State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
**Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**
May 8, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.
24 Marshall Hall/Zoom



# MINUTES

**Voting Members in Attendance:**

Chair John Bartow, Vice Chair Rick Fedrizzi, Trustee Vita DeMarchi, Trustee Stephen Sloan (virtual), and Trustee Daniel Vera.

Absent: Trustee Linda Brown-Robinson, Trustee Daniel Fitts

Ex-Officio: Amanda DeSantins, Representing Lt Governor.

**College Personnel/Students in Attendance:**

Nichole Dougherty, Board Secretary; Joanie Mahoney, Amy Brown, Ragan Squire, Lindi Quackenbush, Kitty McCarthy, Seth Thompson, Tyler Dorholt, Sarah Yurka, Aaron Rounds, Ruth Yanai, Jenn Webb. Matt Millea, Erin Tochelli, Brenda Greenfield, Colin Beier, Sue Fassler, Mark Driscoll, Matt Smith, Jason Kohlbrenner.

## 1. Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Bartow called the meeting of the ESF Board of Trustees to order at 9:02 a.m. With five voting members of the Board present, a quorum was confirmed.

## 2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Bartow noted that a report from UUP President Matt Smith would be added to the agenda.

## 3. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to approve the minutes; Trustee DeMarchi seconded. All approved, Motion carried.

## 4. Chair's Report

Congratulations to graduates
Hon degree President Mahoney, and County named Lakeview Pavillion
Congratulations to all VSP and Three Executive Cabinet Members
Will have Finance Committee meeting in July 2026-2027 Budget

5. **Committee Reports**
M. Lichtenstein provided an I-81 Construction Update.

6. **President's Report:**
**Budget and Stability Plan**
- Stability Plan: Amendments based on actuals – SUNY to approve amended plan.
- SUNY has opened HR lines (Waiting since January)
- SUNY gives monthly mgt reports
    - Actual Spending - ESF is keeping withing the ceiling that ESF provided
    - Prioritize: Do less with less, provide critical functions
    - Actual Revenue Under by $1.8M, mitigated by scholarship
- Loan repayment plan has been smoothed out to save, ESF will use savings on marketing, per SUNY's direction
    - SUNY wants ESF to spend $500K on marketing, we spent $108K (SUNY wants ad buys)
- Purchasing deadline is May 15th
- Shared the 2026-2027 Budget Schedule

**College Updates**
- Expanded Cabinet: Summer reports on Research Foundation→Business Office→Enrollment
- Shared Services
    - Upstate UPD
    - Oswego Purchasing,
- STAR Platinum Sustainability Ranking, 3-year cycle.
- Basil Seggos Honorary Degree Recipient and Speaker
- Executive Summary SPAC, thanked volunteers time
- Chancellor visited ESF on Arbor day – discussed chestnut project
    - $4M Capital Investment at greenhouses at LaFayette Road – shelf ready
- Earth Week
- Thanked participants of the voluntary separation program

7. **Stability Planning Advisory Committee Presentation** (Ad-Hoc Committee of AG)
Colin Beier presented the purpose, process, and findings of the SPAC
- Focus on operational efficiencies, mission-critical investments
- Emphasized importance of Research at ESF – ESF is smallest R2 in country, next smallest is six times the size of ESF.
- Revenue Innovation
    - Differential Tuition
    - Auxiliary and Contract Review
    - Asset Optimization
- Expenditure reduction
    - College-wise reorganization – monitor and manage
    - Communicate cost-benefit of shared services agreements
    - Workload alignment – Faculty/Staff Performance Programs are not up-to-date and needs to be

V. DeMarchi asked what items from SPAC recommendation are within ESF's control

1. Workload allocation for faculty and Performance Programs for Staff
2. Marketing – Tell our story
3. Prioritize – what do less of?

    Engage and Listen

Finance Committee will take recommendations and will discuss them with Executive Cabinet and amongst each other.

