



State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 22, 2022 - 9:00 am
408 Baker Lab, Zoom & Livestream

MINUTES

Trustees present:

William Fisher (Chair), John Bartow (Vice Chair), Daniel Fitts, OJ McFoy, Rick Fedrizzi, Vita DeMarchi (via Zoom), and Michael Goodman.

Not present: Stephen Sloan and Linda Brown Robinson.

Ex-Officio/representatives: Matthew Marko, Trustee Emeritus representing NYS DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos; Amanda DeSantis (via Zoom) representing NYS Lieutenant Governor, Antonio Delgado.

Others present:

Joanne Mahoney, President; Ragan Squier, Secretary to the Board and Executive Director for Administration; Kelly Berger, Chief Campus Counsel; Nichole Dougherty, Administrative Assistant; Danielle Gerhart, Executive Director of Communications and Marketing (virtual); Brenda Greenfield, Assistant VP for Development and Executive Director of the ESF College Foundation (virtual); Susan Head, CFO; Rebecca Hoda-Kearse, Executive People Officer; Mark Lichtenstein, Executive Operating Officer; Anne Lombard, Executive Student Affairs Officer and Dean of Student Affairs; Matthew Millea, Samuel Mukasa, Executive Vice President and Provost; John Stella, Vice President for Research; Gary Scott, Executive Chair, Academic Governance; and Lawrence Zicari, MOSA representative.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Fisher called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Secretary Squier called the roll of members, at which time Chair Fisher declared a quorum.

1. Consent Agenda – Chair Fisher

- 1.1. Approval of the Minutes of the May 6, 2022, Board Meeting
- 1.2. Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review

The consent agenda items were put forth. Chair Fisher invited a motion to approve. Upon motion by Trustee Fedrizzi, seconded by Trustee McFoy, Chair Fisher declared the consent agenda approved as presented.

2. Chairs Report

Chair Fisher noted that he would be reporting regarding two committees that have not met since the May 6th meeting.



- Nearby Round-A-Bout Committee:
 - Chair Fisher met with NYS DOT I-81 Project Director, Mark Burchett, in late May. He provided a timeline of all phases of the I-81 project. ESF will not be impacted until the contract phase five (scheduled late 2023-2025).
 - Project Director is willing to meet with Nearby Round-A-Bout Committee. Chair Fisher proposed a meeting of the Nearby Round-A-Bout Committee this fall and made a call for committee members. M. Marko volunteered to serve on the committee
- Sustainable Finance Committee:
 - New CFO, Susan Head, started on July 1st. ESF will see a new budget process. Chair Fisher expects to convene a meeting of the Sustainable Finance Committee prior to the next full Board meeting.
- Nomination Committee:
 - Upon discussion of the nomination process, Chair Fisher established a nominations task force comprised of Trustee Fitts, Trustee DeMarchi and M. Marko.

3. President's Report – Joanie Mahoney

3.1. College Updates:

- Enrollment
 - Fall 2022:
 - 2,467 first-year application – 10% increase from 2021 (both years were record breakers for first-year applications).
 - Results: 19 EOP, 378 first year, 170 transfers, 96 graduate students, 48 Ranger School students.
 - Continue to analyze recruitment and focus on diversity.
 - Adjusting our recruitment approach as the candidate pool decreases.
 - New bridge program with OCC
 - Scholarship model was changed to support high achievers.
- Student Affairs
 - Class of 2026 orientation showcased a lot of enthusiasm. A. Lombard and M. Millea received great feedback from students.
 - New student communication has been revamped: Countdown to arrival newsletter; Zoom sessions prior to arrival; and new social media manager, Zach Snyder, has grown social media presence across all platforms.
 - Engage Platform: First full year using Engage which allows us to view data and track student involvement.
 - Career Services now has its own ESF branded Handshake platform (previously branded as Syracuse University)
 - Food Service is no longer managed by Morrisville Auxiliary Corp., we are now working with Syracuse University.
 - Partnership with SU will provide purchasing savings via volume discount.
 - ESF opened the new Moon Café.
 - ESF and SU students dining services are now linked, students can use dining facilities at



either institution.

