



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

President Quentin Wheeler: Response to a Bill of Particulars Regarding Leadership

**(*Bill of Particulars* dated February 2, 2016 produced by
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**February 4, 2016
(update of February 3, 2016 original—correction of some facts)**

Opening Statement

Below are responses to the assertions raised in the aforementioned *Bill of Particulars* regarding a potential “vote of no confidence.” My responses correct factual errors, agree with some points, and add explanations and context. Text expressing each assertion is copied from the *Bill of Particulars* and is used as an index in the left column, with my response in the right column. I also make some concluding remarks at the end. In addition to the specific corrections and responses, I would like to make a few general observations.

Regardless of what people in the ESF community may feel about me, my style of leadership, or my vision for the College, I urge everyone to carefully consider the potential consequences attached to a vote of no confidence. This can damage ESF and its reputation at a time when we are facing serious challenges, involved in sensitive negotiations, and making positive headway, as I just explained to the College community February 3, 2016 in my *State of the College Report*. My number one concern is the success of ESF and I would hate to see us inflict such damage to an institution we all love.

Terrence MacTaggart discussed votes of no confidence in an article for the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (“What confidence should boards give no-confidence votes?”). This was a culminating piece for research he had been doing on this issue. In it he says the following:

“The faculty is well-advised to try less confrontational means—meetings with the president, followed by private meetings with the board or system head, or a letter of concern—**before** [emphasis added] resorting to public announcements of lack of trust.”¹

¹ Terrence MacTaggart, *Trusteeship Magazine*, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, November/December 2012 (<http://agb.org/trusteeship/2012/11/what-confidence-should-boards-give-no-confidence-votes>)

A process was set in place by the College and SUNY to address concerns about campus leadership, management, and relationships. A third-party, non-biased group was engaged and a report was issued, entitled “SUNY ESF: Strengthening Our Community.” A summary of that report was sent to the College in December 2015, and the full document from the third-party consultant was distributed to the College community on January 28, 2016. That report provided potential engagement options. I used those ideas to help develop next steps, which were outlined by me in the cover transmittal message accompanying the report, and on February 3, 2106 in my *State of the College Report*. Those next steps will help us build a stronger community.

Until all such options have been explored and exhausted—and I am confident all options have not been pursued—I suggest that a vote of no confidence is premature, extreme, and ill-considered (see my concluding comments for more on this). Therefore, I strongly urge the authors of the *Bill of Particulars* to reconsider, and become part of the process that is already place for the entire campus.

We have made progress addressing the daunting combination of challenges that faced the College at the time of my arrival, including:

- a structural budget deficit inadequately addressed for at least six years;
- a new Chancellor at Syracuse University (SU) who undertook a comprehensive review of services provided to ESF and their costs, resulting in significant increases;
- necessity to immediately staunch the flow of College financial reserves, fast approaching depletion; and
- a requirement to create IT infrastructure in time to transition away from SU within five years.

I am beginning to fulfill the goal stated in the presidential search to increase ESF’s national visibility in order to open doors to new opportunities, and have been leading a transition to the kind of collaborative leadership model that I have found highly effective in arriving at better and more fully informed decisions.

A central part of collaborative leadership is being as transparent as possible. Because the campus community had not been aware of the depth of the financial situation, disclosing this information while working to identify steps to resolve the issue created an uncomfortable sense of urgency and understandable angst about the future. I have absolute confidence in our ability to resolve the deficit and create a prosperous future, but it will of course take time. I understand the impact of openly sharing this information and I am confident that we will be okay.

I have offered and continue to offer new directions and initiatives that are investments in the ultimate elimination of the deficit, the creation of growth opportunities, and the future success of ESF. It was not the Royal astronomer who solved the navigational problem of longitude, but a humble clock maker named John Harrison. Science is a meritocracy that adopts good ideas regardless of their origins. Every one of us has contributions to make through identification of opportunities for efficiencies, sharing of creative ideas, and working together to advance the College. I urge us all to think outside the box, to offer solutions in addition to concerns, and to be flexible in reimagining our future.

Beyond doing our best in our individual roles at the institution, we have unlimited opportunities when we pull together and collectively seek solutions. Well-intended reactions to challenges that are divisive destabilize the College. They focus on problems rather than solutions. They distract us just as we are hitting our stride.

As I mentioned above, we have made progress in just two years. We have a new five-year agreement with SU that allows us to predict and contain our costs. We are laying the foundation to elevate ESF's national visibility, opening new doors to funds and partnerships. We are in a position to organize a new capital campaign around bold, inspiring ideas and the promise to donors that they can be part of leading positive change in the world. We are making infrastructure investments that will make us stronger, more independent, and protected from escalating costs. All this takes time, and it takes concerted, focused effort.

At its base, what must be done is common sense. We cannot continue to spend more money than we receive. We cannot purchase services at rates we cannot afford. We cannot attract all the resources we need or enjoy the impact we deserve without increased national visibility. We cannot have the support of an urban and minority population without being more inclusive and welcoming. We must develop new strategies to meet a new generation of challenges.

We are on a challenging path, but ESF will triumph, just as it always has. We are the envy of any academic institution wanting to play a major role in addressing environmental and sustainability issues. We are focused on the science necessary to solve the problems. We attract capacity classes of highly qualified students at a time when others struggle to meet enrollment targets. We have leading research programs addressing both fundamental and use-inspired questions. And, we can be visible above the weeds because of the combination of our excellence and unique niche. From this remarkable position we can adapt ESF as needed to be at the forefront of 21st century challenges and assure another 100 years of success.

The last thing I want to comment on is trust. The *Strengthening Our Community* report that I referenced above indicated that some of you do not trust me. I do not think it is fair to ask you to simply give me your trust, but I do believe it is reasonable to ask for enough time to earn it. Therefore, I urge everyone to participate by engaging with me as we pursue the steps toward strengthening leadership, management, and relationships.

ESF is a very special college. We have a foundation of excellence and tradition that makes us uniquely positioned to be a leader in the great environmental challenges that lie ahead. This foundation is based on our excellent students and alumni, and our extremely valuable and skilled faculty and staff. If I did not believe that, I would never have joined this community. I am committed to a 21st century for ESF that is marked by even bigger and better successes than those in our illustrious past. This requires working together, sharing your best ideas, coming to me with solutions in addition to problems, compromising, a willingness to take chances, imagination, flexibility, and above all, good will. If we approach collaboration with good will and with ESF's success as our goal, there is nothing we cannot achieve together.

I am prepared to work tirelessly to take ESF boldly into its future, as are all of you, and we can do this together.

My Detailed Response to *Bill of Particular Points*

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
Failed Strategic Plan:	<p>It is not a failed plan, because the process is still ongoing.</p> <p>The framework for the direction in which I am leading the College was laid out in my interview in September 2013, and was embraced by the College, SUNY, our Board of Trustees, and numerous alumni. This “vision” was subsequently reflected in many presentations, and in various rough draft elements to be considered for inclusion in our Strategic Plan. One ultimate goal of a plan is to put forth an inspiring vision with the potential to attract investors and partners who want to be part of the College’s transformational impact on the world. I have never wavered in my intent and interest to meld the solid foundation of existing ESF scholarship, programs, and achievements with new initiatives. It is not an either/or scenario. I am confident that new initiatives we will embark upon are synergistic with ESF's tradition and present portfolio.</p> <p>While I do acknowledge and take ownership for a process that could have been constructed differently, by no means do I see the planning process started in 2014 and continuing to the present as “failed” (see below for more on this).</p>
“...Dr. Wheeler has failed to significantly engage faculty, professional staff, alumni, and students [in Plan development].”	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there can never be enough mechanisms to engage people, I look back and see many opportunities for our community to get involved in our planning efforts. <p>If people in our community felt no opportunity for engagement, then I want to learn more about what else we can do in the future to create more access. However, about two dozen opportunities for engagement were offered. Certainly, more and different ways of engagement could have been found. Later in this document, I comment on mechanisms that would have offered more opportunity for engagement.</p> <p>In spring 2014, in preparation for the planning process, a survey instrument polled the faculty and staff in respect to a number of questions, in particular, it polled “big” environmental challenges and opportunities on the horizon. A summary of the results of this instrument provides an interesting opinion/snapshot of the College. ESF student organizations were also invited to gather parallel ideas about the great opportunities and needs that lie ahead.</p> <p>The planning process was open to the entire ESF community with opportunities for input both in various scheduled sessions as well as through a comment board on a website. Ideas and draft documents incorporated these various inputs and subsequently were made available for review by ESF’s Academic Council, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee of Academic Governance, Leadership Cabinets, and a strategic planning steering committee (Executive Cabinet Plus).</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>The strategic planning process was designed to allow for input from faculty, staff, students, trustees, friends, and the broader community. To achieve this, ESF crafted starting-point statements and documents and allowed the community to react to, add to, subtract from, and modify to arrive at a final product. This process allowed ESF to pursue a far more aggressive schedule, arriving at the framework for the plan in spring 2015, and a set of strategies and goals later in the year. This accelerated timetable was, in part, to identify bold initiatives that would feed into fundraising efforts.</p> <p>As I describe later in this document, while this is all true, the truncated nature of this planning process caused many of the concerns expressed throughout the College community. I relied on the expertise, and active input and editing by interest groups on campus to fill gaps, insert examples, and assure adequate coverage in the September 2015 framework document. This was misconstrued in one sense as a deliberate omission of parts of the extensive content previously created during the time before the summer of 2015.</p>
<p>“...with no vetting by faculty or staff, Dr. Wheeler and the Executive Committee developed four big questions on which to base the new strategic plan.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “four questions” were vetted. <p>The strategic planning committee leading the effort at the time developed and refined the questions. This was the “Executive Cabinet Plus” and included the full Executive Cabinet that existed at the time (myself, Provost Bruce Bongarten, and Vice Presidents Maureen Fellows, Bob French, and Joe Rufo) and two Department Chairs (Don Leopold and Valerie Luzadis). There were numerous instances where our community was offered the opportunity to suggest changes to the questions, or offer new questions, such as on the large visioning boards available in Gateway.</p> <p>These “big” questions were conceived to concisely illustrate the breadth of research and impact of ESF to a general audience—from fundamental science, to sustainable solutions, and impacts on human welfare—through questions so broad and complex in scope that they could not be solved (and therefore remain relevant), yet within each, enormous latitude exists for ESF focus. They are not, and were never intended to be, the base of a new strategic plan; but rather, are overarching concepts. In matrix fashion, the identified research foci (water, etc.) would cut across some or all of these questions. Within those foci would be specific strategic targets that align with the most pressing needs and promising opportunities; and, within those specific goals and milestones, the measurable parts of a strategic plan.</p>
<p>There was lack of support for these questions.</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a generalized statement that is hard to respond to. Clearly, there is lack of support from some people, but there was also support by others.

