



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 6, 2024 – 9:45 a.m.
24 Marshall Hall & Livestream

MINUTES

Voting Members in Attendance:

Chair William Fisher, Vice Chair John Bartow, Trustee Emme Christie, Trustee Vita DeMarchi, Trustee Rick Fedrizzi, Trustee Daniel Fitts, Trustee Oluwole (OJ) McFoy, Trustee Stephen Sloan (virtual)

Absent: Trustee Linda Brown-Robinson

Non-Voting Members in Attendance:

Eden Gardner (MOSA), Adriana Espinosa (virtual)

College Personnel/Students in Attendance:

Joanne Mahoney (*President*), Ragan Squier (*Secretary to the Board*), Kelly Berger, Tyler Dorholt, Nichole Dougherty, Brenda Greenfield, Susan Head, Matt Millea, Mark Lichtenstein, Samuel Mukasa, Lindi Quackenbush, Baylee Woods, Aaron Rounds, Ruth Yanai, Michele McNeill (UUP), Aley O'Mara (UUP), Matt Smith (UUP/AG), Sarah Yurka (UUP), Daniel Beauchamp, Brianna El-Qahir, Abbey Leibert, Daniel Vera.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Fisher called the meeting of the ESF Board of Trustees to order at 9:50 a.m. Secretary Squier took roll call and confirmed a quorum with seven voting trustees in attendance in person.

1. Consent Agenda – Chair Fisher presented the consent agenda items as follows:

- Approval of the Minutes of the September 20, 2024 Board Meeting.
- Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review.
- Candidates for Graduation Presented for Endorsement.

Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to approve the consent agenda items. Trustee McFoy seconded, all approved.

2. Chair's Report – *Chair Fisher*

- Election of Board Officers:
 - Trustee Fitts proposed a resolution on behalf of the Nominating Committee that will appoint officers as follows, effective at the annual meeting on February 28, 2025:



- Chair, John Bartow
- Vice Chair, Rick Fedrizzi
- Secretary, Mark Lichtenstein

Trustee Fitts motioned to approve the resolution as presented. Trustee McFoy seconded, all approved.

President Mahoney thanked Ragan for serving as Board Secretary.

- Chair Fisher reported for the Nearby Roundabout Committee: Noted little to update.
 - Contract five dealing with Colvin, Van Buren, Burt Street area has not been awarded. Work was scheduled to take place Mid-2024 – Mid-2027.
 - M. Lichtenstein noted ESF's contact for the I-81 project is TeNesha Murphy and that ESF will stay engaged.
 - ESF has advocated for signage for ESF and presented the idea of a land bridge. ESF is also coordinating with Pete Sala from SU.

3. President's Report

Fall Semester Highlights:

- NYC Climate Week: Aspen Institute – higher ed climate action plan, how to communicate the plan, PBS – include in current programming. NYTimes hosted speakers including Biden's National Climate Advisor, CEO of Patagonia, and Jane Goodall.
- Alumni Weekend: Highlights included Senior reunion dinner, athletic hall of fame induction.
- Feinstone Awards: Honored Dave Gerber, Sr. VP of Arcadis and Lauren Kochian, President of The MOST.
- Multi-day Conference co-hosted by the Center for Sustainable Materials Management, Northeast Recycling Council, and Syracuse University's Center for Sustainable Community Solutions.
- UUP Meeting November 1st – UUP provided valuable feedback, identified areas to work on.
- QWL Committee reformed – Welcome event, Nichole Dougherty and Susan Fassler are co-chairs. The committee focuses on building community.
- National Championship: ESF Cross Country team won another national championship.
- SOMOS in Puerto Rico – Legislative panels. Trustee DeMarchi supported student travel.
- Robin Kimmerer new book, The Serviceberry, released on 11/19 – President Mahoney interviewed on Podcast, publisher asked for book on economy.

Auxiliary Services Corporation:

- Parking Revenue: \$22,360 – six football events and one concert.
- Revenue is helping to support and fund Women's caucus, QWL, graduate student events.
- Basketball is difficult, weekdays make it difficult with classes and the need for student and employee parking.

Fall 2024 enrollment:

- Enrolment is growing in all areas, first-year, transfer, and graduate students, 1854 total enrollment.
- The College Foundation is interested in building a new dorm to support growing enrollment.
- Retention is at 87%, first year good, out years need attention.