- Research
 - Direct and indirect expenditures have both increased in 2022, 14% & 21% respectively. The number of awards has increased by 19%. Research revenue is 21% greater than last year. Number of active projects and proposals has increased by 20%. We have more projects than any time in the last 10 years. Cluster hires aim to help increase collaborative research projects. Research Development Director begins soon. Funded by SUNY for five years. Growth in student research employees: 139 undergraduates, 184 graduate.
- Accreditation
 - Middle States—response to collegial advice due 3/1/23, final report due in June.
 - Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, Assistant Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, has left ESF; John Turbeville and John Wagner will co-lead ESF through the rest of the Middle States accreditation process.
- Community Engagement: ESF has been active in removing the hidden from our hidden gem status.
 - Hosted NYS officials: Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado, Senator Rachel May, Assemblyman William Magnarelli, and Assemblyman Al Stirpe met with ESF's EOP students.
 - Partnered with the Rockefeller Institute to host day-long conference on Municipal Green Policy Solutions.
 - Local government learned strategies for implementing green policy.
 - Chancellor Stanley attended and provided a welcome.
 - DEC Commissioner Seggos provided the keynote address and continues to highly support of ESF.
 - ESF & The MOST: ESF has stepped in to continue the middle school science camp formerly hosted in partnership with Honeywell. This is an opportunity to introduce middle school students interested in science to ESF.
 - ESF therapeutic horticulture at the VA Hospital: Dr. Lee Newman and Dan Collins have been involved in improving health and well-being at the VA through therapeutic horticulture for 10 years.
 - ESF at the New York State Fair: ESF faculty and staff provided hands-on science demonstration and outreach activities. Brandon Murphy, Open Academy, was featured on ABC News.
 - Syracuse Police's Youth Athletic Activities League on the ESF campus: Program for Syracuse City youth, age 6-13, provided these children with first exposure to ESF. Mayor Ben Walsh was on campus participating in events.
- Facilities: Marshall Hall is on schedule for substantial completion by January 9, 2023. January 9th will begin the 90-day window to complete punch list items.
- WELL Equity Rating: WELL has introduced an equity rating that specifically addressed the needs and priorities of marginalized people and work and school. ESF will be an early adopter. It will help guide us as we deliberately prioritize equity at ESF.
- New Buses: A member of the facilities staff obtained free buses from the SUNY surplus. These buses represent a \$750,000 savings for ESF. We have hired one bus driver to provide



transportation for field trips and athletic programs. ESF College Foundation will look for a donor to help with wraps for ESF branding on the buses.

- ESF College Foundation: Successful fiscal year and continues to provide support for the College.
 - Secured outside foundation support from Templeton and the Nature Conservancy; fundraising and scholarship support are both up; donors show a strong interest in ESF's academic programs; hosted Dale Travis Lecture Series with speaker, Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer to a sold-out Gateway Center on September 21st; Feinstone Environmental Awards, honoring Kenneth Lynch and Steve Breen, scheduled for October 20th in the Gateway Center.
- ESF People
 - Chief Diversity Officer search to begin.
 - A national search for Chief of University Police resulted in hiring ESF's Robert Dugan.
 - Quality Work Life Committee was rebooted to bring back campus camaraderie now that most employees are back to work in person.
 - ESF is working to develop a new schedule that will incorporate more workplace flexibility.
 - Flexibility is needed to help keep us competitive in faculty/staff recruitment.
- Communications and Marketing
 - Media coverage included: Corpse Flower, move in day, American Chestnut, and Chittenango Snail project. Lots of coverage from local and national news outlets: New York Times, CNBC, The Washington Post, CNYCentral, Syracuse.com, WSYR, and Spectrum News.
 - Rankings: ESF continues to receive good rankings:
 - U.S. News & World Report: Top public schools, best value schools, best undergraduate engineering program, top performers on social mobility.
 - AASHE Sustainable Campus Index: #1 in Sustainability Curriculum, top performer in Public Engagement, top performer in water, # 8 in doctoral granting institutions.

Trustee Bartow noted that he worked on the First-year Advisory Task Force and would appreciate continued reports on the first-year experience and retention of students. It was noted that several recommendations from the first-year task force have been implemented, including hiring professional advisors. ESF is currently interviewing finalists for a data manager, this person should aid the college by providing better data, including data related to student retention.

