We have an RFP on the street right now for a partner to provide childcare. Most of the SUNY campuses that got a SUNY award, we got \$1,000,000, are building childcare facilities on their campus. But because of our space constraints, we are looking for a partner and our goal is to invest these dollars with a partner to increase their capacity and put ESF faculty and staff and students at the top of the list in exchange. So more to come. But we are seeing movement.

Another big topic of conversation is space. 25Live is coming and that is software that's going to help Leslie and the registrar's office and also the events folks to program space. We've been doing it on pencil, paper, spreadsheet, and the time has come to take the next step toward digitizing how we allocate space. And really, no matter what happens with Illick, Illick is being talked about now and there's talk of search space and what we're going to do, and that really is just at the very beginning stages. But no matter what happens, we want ESF to always be putting its best foot forward when we have people here on the campus. And I have been touring our buildings. I did it a few years ago and I'm doing it again now. And I will say, and I want to give Lee Newman credit because I toured Jahn twice recently and the difference between my first visit and my second visit was really noticeable. We had signs updated and spaces cleaned up and I just think everybody's so busy that we maybe haven't noticed that we've grown the number of storage spaces that we have, and we have some things that we can be doing no matter whether we need the space or not. We really should be helping to get rid of outdated equipment.

And to that end, I would like to propose a spring cleaning and it's just an offer of support from facilities. Sue Fassler has put a really great plan together. I've asked her and Mark now to socialize that, to go to chairs, to go to faculty, to say, if you can use our help, we would very much like to help. So more to come on that.

And big news, I think that we're going to have ESF.edu and I think students will be very happy. Silas, this has been on your list, I think, the whole time you've been here. And so I have reason to believe and I'm asking Jim Sahm to make sure that when the new students arrive in the fall of 2024 that they have ESF.edu for everything they do and they don't have to have the syr.edu also. So yeah, I thought the students would like that. Silas, that's one of the many things that you should take credit for in your tenure as MOSA President.

Another proposal I have is that we do an in-service day both in August and in January. We had a great retreat from my perspective in January, and I would like to continue that momentum. And in the week before students arrive, faculty are already on campus. I would love for faculty and administration everybody to come together, have it be an opportunity for us to share what's going on, what to be, what's new, what to look out for, and to be able to hear from faculty about what they need, what they're seeing. So if we can get together one day that week before the semester starts in August and then again in January, I think it would do wonders for the community building that we're trying to do as one of our pillars in our strategic plan.

And as I conclude, I just want to remind everybody, if we do get busy and it's important for us to just stop and remember that ESF truly is a special place, we have increased able students here working with us. Our faculty is doing incredible work. Our staff is tireless with fewer and fewer people doing more and more work.

And in order to keep up the momentum that we now have, I'm just I have a few requests. Please take our new budget process seriously. I think you will be thrilled with it when you realize how much agency you will have over your own budgets. We're going to show everybody everything and you can see where you fit. You can help make decisions about the year going forward, and then we will support people in meeting those budgets because, again, Susan's bringing a lot of discipline to the process. So, when we sit down and we put a budget together, we will stick with the budget and I think it'll be music to SUNY's ears.

Please stay informed. Our communications and marketing team, Danielle and her office are putting out a lot of information and I know it's hard to keep up, but I would encourage you to read newsletters, follow us on social media, attend our executive briefings, and then let's just all stay focused on our mission.

We still have one of the most important missions anywhere, and adhering to that mission is what is making the state of our college strong and our future bright. But when your enthusiasm or optimism wanes a little bit, I will encourage you to wander over to the Moon Library because these little stickies are appearing on the wall and Moon Library, and there's a lot of profound messages from students and some not so profound but important, nonetheless. Mark, I'll grab that one for you.

There more like this one right here. It's okay not to have it all figured out. Eventually you will! You've got this! And these are the kinds of messages our students are leaving for each other. And I can relate to that, because I haven't yet in my life felt like I have it all figured out.

And most importantly, this message recognizing that our students also feel like they're in this with us. And it's the reason that we get to do what we do. We just have this incredible student body here. So thank you all. Steve Morrison

has put together a wonderful reception for us. I'd like to keep the conversation going and I will just see you all out on the concourse.

Thank you so much!