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	<p>The first phase of planning focused on visioning (“What does ESF want to be five and 20 years from now?”). Co-chairs of each committee produced a draft starting-point, convened visioning sessions, and guided each group. The charge to these “Committees on Transdisciplinary Questions” was to propose sub-questions that ESF should consider adopting over the next five years. The sub-questions were intended to engage the participation of multiple disciplines. Each question should have great potential impact on science, society, or both. And, each of the committees was asked to identify at least one sub-question that would build on existing ESF strengths to accelerate success at the College.</p> <p>The “right/big questions” (transdisciplinary questions) idea followed a questionnaire of the previous spring semester. Don Leopold and Huiting Mao led those discussions. Review of the comments provided many ideas of topics on which to focus. This led to the development of the four questions that framed the next round of discussions. The Executive Cabinet Plus group (strategic planning committee at the time) discussed this at length and tweaked the questions many times prior to the first round of discussion. The wording of the questions was also adjusted throughout that process based on input from the groups, comments online, and Executive Cabinet Plus discussions to bring it all together.</p> <p>There were lively debates by the steering committee (Executive Cabinet Plus) over the content and wording of the four questions that resulted from comments on the visioning wall and website, and their adequacy to provide an umbrella under which all research and scholarship at ESF could find a home. With a little imagination and flexibility, we saw such a fit.</p> <p>Some of the negative comments regarding the questions seemed to have to do with the absence of specific words or explicit reference to individual disciplines. The point of the questions was to appeal to broad curiosity and impact that both includes by implication and transcends by collaboration individual disciplines.</p>
<p>“The first draft of Strategic Plan was distributed to the campus community in May, 2015.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As explained to the College community at the time, the document of May 7, 2015 was not a “first draft of a strategic plan,” nor was it intended to be. <p>Any strategic planning effort must also be linked to overall institutional goals and administrative unit goals. The focus of the May draft was specifically brought to institutional level goals because a team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education was visiting campus in mid-May to monitor our assessment progress. During these meetings, the team specifically indicated the importance and value of the May 7, 2015 draft as demonstrating ESF's understanding of the necessity of such linkages to meet Middle States standards of excellence. Without this, the outcome of that visit might have been very different. It was a very successful visit that resulted in our current accreditation status being maintained.</p>

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<p>“The May draft formed the centerpiece of the strategic plan discussion at the summer retreat of the cabinet with the president.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As stated above, the May 7, 2015 document was not a “first draft of a strategic plan.” • The summer retreat referenced here was actually with the Full Cabinet (on July 30, 2015). <p>The Full Cabinet includes the entire Executive Cabinet and the heads/leaders in all the following administrative and support units: Admissions, Alumni Relations, Business Affairs, Communications, Development (and College Foundation), Environmental Health and Safety, Financial Aid, Forest Properties, Human Resources, Information Technology, Instruction and Graduate Studies, Library, Outreach, Physical Plant and Facilities, Registrar, Research Programs, Student Affairs, Sustainability, and University Police. Joining this group at the retreat was the Newcomb Campus Director, another member of the College’s Communications Office, and for the first-time ever (at a retreat like this), a student.</p> <p>Incidentally, early last year, recognizing the importance of responding to some critical areas (e.g., diversity, student affairs, and sustainability), improving communication and coordination for essential strategic functions (e.g., between fund development, the College Foundation, and me), increasing the number of people advising me on executive decisions, and adding more diversity on the Executive Cabinet, I broadened the Executive Cabinet to include Brenda Greenfield (Assistant Vice President of Development and Executive Director of the College Foundation), Mark Lichtenstein (Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Sustainability), Anne Lombard (primarily in her role as Interim Chief Diversity Officer), and Ragan Squier (Secretary to the President). Before that, in September 2014, I added Maureen Fellows (Vice President for Government and External Relations). They all joined Bob French (Vice President for Enrollment Management and Institutional Research), Valerie Luzadis (Interim Provost and Executive Vice President), and Joe Rufo (Vice President for Administration), and me to round-out the Executive Cabinet.</p> <p>The focus of the Full Cabinet retreat was on strategies and tactics to successfully achieve three immediate needs for long-term sustainability of the institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinction and national visibility, • Greater revenue generation, and • Cost-effectiveness. <p>Other retreat objectives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand the President’s vision; • Discussion of potential institutional goals and the College’s adaptive process to strategize and act to achieve them; • Attain clarity of the relationship between administrative unit mission and goals;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of opportunities to create integrative, cross-unit teams to help achieve goals and reduce redundancy; • Start the development of metrics for teams; • Work on a process to finalize administrative unit annual work/assessment plans; and most importantly, • Generate excitement for 2015-16 and beyond. <p>The overall intent was to continue to move the College forward at the same time strategic planning was underway. At the end of the day, three priority areas (among numerous discussed) came to the forefront for unit leaders to develop further throughout 2015-16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new opportunities in the area of auxiliary services (e.g., new dining and residence halls), • Accelerate movement toward online opportunities through an ESF Open Academy, and • Maximize the capabilities and potential of our “extended properties” (e.g., Cranberry Lake Biological Station, Huntington Forest, Pack Forest, Newcomb Campus, and Thousand Islands Biological Station). <p>Administrative leaders and units continue to work on all these priorities.</p>
<p>“That document was then modified by Dr. Wheeler, Dr. Luzadis and Chief of Staff Lichtenstein at a private meeting held at the AEC in early September, 2015.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I joined with Interim Provost Valerie Luzadis and Chief of Staff Mark Lichtenstein at Huntington Lodge from September 11-13, 2015 to work on the plan as an ad hoc writing group. • There is an inaccurate inference by the use of the word “private.” <p>Mark Lichtenstein offered to help pull together components of the Plan over that weekend. To reduce the potential for interruptions and distractions by working from his home, he made plans to go to Huntington to immerse himself in the effort. Upon hearing his plan, Valerie Luzadis and I offered to join him to assist in moving the Plan forward. It was not any secret that we were going there, having informed other members of our leadership team that we were sequestering ourselves for the weekend to get as much done as we could. It is important to note that we extended an open invitation to others to join us—an invitation that resulted in Adirondack Ecological Center (AEC) staff members joining us at various times during the weekend.</p> <p>We also spent some time eating at the dining hall and talking about our College with a group of our students who were there for the weekend. That aided in our thinking about the plan.</p>

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<p>“The second draft of the Strategic Plan that they produced was vetted in mid-September 2015 and found unacceptable by the faculty, students, and professional staff, as evidenced by a plethora of comments made at two town hall meetings held on campus.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The September 2015 draft was the first draft, not second. • Many comments at a Town Hall meeting about the draft Plan were not favorable, but many people in the room had yet to actually see it (it had not been released to the entire campus yet). • Generalizing by using terms such as "the faculty" creates an inaccurate picture of the reality of the situation. It is true that a large number of faculty, many alumni, and some students and staff shared negative comments. It is not clear how many faculty, students, and staff found the September 2015 draft “unacceptable.” A number of other faculty, alumni, staff, students, and Board of Trustee members shared positive comments, as well as a keen understanding that this was only a very rough start of a document. They recognized the document still required much work. <p>In retrospect, distributing the September 2015 draft in its present form, and in the manner we chose, became a catalyst for confusion.</p> <p>During the spring and summer of 2015, I made a commitment to the College community that a first draft of the Plan would be available by early September. The intent was that it would have been much farther along in development than the rough draft that was distributed. The fact is, unexpected, high-priority needs arose during the summer that deflected executive leadership’s attention. These included a critically important Middle States Review (which could impact our accreditation), unexpected deadlines surrounding SUNY reporting requirements and related funding requests, essential negotiations with Syracuse University, and others. This forced strategic plan development into the second-tier of priorities for leadership, which I should have communicated and explained to the campus.</p> <p>The September 2015 draft was not intended to be, or was it presented as a complete draft, but rather as an initial compilation to which I wanted the College community to help populate and refine. I liken this to the early stages of putting together a major grant application with an interdisciplinary team. Nevertheless, this needed more clarification. In addition, there is no question that not all academic departments, areas of scholarship, and other critical elements of our College are readily visible in that draft. This absence wasn’t purposeful, or intended to indicate lack of support for what we (you) do here. I had always expected that with your help we would flesh-out the document to be representative of not only those new things I am confident we should explore, but also what we already do so incredibly well.</p> <p>I, however, did express that it was a very rough draft, meant to be a living document, and that we would spend the fall semester of 2015 refining it and then condensing and abstracting it. The objective was to develop a document that looked very much like the existing <i>ESF Vision 2020</i> plan (layout, page length, etc.), and that other material in the master draft would find its way to appended documents or in a suite of online resources and archives.</p>

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	<p>Most of the College community had yet to see the September 2015 draft for a few weeks after its release to a subset of the College on September 15-16. Up to that point in mid-September, only Academic Council, Executive Cabinet, and members of the six visioning committees had received a copy. There was a call to release the draft to the entire College community, which I did in early October. That created one additional problem, in that it was released broadly without the content of the original associated transmittal messages (cover memos) sent to the groups noted above when they got the draft Plan (therefore, it lacked context for the entire College to better understand what it was, and what its purpose was intended to be). Below, I include some of the language that was sent to those groups—language I think would have prevented some of the misunderstanding that resulted. Here is some of what I told Academic Council (AC) (academic department deans and other academic leaders) early in September:</p> <p>“Attached is a draft of our strategic plan... This is a working, living document. This draft is being shared with you in its unrefined, very rough state. It has not been thoroughly proofed, edited, etc., and a number of things need to be tweaked, moved, and added. You’ll even see where we have notes highlighted in yellow throughout identifying where more obvious work needs to take place. It’s very rough shape notwithstanding, we wanted it in your hands today... Preliminary comments are welcomed from you after we look this over with you tomorrow morning, leading to a refined next draft by COB tomorrow. That new draft tomorrow will be distributed to additional members of the six visioning committees that were formed earlier this year. We will review that draft with those committee members ... and ask them to convene to offer more input. After meeting with the six committees; if needed, [another] draft will be completed and used to help inform my remarks at [a] "Town Hall" meeting... It will not be distributed to the college community yet. A final draft will be completed after comments are received from all the processes above. That draft will be distributed to the entire college community. Later next week, we will also convene the new Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which will help guide our participation process through December (toward completion of the plan by the start of the new calendar year). We’ll review some preliminary components of that participation process at tomorrow’s AC meeting, but I expect the Strategic Planning Steering Committee to help us refine how best to engage our faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and other stakeholders.”</p> <p>I also sent a note to the members of the six committees referenced above. Pertinent points include:</p> <p>“As a first step in our strategic plan development process, we’d like to have members of the six visioning groups meet to review our rough draft of the plan. This would be the first look at the draft plan by any members of the ESF community. The intent is to get your preliminary impressions and input, and catch any serious errors or omissions before we release the final draft to the entire College community. This morning, the Interim Provost and I had a great meeting with leadership from Academic Governance [about this]...We understand that it will be difficult to accomplish much in one hour, so consider this just a starting point for participation and input.”</p>

