



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 12 2023 - 9:00 am
408 Baker Lab, Zoom & Livestream

MINUTES

Voting Members in Attendance:

Chair William Fisher, Vice Chair John Bartow, Trustees Linda Brown-Robinson, Vita DeMarchi, Steven (Rick) Fedrizzi, Daniel Fitts, Michael Goodman, Oluwole (OJ) McFoy, Stephen Sloan (joined at 9:25 AM via Zoom).

Absent: None

Non-Voting, Ex Officio Members in Attendance:

Amanda DeSantis, representing Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado

College Personnel in Attendance:

Joanne Mahoney (*President*), Ragan Squier (*Secretary to the Board*), Kelly Berger, Nichole Dougherty, Danielle Gerhart, Brenda Greenfield, Susan Head, Rebecca Hoda-Kearse (virtual), Mark Lichtenstein, Anne Lombard, Matthew Millea, Samuel Mukasa, John Stella.

Invited Guests:

Gary Scott, Academic Governance Chair, Silas Cochran (MOSA), and Emme Christie, incoming graduate student representative.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Fisher called the meeting of the ESF Board of Trustees to order at 9:00 am. Roll call taken by Secretary Squier. With eight voting Trustees in attendance, in-person, a quorum was confirmed.

Chair Fisher acknowledged the privilege to meet on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee.

1. Consent Agenda – Chair Fisher

- 1.1. Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2022, Board Meeting
- 1.2. Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review
- 1.3. Candidates for Graduation Presented for Endorsement – May and August, 2023

Chair Fisher invited a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion made by Trustee Fedrizzi and seconded by Trustee DeMarchi. Trustee Goodman noted that he would abstain from the vote to approve the candidates for graduation as he is one of the May candidates for graduation.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve the Minutes from the December 9, 2022,



Meeting of the Board of Trustees and Personnel items. Approved unanimously.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to endorse the Candidates for Graduation. Eight in favor, one abstention, motion passed by majority vote.

2. Chair's Report – Chair Fisher

- The Governance Committee is looking for a chair.
- This is the first meeting of the year and serves as the annual meeting.
- Reviewed structure of Board of Trustees
 - This is the last meeting of the graduate student trustee. Thanked Michael Goodman, introduced/welcome Emme Christie as next graduate student representative.
 - Silas Cochran will become voting member for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- The Facilities Committee met on May 9th – thanked the three trustee committee members and two additional trustees who participated.

3. Nominating Committee's report. The Nominating Committee presented its nominations and proposed a resolution to appoint the following trustees to serve in the offices listed below for a two-year term, through the annual meeting to be held in 2025:

Board Chair: William Fisher
Vice Chair: John Bartow

Trustee DeMarchi made a motion to accept the resolution, Trustee Fitts seconded, all approved.

4. President's Report – Joanie Mahoney

4.1. State of the College Address video: President Mahoney provided the video of her State of the College Address to the Board prior to the meeting to serve as her College Update.

Chair Fisher requested an update on ESF's status with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). President Mahoney responded that MSCHE will hold their formal vote in June and plans to return to campus in July. They have provided collegial advice (recommendations) and ESF has been addressing areas of concerns, including strategic planning and assessment. Provost Mukasa has completed a draft of the Strategic Plan and hired a new Institutional Research and Assessment Coordinator.

President Mahoney reported that a presentation of the Strategic Plan will be available soon. An implementation committee is being formed to begin the implementation process in the fall.



5. Enrollment Update and Incoming Class Metrics:

5.1. K. McCarthy provided metrics on:

- First year students – more applications (SUNY initiatives – free applications) increase of 43%; impact - admitted 800 more students. 402 commitments.
- High number out-of-state applications.
- SUNY initiatives for tuition matches – can't increase tuition for these match states.
- Are we tracking diversity/etc? Yes. We are seeing increases in Hispanic and Asian students. Economic analysis is not available yet. 60% female.
- NYS Geographic (slide) 48/62 counties – how do we compare to other SUNYs?
- Diversity recruiting in Puerto Rico – faculty members, NYS and Chancellor ties to Puerto Rico.
- GPA is holding almost at 94.
- Few more seats available for EOP students.
- Transfer students – not as much info. available because of where we are in cycle. Decline in enrollment at Community Colleges. Staff have been processing applications and providing responses. Larger pool because of partnerships.
- Apply for free initiatives. 50% of deposited students, most in-state.
- Tuition match 576 offers – 58 accept. 105 tuition match only, 16 deposits tuition match only, will evaluate and decide if we will offer.
- Free applications: We have to hire additional reviewers of applications even though it negatively impacts yield.
- Test optional –SUNY suspended, no end date at this time – consistent with national trends.
- What we're watching:
 - Supreme Court Affirmative Action decisions by end of June – may no longer be able to ask about race/ethnicity. Could impact scholarships, research.
 - FAFSA updates – need-based assistance, become user friendly. Expected family contribution, expected need-based index, many changes, concerned about timing. Usually available Oct. 1, will be sometime in December. Will slow our process.
 - Online Growth – Number of high school students interested in fully online program is growing.
 - Politics and College Choice – ruled out based on politics, policies, and legal situations, state policy. 1/3 declined considering in-state because of policy.
- Ability to house students, increased number of triples in dorm to accommodate, we can't guarantee housing. Working with OCC to potentially offer housing options. ESF is limited in number of students that we can provide housing for, SU yield went up, they do not have space. Housing is a limiting factor.
- Rental stock housing is available, but dorm housing is limited.
- Any concerns of student conflict with triples? Brenda Greenfield stated – transitioning double rooms to triple went very smoothly last year, design of rooms lends well. Fewer rooming conflicts in triples than students in suites. More returning students want to remain in Centennial Hall. Rented fewer rooms to returning students this year. 77 returning students are on waitlist. Centennial triples are much nicer than traditional triple rooms at most



