



State University of New York  
College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
September 18, 2025 – 12:00 p.m.  
24 Marshall Hall & Livestream

## MINUTES

### **Voting Members in Attendance:**

Chair John Bartow, Vice Chair Rick Fedrizzi, Trustee Vita DeMarchi, Trustee Daniel Fitts, Trustee Stephen Sloan (virtual), Trustee Daniel Vera.

**Absent:** Trustee Linda Brown-Robinson.

### **Non-Voting Members in Attendance:**

Emily Friden, Dereth Glance.

### **College Personnel/Students/Public in Attendance:**

Nichole Dougherty, Emily Friden, Brenda Greenfield, Joanie Mahoney, Kitty McCarthy, Matt Millea, Lindi Quackenbush, Aaron Rounds, Ragan Squier, Tom Squires, Seth Thompson, Jennifer Webb, Baylee Woods, Ruth Yanai. Mark Driscoll, Sue Fassler, Jennifer Goff, Katherine Hobbs, Sabrina Horrack, Jason Kohlbrenner, Matthew Krush, Michele McNeill, Lee Newman, Liz Parsons, Leslie Rutkowski, Adam Scalisi, Matt Smith, Bryan Smith, Steve Teale, Erin Tochelli, Sarah Yurka. Robert MacGregor, Rustan Petrela, and Jill Rahn. Members of the ESF Athletic teams: Asher Anderson, Erica Angelillo, Joe Arnold, Tee Atwater, Noah Beakes, Luke Betterncourt, Robbie Bettencourt, Aidan Braver, Hayden Bregg, Chase Birdsall, Kyle Brombos, Kimora Brown, Paige Cadden, Heather Cecco, Teagan Costello, Lydia Culbert, Matt D'Adderio, Mason Darsney, Ethan Debucar, Evan Duzzanco, Riley Fowler, Archie Fowler, Ninette Fults, Christobal Garcia, Madison Giraldo, Justin Grocato, Shaye Gruenberg-Thieling, Hyle Hebler, Kyle Held, Ash Herrera, Katie Hite, Dana Ingersoll Jr, Amenji Islam, Vienna Kuhn, Sophia McCord, Jordan McGuire, Gabrielle McKenzie, Ben McPherson, Luke Myers, Joey Neuscheler, Gabriel Oakley, Remy O'Keefe, Margaret Ryan, Sophia Ryan, Sydney Schug, Robert Slater, Evan Snyder, Connor Stach, Jenna Stiles, Sam Tymeson, Adam Usselman, Aaron Walker, Aidan Watts, Eric Wilson, Mary Woodruff. Representing Senator Chris Ryan, Spencer Berg.

### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome**

Chair Bartow called the meeting of the ESF Board of Trustees to order at 12:00 p.m. Secretary Lichtenstein took roll call and confirmed a quorum with five voting trustees in attendance in person and one voting trustee participating from a location shared with the public in advance.



2. **Approval of Agenda** – Chair Bartow noted that agenda item #7, the Chief Information Officer Update would be removed from the agenda. Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to approve the updated agenda. Trustee Fitts seconded, all approved.

3. **Consent Agenda** – Chair Bartow presented the consent agenda items as follows:

- Approval of the Minutes of the May 9, 2025, Board Meeting.
- Personnel Actions Presented for Board Review.

D. Glance noted the misspelling of her name on page 3 of the minutes and requested an amendment to make the correction. Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Trustee Fitts seconded. All approved.

4. **Chair's Report** – *Chair Bartow*

- In Contact with President Mahoney often. Moving targets on stabilization plan. Has been challenging, Board would have liked better communication, but the stabilization plan has been accepted by SUNY. Next 90-100 days will be very busy. Situation remains fluid.
- ACT Meeting in October better understanding of SUNY system and role as Trustees.
- All SUNYS and higher education are facing financial challenges, if anything positive from stabilization process, it's that we are in a good position to move forward.