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	<p>I also sent an update to the College community on September 10, 2015, which included the following:</p> <p>“From now until the end of 2015, the ESF community will work together to finalize the College’s new strategic plan for 2016-2020. This will include opportunities for active engagement by faculty, students, staff, trustees, alumni, the ESF College Foundation, and other stakeholders. We are currently working through the wealth of ideas generated through the numerous participatory processes of the past year to propose a focused, tentatively prioritized set of goals. While this first full draft of a plan embodies a great deal of progress, it is at the same time a starting point for a final round of comments and discussions before it is finalized in December. There will be many and varied ways in which you can help improve the document in the months immediately ahead... Prior to releasing the draft to the entire campus community, we are inviting the six strategic planning committees, who generated reports earlier this year, to offer comments and corrections. These committees consisted of faculty, staff, and students. With the committees’ input, we will make further edits and then release the draft to the College community within a few weeks. With the assistance of ESF’s student and Academic Governance leadership, by September 17th we will constitute a new Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This group will include Executive Cabinet members and additional representation from faculty, students, and staff. The Steering Committee will help manage the creation of opportunities for your participation this fall and guide the plan’s completion by the end of the semester.”</p> <p>Here are just two of a number of positive comments we received about the September 2015 draft from senior faculty members not associated with Executive Cabinet, Academic Council, or the previous strategic planning group. These two comments are from faculty members of the department(s) represented by the authors of the <i>Bill or Particulars</i>:</p> <p>“I think there is much to praise in the draft strategic plan I saw, and I hope it will move forward, because I see it as the best hope for a bright future for the College. It is essential that it succeed. ...The draft strategic plan I saw proposes some radical changes in how we think of ourselves and how we meet our mission. I welcome these changes (faster, please, but I wish there were more).” (Faculty member one)</p> <p>“This is so much better [than the May document]. Thank you! ... It’s ... so much more readable. While there are things here [that will raise concerns around] the campus, this is a plan, not empty rhetoric – I’m excited!” (Faculty member two)</p> <p>Here is a note I sent to another faculty member from Forest and Natural Resources Management who offered very helpful comments on how to move forward based on her read of the September document:</p> <p>“Time and opportunity exist for refining the document which is the aim and hope. I have assumed that this will include sidebars or other call-outs in the document that brag about the great current strengths, in part as examples of expressions of</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>our existing leadership in the broader questions (that are conceived to allow us to have great latitude in particular projects going forward).”</p> <p>This is one point from the Academic Organization Committee (one of the six committees) after they reviewed the September 2015 draft: “Everyone can see themselves in this document.” Other comments from that committee were focused on needs for document improvement.</p> <p>I share these not to downplay the fact that many people in our community expressed numerous concerns about the draft; but rather, to point out that—typical for an academic community—there have been a variety of opinions expressed about the September draft.</p>
<p>“The main criticism was that most of the work done by the committees was discarded...”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By no means was the work of the committees "discarded." <p>During the summer of 2015, three other members of the College community exerted great effort going through all the material from the six committees (not Mark, Valerie, or me). The three of us then invested considerable time at Huntington Lodge working to determine the best way to incorporate a wealth of information from the committees that—from committee-to-committee—wasn’t organized the same (this is another place where, looking back, I wish we had spent more time; that is, helping the committees with a consistent template to organize their information). In any case, our attempt was reflected in the section on “environmental grand challenges” in the September draft where we captured only an outline of the work from the committees. We acknowledged that. This was the main reason we wanted additional assistance from the committees throughout the fall.</p> <p>Further exemplifying my interest in including more information that would better reflect our College, in the draft document itself we identified numerous highlighted caveats, including (directly quoted verbatim from the September draft):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the <i>table of contents</i> related to <i>academic organization</i>: “NEED TO ADD BEYOND THIS POINT AS THE PLAN FURTHER DEVELOPS” • In the <i>specific goals, initiatives, and actions</i> section (the most important section, and forming the core of the the final 30-plus page product): “THIS SECTION WILL SUMMARIZE THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THIS PLAN. IT WILL BE ONE OF THE FINAL TASKS COMPLETED AFTER THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY ENGAGES IN THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN THROUGHOUT FALL 2015.” • In the <i>appendices</i> section: “WHAT FOLLOWS ARE ITEMS TO DO AND/OR POTENTIALLY INCLUDE IN THE PLAN. ALL ARE CURRENTLY BEING WORKED ON:” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Prioritization of initiatives, actions is needed.”

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Timeline of implementation of initiatives and actions [The thinking is that this might be premature to put forth at this moment. The intent is to focus on the vision now and not be bogged down by specifics. However, a general timeline for the process seems appropriate and is being developed. Thoughts are welcome on this approach.]” • “Better articulate how the aspirational, growth strategy embodied by this plan directly addresses the fundamental structural financial deficit ESF faces” • “Develop a succinct list (say, 10 points) that includes factual examples of what makes ESF distinctive among peer institutions. This could include items such as ‘ESF is the best college for undergrads looking for opportunities for research’, ‘ESF’s faculty interact directly with and teach students’, etc.” • “Focus better on employment opportunities/outcomes of students” • “‘Saving the environment’ is important, but also focus on ESF’s strengths and focus areas like materials and utilization” • “Make a better connection to Chemistry, including the work on sustainable materials and green chemistry—also, biorefinery efforts” • “More language on environmental health from associated white paper, from important comments on this topic from both Don Leopold and James Gibbs at recent meetings (such as opportunities with environmental health issues flowing from impact of natural disasters, and also, the connection of childhood health and nature)” • “Include Critical Maintenance Plan and Strategic Facilities needs in the section on Enabling Initiatives (ARB, OLSC—don’t build without biz plan, Beautification, labs, etc.)” • “More clarity on recruitment strategies for out-of-state and international undergrads and grads, including identifying any needed support structures” • “Highlight the importance of external relationships and partnerships more—such as with other SUNY campuses” • “Incorporate student leadership skill building material” • “A list of existing academic programs” • “Look at 2020 plan once more—anything to add?” • “Look at visioning boards from last year and be sure key items have been incorporated” • “Look at Roosevelt Wild Life Station Strategic Plan for items to include” • “Put in review of external organizations (stakeholder analysis)” • “Potentially include strategic performance indicators and targets (Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and metrics) [ESF could adopt a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework in order to evaluate the organization’s efficiency and effectiveness.]” • “Clearly articulate potential partnerships with SU, such as with Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, PARCC, CEPA, sustainable infrastructure certificate, SEP, etc. (how do we better capture positive attributes of our relationship)” • “From Middle States Report: Take a look at these for possible inclusion of solutions to the challenges”

