



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 6, 2022 - 9:00 am
408 Baker Lab, Zoom & Livestream

MINUTES

Voting Members in Attendance:

Chair William Fisher, Vice Chair John Bartow, Trustee Daniel Fitts, Trustee Oluwole (OJ) McFoy, Trustee Steven (Rick) Fedrizzi (via Zoom), Trustee Vita DeMarchi, Trustee Silas Cochran.

Absent: Trustee Stephen Sloan, Trustee Linda Brown Robinson.

Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

Stephanie Webb (Representing DEC Commissioner, Basil Seggos), Trustee Kent Syverud, Melanie Berger (Graduate Student representative).

College Personnel/Students in Attendance:

Joanne Mahoney (*President*), Ragan Squier (*Secretary to the Board*), Kelly Berger, Nichole Dougherty, Danielle Gerhart, Brenda Greenfield, Rebecca Hoda-Kearse, Diana Jaramillo, Mark Lichtenstein, Anne Lombard, Matthew Millea, Samuel Mukasa, Gary Scott, John Stella, Shelby Zangari (graduate student).

Invited Guests:

Meg O'Connell, Allyn Family Foundation, Rose Osborne, Graduate Student Employees Union.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Fisher called the meeting of the ESF Board of Trustees to order at 9:03 am. Secretary Squier did roll call. With seven (7) voting Board members in attendance, a quorum was confirmed.

1. Consent Agenda – Chair Fisher

1.1. Approval of the Minutes of the February 25, 2022 Board Meeting

Chair Fisher invited a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2022 Board Meeting. Trustee Bartow made a motion to advance, seconded by Trustee DeMarchi. Chair Fisher called for a voice vote, with all in favor, the motion was passed unanimously.

1.2. Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review

Chair Fisher invited a motion to approve the Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review. Trustee Fitts made a motion to advance, seconded by Trustee McFoy. Chair Fisher called for a voice vote, with all in favor, the motion was passed unanimously.



1.3. Candidates for Graduation Presented for Endorsement – May and August, 2022

Chair Fisher invited a motion to approve Candidates for Graduation Presented for Endorsement – May and August, 2022. Trustee Bartow made a motion to advance, seconded by Trustee Fitts. Chair Fisher called for a voice vote, with all in favor, the motion was passed unanimously.

2. Graduate Student Fees – *Rose Osborne*

Chair Fisher noted that the Sustainable Finance Committee met on May 2nd with Jenny Frank representing the Graduate Student Employee Union and discussed many of the items on the request to be added to the agenda for the Board of Trustees meeting.

Dr. Rose Osborne, GSEU Business Agent, made the following comments:

- There is a need to change the College’s approach to graduate employees, especially if there is a goal to increase PhD’s to 25 by 2025.
- \$2K raises for graduate stipends will bring PhD’s to \$18K/year and MS to \$16K, however, the cost of living for a single adult has increased from \$26K to \$34.5K in the last 6 months.
 - Raises are being countered by inflation prior to being received.
- M. Lichtenstein reported a change to Oct. 15 for the application of late fees for graduate students.
 - GSEU is grateful, but apprehensive, noting mixed signals, and unexplained delays in the past.
 - GSEU has requested an official email announcement regarding changes/deadlines.
- Raises to stipends and adjustment to late fee deadline should be the first steps.
- Changing the approach to graduate student workers will help with graduate student retention.

Trustee Cochran commented that this is not the first time has heard the concerns noted by R. Osborne and that the concerns noted pertain to many ESF graduate students.

3. President’s Report – *Joanie Mahoney*

3.1. College Updates:

- New Chief Financial Officer, Susan Head, will begin July 1.
- In response to a request to reduce faculty shadow work:
 - College hired two new academic advisors for Environmental Biology.
 - R. Squier and Assistant Director of Human Resources, Janice O’Mara, met with the department chairs and administrative assistants to review concerns and developed some strategies to address the concerns including:
 - Standardization of performance programs.
 - Develop departmental reference manuals.
 - Provide professional development and educational opportunities, especially in regards to new computer software programs.
 - Develop Administrative Assistant cohorts that will allow for both peer-mentoring



as well as senior mentoring.