5. **Committee Reports**

- **Governance:** did not meet but discussed composition, added D. Glance as a committee member.
- **DEI:** Co-chair Bartow reported on the committee meeting.
  - Introduction of new CDO, Seth Thompson.
  - No mission or scope changes.
  - Membership: Co-Chairs Bartow and Brown-Robinson, D. Glance, Trustee Vera.
  - CDO asked to work toward a DEI Strategic Plan and to work with the campus IDEA Committee.
- **Facilities:** Chair Fedrizzi reported on the committee meeting.
  - Discussed Charter.
  - M. Lichtenstein provided information on facilities and funding sources.
  - Membership: Chair Fedrizzi, Trustee Fitts, E. Friden.
- **Finance:** Bartow as chair, V. DeMarchi, D. Vera.
  - President Mahoney reviewed the stabilization plan,
    - Focus on growth.
      - Summer and Online Programs
      - Add Winter Programs
    - Maintaining R2 status is a priority.
    - Voluntary Separation Program, need to cut 38 FTE,
      - hopeful that VSP will address most FTE reductions.
      - President Mahoney receives daily updates on applications to VSP



- \$1M for incentive payments, current applications at \$900K representing 2.7 M salary savings.
- Application deadline is October 24<sup>th</sup>, and decisions will be communicated to Board as soon as possible.
- President Mahoney shared that last week SUNY greenlighted \$1.8M for incremental funding to ESF.
- Budget goes into the black in year 3.
- SUNY has agreed to additional \$1M to ESF in years 4 and 5.
- President Mahoney noted that she appreciated the advocacy and that it has turned into real dollars.

## 6. President's Report:

Acknowledged presence of athletes at meeting, noted that they missed the update during the Finance Meeting that the cost of the athletics programs is \$500,000 and that there is a \$100,000 difference between revenue and expenses. Asking Department of Athletics to balance spending with revenue. Asking many other departments at ESF to do the same, including The Graduate School.

- Reflections:
  - Rare Chestnut Bee discovered at SUNY ESF.
  - Summer Program Growth: 2021 enrollment 252, 2025: 369
    - ESF matriculated: 209 to 287.
  - 246 students took courses at Cranberry Lake.
  - Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute had another successful year.
  - ESF Summer Science Corps and Summer Science Week.
  - ESF returned to the New York State Fair.
- National Institute for Student Success
  - Focus on academic supports such as tutoring and supplemental instruction on high enrollment, gateway courses with significant Drop Fail Withdraw (DFW) rates: will use these to drive additions to summer and winter courses.
  - Help students succeed, retain revenue if retention rates go up slightly.
    - #1 Focus is students.
- Goodnow Fire Tower has been rebuilt, thanked Paul Stacy and Private Donors.
- MSCHE visit report is confidential but will report out to board when results are final.
- Upcoming Events:
  - Club Fair Today - September 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - Career Fair has grown very large, will now be in Dome - September 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - Empire State of Work Day - September 24<sup>th</sup>
  - College Tour Watch Party - September 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Dale Travis Lecture: James Gibbs on Galapagos Tortoises - September 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - Homecoming Weekend – September 25-27<sup>th</sup>.
- Personnel Announcements:
  - New CDO, Seth Thompson



- Kevin Reynolds passed away on campus near Robin Hood Oak. Memorial Service on Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 11 AM – 12:20 PM in the Gateway Center.
- Enrollment: Thanked Admissions staff, student affairs orientation leaders, staff at centennial hall.
  - New Class – 375 Undergraduate Students, 152 Transfer Students, 79 Graduate Students, 60 Ranger Schools Students.
  - Daily Enrollment Tracking 1853 Undergrad, total 2228. Enrollment is not an issue.
- Budget 2025-2026:
  - Budget is different from stabilization plan.
  - Stabilization plan now feeds the annual budget.
  - Direct State Tax Support Base of \$19.6M up to \$25.9M, base remains the same, amount over \$19.6M is incremental funding.
  - Tuition dipped from last year, likely tied to reduction in scholarship dollars.
    - \$21.3M in tuition revenue in 22-23, \$26.7M in 25-26
  - Increase in utilities and negotiated salary increases (well deserved).
  - Collect more revenue, spend less, reduce deficit.

President Mahoney noted that ESF is not immune to challenges in higher education, many others are planning staff reductions. Not looking at program closures, loss in enrollment has not occurred, but need to balance revenue and expenses.