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>...and the new Strategic Plan didn't fully acknowledge ESF's history, strengths, or the faculty and staff vision for moving forward."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is correct. It did not. <p>Some history, tradition, and strength areas are noted, but certainly not enough. Expectations of mine were that the final version would have addressed this need through a background section not yet written as well as through sidebars illustrating current areas of excellence. One additional thing that could have helped would have been for a professionally facilitated SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis with the College and its stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>Another obvious factor leading to the challenge we faced with the planning process is that we attempted to complete a new, comprehensive plan in a relatively short period of time. A planning process like the one we embarked on can take up to three years.</p>
<p>The Plan ignored ESF's State of New York Charter.</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident that this claim is not correct. <p>I assume this refers to when the College was "re-chartered" in 1972 to reflect the breadth of our programs at the time. I am familiar with <i>New York State Education Law, Article 121, section 6002 (Objects and purposes)</i>, and I am not clear what this comment in the <i>Bill of Particulars</i> means. I am also aware that our current Strategic Plan Steering Committee looked at this issue and is satisfied with the direction we are going regarding alignment with the <i>NYS College Charter</i>.</p>
<p>The Plan "was devoid of the physical sciences, too narrowly focused, too generic, without a plan of action, and ignored much of the positive work currently being done at ESF to the point where many people saw no role for themselves in the plan."</p>	<p>Many of the comments above attempt to address this.</p> <p>Regarding the plan of action comment:</p> <p>The purpose of a strategic plan is to set high-level goals and objectives, and identify commensurate strategies. This should then inform annual work-plans (department and unit plans of action). Our summer 2015 administrative retreat was one step toward development of these types of plans of actions, and we are working on others now, including a "bridging the gap" financial plan.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
<p>“Consequently, after more than a year and half of hard work by many faculty, staff, and students, the second draft of the Strategic Plan was scrapped...”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is patently false that the September 2015 draft has been “scrapped.” <p>With my agreement, our present Strategic Plan Steering Committee is using the existing <i>ESF Vision 2020 Plan</i> as the foundational piece for an updated Plan that will serve as a bridging document to a new planning process to be started in a few years. In addition to many other data sources, they are using the May 2015 planning document, September 2015 draft, and all the previous planning effort products (from the spring of 2014 through the summer of 2015) to inform their process. Multiple members of that Committee—faculty, professional staff, students, and administrators—have expressed the need to incorporate pertinent information from the September 2015 draft. One of the authors of the <i>Bill of Particulars</i>, John View, sits on that committee and knows this.</p>
<p>...and a College-wide committee was formed with the charge to generate a new strategic plan.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A possible inference here is that after the September 2015 draft “failed,” a College-wide Committee was formed, and that somehow that Committee was thrust upon me. This is not the case. • The new committee was not “charged” to generate a “new” plan (the implication once again is that the September draft was being “scrapped”). <p>The formation of the current Strategic Plan Steering Committee was originally conceived in June 2015 by the Executive Cabinet and me. This is partially due to the fact that Valerie Luzadis, by virtue of taking on her new role as Interim Provost, should no longer serve as an academic department representative to Executive Cabinet Plus, and also that the other academic representative, Don Leopold, left the committee to meet other obligations. Regardless of these two occurrences, I wanted to expand the committee to include more faculty members, professional staff, and students, and was working throughout the summer with the Executive Chair of Academic Governance to devise a process to create and populate the new committee. My messages—including earlier in this document—to Academic Council and the College community in early September, <u>before</u> the release of the September draft, attest to this.</p> <p>My charge given to the new committee at their first meeting was as follows:</p> <p>“The Strategic Planning Steering Committee should guide the development of a plan that should recommend several institutional-level goals and associated objectives, and between six and ten actions (tasks or projects) that the College will complete during the next five years to achieve or advance the identified objectives. The Committee should advise the President from time to time of its progress, particularly prior to major decision points. The aim is to present a plan or critical elements of a plan to the President before the end of the 2015-16 academic year.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
	<p>Committee “charge” continued:</p> <p>The plan should build on existing strengths of the College while taking into account the imperatives to increase visibility of ESF nationally, to differentiate ESF from its competitors, and to attract new investors through an inspiring vision. Sources for the Committee to consider include, but are not limited to, the existing draft documents from May and September 2015, the collected materials gathered over the past year, the President’s Inaugural (September 2014), The Power of SUNY system-level strategic plan and the priorities of the current SUNY Excels initiative, the ESF Vision 2020 strategic plan, and the Middle States re-accreditation process.</p> <p>I ask that the Committee pursue the overall interests of ESF at the College level, painting an inspiring vision of our future grounded in the excellence of the present and traditions of the past. The plan should be concise and focused; perhaps no more than 30 pages in length, and establish a bold, forward-looking direction for the College. Longer, more extensive documentation can, of course, be made available through our website.</p> <p>The Committee is charged with representing ESF as a whole. As has been the case in planning so far, milestones along the way should be posted to the strategic planning website so as to be widely available. Meetings should be announced and open to observers. I also encourage you to use an external facilitator for your work. Names of facilitators are available from SUNY.</p> <p>Strategic planning should not be confounded with the immediate work of closing of our budget gap, even though it has clear and great implications for the College’s long-term financial well-being. Thus, while you are advancing the plan, I will, with Executive Cabinet continue to focus on balancing the budget and identifying new sources of revenues for the college through SUNY and other state and federal sources, foundation and corporate philanthropy, individual philanthropy, creation of auxiliary services, an increase in out-of-state tuition revenue, as well as additional cost efficiencies and transitions to more cost-favorable sources for services. Having said that, I will make myself available to you as we mutually work to finalize the Strategic Plan as an additional very important tool to advance the College.</p> <p>I have one goal, which I know is shared by our entire community: the continued excellence and success of ESF. Ultimately, this is the primary goal of a strategic plan, too.”</p> <p>Again, one of the authors of the <i>Bill of Particulars</i>, John View, as a member of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, is aware of this charge, and the charge is posted on the Colleges’s strategic planning website, so all authors of the <i>Bill of Particulars</i> have access to it. This charge clearly articulates what documents should be used to inform plan development, including the September 2015 draft.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“This collective waste of time happened in large part because of the President's isolationist style, poor interpersonal skills and the inability to lead or take advice from key College constituencies.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted already, to say that the planning process was a “collective waste of time” is not only an unsubstantiated generalization, but is also being proved untrue on a daily basis by the work of the current committee. <p>I will address the reference to isolationist style, interpersonal skills, and how I value our College constituencies later in this document.</p> <p>The committee is making excellent progress under the able leadership of committee chair Chris Nowak (Forest and Natural Resources Management), and with active participation from members Scott Bergey (Graduate Student Association), Kelley Donaghy (Chemistry / Academic Governance), Maureen Fellows (Government and External Relations), Margaret Foley (Undergraduate Student Association), Bob French (Enrollment Management and Institutional Research), Brenda Greenfield (Development / College Foundation), Richard Hawks (Landscape Architecture), Mark Lichtenstein (Chief of Staff / Sustainability), Anne Lombard (Student Affairs / Diversity), Valerie Luzadis (Interim Provost / EVP), Neil Ringler (Research), Joe Rufo (Administration), Susan Sanford (Admissions), Scott Shannon (Instructional Support / Graduate School), Chuck Spuches (Outreach), Art Stipanovic (Chemistry), and John View (Financial Aid /EOP). I am continually updated, have addressed the committee, offered input, and have adjusted my initial charge per the committee's recommendations.</p> <p>The model of collaboration, organization, work product development, and engagement of the broader College community that this committee is exhibiting is exactly what I had hoped would happen when we talked about forming this group pre-September 2015.</p> <p>This committee is a model of transdisciplinary collaboration we need to continue to emulate throughout our College community. To that end, I personally commit to continuing to create opportunities for shared decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, and increased empowerment of the members of our College community.</p> <p>Even considering the concern on campus after the September 2015 draft release, concern which I took very seriously, I never felt the planning process up to that point was a failure. With the work of our planning committee, efforts of College leadership, and the interaction of many others who are involved, we can look forward to a great <i>Vision 2020 Plan Update</i> by May 2016, six months after my original target date. Granted, this May 2016 product will not be a complete plan; we will embark on a full and robust planning process in a few years (prior to 2020). In any case, from what I see evolving from our existing planning committee, it will be an essential planning tool for us. It is very unfortunate that the authors of the <i>Bill of Particulars</i> don't recognize and acknowledge water over the dam (“water” that hasn't caused irreversible damage), or the course-corrections that already have been implemented by College leadership, faculty, staff, and students.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>Failure to Raise Funding on Behalf of the College:</p>	
<p>“President Wheeler has not raised substantial external funding for the College, a significant aspect of his position description.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term “substantial” is hard to address. Consider the following discussion about this claim. <p>I am by no means taking full credit for this, but following early completion of the capital campaign, ahead of schedule and \$1.5 million over target, average annual giving has doubled to the current \$3 million per year. We have raised \$600,000 toward the core \$1 million endowment for the Boone and Crockett Chair in cooperation with the Boone and Crockett Club, the Campfire Club, and Syracuse University’s Maxwell School. Contacts made in the course of this fundraising led to securing permission from the Theodore Roosevelt Association to potentially name ESF’s graduate school after President Roosevelt. I am confident that this will in turn create new fundraising opportunities. Guided by Development Office staff members, and through the efforts of others here, this was an extensive endeavor to secure this special permission.</p> <p>Development of individual prospective donors involves relationships that are cultivated over time. For us, this will mean both valuing existing and long-standing historic relationships, and also cultivating new relationships in other areas of the country and world not yet tapped by our College. Breaking into major foundation philanthropy involves high profile national visibility—visibility we need to increase. We have, and continue to pursue, activities on all these fronts. Our Development Office staff and I are working on a widening circle of prospects. In addition, the leadership team is laying the foundation for the kind of national visibility that gets us on the radar of both foundations and philanthropists outside the region and state. For instance, we are now one of nineteen founding members of <i>The Conversation</i>, which is an online “collaboration between editors and academics to provide informed news analysis and commentary that’s free to read and republish” (theconversation.com) and this gives ESF an inside track to the fastest growing digital media news outlet. We are fortunate that a handful of our faculty have already taken advantage of this media outlet. In addition, I have been invited to serve on the board of <i>Planet Forward</i>, a consortium of institutions—including ESF, and led by George Washington University—that supports students to tell sustainability stories through videos and new media (planetforward.org). This also makes connections for ESF and our students with high ranking federal government officials. We are also developing a set of initiatives designed to raise ESF’s profile through earned national media presence.</p> <p>Ultimately, funds to support the College should come from diverse sources, such as SUNY and New York State Legislature appropriations; New York State agency partnerships; local and regional philanthropists, foundations, and businesses; national</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>foundations and private philanthropists; corporate partners; competitive grants, including multi-institutional; contracts; and online courses and certificates, among others. Many of these require the increased national visibility already mentioned.</p> <p>The NYSUNY 2020 \$3.5 million award for biomimicry created a buzz in New York State (including DEC and NYSERDA), and the national and international biomimicry world, and begins to position ESF to play a leading role in this emerging economic engine and sustainability driver. Our recent performance improvement grant is the first step in creating the ESF Open Academy that will expand the reach and visibility of ESF's academic and public science education efforts.</p> <p>We have curtailed the rapid expenditure of College reserves and have begun to rebuild them. By minimizing their use for day-to-day operating costs, they are available for strategic investments that increase our visibility or otherwise strengthen our short- and mid-term positions.</p> <p>It took more than six years of not addressing a structural budget deficit to create the current challenge we face. It will take several years to completely reverse the damage, but we are well on our way to that goal. Building national visibility is key to expanding existing revenue streams (such as tuition dollars) and opening doors to new sources of philanthropic and foundation funds. This takes time and strategic investments. Similarly, major donors must be cultivated before being asked for a donation. In the academic world, such prospect cultivation routinely takes as much as five years. Expecting results in these areas in less than two years is simply unrealistic.</p>
<p>“At the same time he has jeopardized funding for existing programs, such as the Undergraduate Honors Program, by soliciting donations from the current donors to that program to support other projects.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the best of my knowledge I have not jeopardized the funding referenced with this claim. <p>When I first met a current donor to our Honor’s Program (the one I believe is alluded to by this claim), we instantly hit it off. I very much enjoyed our discussion, and he and his wife indicated the same. I have talked to him several times since that first visit to his home. He expressed a passion for the relationship between population demographics, natural resources, and environmental issues. Since that first encounter, he has raised the issue again, and we continue to share thoughts on the issue and how ESF might play a role in related research and scholarship. The donor continues to provide financial support to our Honors Program and no alternative ask has been made, although I am continuing a mutual interest in the subject area. This shared concern for population has in fact strengthened our relationship with the donor, as is the usual process for prospect development. I will stay in touch with our Honor's Program as this relationship continues to evolve.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>Fiscal Mismanagement of Limited Financial Resources:</p>	
<p>“Soon after his arrival at ESF, Dr. Wheeler stated that we were in a financial crisis and needed to create new revenue streams to take us out of this situation.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did say this and that we needed to grow ourselves out of this situation instead of making draconian cuts. <p>The fact is this: I inherited a neglected structural budget deficit that existed well before my arrival. This was initially related to the national monetary crisis of 2008 and a cut of \$5.3 million in state support to the College (19%). This is particularly difficult for a small institution such as ESF that lacks enrollment and the associated tuition revenue to make up for the reduction in NYS support. Things appeared normal because the College had been drawing down its fund balance / reserves to pay for day-to-day operations. At the time I arrived, we were on course to deplete the reserves in just two years. During the last two years, College and Foundation leadership and I have stemmed the rate of the deficit and modestly increased the College’s financial reserves.</p> <p>Reserves serve two main functions. First, they provide a pool of funds to assure effective cash flow for the institution. This is especially critical given that we receive approximately 80% of our state support during the final three months of the fiscal year. Second, they are a depository for the revenues and expenditures associated with a number of self-supporting services and activities (i.e., Income Fund Reimbursable accounts-IFR’s) beyond those normally funded in the core budget (e.g., timber sales, student technology and activity fees).</p> <p>If I were to have allowed the reserve balance to continue to erode unabated, the College would, in a relatively short period of time, have been unable to meet its payroll, pay its bills, or adequately fund the self-supporting activities and services.</p> <p>There were two fundamental choices to close the budget gap permanently. One was to make deep cuts, and the other to grow. Because most of our expenditures are in personnel, sufficiently deep cuts would have involved the elimination of the equivalent of twenty faculty lines, which would have the commensurate impact of cuts to administrative support units as well. This would have been a fast way to balance the budget, most likely achieved by the elimination of one or more academic departments.</p> <p>With the support of the Executive Cabinet, I rejected this option. I did this for several reasons. First is the concern I have for the welfare of the good people who work here, and the families that depend on you. Second is the quality and excellence of our</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>faculty and staff, and what I hold as a fundamental responsibility of my administration: to protect those jobs to the fullest extent possible and eliminate them only as a last, extreme resort. Third is the fact that we are already understaffed in almost every area. Cuts would run the risk of making it even more difficult to carry-out our mission and would possibly change the character of the College. Finally, eliminating one or more departments would damage the reputation of ESF, making it more difficult to attract and retain the best faculty, <i>much as a vote of no confidence—rather than working together to resolve issues—damages an institution’s reputation.</i></p> <p>The budget deficit took more than six years to become as serious as it is, and the growth strategy—first balancing the budget and then growing it to meet a diverse set of needs—will require a comparable period of time to fully achieve. To protect jobs and maintain the unique character of the institution, I believe that this harder, and more protracted, option remains the best one.</p>
<p>“At a recent Academic Governance meeting we were told that ESF may experience a shortfall of approximately \$1.5 million dollars in our budget this year.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At that meeting, Joe Rufo, Vice President for Administration, cited the figure of \$1.334 million.
<p>“His excessive spending of State and College Foundation funds indicate poor fiscal responsibility.”</p>	<p>The irony of our situation is that the growth option cannot be successful without investments of time and money. For instance, we must invest in increasing our national visibility if we are to have full flexibility in dictating the ratio of in-state to out-of-state students without lowering the quality of entering classes. We must invest in that same visibility to attract the attention of major private, foundation, and corporate philanthropists. We must invest in the right skill sets to successfully advance this more difficult path that I have chosen. Changes in our executive, leadership, and administrative teams are central to that goal.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“Dr. Wheeler is paid approximately \$90,000 more than his predecessor.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The salary was set by the SUNY Chancellor prior to the selection of a new President. I was offered \$275,000 per year. • President Murphy made \$208,000 during his last year as President, and \$106,461 in a half-time position during the first year after he left the President’s role. • The correct number is \$67,000.
<p>“The former provost is still on the payroll at \$188,000.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The correct number budgeted is \$188,706 per full calendar year, but for 2015-16, the actual salary (cost) for the former provost will be \$141,530 since he will be retiring before the full calendar year is finished. <p>Bruce Bongarten, the former Provost, had a continuing appointment and could have continued on as a faculty member at the same salary. Instead, he offered me a transition plan including completing some specific projects of importance to the College (e.g., schedule reset), and expressed an interest in retiring in March 2016; thus, the pro-rated salary number above.</p> <p>When Bruce informed me unofficially in 2014, and then formally by way of letter in 2015, of his request to step down from his Provost role, we discussed a range of issues for which his advice would be helpful to the College, and some that were ongoing projects that he hoped to complete before retirement. This advisory and project service, as well as recognition of his contributions and long, capable service to ESF, made this time of transition from Provost to retirement an appropriate decision.</p>
<p>“The interim provost received an \$86,000 salary increase upon her promotion.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The correct number is \$77,155. <p>Because my expectation was for full performance and authority in the Office of Provost during an interim period, it was appropriate that the salary be commensurate with the responsibilities, and with Valerie Luzadis’ years of service to ESF.</p> <p>Most importantly, I am absolutely committed to equal salary for women at ESF, and it would have been unethical to appoint the interim at a lower level than her male predecessor. If anything, it could be argued that it would have been justifiable to increase the salary further given the added responsibilities of an Executive Vice President role.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“The Chief of Staff, a new position created by the President, was hired over vacant faculty lines...</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College presidents have Chief’s of Staff. • I was also filling a vacant Sustainability position with this one individual. <p>Mark Lichtenstein, the new Chief of Staff and Executive Director for Sustainability, replaced Mike Kelleher in the sustainability role. Mike reduced his time to focus only on his role as a faculty member.</p> <p>Going back to my comments earlier about the need to grow in some areas as an investment intended to help develop new resources, that was a primary motivation for creating and filing this position over other lines. I don't see the as an either/or choice. We need to fill critical faculty <u>and</u> administrative and staff positions, but in a very strategic manner. That was what I did with this position.</p> <p>A 40% position of director of sustainability was vacant, and the College had a need for additional effort to pursue a large number of sustainability and strategic initiatives. By increasing this position from 40% to full time, I was able to restore leadership for College sustainability efforts as well as dramatically increasing the work capacity and efficiency of ESF's leadership team.</p> <p>For instance, Mark immediately identified that our participation in the critically important STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System) program administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) had been allowed to lapse. The sustainability office immediately re-engaged in the program (where we re-joined with 700 other institutions). This activity is essential to the College for a number of reasons, including that the STARS rating is used by several national rankings of “green” schools. We rely on these rankings for a host of reasons (e.g., recruitment). We have been slipping on some rankings, and are non-existent in one. This not only has been restored, but we are on-track to achieve a new, all-time high STARS score, moving into a leadership spot nationally. Due to the additional 40% position, we are progressing on many more initiatives simultaneously.</p> <p>Mark's role as Chief of Staff / Executive Director for Sustainability can be summed up under four categories of responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Chief of Staff, he can better track, develop, and support long-term and complex projects, and improve coordination of efforts across the senior administrative team. Twenty of the 64 SUNY campuses have a chief of staff position, including the smallest—the Maritime College. In recognition of the rapidly changing landscape in higher education, more of these positions are likely to come on line in the near-future (including one college locally that has asked us for advice about this position).