- Enrollment: Admissions redeployed staff and Financial Aid made changes to the scholarship model resulting in a record year for ESF including the following:
 - 10% increase in applications (increase from a record year in 2021).
 - Increase in number of deposits received at this time last year.
 - The number of EOP students have doubled.
 - The GPA of the incoming class has increased.
 - President Mahoney noted that the transfer student information is not yet available but that ESF hopes to see similar enrollment trends.
- Grants and support:
 - State budget was good to SUNY.
 - \$1M CAFRI grant.
 - Funding for Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions.
 - \$2.1M annual grant for a Climate Science and Career Summer Institute at the Newcomb campus.
- Fundraising: Last year was a record year, this year ESF had already exceeded the annual goal by the end of April.
 - First ESF Giving Day was an alumni effort.
 - 202 gifts, prior 1 day high of 54 (Dec 31).
 - Earth Day generated a lot of activity.
 - Alumni Association provided a matching gift of \$25K.
- Douglas Johnston was named Distinguished Service Professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees.
- 2022 SUNY Chancellor Award recipients:
 - Christopher Goonan, Student Excellence Special Award for Military Service
 - Bridget Maloney, Student Excellence
 - Emily Li, Student Excellence
 - Dr. John Farrell, Excellence in Scholarship
 - Maren King, Excellence in Faculty Service
 - Dr. Stephen Shaw, Excellence in Teaching
 - Maura Stefl, Excellence in Professional Service
- EOP Updates:
 - Alumnus Brie Hymes '21 has been accepted to the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program at SUNY Upstate, first ESF student to participate in SUNY's new pre-med initiative.
 - A SUNY grant has helped to increase EOP staffing.
 - The number of EOP students continue to increase.
- The graduate student stipends have been increased by \$2K.
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Basil Seggos, visited ESF and the Center for Sustainable Materials Management (CSMM).
 - CSMM received a \$6M grant from the DEC a couple of years ago.
 - Commissioner Seggos spoke with students, was impressed with work, wants to do more.



- Commissioner Seggos is a key supporter of ESF and research.
- ESF will host the DEC Ranger School at the Newcomb campus.
- Summer Programs: ESF is offering more courses, in-person, in field, and on main campus.
- Rankings: Princeton Review ranked ESF the #1 public school for making an impact.
- Increased Media Coverage:
 - Dr. William Powell's work on The American Chestnut featured on Good Morning America and in National Geographic.
 - President's Podcast, features faculty research, has received really good feedback.

President Mahoney summarized that enrollment is up, philanthropy is up and diversity is up. She then introduced Dr. John Stella, Vice President for Research.

3.2. Research Program Reports – John Stella

- Reviewed last 5 years expenditures, up 17% in the 3rd quarter this year.
- Increased discretionary and support of other initiatives.
- More active awards.
- Greater % federal and industry sources.
 - These have increased, larger indirect cost recovery → Good trend, we want to see these going up.
- Expenditures have been flat, expect to hit \$20M this year.
- Positive productivity trends seen in faculty and research staff.
- New search for a research director, this person will work with faculty help increase research.

Chancellor Syverud commented that he presents similar reports to the President's Update and that the report given by President Mahoney is the best report that he has seen in his nine years as Chancellor at Syracuse University. ESF is doing impressive work.

3.3. Facilities – Mark Lichtenstein

Planning tools used in regards to facilities at ESF:

- JMZ Master Plan for Main Campus and Ranger School, JMZ also developing a Satellite Properties Master Plan (scheduled to be completed by end of summer '22).
- 5-year Plan for projects, spending, etc.
- President Mahoney has requested that ESF accelerate spending, increase spending in early years.

Facilities funding sources:

- State Operation
- Critical maintenance (minor & major)
- LUMP – New initiatives, more competitive (shovel ready projects)
- Strategic Initiative
- Borrowing and Financing



Priority Projects (all currently in-progress):

- Marshall Hall
- Moon Library Café
- Bray 4th Floor HVAC system - SRM enduring a lot of noise as working is being completed while the building is occupied.

Feature future projects:

- Bray Hall renovation
- Cranberry Lake Biological Station
- Newcomb
- Energy Management
- Illick (total gut—next big project)
- Moon library, phase 2
- A new child care facility
- Ranger School
- A new building on the Syracuse Campus

“A Welcome Western Approach”:

- Serve as new entryway to campus.
- Increase campus accessibility.
- Provide safer/more comfortable area for students to wait for transportation to field sites.

ESF Landscape Architecture student, Savannah Wright, is creating different potential plans the development of D-Block.

Facilities will continue to strive for:

- LEED certification for ESF buildings.
- Will expand its focus on WELL Buildings.

The Board of Trustees Facilities Committee will be tasked with the implementation of master planning and identifying funding sources, as well as measuring the process of WELL and LEED sustainability.