- National Institute for Student Success (NISS) assisting to develop and plan specific to ESF – specific recommendation to appoint a Chief Data Officer to coordinate student success data.
 - Appointed Yoshi Guy as Chief information data officer – coordinate student success data from various sources.
 - Compared to University Centers, we are low. ESF is the smallest R2 in the country.
- Review of budget and stabilization plan, on target, reviewed in finance committee.
- OTPS: Manage, diligent on spending. Meeting year 1 will help with the following years. Currently scheduled for a standing meeting with SUNY along with multiple additional meetings to review finances each week.
 - Stabilization plan focused on accessory instruction fee during the first year.
 - Surpassing \$1.1M savings budgeted from changes to accessory instruction.
 - Noted that Erin Tochelli, and advisors, assisted to help students find elective courses at ESF rather than paying a fee for electives at Syracuse University.

Stabilization Plan Priorities

- Maintain OTPS Spending Discipline
- Track salary savings and position vacancies
- Balance graduate program budget: Currently, ESF offers full tuition waivers and stipends, ESF cannot afford to do this, but does rely on graduate students for teaching.
- Optimize scholarship spend
- Increase years 2-4 retention
- Achieve 12% yield on 2025 first year applicants (452 FYS)
- Increase Marketing Spend – Out of State

Announced changes in Executive Leadership:

- Lindi Quackenbush serving as Interim Provost, Chief Academic Officer, and VPR.
- Heather Engelman serving as Interim CDO, search almost complete.
- Matt Millea will serve as Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives.

December Commencement:

- Last December Commencement. MOSA passed a resolution to continue.
 - Noted that Binghamton stopped holding December commencement 10 years ago.
 - ESF don't have a campus space, budget is an issue.

Looking Forward:

- ESF will hold an In-Service Day for faculty and staff on Thursday, Jan. 9th – fall feedback was good.
- President Mahoney thanked Provost Mukasa for all that he accomplished while at ESF, citing the Strategic Plan, Middle States Assessment, and many other initiatives.

R. Fedrizzi noted that the enrollment trends looked good, asked about a ceiling for too many applications and enrollments. K. McCarthy noted that applications are not an issue, infrastructure is an issue for enrollment, need to accept additional students in the right departments. ESF will also need additional housing with increased enrollment. ESF is not at its highest enrollment but is getting close.

4. Puerto Rico Initiative – Mark Lichtenstein

Reviewed purpose of renet trip: Multi-layered:



- Lead a legislative panel at the SOMOS Conference.
- Support SUNY initiatives in Puerto Rico.
- Develop partnerships around ecosystem restoration, environmental health, and regenerative communities.
- Continue environmental protection initiatives on Vieques that have involved the Departments of Environmental Biology and Landscape Architecture.
- Provide outreach in the K-12 schools in Vieques, participate in roundtable on advancing educational opportunities in Vieques.
- Promote ESF educational and employment opportunities.
- Create additional opportunities for ESF academic programs.
- Provide students with an experiential learning environment and expose them to multiple storytelling opportunities with a goal of publishing with our partners at Planet Forward.
- Make a positive difference.

Thanked Trustee DeMarchi for underwriting the travel for the students and supporting the digital storytelling studio.

Reviewed ESF faculty and staff that been involved in Puerto Rico initiatives:

- Acorns 2 Action
- Environmental Biology: Josh Drew, Charlie Hall, Myrna Hall, Nancy Harris, Whitney Lash-Marshall, Dave Murphy, and others.
- Environmental Science: Ann Moore
- Environmental Studies: Kaira Fuentes, Valerie Luzadis, Andrea Parker
- International Education: Jule Findlay
- Landscape Architecture: Margaret Bryant and Ellen White
- Office of Communications and Marketing and The Digital Storytelling Studio: Tyler Dorholt
- President's Office: Nichole Dougherty, Mark Lichtenstein, President Mahoney, Baylee Woods
- Sustainable Resources Management: Brauilo Quinetero

Next Steps/Opportunities:

- ESF in Vieques: Josh Drew spring break trip with course in March 2025, Landscape Architecture off-campus program scheduled for fall 2025.
- MOU for SUNY and University of Puerto Rico: Identify additional opportunities for partnerships.
- Enhance educational opportunities and develop pipelines.
- Vieques is a superfund site being cleaned up by the SU Navy, then land is turned over to the Fish and Wildlife Service, opportunities for post docs.
- ESF Alumni is working on the Puerto Rico Energy Grid.