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In his role leading sustainability, Mark has already launched a number of new initiatives, has supported student-led efforts like fossil fuel divestment and the Centennial Hall EcoReps program, and helped correct a potential on-campus compliance issue. • In the “boundary organization” role he is playing, he is helping make important connections for our faculty and students locally, and in the Caribbean, Brazil, Mesoamerica, New York City, and Puerto Rico. He led an ESF team applying for a major EPA grant within two weeks of being on the job, and is leading or involved in three others related to EPA and NSF. With Tim Volk (FNRM) and a team of students, he is helping put together a \$1 million application to the State of New York. Also, he is helping lead our efforts to strengthen ESF’s critically important relationship with the DEC. • He co-teaches a sustainability class in Environmental Studies, and co-advises/teaches another with Tim Volk related to energy and the NYS grant referenced above. In addition, he is working on proposing new academic offerings related to sustainable materials management. <p>Mark has already played a major role in helping to advance many essential initiatives, as many of you know, since he has been very accessible and active with large numbers of faculty, staff, and students on a variety of projects and priorities.</p>
<p>...and paid an annual salary of \$128,000.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, Mark's salary is \$128,000, but \$40,612 of it is funded by the reduction of the previous sustainability director's salary as a result of Mike Kelleher relinquishing his role to become a 60% time faculty member; thus, the actual incremental cost is \$87,388.
<p>“Approximately 33% of the estimated shortfall of \$1.5 million is due to new administrative salary costs that are a direct result of Dr. Wheeler’s actions.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total salary increases for new hires and promotions noted above total \$231,543. That represents 17% of the \$1.334 million shortfall. <p>There were a few additional personnel changes that are not included in this <i>Bill of Particulars</i>. All of these meet my litmus test of projected Return on Investment (ROI) for the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President for Government and External Relations, Maureen Fellows: Recognizing that Maureen had responsibilities commensurate with other vice presidents, but neither comparable title nor salary, I also made those equity corrections in title and salary (increase of \$25,000 over a two-year period for a total salary of \$136,964). • Director of the Adirondack Ecological Center, Brian Houseal: To tap into Brian’s extensive network of relationships in government at the local, state, and federal levels, I have increased him from 50% effort to 100% (increase of \$63,006 from his July 2015 salary for a total salary of \$105,000) and asked him to help lead major

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>relationship efforts, such as with the DEC. This increase in time/salary was done under a specific agreement with him to only continue it if he raises/preserves this amount or more within two years (one year of effort over two years given that this part is 50%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Vice President for Development / College Foundation Executive Director, Brenda Greenfield: To address equity issues, value Brenda’s contributions, and recognize the importance of development, I gave Brenda a new title equal to her job duties. <p>Like former Provost Bruce Bongarten, former President Neil Murphy also continues to remain on the payroll as well, playing an important role in the Department of Environmental Resources Engineering (ERE). It is typical in academic settings for top administrators to follow this tradition. Former President Murphy’s current salary as a 10-month Professor is \$148,211.</p> <p>Bruce Bongarten’s salary is not included in the <i>Fact Check</i> statement given that his salary was not an increase resulting from promotions or new hires, but rather a prorated salary that compensated him for his transition related activities which is addressed above. In addition, the statement does not include Maureen Fellows and Brian Houseal's increases, or Neil Murphy’s salary. Instead, it is a figure that corrects the record described by the authors of the <i>Bill of Particulars</i>.</p>
<p>The College pays a monthly Time Warner bill of \$284.00 (ave.) for his home.</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To quote an actual bill, the October 2015 invoice was for \$548.57, not the average of \$284.00 cited. <p>The ESF presidential residence receives two Time Warner Cable bills—residential class and business class. Embedded within them is the residence security system, high speed internet, phone, and cable TV wired for both living and guest areas. In October 2013, President Murphy’s Time Warner bill was \$251.43, but this did not include the same internet service as President Wheeler, didn't include phone service (that was a separate Verizon contract for President Murphy), and doesn't account for general rate increases. In any case, we are seeking ways to reduce these bills.</p>
<p>The total amount [of the above] is nearly \$500,000.</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total amount of the above is \$238,125.84.

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“The chief executive of any college must travel to various events to promote the institution to a broad audience and communicate its needs. Yet, President Wheeler’s expenditures are excessive given the fiscal shortfall the college faces.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel is an essential part of a president’s duties. <p>Travel was involved in my first year to attend a number of alumni events. Additional travel will become necessary as our engagements grow and expand with prospective donors and partnering organizations that can enhance our activities.</p> <p>The total amount expended from my travel budget in my first full year of service was \$13,261. I will share the total to-date (it is being compiled). President Murphy’s travel expense totaled \$7,136 during his last full year of service. The difference is understandable given that during a president’s first year on the job, that person must spend a considerable amount of time traveling in order to meet and establish relationships with key alumni, donors, and other important College stakeholders and partners. Moreover, one of the key objectives the Presidential Search Committee emphasized to perspective candidates (including me) was to increase the visibility of the College, including on the international scene. This is also something expressed very clearly to me by the College Board of Trustees since my hire. International travel drives these costs higher. I continue to have deep convictions that partnerships with international organizations is one key to the growth of ESF.</p> <p>During my travel to England and France last August, I delivered a lecture and promoted ESF at a meeting at Oxford University (England), worked with colleagues from London, Madrid, Paris, Germany, and Yale University to develop an international online course with ESF in the leading position, and on an ongoing remote microscopy project for which ESF will receive most of the publicity. ESF and the Museum National D’histoire Naturelle in Paris are the two primary leads for the course, and we also discussed ways in which we might offer a joint degree program and open internships for ESF students in Paris. These were international meetings that presented the opportunity to promote ESF.</p> <p>In addition, a total of \$3,512 was expensed from my College Foundation account for travel; however, it is important to note that all of these funds were transferred by me from my Foundation account to other College accounts to enable faculty, staff, and students to travel on behalf of the College. None of these funds paid for my travel.</p> <p>As I said above, I expect these costs may remain higher than the last few years of President Murphy’s tenure, but will be vigilant and cognizant of the need to balance this need with the College’s financial situation.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“Use of State and College Foundation funds to pay for spousal travel is questionable, perhaps even unethical;...</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A President’s spouse has a formal appointment as SUNY Associate, which qualifies that person for travel. My wife Marie holds that title. <p>Pursuant to SUNY Policy 8000, “[D]esignation of SUNY Associate recognizes the contributions of individuals who provide the University with substantial and valuable services which support the official duties of the campus president. Such services include planning and participating in meetings, workshops, conferences, University activities, alumni and fundraising events, faculty/student/staff activities ... Services and responsibilities of SUNY Associates may also include other activities which are clearly in support of the official duties of, and are assigned by, the campus president.” In my appointment letter, both Policy 8000 and the SUNY Chancellor acknowledge that such an individual is usually the president's spouse. In sum, like all SUNY presidents, Marie has an official SUNY appointment that qualifies her for travel. As noted above, there are many occasions when dining with donors, meeting alumni, or developing other relationships is enhanced by operating as a couple. Most such travel has been to New York City using coach fare on the train from Albany.</p>
<p>...as are staying at boutique, ~ \$500/night hotels when other College employees are required to stay within State per diem spending; ...</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing the specific example, it is hard to address this, so I will have to make some assumptions. Depending on timing, room availability, and/or proximity to meetings it is not always possible in New York City to stay within the per diem rates. The few times that rooms were used in New York that were not within the per diem rate, they were reserved and approved at that rate by SUNY. One other time was at Oxford (England) where the room was pre-chosen for its proximity to the meetings.
<p>...spending ~ \$2,000 to fly to a scientific meeting in Europe.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The airfare for this trip was \$1,798.70. • SUNY Associate Marie Wheeler’s airfare was paid for personally (Marie did share the hotel room I was already paying for with College funds).

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
Problematic Relationship with ESF Board of Trustees:	
<p>“A conflict of interest exists between the President and Chair of the ESF Board of Trustees that has precipitated the resignation of one Board member.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No conflict of interest exists. • The Board Member in question sent the Board a message where he clearly outlined his reasons for resigning. <p>When the former Board Member confronted Chair DeMarchi with the allegation of a conflict of interest, Chair DeMarch, immediately brought this issue to the attention of the NYS Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) for their advice and counsel. She did this “in keeping with the need for Board transparency and engagement (DeMarchi).” JCOPE informed Chair DeMarchi that there was no conflict.</p>
<p>“The Chair is a major shareholder of 3GiCNYIP, a company that opposes the siting of the proposed inland port of Syracuse in Jamesville, and is trying to locate the inland Port of Syracuse in Manlius on land that 3GiCNYIP owns.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair DeMarchi has an interest in 3GiCNYIP. • 3GiCNYIP is trying to locate an inland port of Manlius on land that they own. <p>Members of the ESF Board of Trustees, including our Chair, are volunteers who devote a great deal of time and talent in the interest of the College. That any member of the trustees, including the Chair, has business interests and personal investments is the norm and to be expected. It is up to all public servants to disclose potential conflicts when they exist.</p>
<p>“President Wheeler, as ESF President, and a member of the CNY Economic Development Council can influence the siting decision.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the CNY Regional Economic Development Council (REDC). • Former President Murphy represents ESF on the REDC. • I do not have a seat on the REDC. • I am not in a position to influence the location of an inland port.