universities.

- Board role in multi-year enrollment plan is where the Board would be interested.

Chair Fisher welcomed Danushi Fernando, Chief Diversity Officer.

6. Strategic Planning and Academic Reorganization:

6.1. Provost Mukasa presented on the strategic planning process and highlights of the plan.

- Strategic Plan development was a recommendation from MSCHE – Standard 1
- Strategic Planning steering committee members represent a cross-section of the campus. The process includes campus presentations and feedback period prior to implementation.
- Academic units developed their strategic plan first, committee reviewed.
- Steering Committee identified three major pillars from multiple themes.
 - Developed goals within the themes of the three major pillars.
 - Identified tasks and actionable items associated with each goal.
 - Hundreds of actionable items over the 5-year plan.

Provost Mukasa also discussed opportunities to grow enrollment through the restructure of academic programs and departments and addition of micro-credentials:

- Most programs have been experiencing a decline in enrollment.
- ESF to institute new programs that will benefit ESF students and help with recruitment to increase enrollment.
- There is a need to increase visibility of our computational and quantitative sciences (will help with international recruitment).
 - Implement a new program with already existing faculty by creating a department with classes that already exist within other programs.
 - Computational classes are currently hidden within other programs –i.e.: statistics in SRM, Environmental Health is housed under the Division of Environmental Science and these two programs would be more visible if they transitioned from a division to an academic department.
- There is also a need to increase visibility of programs like environmental health, which has experienced positive enrollment trends over the last 10 years.
- There is also a need to increase non-traditional learning opportunities such as micro-credentials.
 - The Open Academy will continue to increase courses to grow these opportunities.

Adriana Espinosa noted that data science/bio-statistics programs are very valuable for State agencies (like the DEC). The programs will be very valuable for the career pipeline for students. She also questioned which program of study includes the curriculum on Environmental Justice and Social Justice at ESF. Provost Mukasa noted that these courses are in the Department of Environmental Studies and that the department faculty will be adding additional courses to fulfill the new, New York State General Education requirements.



- President Mahoney noted that DEC is one of the largest employers of ESF grads and that it would be very impactful if they would provide a statement of support related to the development of a computation sciences department as members of ESF's Academic Governance are looking for more information to support the change.
- New York has agreed to provide seed funding for a new computational sciences department.
 - Department will help grow enrollment with a balance of scholarship and research.

Trustee Bartow asked how to make quantitative science an overarching benefit for all departments. ESF will encourage all students to look at the value in quantitative science. Cluster hires will help.

Trustee Fedrizzi asked if we can encourage current faculty work in the cluster style. S. Mukasa responded that yes, some faculty, such as the bio-economy group, are exemplifying cluster work, they were self-organized and have benefited from peer and senior mentorship.

Trustee Fisher noted his support of a focus on computational science. It will be increasingly important for students to have these skills rather than relying on others that do. He also noted that redeploying resources to create new departments will help increase revenue opportunities.

A discussion of the newly proposed mission statement took place.

Trustee Fitts asked if there were any other areas that ESF needed to focus on for the Middle States accreditation process. Provost Mukasa noted that assessment was an issue and that ESF has hired a new Institutional Research and Assessment Coordinator who has helped to address this area. Once data is collected, it needs to be applied for decision making.

Trustee Fisher noted that Middle States asked about the process for reviewing and evaluating the College President. It was determined that SUNY has a formal process with a 3-year cycle and that SUNY is scheduled to evaluate President Mahoney in November 2023.

7. Student Reports

7.1. Graduate – Trustee Goodman:

- Grad Fees Issue: delay of due dates from billing implemented well in the fall, but was an issue in the spring semester.
- Engaging students: Request for an increase in student engagement in more ways, with more offices in Bray Hall planning events.
 - President Mahoney noted that it would be helpful to have a list of events that graduate students would like.
- GSA conference was a success. Thanked Graduate Office, Research Office and President Mahoney for support and involvement.
- SYR.ESF emails - GSA drafted resolution to make ESF email the primary email for students.
 - ESF is working on this with Syracuse University.
- Thanked Kim Armani and Valerie Luzadis for their work with The Graduate School – urged



administration to fill position and involve students on search committee.