5. Student Reports:

5.1. Graduate Student Association – Trustee Christie

- Reviewed structure and changes as some officers are graduating in December.
- Noted communications issues at many levels, collected information that will be shared.
- Organizing a town hall, scheduled for January 21 or 22.
- GSA Day Success – thanked President Mahoney and ASC for funding.
 - Would like to bring keynote speaker back for faculty and administration



The Board discussed holding until the annual meeting in February for a vote on the proposed GSA Day resolution to allow review by Administration and Counsel. Trustee Christie noted that the resolution had been endorsed by Academic Governance. After further discussion, the proposed resolution was amended to recognize GSA day on an institutional calendar, rather than the academic calendar.

Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to recommend administration recognize November 7th GSA Day and include it on the ESF institutional calendar. Trustee DeMarchi seconded, all approved.

5.2. MOSA - Eden Gardner

- 17 news senators, record attendance at MOSA meetings and events
- UPD meetings and campus safety walk.
- Instituted athletics liaison and Syracuse University Student Association liaison.
- December Commencement – noted that students want to continue holding December event.
- Held a Town Hall Quorum: President Mahoney got to hear directly from students, comprehensive, encourage more forums for this kind of communication.
- SUNY Student Assembly Conference: Eden Gardner received the Spirit of SUNY SA Award.
- Food Pantry success and new partnerships:
 - Thanked Trustee Fedrizzi for providing a refrigerator.
 - Thanked Trustee Brown-Robinson for support.
 - Partnering with Office of Sustainability for a food pantry refill.
 - Looking to expand food and non-food items.
 - 24/7 Access increased use, eighty-seven unique users.

Reviewed upcoming events:

- December Soiree
- MOSAIC Fest March 22
- Earth Week

Noted opportunity to support sustainability, encouraged ESF to switch default browser to Ecosia, an eco-friendly browser that uses 100% of profits for climate action. Will also advocate for use of Ecosia SUNY wide.

6. Academic Governance Report – Aaron Rounds, Academic Governance Co-Chair.

- Looking forward to working Dr. Quackenbush as interim provost, disappointed that decision was made without consultation with Academic Governance.
- Concerns around moving academic units from academic to administrative reporting structure.
- Reported work of Academic Governance Committees:
 - Academic Affairs Committee:
 - Three new policies: Posthumous degree policy, grade forgiveness policy, micro-credentials policy.
 - Course changes: One new minor (plant science), five new course proposals/revisions, three course deactivations.
 - Faculty and Staff Advancement Committee:



- Working on recommendations for programmatic review.
- Online Programs Committee:
 - Four Charges: Set strategic direction, ensure quality and accessibility, foster collaboration and innovation, promotion of online programs.
- Congratulated December graduates. Noted the Academic Governance is disappointed that December ceremony will be discontinued.

7. New Business:

Trustee DeMarchi reminded the Board that all Trustees are members of the SUNY Association of Council members and Trustees (ACT). ACT is working to increase participation back to pre-covid levels, will be meeting quarterly. ACT works to connect Trustees from different campuses and help familiarize Trustees with SUNY-wide initiatives that impact their campuses. ACT's most recent meeting focused on the SUNY Sustainability Plan, Trustees should receive email invitations. Trustee DeMarchi will also share with ESF Board secretary. Encouraged participation with ACT.

Trustee Christie reminded the Board that there was an endorsement for single login for IT systems. Noted bigger Issues with anonymity of forms and surveys, issues are impacting course evaluations. M. Millea noted that he was aware of an issue with forms, he was aware of an issue from a year ago that was resolved and had not heard of any continuing issues, will address with IT. President Mahoney noted that SU changed leadership in IT and paused commitment for syr.edu single login, noting that it needed further security review. President Mahoney will discuss at next meeting with Chancellor Syverud.

Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to adjourn, Trustee Christie seconded, Meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nichole Dougherty.