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
Other Examples of Poor Leadership:	
<p>President Wheeler has spended irresponsibly “without regard for ESF’s financial constraints, ... which represent[s] a lack of leadership by example.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending irresponsibly “without regard for ESF’s financial constraints” is a charged statement with no supporting information. <p>If this statement refers to the items covered already, I believe I addressed those points thoroughly and adequately. If there are other examples, I would value the courtesy of learning about them, and an opportunity to address each.</p>
<p>“Appointment of the current Interim Provost: Although the President informed most department heads in advance that he was making this specific appointment, most heads/ chair expressed serious concerns about his choice, but he proceeded nevertheless.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I consulted with <u>all</u> (not most) academic department chairs/heads about names to consider for appointment as Interim Provost, and about my consideration of Dr. Luzadis for that position. • Comments from chairs were mixed—some expressing support, some concerns, and some giving a mixed review. None of the concerns expressed were in my opinion disqualifying. One chair self-nominated. • I did proceed with the appointment. <p>I chose an Interim Provost who I knew would be an effective member of my team until a permanent appointment was made, and it has been the right choice for the College. I met with the Chairs to seek their view on Valerie Luzadis as a possible Interim Provost and their recommendations for alternative candidates to be considered. There were both positive and negative comments. I listened to reservations expressed, weighed them against the experience, skills, and shared vision for the future of the College that Valerie brought to the role. I also considered the direct experience I had working with her for 17 months prior to her appointment. Before my arrival, she had stepped up to the challenge of the Middle States review, demonstrating strong organizational skills and gaining an understanding of important issues and practices in the Provost office. After my arrival, she showed extraordinary initiative in working with Executive Cabinet Plus as a faculty representative to the strategic planning work. In the process, she understood and expanded upon the potential benefits to ESF of many of the core elements of my vision as well as constructively challenging and offering alternatives to others. The previous Provost also gave me three possible names to consider; Valerie was one. Thus, I decided that Valerie was my best option to keep the College advancing in the directions I have chosen until a permanent provost appointment. As second in command, the working relationship between a president and provost is critical, and ultimately the decision was mine to make. I stand by it.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“Hiring of a Chief of Staff (a new administrative position) while leaving key faculty and staff lines vacant. There also was no search process...”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many academic institutions have Chief's of Staff, including some smaller than ESF. <p>I have already commented on the rationale for, and benefits of, adding a Chief of Staff function to the Sustainability Director duties, and how I see this as a high return on investment position (to benefit the entire College). While searches should be (and are) the norm when filling positions, most institutions have provisions for a modest number of “targeted hires” when a specific skill set is available to meet institutional needs. SUNY has this provision. In addition, many new presidents coming into office turn-over prior executive level positions by replacing them. This has happened in large part at other academic institutions in this region. I did not do this. Instead, I spent my first 12 months in a deliberate mode of evaluating the capabilities of the exiting leadership team, and identifying areas I wanted to augment.</p> <p>The hire of Mark Lichtenstein was one such occasion of a targeted hire to fill a need. He was (is) highly qualified to lead campus sustainability initiatives. He brought valuable contacts in local, state, and federal agencies, indigenous communities, and international organizations. He has extensive experience leading a “boundary organization” developing numerous opportunities for faculty, researchers, and students (while at Syracuse University). Incidentally, during his tenure at Syracuse, he created student- and experiential-learning and internship opportunities for dozens of ESF students. He has been a leader in the STEM arena, and has recognized capabilities in securing and managing institutional grants, having played a leadership role with 130 federal, state, local, and private-sector grant applications to 45 distinct sponsors—securing nearly \$10 million as a principal, and playing an important role with another \$10 million in successful proposals since 2005.</p> <p>During his time at Syracuse, he created numerous opportunities for ESF scholars and researchers to benefit from sponsored funding partnerships, such as with Onondaga County's <i>Save the Rain</i> Program, which involved many faculty and students here. And, he has the skill set to track and manage complex projects and coordinate among the Executive Cabinet team. Given our need to advance a wide range of initiatives simultaneously, this was a sound investment on our leadership team.</p> <p>Mark is already creating valuable opportunities for every academic department here, and I know that Mark's commitment to us will be yet another tool that will help us generate resources to fill faculty and staff lines. It is typical that many colleges have a chief of staff and we were able to do so, with all its benefits, by adding a 60% position and capitalizing upon the unique skill set available to us through a targeted hire.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
<p>“...and the individual was hand-picked at the advice of the Chair of the ESF Board of Trustees.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Lichtenstein was not “hand-picked at the advice of the Chair of the ESF Board.” <p>Arguably, this could be one of the most egregious comments in the <i>Bill of Particulars</i>. It is based on a faulty assumption—possibly an unfounded rumor—and is a claim that discredits me, the Board Chair, and most importantly, Mark. His credentials and professionalism should stand on their own merit, and not be tainted by this allegation. He is highly respected and regarded by many within the ESF community, the local area, and beyond. The fact is, I informed the Board Chair and Board as a whole about Mark filling this role after he had been hired.</p> <p>Mark is a 1985 graduate the ESF Environmental Studies program. He has provided many opportunities for ESF faculty and students since 1990 when he hired Oswego County’s second recycling coordinator—a then ESF student. Since that time, he has hired dozens of ESF students and graduates, and created value-added opportunities for many others here. He has been involved with ESF in some manner since 1983, and knows this place well.</p> <p>Recognizing his contributions to the field he has worked in for more than 30 years, and to ESF over the years, unbeknownst to me, our Environmental Studies faculty invited him to be a Visiting Scholar during the spring of 2014. I first came to know Mark through a chance encounter and subsequent discussion at a National Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD) meeting in Westchester County (June 2014) where he was representing Syracuse University. I also interacted with him at a few alumni events that summer. Again, without my involvement, he was then invited by the Environmental Studies department to become a Visiting Instructor during the fall of 2014, and asked to teach Richard Smardon’s Community Planning and Sustainability Class. He was invited by the committee planning the <i>New American Environmentalism Symposium</i> in September 2014 to be one of the panelists. I was once again impressed by what I heard from Mark at that event. Late that semester, he was one of a few instructors here who engaged an entire class in a discussion about <i>New American Environmentalism</i>. Mark had all his students send me letters with their ideas and critiques of the concept.</p> <p>When I decided around the December 2014 / January 2015 timeframe that I wanted to add a Chief of Staff, and then when I learned that the previous sustainability director would be leaving his sustainability role in March 2015, I knew who I wanted to secure for a newly melded role. I lured Mark from a secure job at SU and he took a cut in pay because he believed in ESF, its promise and people, and his interest in supporting my vision (according to him). By April 2015, when Mark was appointed, it could be said that I had already spent nine months vetting him. Chair DeMarchi, while admittedly having known Mark since 2009, had absolutely nothing to do with my decision, but fully supported it after the fact, as did Vice Chair Matt Marko, who also has known Mark for years.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>"The lack of a search process [for the Chief of Staff] does not mesh with the President's stated goals of enhancing biodiversity at the college as discussed with the students in a recent town hall meeting on biodiversity with the Baobab Society and the college community."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am assuming the correct reference with this claim is that it is about diversity (and inclusion), not biodiversity. Yes, we do need to strive for diversity with our hires. <p>I am absolutely committed to a focus on diversity with hires. In this case, in addition to the assets noted already, Mark also has a very unique background regarding diversity issues, and this is also what attracted me to him. This includes his experience creating the first diversity committees and programs while presiding over a national NGO and also at a local organization, leading related efforts when he worked for a regional government, his work in Latin America, and as a champion of indigenous rights and values. He also traveled to India in 2002 with another friend of ESF, Ralph Singh, at his own expense to apologize on behalf of his community as a result of a hate crime committed by youth there post-9/11 (arson of a local Sikh Temple). A documentary (<i>North of 49</i>) was produced about that situation by two SU faculty members, which was subsequently broadcast on national TV, and used at places like Harvard and SU's Maxwell School to explore issues of understanding and tolerance. Mark was one of a number central figures in the film.</p> <p>He understands his current privileged identity (white, male, economic class status, title). He has been a champion of diversity and inclusion issues in his short time on campus, and I expect his important contributions in this critical need area will continue.</p>
<p>"The College's Physical Plant was down 14 custodial and trade positions when President Wheeler arrived in 2014. Since then, the Physical Plant has lost an additional six positions for a total of 20."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because I don't know what baseline is being used for the statement that custodial and trade positions are down 14, I can't speak to that. • Full Time Equivalent positions (FTEs) in Physical Plant and Facilities have actually increased by 2.0 FTE since I have been here. <p>FTEs in Physical Plant and Facilities in the fall of 2013 totaled 67.5. Presently there are 69.5 FTEs (this includes a present search for a position not filled yet).</p> <p>Our Physical Plant staff has done a spectacular job under very trying circumstances and with a reduced workforce. I deeply appreciate their dedicated service. In addition to the increase, we secured a grant from the New York Power Authority to create a new position that will both increase energy efficiency on campus and save the College more money than it costs (Energy Manager). This is the search referenced above. This is another one of those positions that I was considering creating regardless of grant funding due to the return on investment expected.</p> <p>We will continue to look for ways to invest further in our Physical Plant, including replacing aging equipment and improving our capital infrastructure, both areas we have also invested in over the last year.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“Numerous IT vacancies have been unfilled as part of Dr. Wheeler's hiring freeze.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't have a “freeze” on hiring, as has been alluded to already (we are being strategic with our hires). • We are down 1.3 FTE in IT since I started here in 2014. <p>In the fall of 2013 there were 12.3 FTE. Presently there are 11 FTE.</p> <p>We have been working with the SUNY Chief Information Officer to determine the skill set that we need to transition from full dependence on Syracuse University for IT services to a largely independent IT that is integrated with both SU and SUNY. We need the right team to migrate to Banner (the IT support system used by many other SUNY campuses), conform to most SUNY campuses, transition from many SU services over the next five years, and have the right team in place thereafter. As we replace our home-grown systems, the coding needs will change. As we develop our online teaching capacity, additional skills will be desired. We are being deliberate in defining the right skill set as IT positions are filled.</p> <p>We are also working closely with Academic Governance's Technology Committee as we navigate through all this.</p> <p>I recognize that we direly need more IT assistance and capability; as such, it is one of my highest priorities. [See the comment below about IT and biomimicry.]</p>
<p>“...during this time administrative positions not only have been met, but have increased.”</p> <p>“... numerous faculty positions ... have been unfilled as part of Dr. Wheeler's hiring freeze.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I implemented a hiring “chill,” rather than a freeze, so that essential and urgent hires could proceed. • Administrative and support positions have increased by 5.2 FTE from 2013 to now. • Filled faculty positions have gone down by 4 during this period. <p>The administrative positions include all non-faculty lines. Of this, 2.0 are in Physical Plant, and 1.0 is a Police Dispatcher. The other 2.2 FTE include an Assessment and Institutional Research Associate (1.0 FTE), Chief of Staff (0.6 FTE), Staff Associate / EOP (0.5 FTE), and a Senior Staff Assistant / Alumni (0.1).</p> <p>The faculty numbers includes tenure-track faculty and research associates only. It does not include adjuncts, visiting instructors, or temps.</p> <p>With only two years of reserves left by the time I arrived, and grave uncertainties about our future expenses for services from Syracuse University, and recognizing that our largest expenditure category is personnel, I made the decision to slow the rate of positions filled until we had a better grasp on expenses that at the time could have gone from \$4.2 million per year to as much as \$10 million.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>There is nothing a president looks forward to more than hiring faculty, and I am no exception. With a five-year certainty in our SU service costs, we are now planning to hire at least three faculty members per year for each of the next three years. Depending on how rapid progress is made on other budget matters, this number will be revisited.</p>
<p>“A Roosevelt Biomimicry Center in Newcomb NY” was named “without input from the faculty including the Director of the Roosevelt Wild Life Station or the AEC staff.”</p> <p>[The Bill of Particulars also talks about an optional approach to using the Roosevelt name.]</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biomimicry laboratory at the Newcomb campus, the data center on the Syracuse campus, nor the Graduate School have yet been named, aside from working names in the successful proposal. • I did consult with the Director of the Roosevelt Wild Life Station and AEC staff. • The points in the <i>Bill of Particulars</i> about the options for use of the Roosevelt name are generally correct. <p>I consulted with Professors Frair and Gibbs of the Roosevelt Wild Life Station regarding my concept for a biomimicry center in Newcomb and asked them what functions they would find useful in the facility for the purposes of the RWLS beyond biomimicry. They were in full agreement with my proposal of such a laboratory as an Adirondack home for the RWLS so long as that did not mean that the station would have less presence on the Syracuse campus. It does not. The facility is being designed to meet their identified needs. This was an effective mechanism to secure \$3.5 million from the State of New York, most of which will support IT improvements on both the Syracuse and Newcomb campuses. Further, I have been collaborating with Professors Frair and Gibbs in regard to the earliest data population of the data center. With extensive input and leadership from Professor Gibbs, I have officially requested permission from the DEC to host the New York State Herpetology Atlas as the first significant biodiversity database in the center.</p> <p>I greatly look forward to establishing a meeting to sit down with all the pertinent parties (e.g., Roosevelt Wild Life Station leaders, EFB faculty, AEC representatives, our Graduate School staff, Development Office staff, and others) to talk about naming options. This process has been started by the Provost’s Office.</p>
<p>“President Wheeler claims to value faculty, staff, and student input; however, it is rarely used when provided.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input by faculty, staff, and students informs decisions and priorities made by me and by all of Executive Cabinet constantly. <p>In addition to many explored already, some additional examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Unit Priorities: Such as the Full Cabinet Retreat • Academic Research Building (ARB): Faculty, staff, and students are actively engaged in facility planning