- ESF/SU agreement under negotiation, requested that the agreements be communicated to MOSA and GSA.
- Concurrent degree program changes have created issues for registration between ESF and Syracuse University.
- Recognized that the student trustee position will move to the undergraduate representative for the next year.

Chair Fisher made a motion to recommend that ESF work to adopt a process that will allow ESF students, faculty, and staff the ability to use their “@esf.edu” email addresses as the preferred user ID to sign in to all IT services provided by ESF and Syracuse University. Trustee DeMarchi seconded. All approved.

7.2. Undergraduate - S. Cochran provided a recap of MOSA’s work

- Approval to implement mid-term grades
- Better relationship with SU student assembly
 - First time in 20 years all SU student assembly representation spots full
- Complete Internal Restructure: 6 E-Board members, several committees, Oakie’s Activity Council
- GCI merged with Sustainability Office – Oakie’s Green Team.
- MOSAIC collective of cultural or affinity student groups, these students face similar challenges – help with a larger voice. Allow for more planning and funding.
- Goals
 - Return of College hour discussed – hopeful for fall, if not then, spring ’24.
 - Improve Department Senator’s relationships with academic departments.

Trustee McFoy asked how MOSA is working to avoid marginalizing MOSAIC groups. MOSA will still have individual clubs with their own access to funding but partnering will help with access to manpower and other needs to put on larger events.

Trustee Brown-Robinson noted that there were clubs invited to MOSAIC and asked how many clubs there were? S. Cochran noted that all cultural infinity clubs were invited to join MOSAIC (and accepted). He reported that there are over 40 total clubs on campus.

8. Academic Governance Report

- Gary Scott congratulated graduates and thanked Academic Governance Committee Members
 - Special thank you to outgoing Secretary, Neal Abrams, announced newly elected Secretary, Kelly Watson-Collins.
- Academic Affairs Committee has been busy with the following:
 - Addressing change in SUNY General Education requirements.
 - Landscape Architecture transition from a 5-year to a 4-year BLA program.
 - Implementing the posting of mid-term grades into Banner for Fall ’23.



- SUNY Resolutions and Issues presented at University Faculty Senate plenaries seem to be similar to issues on individual campuses.

Trustee Fitts questioned if the Chancellor is receptive to issues and suggestions presented at the plenaries. G. Scott noted that there has been high chancellor turnover, but that they have seemed receptive. He also noted that a permanent SUNY Chancellor has been appointed.

9. Committee Reports:

9.1. Facilities Committees: Trustee Fedrizzi reported that the Facilities Committee held its first meeting. Director of Facilities and team reviewed:

- Facilities issues surrounding campus
- Organizational chart/staffing structure
- Planning tools and prioritization of projects
- Sources of funding
- Opportunities for Board to provide support
 - M. Lichtenstein noted that Trustee Fedrizzi has offered to travel to Construction Fund to provide insight and expertise in green building and other sustainability initiatives.

President Mahoney requested a highlight of STARS: M. Lichtenstein announced ESF has received Platinum status. Cornell was the only other school in New York state and beat ESF by .01%. President Mahoney has asked what would be needed to become the number one institution on the STARS list. ESF will need to take actions to become net carbon neutral. Two Canadian institutions scored very high. ESF will evaluate the practices that are helping Canadian schools with their high rankings.

- M. Lichtenstein noted that President Mahoney has been very supportive with personnel items related to a Facilities restructuring.
- Chair Fisher noted that the Board will be very impressed when given the opportunity to tour Marshall Hall.
- M. Lichtenstein noted that there may be an opportunity to hold the next Board of Trustees meeting in Marshall Hall.

9.2. Sustainable Finance Committee: Chair Fisher reported that the Committee has met twice, last on April 13th.

- Reviewed ESF/SU contract and associated expenses.
- Reviewed IT services.
- Review of budget planning: Starting process with more input from academic and other departments.
- Next meeting will be scheduled in June and will include a review of ESF's 2023-2024 Draft Budget, all trustees will be invited to participate.

10. New Business:

M. Goodman noted that Chancellor King has announced a new SUNY Sustainability Office and appointed Carter Strickland as the Vice President, he asked if President Mahoney has had any communication with the Chancellor related to the new Sustainability Office. President Mahoney



responded that she was on search committee. She also recommended that the Office have an advisory committee. The Office is implementing the advisory committee and has requested that President Mahoney serve on the Committee. President Mahoney has also offered ESF as a resource for the SUNY Sustainability Office, noting that we are available to share information on best practices in sustainability.

Adjournment:

Chair Fisher called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Brown-Robinson motioned to adjourn with a second by Trustee McFoy. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ragan Squier with assistance of Nichole Dougherty.

DRAFT