- M. Millea offered to present at the next meeting to refresh the Board on programming taking place as a result of the first-year task force.

President Mahoney asked Trustee Bartow to thank the DEI committee, noting that they have helped elevate the focus of diversity at ESF.

4. CFO Report

- 4.1. S. Head introduced herself and her approach to ESF's finances, noting that she has 15 years of SUNY experience and has been working to understand the needs of ESF. She sees her role as a facilitator who will work collaboratively to help departments get the funding that they need to operate.



Trustee Bartow noted that the Governor has directed every state agency to have a sustainability officer in place and that ESF could be positioned to provide training for these positions.

- President Mahoney would like to reach out to the State to offer this service. Trustee Bartow noted that NYSERDA may be charged with facilitating compliance at State agencies.

Chair Fisher asked if S. Head has reviewed the Satellite Properties Master Plan and whether it will be presented to the Sustainable Finance Committee for further discussion.

- S. Head noted that the study had not yet been finalized. She will search for opportunities that can be discussed.
- M. Lichtenstein will provide an update on the Satellite Properties Master Plan at the next meeting.
- President Mahoney noted that she viewed the satellite properties as a business but has recognized that we do not view our other academic programs in the same way.
 - It was noted that satellite properties are integral parts of their communities.
 - Properties provide ancillary benefit to the State and to ESF.
 - Satellite campuses help with retention: provide retreat space for students, faculty, and staff.
 - Satellite campuses hosted DEC Ranger camp, which generated revenue, and further strengthened our ESF/DEC partnership.

Chair Fisher asked if it is possible to view all funds (including research dollars, College Foundation funds, etc.) not just state operating funds. Sustainable Finance Committee would like to see the big picture. S. Head will provide a Campus Income Statement that includes all information, including revenue and off-sets.

President Mahoney commented that the budget process is still off-cycle (The SUNY fiscal year begins July 1, budget submitted in September). S. head confirmed but noted that the State operating budget is easy to predict. President Mahoney noted that by May 1st we know where the enrollment numbers stand and can calculate tuition revenue.

- Objectives as we move forward:
 - New revenue sources
 - Identify non-traditional sources.
 - Focus on a long-term plan to identify sources that can support growth and institutional advancement.
 - Consider the impact of increased enrollments.
 - Cost-Cutting (Permanent vs Temporary)
 - Identify duplication of expenditures – opportunity for immediate savings.
 - Include review and analysis in the budget process.
 - Identify where we are spending our money and make sure it matches our goals.
 - Long term savings through strategic initiatives.



- Improvements/Efficiencies
 - Use Internal Controls to develop policies and procedures.
 - Use Key Performance Indicators.
 - Long-term planning (assessment for non-instructional).

Trustee Fisher noted the costs associated with Accessory Instruction at Syracuse University, as well as the purchase of our IT services from multiple sources, and requested a review of the finances associated with these items and whether there are other opportunities to deliver each of these services. Trustee Fisher also requested a review of student registration for courses at Syracuse University and how to integrate the information on our registration system to make sure that students are not going over their allotment of courses that can be taken at Syracuse University. S. Head noted that there could be a simple solution of having ESF students register through our own system and providing Syracuse University with that information.

Trustee Goodman noted that when considering making changes to registration for ESF courses, we need to keep it easy for Syracuse University students to register for ESF courses.

5. Provost's Report – Samuel Mukasa

- Academic Side of ESF: Retention of faculty will be increasingly challenging.
- New Faculty: Hired eight new faculty members, would like to increase ethnic diversity of faculty members.
- Cluster Hire Update:
 - Four clusters: Water Science, Bioeconomy, Indigenous Environmental Science, Urban Sustainability.
 - Five faculty members hired as part of clusters; one has deferred.
 - New Research Development Director has been hired, will help early career faculty launch their research career and increase collaborative research.
- Strategic Planning Update:
 - Review of the current ESF: including demographics (both faculty and students), enrollment trends, and other data of the present ESF.
 - Satellite property programs are very consistent, online programs continue to grow.
 - Individual departments have been tasked with updating their vision and mission.
 - Will include all components of the Strategic Planning Process.
 - All components last incorporated in the Vision 2020 Plan (2000-2003).
 - Will include opportunity for community input.
 - Will also include a review of branding and name recognition
 - Timeline for strategic planning: July 2022 → May 2023