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Planning Committee: For the first time, we will have a group representing all stakeholders on campus to better guide campus infrastructure development and capital needs • Diversity and Inclusiveness: My administration is actively engaging students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders • ESF/DEC Strategy: We just held a collaborative meeting with 19 faculty members, and engaged more after that meeting to help us plan for an important meeting with the new DEC Commissioner in Albany that 10 of us attended (including two Academic Department Chairs) • Fossil Fuel Divestment: A team consisting of leaders from the Executive Cabinet, College Foundation, Communications Office, and <i>Divest ESF</i> (a student group) worked on this • Middle States Assessment: Numerous faculty and staff worked to prepare for a Middle States visit last year • Nature Inspired Design / Biomimicry: I'm working with a number of faculty, staff, and students to further inform our efforts in this area • New Budget Committee: Our Interim Provost and Vice President for Administration have formed a new committee of key staff and administrators to help better characterize, analyze, manage, and project our financial picture • Numerous Sustainability Initiatives (including STARS): This is involving many faculty, staff, and students • NYS REV Campus Challenge: Our student Sustainable Energy Club is working with other students, staff, administrators, faculty, and community partners on this initiative • Recognition of the Onondaga Nation: Our <i>Center for Native Peoples and the Environment</i> guided and advised me as we made our historic statement last fall • Strategic Planning: As noted already • SUNY Excels: Academic Council and Academic Governance were engaged • Sustainability Committee: We are forming this College-wide committee of faculty, staff, and students in the next few weeks • Syracuse University Negotiations (including the recent success with dependent tuition reimbursement): Suggestions and brainstorming around solutions by staff, administrators, and College Foundation representatives helped inform our successful strategy • Technology Initiatives: I have been working with Academic Governance's Technology Committee, including moving toward the creation of a task force to help with our online/Open Academy initiatives <p>These are just a few examples, and it does not mean that there isn't room for me to do better. Also, every suggestion made may not be adopted, because not acting on them may make more sense in the context of other issues. When this happens, I need to let our community know why the input was not acted on. Valuing our community members and creating opportunity for input and engagement is something I should never lose sight of, and I won't. For instance, I'm currently evaluating numerous shared-decision making models at other academic institutions, with the hope that we collectively (with Academic Governance, student leadership, the Board of Trustees,</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>and other staff organizations) can develop new and improved ways to share in the management, leadership, and direction-setting of this great institution.</p> <p>Having said all that, I understand that decisions must be made, and hard priorities set. I recognize this is not only about pleasing as many people as possible, it is about consulting with as many constituencies as reasonable/possible to consider a broad range of input, and then making a decision—recognizing that the decision made won't always be popular. That's what I'm called on to do as president.</p>
<p>"A detailed Chemistry Faculty report was presented to the President in January 2015 outlining how the Chemistry Department could contribute to the future of ESF was ignored."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did receive an extensive report from the Chemistry Department in January 2015. • It was not ignored. <p>I reviewed it extensively, and also asked Provost Bongarten to review it. The note included in the September 2015 Strategic Plan draft (shown earlier in this document) about the need "to make a better connection to Chemistry" was in reference to this January 2015 Chemistry Report).</p> <p>I welcome the opportunity to meet with the department to provide additional feedback on that report.</p>
<p>"Suggestions by the Executive Committee of Academic Governance to improve on a draft of the President's visioning document were ignored."</p>	<p>February 4, 2016 Update: Academic Governance Chair Kelley Donaghy gave me this document today (again). It was a document sent to me from Kelley on October 29, 2014, and offers good perspectives of the work of the visioning groups. Both Kelley and I think this is a worth document for our current Strategic Plan Steering Committee to consider. I am passing it on to Committee Chair Chris Nowak.</p>
<p>"Superficial connection to the graduate and undergraduate students at ESF as evidenced by..."</p>	<p>See my comments above about valuing people, and the examples of where I am engaging with students. There is no doubt that I can and should make more connections with our students—more frequently, and with more substance. This task and obligation should never be finished.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
<p>...student comments at a September town hall meeting that they do not know him since he seldom engages them on campus.”</p>	<p>Over the last 24 months, and in particular, the last four months (since that town hall meeting), I have continually increased my effort in this regard, better organizing my time and what I focus on. I've attended classes, and many department and College functions with students. I've opened my office to students, and have had the pleasure of numerous one-on-one and group meetings. I'm advising a graduate student this semester, and will be co-advising a new biomimicry club being formed by a student. I've been proactive with students concerned about diversity and divestment, and members of our leadership team and I meet frequently with student organization leaders. I receive many emails from students, and I respond to all. I also hosted a pizza-party at the College Residence with our Environmental Scholars Program, and I'm willing to do the same with other student groups.</p>
<p>“Angering, disenfranchising, and alienating many faculty, staff, alumni, the College Foundation, and some members of the BOT [Board of Trustees] through unilateral decision making and poor choices that further the President's agenda rather than promoting ESF's shared goals and vision.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is serious and generalized accusation that demands more specificity (unilateral decision making, poor choices, etc.). <p>If the specifics are already included as items in the rest of this <i>Bill of Particulars</i>, I have striven to adequately address them. If there are other examples, I would like to know in order to address those concerns.</p> <p>Similar to the discussion about my engagement with students above, as I've settled-into this position—during a period of many historic challenges for ESF—and come to better know the people, culture, and traditions here, I have progressively adjusted my style of leadership. True, there are examples of where I have unilaterally made decisions. Some were sound, others I would like to take back. Over the last year in particular, and the last four months specifically, a majority of decisions were vetted with many others before I make a final decision. This includes, but is not limited to, an expanded Executive Cabinet (as I noted already) with an expanded role. We now have a three-hour meeting nearly every week to work through many strategically important issues, and I meet with the Vice Presidents and other direct reports weekly; many times, daily. These are but a few mechanisms I have supported to broaden my access to new approaches, and to give me critical feedback.</p>
<p>The President is “creating a climate of fear on campus in terms of retaliation for speaking out against his agenda.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This implies that retaliation has occurred, and I am aware of none. <p>This is another claim that deeply concerns me. It is not who I am. I have never practiced retaliation in any position of authority I have ever held. I deeply believe in freedom of thought and expression and I love to engage in debates, always learning something by having my views challenged and by hearing those of others. Because the</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
	<p>College starts a new initiative does not mean that all or any particular faculty must engage with it. Bright and creative people who devote their lives to science naturally have interests that evolve. Discoveries set them off in new research directions. Opportunities draw them into others. I deeply believe in the freedom of faculty to follow their individual intellectual and research paths. Institutional initiatives are not incompatible with this freedom, and both are necessary.</p> <p>Our employees have rights, and I highly encourage anyone who has experienced any type of retaliation or discrimination to pursue the many options available to them, such as making a complaint with our Human Resources Office. Your concerns will remain confidential and will be taken seriously, as they should.</p>
<p>The President "dragged the College Foundation into wasting \$150,000 to defend itself with regard to environmental clean-up of the Masten House at the AEC. This could have been avoided by communicating directly with the College Foundation rather than over reacting to unsubstantiated claims."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those who might not know, Masten House is a retreat location owned and administered by the College Foundation just south of the High Peaks Region of the Adirondacks. It is not at the AEC (Adirondack Ecological Center), but rather, 19 miles to the northeast. • From August 2015 through January 2016, the College Foundation has spent \$165,000 on an independent environmental compliance investigation. • It is a specious argument that "this could have been avoided by commenting directly with the College Foundation." • Safety and environment compliance issues are serious and must be addressed whether or not the initial claims proves to be substantiated. <p>In mid-July 2015, unsolicited concerns were expressed to College leadership about safety and environmental compliance issues at Masten House. I took the concerns seriously and consulted with our legal counsel about the matter. At that point it was recommended that we turn the matter over to SUNY counsel in Albany. On the advice of counsel, I made a formal request for information from the College Foundation with no presumption of expenditure of funds by the Foundation. The Foundation also took the matter seriously, and their Board initiated an independent comprehensive environmental compliance assessment of the facility. Some important points from the investigation are known to me: the Masten House is safe for utilization and occupancy, and the facility is in full environmental compliance.</p>
<p>The President is suppressing "academic freedom by dictating what memberships a faculty member can and cannot hold..."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is another generalized statement that has no specifics. I don't know what it is referencing. <p>Because of the lack detail, it is hard to address this allegation. Any faculty member can engage in any membership they choose. If they wish to speak for ESF as a whole, rather than as an individual researcher, then it is expected that they will consult with and inform the person or persons responsible for that area at the College to avoid chaos and confusion.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>..in addition to restricting their ability to apply for outside research grants.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, this is another generalized statement that has no specifics. I don't know what this is referencing either. <p>Similar to what I said above, submission of grants that make commitments on behalf of the College, impose opportunity costs, or limit future College decisions must be made in a way that informs me, the Office of Research Programs, the Provost, and the appropriate office.</p>
<p>The President portrays “the campus as fearful of change when the very nature of ESF is about scholarship and research that leads to change.”</p>	<p>I acknowledge that ESF has changed many times in many ways large and small through its illustrious history, and I have complete confidence that we will make the changes needed to adapt to the rapidly changing world in which we live so that we remain as positively impactful as we can be. Change can be difficult and does not come without a measure of risk.</p>
<p>The President has “embarrassed ESF at several public events...,” including...</p>	<p>I will, like any human being, make mistakes from time to time. I will continue to improve, but I cannot commit to perfection. I am often pulled in several directions at the same time and what is perceived as a slight may be correlated with added attention to a competing issue. When this happens, I need to better explain my intentions and behavior. I would never knowingly embarrass ESF, and if I did so, I accept the blame, but assure you it is not intentional. In the spirit of teamwork, I appreciate when anyone points this out or reminds me of an oversight or lapse in awareness.</p> <p>I address the three incidents put forth below, one of which I believe was not actually related to me. What is omitted from this analysis are the literally dozens of other public events where I have represented the College—locally, and in Albany, New York City, Washington, Europe, and communities across New York State. I’m confident—through feedback I’ve received from many people attending these—that I have represented the College well.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“...failure to participate at a forum to solicit donations from Honeywell...”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, with no specific dates or other reference points, I can only assume this is an event that was held on Saturday, September 13, 2014—16 months ago—at the Honeywell Visitor’s Center on Onondaga Lake. If that is the case, this claim is true. <p>After my mistake in not attending, I talked extensively with our Board of Trustee’s Chair Vita DeMarchi who stood in for me. We discussed ways to better manage my schedule. I take responsibility for this, but subsequent to that event, I’ve had a number of very fruitful conversations with a representative of Honeywell, including when he attended the College holiday gathering at the residence several weeks ago. There are other instances where I have engaged with and supported initiatives with which Honeywell has been involved. It has been 16 months since that instance, which was during a full week of events and symposia related to my inauguration. It was nine months into my tenure here, while I was still working to find my way. Since that time I have endeavored to work better to manage my schedule, and there have been marked improvements.</p>
<p>...failure to engage alumni at a recent SAF meeting...</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once again, without specificity, I am left to reconstruct what this might be. That I can recollect right now, there have been four Society of American Foresters (SAF) events during my two years here: an alumni reception on January 23, 2014, days after my arrival here; an SAF accreditation meeting on April 10, 2014; an SAF reception on January 22, 2015; and a series of SAF meetings and reception on January 28, 2016. I don’t believe this claim is actually referring to a “recent” event. If it refers to the January 2015 event a year ago, then the claim is correct. <p>Since that time 12 months ago, I recently attended a full-day of SAF meetings last week, and gave remarks at the evening reception. I’ve heard from faculty, alumni, and others that those remarks were well-received, and put the College in a good light. While this will be a work in progress, I believe I have rectified what happened a year ago.</p>

