



SUNY ESF Board of Trustees

October 13, 2016

Mr. John E. View
SUNY ESF UUP Chapter President
One Forest Drive
Syracuse, NY 13210

Dear Mr. View,

The ESF Board of Trustees is in receipt of the report from the third-party investigation conducted by Mr. Stan Matusz, Attorney and Counselor at Law, regarding the two allegations made by UUP in a letter to ESF Board of Trustees dated July 8, 2016. We thank you for your cooperation in the investigation and appreciate your participation and support. In summary, the investigation concluded the following:

With regard to allegation 1, stating that President Wheeler has failed to follow through on commitments he made on the nine items, the report concludes: ***“My determination is that President Wheeler has made a good faith effort to follow-through on each of the commitments made with respect to the Nine Items. It is true that completion of three major items has been delayed (SUNY salary comparison, release of narrative comments from Campus Climate Study; Provost search). While some hold Dr. Wheeler and staff personally responsible, there are legitimate and clearly communicated explanations for those delays. I do not attribute any delay to recalcitrance or lack of diligence on the part of Dr. Wheeler or his staff. Moreover, major progress has been made on all three initiatives. Accordingly, I disagree with the assessment in the July 8, 2016 letter to the Board that “little to no progress has been made to adhere to [the Nine Items]. I would further note that the majority of persons interviewed -- UUP members and administrators alike - have no concerns (or few concerns) about how the President has responded to the Nine Items. Most also believe the importance of the Nine Items has diminished with time.”***

With regard to allegation 2, stating that a “climate of fear, retaliation, and mistrust now pervades our work environment,” and the allegation that it is caused by President Wheeler, the report concludes: ***“As an objective matter, there is no evidence President Wheeler or his staff members, individually or collectively, retaliated against any UUP member for opposing concepts or issues supported by the President. Similarly, there is no evidence Dr. Wheeler or his staff intentionally sought to create a climate of fear, retaliation or mistrust at SUNY-ESF. There is a contingent of UUP members who subjectively perceive that such a climate “now pervades (their) work environment. However, it is clear that not everyone shares that perception.”***

Given the independent investigation findings, the ESF Board of Trustees continues our support for President Wheeler and the Administration. We are hopeful that the climate on campus will continue to move toward a state where all voices matter, whether for or against any particular idea. **Freedom of speech and safe space** to allow independent ideas and voices to be heard are the milestone of civilization, and certainly at an academic campus. The Board of Trustees trusts that the UUP will move forward with a **spirit of cooperation and open-mindedness** of all people's ideas and engage in constructive discourse regarding any matter that arises.

Respectfully,

Vita DeMarchi

Vita DeMarchi
Chair SUNY ESF Board of Trustees



Cc:
SUNY ESF Board of Trustees
SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher
SUNY Provost Alexander Cartwright
SUNY Faculty Senate President Peter Knuepfer
SUNY ESF Academic Governance Chair Thomas E. Amidon
UUP President Fred Kowal
UUP Executive Committee
SUNY ESF President Quentin Wheeler