**8. Student Reports:**

**8.1. MOSA Update by Daniel Vera:**

- ESF Student advocacy – very engaged, committed to transparency, etc.
- Grateful for some tough conversation
- SUNY-wide impact – implement Ecosia across SUNY
    - 1000 trees planted via Ecosia
- Thanked outgoing E-Board and Introduced new E-Board

**8.2. GSA Update:**

- Reinvested $50K
- 450+ participants engaged with GSA
- Conference largest ever:
- Space: communication has been helpful, will need to continue good communication
- Graduate student research productivity, high level of output needs high level support
- Introduced 26/27 GSA Senate

**9. Academic Governance:**

Aaron Rounds & Ruth Yanai – outgoing chairs

- Successes: SPAC has done a lot of work – provided healthy outlet
    - Active AI council
    - Thanked the Trustees for increasing participation, noting it has helped students connect with
- Concerns: No AG Chair, byalws state past AG chair will serve
- AG Does a lot of good work on campus.
- Uncertainty with stability plan and moving goal posts

**10. Request to Discuss State of ESF:**

**M. Driscoll**

- **Concerns:**
    - College lacking in ADA Compliance
    - College instruction going down
    - On edge of losing R2 Status
    - Lab Safety
    - Faculty workload, already working over 37.5 hours/week
    - Losing junior faculty
- **Solutions:** ESF as regional center for radiation research & partnerships with other institutions

**M. Smith:**

- Acknowledged over 550 collective years of experience from VSP

Qs from the UUP membership to ESF Board of Trustees –

1. How can the ESF Board of Trustees effectively intervene at the SUNY system level to expedite approval of already completed and locally authorized job searches, temporary appointments, extra service, and also receives, particularly in cases where candidates have received and accepted verbal offers and work has already been performed but are stalled in system level processing?
    - With increased resource scarcity, we cannot afford the sub-cost of lost candidates, nor can we continue to expect staff to do more when compensation is drastically delayed.
2. How can the BOT address the broader issue of administrative authority being undermined by prolonged SUNY delays?
3. While the Provost is addressing faculty workload, staff performance programs compliance here is critically low. Performance programs outline a staff member's responsibility and are the basis of what they can be evaluated on. Based on member reporting, ESF may be operating at about 20% compliance, we have asked for three years for compliance numbers and never received an answer.
4. In prior labor management discussion, establishing a clear pre-reorganization baseline was identified as essential to any successful restructuring, how is the BOT accounting for this lack of baseline data, and what steps are being taken to ensure staff are not systematically disadvantaged in the reorganization process?
5. Beyond compliance and workload metrics, how is the Board considering the qualitative factors that have historically sustained ESF's performance, particularly employee commitment to mission driven work? To what extent is the reassignment or expansion of duties, even where contractually permissible, undermining that foundation?
6. How does the Board reconcile management's authority to assign work with the institution's implicit commitments to employees regarding the nature of their roles? At what point do significant deviations from those expectations risk eroding trust, morale and long-term institutional effectiveness? Have we crossed that point already?
7. How is the BOT ensuring that stability does not translate to a standing expectation that staff absorb delays through uncompensated labor, expanded duties, or indefinite flexibility? Where are the administrative safeguards that protect employees from becoming the perpetual buffer for systemic inefficiencies?
8. How is the Board planning for future shocks; fiscal, administrative, or political; if current processes already demonstrate limited capacity to execute routine functions in a timely and reliable way? In other words, since the community has yet to be convinced, what does a stable ESF actually look like and practice and what concrete steps are being taken now to build toward that.

**Old Business:** Trustee DeMarchi noted that ACT Scholarship applications are open, K. McCarthy confirmed that ESF has received notice of the ACT Scholarships.

**New Business:** None.

**Motion to adjourn:** Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to adjourn, Trustee Vera seconded. All Approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Nichole Dougherty.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**
September 24, 2026

**PERSONNEL ACTIONS PRESENTED FOR BOARD ENDORSEMENT**

**A.** **Continuing Appointment (Policies of the (SUNY) Board of Trustees, Article XI, Title B)**

(none to report)

**B.** **Permanent Appointment (Policies of the (SUNY) Board of Trustees, Article XI, Title C)**

(none to report)

**C.** **Emeritus Status (Policies of the (SUNY) Board of Trustees, Article XV, Title D**

Mark Lichtenstein
Assistant to the President
Sustainability Division
May 21, 2026

David Newman
Professor
Chemical Engineering
May 21, 2026

James Savage
Professor
Sustainable Resources Management – Ranger School
May 21, 2026

William Smith
Professor
Sustainable Resources Management
May 21, 2026

**D.** **Leaves of Absence (Policies of the (SUNY) Board of Trustees, Article XIII)**

**SABBATICAL LEAVE, TITLE E:**

(none to report)

**TITLE F LEAVE:**

(none to report)