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>...inability to respond to an alumnus's question at recent EPA regional director forum, prompting the alumnus to publicly state he will no longer make financial contributions to the college."</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The forum was with the US EPA Region 2 Administrator (October 6, 2015). • Again, this claim is vague, so I can only take a stab at an assumption regarding what it is about. <p>First, this was another value-added effort due to Mark Lichtenstein's initiative. He has long-standing engagements with the EPA and is friends with the Regional Administrator (Judith Enck). He secured her presence on campus on October 6, 2015 nearly all day, including with a meeting of the Onondaga Lake Watershed Partnership here, leaders of the Onondaga Nation, at a private meeting with me, in his class (which I attended), and at the public forum that evening. I can only speculate what this claim is about, but Mark and I did recall that he fielded a question from an audience member at the end of the event. He was focused on getting Judith out of the venue since she had been there all day, and wasn't playing close attention to the questions. He thinks the question directed to the College was: "Do you plan to install any solar panels next year?" He did answer "no." That was actually the truth, we had no plans for solar installations this year; however, more dialogue could have occurred around the question, but the situation wasn't amenable for that dialogue. Mark knows the person who asked the question well, having worked with him for years. He's with the group <i>Solarize CNY</i>. Immediately after the event, Mark approached and had a very productive conversation with the alumnus, and clarified his answer saying we are considering installations of additional solar in the longer term, but not this calendar year. We are partnering with the host organization for <i>Solarize CNY</i> on an application to the State—the REV Campus Challenge.</p>
<p>The President has "ignored repeated calls by some faculty for additional research space."</p>	<p>I am not aware of calls that have been ignored.</p> <p>Research needs have been discussed with Academic Council last summer, recently, and individually through the former and current Provost offices. This dialogue continues, including that the former Provost, Bruce Bongarten, is currently looking at research needs in Baker Hall.</p> <p>We have serious space issues on campus. Deferred maintenance of laboratories and classrooms has created some of these problems, while evolving scientific and faculty needs have rendered some older spaces very inadequate. We are working diligently to increase the capital funds available to address these issues. The new ARB will help to a limited extent and open some existing space for renovation. We are also exploring ways in which space on campus can be better and more fully utilized, and plan to continue to discuss this with Academic Council.</p> <p>If there is something about this that I have not addressed here, I would appreciate learning more about it.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
<p>“...Dr. Wheeler does not work with his faculty, department chairs or professional staff in an effective and collegial manner that has the best interest of all or the mission of the college in mind.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is another generalized statement, and read literally, includes all faculty, Chairs, and professional staff. That is simply not the case. <p>I believe I have addressed this in a number ways already, but I also want to say that this is a two-way street, particularly when it concerns some chairs. I offer the opportunity, once again—particularly with our Academic Department Chairs—for a collegial discussion about issues included here, and any others impacting our College.</p>
<p>“The direction that Dr. Wheeler wishes to take ESF as evidenced by his failed version of the Strategic Plan and endorsement of a Biomimicry Center (as two examples) is not one that is embraced by the Faculty, Department Chairs, professional staff, and alumni at ESF.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, these are generalized statements whose validity can be argued (e.g., “failed vision,” biomimicry “not embraced by the Faculty”). • The Strategic Plan has been discussed in detail already (it is not “failed”). • The biomimicry initiative actually has been supported by a number of faculty, staff, students, and alumni, as well as community, state, and national organizations.
<p>“Because of the President's continued poor judgment and leadership several alumni have verbally stated that they will reduce their financial support to the college.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are more generalized statements that are hard to respond to (“several alumni”—are these in addition to the few noted in this <i>Bill of Particulars</i>?).

Summary of Bill of Particulars Points	Responses
<p>“One alum stated that he will withhold a nearly 1 million dollar donation to ESF as long as Dr. Wheeler is the President of ESF.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without specifics, it is hard to know what this about. <p>I have spoken to Brenda Greenfield from our Development Office. She is not aware of a potential donation of this magnitude, and she and I would like to learn more about it. I also would greatly value having reasoned discourse with this individual.</p> <p>There is another part of this that bothers me. We are not large, but we are complex and diverse. ESF is much more than its sitting president. We have important history, tradition, and roles we play in society, and around the world. I don't want to imagine a potential donor who would not be able to look at the organization as a whole. I am not naive. I know donors make decisions based on things like who is in charge. My hope is that we as a society could move away from this paradigm.</p>
<p>“Given this leadership void and lack of trust in President Wheeler, his interim provost and the Chief of Staff, the campus governance body requested and was granted permission by the SUNY Chancellor to bring in an outside firm to determine if the dysfunctionality in campus leadership at ESF could be fixed.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of this statement is misleading. <p>It was not just leadership and related trust issues that an external intervention was going to explore, it was the entire campus climate, which included many factors, including shared-decision making, roles, leadership, etc. The Academic Governance Executive Chair and I were in contact with University Faculty Senate and the SUNY System, respectfully, about the issues. It was after reviewing a few other options that a <u>joint</u> request was made to the SUNY Provost by the Academic Governance Executive Chair and me.</p> <p>Also, by including only the three positions noted, the implication is that there is some type of closed-door, three-person cabal running ESF. This is far from reality, as explained already. Our nine-member Executive Cabinet and others are actively involved in nearly all major decisions; thus, this claim undervalues and undermines the critically important leadership role those individuals, and others, play.</p>

Summary of <i>Bill of Particulars</i> Points	Responses
<p>“This firm conducted initial interviews on campus and a long report that summarized the depth of the leadership problem was issued.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report addressed the concerns about campus leadership, management, and relationships. <p>The rest of the report is focused on an introduction to the process and situation, and then some recommendations for next steps for engagement. It did not just focus on problems, but outlined some positive conditions and opportunities as well. It suggested more work in three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, • Governance, and • Leadership. <p>These form the foundation of my initiative to <i>Strengthen Our Community</i>, and I look forward to your active participation as this roles out.</p>
<p>“This report was not made available to the campus and was not allowed to go public. Instead, a short one-half page, generic report was released to the campus community.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report was not made public until January 28, 2016. It was in draft form, initially dated December 10, 2015. • The report released to campus on December 15, 2015 was two pages, which accompanied an in-person presentation at the Academic Governance meeting on that day of five slides.
<p>“Funding for the mediation process was discontinued by the SUNY Chancellor such that the process has broken down.”</p>	<p><u>Fact Check:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some of us thought mediation would be a good option, this was not a mediation process, far from it. • The process has not broken down, and the entire process has not ended, as is implied by this claim. The conclusion of the initial effort was that the campus could take it from here, and that is what we are doing through the effort to Strengthen Our Community—focusing on leadership, management, and relationships.

Conclusion: Moving Forward Together

Communication is necessarily a two-way street. Everyone in a leadership position on campus is in a position to effect change, to influence College decisions and priorities, and to shape the future of ESF. Everyone in a leadership position, from directors of programs and chairs, to the vice presidents, have a special opportunity and responsibility to bring ideas forward and my door is open, as are the doors of everyone on the administrative team and Executive Cabinet.

I want the best ideas for ESF, regardless of where they come from. Proposing the four potential organizing questions and initiating new areas with potential to bring new resources and successes to the College were not only my prerogative, this was my responsibility. I do not care whether a good idea comes from a Nobel Laureate or a staff member on their first day on the job.

We will continue to *Strengthen Our Community* by improving campus leadership, management, and relationships.

Let me reiterate some of the important forward-looking points from my email message to the College community on January 28, 2016 relating to the *Strengthen Our Community* report:

- We are working with SUNY's Center for Professional Development (CPD) to create a mechanism to provide an opportunity for everyone on campus to share their concerns and possible solutions anonymously. This input will be important in determining the best next steps.
- I will be scheduling several informal meetings to brainstorm additional steps we can take to squarely address concerns. During these sessions, I will be available to answer any questions and to explain details and circumstances that were not reflected in the Sears report but which constitute significant context.
- As I mentioned already, the strategic planning committee has been making excellent progress, sharing that progress with the community through several channels, and keeping me informed of major milestones. We are on track to have a document by early May.
- Because my leadership philosophy and style differ from previous ESF administrations, as identified in the report, confusion has been expressed over roles on campus. We will work collaboratively to clarify roles.
- While it is critical that we focus on solutions to the concerns expressed, it is important, too, that we not lose sight of the incredible number and diversity of recent ESF successes and the incredibly exciting opportunities ahead of us.
- Communication issues have played a part in all the concerns expressed and have contributed to misunderstandings. It is critical that we communicate better, including myself, in greater details, and with greater frequency.

"Above all, I want to be absolutely clear that I have only one over-arching goal, one I share with all of you, that is the success of ESF. I am open to compromise, seeking common ground, and continuous personal improvement. These are all necessary and appropriate tools when keeping the best interest of the College front and center. Let's all put the success of ESF first and move forward together!"

Indeed, solutions will come much faster if everyone is willing to work together to seek them, to share their ideas about how to achieve them, and to focus on compromise, creativity, and constructive criticism. We have incredible talent at ESF and there is nothing that we cannot achieve when we all pull in one direction.

I am looking for all of us to get behind the *Strengthening Our Community* engagement and action plan. We have great things ahead of us!

Quentin Wheeler
President