4. **Chair’s Report** – *Chair Fisher*

4.1. I-81 Roundabout location – *Chair Fisher*

Chair Fisher presented the current plans for I-81 in relation to the ESF campus, noting that they are probably not finalized.

- Highway will no longer be elevated through the City.
- Business loop is proposed.
- Syracuse Housing Authority Building will be removed.
- Traffic calming measures will begin at Colvin Street with a roundabout exit at Van Buren Street.

In an effort to mitigate effects of the roundabout on Syracuse's 15th ward, as well as the University area, and pursuant to the Board of Trustees Bylaws, Chair Fisher announced the formation of the Nearby Roundabout Committee.

Chancellor Syverud noted that with all traffic from the south being routed through the roundabout, it will be imperative to focus on the route from the roundabout to campus.

4.2. Blueprint 15 – The new 15th Ward transformation plan – *Meg O'Connell*

Meg O'Connell, Executive Director of the Allyn Foundation, presented the Master Plan for the transformation of the 15th Ward that Blueprint 15, a 501C3 has been working to develop.

- Syracuse's 15th ward was the first public housing in New York State and in the country.
- Construction of I-81 in the 1950's devastated the neighborhood.
- Blueprint 15 aims to transform the 15th ward into a neighborhood of choice and has applied to HUD for a Choice Neighborhood Grant:
 - Must include mixed income housing, access to education, and access to jobs and services.
 - Plan includes rezoning of 15th Ward to better match an urban development.
 - Imperative to show community support.
 - Blueprint 15 staff have worked collaboratively with residents to develop the plan.
 - Blueprint 15 provided HUD with evidence of grant leverage in the sum of over \$1B in estate gifts, DOT, and other funds.
- Plan will require moving residents:
 - Goal to relocate residents prior to the highway (de)construction and with as little disruption as possible.
- Plan also includes:
 - Educational Opportunity Center
 - Linear park that would connect to Rensselaer Park
 - Children Rising: A learning and recreational facility.

Chancellor Syverud and President Mahoney both recognized M. O'Connell's persistence, ability in bringing people together, and record of accomplishment and noted that none of the plan would be possible without her diligence.

President Mahoney noted that ESF has expertise in environmental justice and many other related areas and encouraged Blueprint 15 to reach out for any assistance. J. Stella noted that the urban sustainability cluster hires will also be available to provide expertise.

R. Fedrizzi recommended contacting Enterprise Community Partners, noting that they provide support to help fund the gap for high performance energy in projects that are environmentally responsible and focused on health and wellness.

Chair Fisher requested M. O'Connell let the Board of Trustees know if they can assist in any way.



Break at 10:30 AM

Return from Break at 10:41 AM

5. Provost's Report – *Samuel Mukasa*

- Leadership Appointments
 - Valerie Luzadis as Interim Dean of Graduate School. (Dean Shannon retired)
 - She will serve for 1 year as a national search is conducted.
 - Margaret Bryant Interim Chair of LA (upon Douglas Johnston's retirement)
- MSCHE Reaccreditation visit:
 - Committee provides us with weaknesses, strengths, recommendations, collegial advice.
 - Collegial advice: ESF needs better assessment.
- SUNY Changes to General Education Requirements (starting fall 2023).
 - 30 credits in 7 of 9 categories:
 - Previously 5 required course areas, with a total of 7 categories needed.
 - Will now require 4 course areas, total number of categories will remain 7.
 - New requirement for DEI & Social Justice course.
- Expand Outreach Participation
 - ESF in High School: summer programming for K-12.
 - Open Academy: expansion of foundational college courses.
 - Online degree in Sustainability Management, increase enrollment.
 - Standardize Experiential-learning, including internships.
 - Partner with student clubs in Fall 2022 to teach middle school science modules.
- 3 of 9 Faculty Clusters greenlighted (will continue with cluster hiring - helps build faculty diversity & provides built-in camaraderie).
 - Water Science
 - Bioeconomy (Carbon Cluster)
 - Urban Sustainability
- New Mentor Program:
 - Cohort career advising program.
 - Multiplies network.
 - Encourages collaborative research and interdisciplinary research teams.
 - Provides opportunity to shape curricula together.
- Branding: An article highlighting the impact of SUNY in production of Forestry PhDs
 - Article noted 700 PhDs from SUNY, ESF was nowhere to be mentioned.
 - ESF is the only Forestry PhD granting program in SUNY.
 - The name and identity of the school is topic of discussion.