- **Foundations of Stability Plan**
  - Growth in summer, winter, online, and experiential learning opportunities.
  - Growth in undergraduate enrollment.
  - Growth in graduate school enrollment.
  - Growth in research portfolio.
- Information feeding stabilization plan allows us to be strategic.
  - Stabilization plan has been approved, because we will be in the black.
  - SU contract was not paid in 2024-2025, not a true jump in 2025-2026.
  - FTE: 5.4 ratio in 2014/2015, what is planned in the stabilization plan is achievable.
  - Accumulated deficit of \$16.1M at end of stabilization plan,
    - Without any changes the accumulated debt would have hit \$59M in the end.
    - Not acceptable to SUNY System, can't operate with 64 campuses generating debt.
- **Plan Goal**
  - Ensure the continued, financially sustainable, operation of ESF as New York State's premier R2 Carnegie ranked, leader in Environmental teaching and research.
    - Graduate minimum of 20 PhDs/year to maintain R2 Carnegie rating.
- **Improvements:**
  - Assessment
  - Annual Budget Process
  - Stabilization Plan – Development & Implementation
    - Involved 100's of meetings with SUNY. President Mahoney thanked everyone doing the work, Kitty, Ragan, Brenda, Lindi, Baylee, Matt.

Ended with a reminder of why ESF is here. Teach students, find new ways of thinking about



sustainability and climate, build workforce, make discoveries, we are here to improve our world.

## **7. Student Reports**

### **7.1. MOSA Report – Daniel Vera**

- Introduction: President, Junior, DEI Background, MOSAIC.
- Reviewed MOSA executive board and structure.
- Reviewed achievements from the year so far.
- Reviewed budget.
- Reviewed 25-26 work plan:
  - Three main goals:
    1. Transparency
    2. Club Collaboration
    3. Students first
- Reviewed achievements for the year.
- Advocacy: Student athletes, community impact, quality of education.

### **7.2. Graduate Student Association Report – Emily Friden**

- Introduction: Fourth-year PhD Candidate, first year as President of GSA.
- Vision: Represent the interests of the (entire) graduate student body.
- Mission: Continuously seeking ways to improve organizational sustainability and efficiency.
- Reviewed GSA senate and organizational structure.
- Reviewed Budget - \$70K
  - Programming
  - Social
  - Professional Development
  - Grants and Awards
- Reviewed 25-26 Events:
  - Student Socials
  - EDGE Events
    - SciPi, R Stats, and writing groups (practice presenting and reviewing data)
    - College Your Premiere – September 24<sup>th</sup>
    - GSA Day – November 6<sup>th</sup>
    - Townhall – Spring 2026 (Include key admin. Business Office and Research Office)
    - Research Conference – April 2026
- Grievances:
  - Graduate Assistant cuts and Workload: GAs are handling extra workload; many are half Teaching Assistants.
  - Clarity of roles and expectations – need clear communication.
  - Payroll delays – administrative support shortages.
  - GSA will take steps to address grievances as they can.

Chair Bartow noted that he is happy to attend meetings of GSA or MOSA.

## **8. Academic Governance Report – Aaron Rounds/Ruth Yanai**



- Encouraged all to advocate, increase in participation in Academic Governance.
- Reported the department chairs are working on faculty workload.

## **9. Old Business:**

### **9.1. Amendment to the Bylaws.**

Chair Bartow motioned to approve resolution to amend the bylaws. V. DeMarchi seconded. All approved.

## **10. New Business:**

### **10.1. UUP Address to the Board:**

- How to reconcile retention: staff, athletics, faculty.
- Optimistic that advocacy helped with additional funding.
- Asked what happens in year six of the budget.
  - Noted that SUNY didn't address campus deficits sooner.
  - Noted that funding goes to SUNY but is not distributed to campuses.
- Asked Board of Trustees for support in advocacy.
- The work of ESF is present in every aspect of New York.
  - Millions of below cost research for New York State agencies.
- 120 Days to tell the story.
- Goal: Restore \$10M Mission Funding.

### **10.2. 2026 Board Meeting Dates:**

February 27, 2026 – Annual Meeting  
May 8, 2026  
September 25, 2026  
December 11, 2026

**11. Adjournment:** Trustee Fedrizzi motioned to adjourn. Trustee Fitts seconded. All approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nichole Dougherty.