6. Student Reports:

- Graduate – Trustee Goodman:
 - Announced new President of GSA, Emme Christie.
 - Reported transportation issues for many international students. Summer/winter break 5:00



- 8:00 P.M.
 - President Mahoney noted this was the first she has been made aware and thanked Trustee Goodman; she will address this issue.
- SUNY-wide student assembly will be hosted in Syracuse. (11/18 – 11/20)
 - GSA & MOSA are hopeful to host at ESF and showcase sustainability at ESF as past conferences have generated a lot of waste.
 - Expected attendance: spring attendance was 150, pre-covid numbers of up to 400.
 - Trustee Goodman to follow up with R. Squier.
- Thanked President Mahoney for assistance with MPA concurrent degree program with Syracuse’s Maxwell School.
 - President Mahoney noted that ESF advertised this program where students spend a full year at ESF and then apply to Syracuse University. SU had not made ESF aware that they would no longer provide this program and the students on the first year of the program at ESF were left with uncertainty.
 - President Mahoney noted that the program is likely to continue but details have not been finalized, she was able to assist current students with support from the ESF College Foundation.
- Graduate student fees issue has been resolved by extending billing due date of 10/15.
- Undergraduate – Lawrence Zicari
 - Announced student association rebrand to MOSA (Might Oak Student Assembly). Membership has doubled - increased engagement and revitalization of campus life.
 - Engage is fully rolled out, helping with event and club advertisement.
 - Trailhead and Moon Café: Recognized that Trailhead is work in progress, would like more dietary and allergy conscious menu items.
 - MOSA has taken action to follow up with Mental Health Discussion: provide booklets to first-year students and make aware of resources for students.

Chair Fisher: Thanked the students for reports, reminded them of the process of adding items to the meeting agenda, should they ever have specific action items to address.

President Mahoney acknowledged Dean Lombard and the Student Affairs staff for addressing past student concerns.

M. Lichtenstein noted that along with the increase in activity, Acorns 2 Action have been meeting and are working to develop a plan to provide disaster relief assistance to Puerto Rico in response to hurricane Fiona. He noted the importance to assist Puerto Rico as they do not receive assistance from the federal government.

7. AG Chair Report:

- Syracuse City School District (SCSD) students receive free tuition to any SUNY or SU. SUNY covers just tuition; SU provides additional funding to cover \$1,000 in student fees and a \$600 book allowance.



- SUNY General Education Requirements: Academic Affairs Committee is working to implement the changes by the fall 2023 deadline.
- SUNY is promoting the use of micro-credentials
- Promotion and tenure policy is under review.
- IT policies and infrastructure: ESF will continue to use Blackboard (aligns with Syracuse University).
- Middle States responses.
- AG meetings are on the college calendar; all are welcome to attend.

8. Committee Reports:

- Trustee Fedrizzi noted that he met with facilities team managers and Susan Head on 9/14.
 - Organizational meeting to gain understanding – attendees reviewed the approach to their work. Reviewed the multiple dimensions of ESF facilities: SUNY Umbrella, remote campuses, lands, grounds, energy, health and wellness, climate, etc.
 - Will hold a formal meeting and provide a report back to the Board.

Chair Fisher noted that the Board is looking for long-term planning and that a robust facilities plan will be beneficial. ESF will need to lead SUNY in renewable energy. Chair Fedrizzi noted that the role of the Board committee is to support people in execution of their job by bringing critical information back to full Board.

Chair Fisher acknowledged the privilege of meeting in a college facility located in the ancestral lands of the Onondaga Nation, the keeper of the fire for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, whose intellectual traditions include the original philosophy and practice of environmental stewardship.

Chair Fisher invited a motion to adjourn. Motion by Trustee Fitts, seconded by Trustee Fedrizzi. All Approved. Chair Fisher declared the resolution approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:03 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nichole Dougherty.