6. Student Reports

6.1. Undergraduate Report – *Trustees Cochran*

- Beginning in the fall, the name will be simplified to Student Association
- Mental Health Discussion takeaways:
 - Students with 4.0 GPA in high school are struggling to maintain a 2.5 GPA at ESF



- Noted that several professors do not follow a syllabus & had not updated grade books since midterms.
- Counseling services has cancelled student appointments or scheduled with different counselors.
 - Students end up going elsewhere for services
- Student Association encourages faculty and administration to be more present on campus.
 - Suggested luncheon or meet & greet
- Student Association will work to organize and make action items.
 - Will continue cultural diversity efforts on campus.
 - Continue progress around flags to represent the culture demographics on campus.

Chair Fisher thanked Trustee Cochran for his honest feedback, noting that some of it was alarming. Trustee Fitts noted that The Board of Trustees was aware of some of the issues presented and will work to address them.

6.2. Graduate Report – *Melanie Berger* (representing P. Wickersham as he graduated in December)

- Graduate Student Association had good momentum this year; presented needs, concerns, and suggested solutions.
- She has been requested to stay on as President of GSA for one more term.
- Introduced incoming Trustee, Michael Goodman.
- Michael Goodman introduced himself, noting that he became interested when his undergraduate alma mater's Board of Trustees (not ESF) made decisions that he was not pleased with.
- He recently Represented Graduate Students in Albany lobbying SUNY to include students on the SUNY Chancellor Search committee, the motion passed unanimously but SUNY denied the request.
- He recognized that ESF included students in its presidential search two years ago, noting that shared governance benefits all members of a community.
- Noted that he chose ESF for great public education and opportunity to enroll in ESF and SU MPA program.
 - Day applications were due, program was cancelled.
 - 3 students were not contacted.
- Excited to see how the College operates and to be included.

President Mahoney commented that the MPA program was on her radar and that the program has not been cancelled. ESF can transfer in 12 credits toward MPA and will receive a 40% discounted rate on remaining credits needed. ESF is working to calculate the delta of what students anticipate would be their cost for the program and the now actual cost and will then look to help find resources to fund the difference.

Trustee Fisher thanked Melanie Berger for her service as a trustee.



7. Academic Governance Report – Gary Scott

- Congratulated the Class of '22 and recognized officers and committee members, noting that AG is comprised of faculty, staff, and students.
- Noted that the Academic Affairs Committee is tasked with reviewing curricula.
 - Made a change to Withdrawals - student transcript will no longer annotate passing or failing at time of withdrawal
- AG Election results: Gary Scott was elected to serve as President for another term.
 - Will represent ESF at University Faculty Senate (generally meets 3 times per academic year for plenaries, which include SUNY Admin & UUP President).
 - Last meeting included two resolutions pertaining to:
 - The advancement of underrepresented faculty.
 - Professional development for faculty that will work within new DEI courses.
- G. Scott also reported the following discussion points from the last AG meeting:
 - The state budget was good to SUNY.
 - Spike in lack of communication from campus administration during pandemic:
 - Emergency is over, better communication requested.
 - Telecommuting policy needs updates to address support staff and aid recruiting.
 - Academic Governance is available to help with response to Middle States.
 - Academic Affairs Committee will assist with implementing new general education requirements.

8. Committee Reports

8.1. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – Trustees Brown-Robinson and Bartow

Trustee Bartow reported for the DEI Committee, noting that they met on April 14th and discussed:

- Resources & Personnel: Add tenure track position in interdisciplinary studies.
- Hardy Shirley Colloquium: Use to provide DEI training for faculty.
- Request for a more welcoming space for students of color, current space in basement of Bray.
- BOT training on implicit bias and microaggression training, possibly during a fall retreat.
 - Niki Hylton-Patterson offered this training.
- Next meeting in July at a remote campus.

8.2. Sustainable Finance – Chair Fisher

- Chair Fisher encouraged Trustees to participate in Committees.
- Graduate student fees were a bulk of the meeting.
- Accessory Instruction Fees: Growing item. Dave Dz. provided 10-year report. Cost is increasing, we pay a lot, forecasted number reduced by about 10%.
- Board and administration should continue to review Accessory Instruction.
- IT services: We select a bundle from SU, we receive some from SUNY, we have some of our own.
- Contract started with 50% discount, 2020-21 25% discount, this year 10% resulting in a \$600K increase (nearly double).
 - CFO should evaluate IT services and try to drive down, compare to other SUNYs.



9. **New Business:** No new business presented.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Fisher called for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Fitts so moved, seconded by Trustee Bartow. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nichole Dougherty.

DRAFT