

## **SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES MINUTES**

**December 10, 2020**

The Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees held its quarterly business meeting Thursday, December 10, 2020 via Zoom conferencing. Chair Matt Lautman called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

### **Recording of Attendance**

Trustees present: Dr. Alfonso Angelucci, Ms. Samantha Hawk, Mr. Domenic Ionta, Mr. Matt Lautman, Mr. Dan Lavalley, Mr. William McCarrier, Ms. Elise Michaux, Mr. Jeffrey Smith, Mr. Robert Taylor, Ms. Suzanne Vessella, Mr. Joshua Young

Dr. Lia Paradis, faculty liaison to the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees, was present. Welcome Lia!

### **Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Trustee McCarrier moved, second by Trustee Ionta, approval of the December 10, 2020 meeting agenda. Motion passes. (TAB 6) (Appendix A)

### **Approval of Minutes**

Trustee McCarrier moved, second by Trustee Michaux, approval of the September 24, 2020 quarterly business meeting minutes. Motion passes (TAB 18) (Appendix B)

### **Public Comments**

#### **Joey Sciuto, President, Student Government Association**

Good afternoon, Council of Trustees:

Just as a reminder my name is Joey Sciuto and I am so excited to present a report and not have to say I am a newbie president. In my brief report I will be discussing the resiliency our organization has displayed throughout the semester, interpersonal and organizational tools utilized to create an engaging and positive work environment, committee accomplishments, and plans for the break and the upcoming semester. Let's begin.

I could take up an entire hour discussing how saying this senate went above and beyond any expectations is the understatement of the year. In fact, I am sure analyzing the ecological and social factors that contributed to the success of our organization could be the grounds for an amazing master's thesis. As an upper classman with tenure in this organization I can say with complete confidence this has been our most successful senate elections. At the beginning we were nervous that increasing the size of our senate would make the dream of having a full senate seem always out of reach. This could not be further from the truth. I have to attribute most of this success to our new

senate structure. Our senators are proud to represent their constituencies. Our senators truly identify with their constituents, and we have to thank the restructuring committee for their hard work. Out of the 43 senator positions only 8 positions remain open: those would include 3 graduate senator positions, 4 at large positions and 1 veteran senator. I have to extend my congratulations to Mia Graziani for all of her recruiting efforts. Another factor that has led to our success is that student leaders are actively seeking engagement opportunities during this virtual environment. They want to find a niche on campus and have a purpose. The average senator this year is more willing to take on and complete tasks than any other year in my experience.

Before I discuss my second item, I want to explain that this semester was one of preparation. I dedicated a large amount of time for the committees and executive board members to sit and think about their goals and purposes. We really stressed the impact of a measurable goal, since that was a way to conceptualize that shifting of success from in person to an online environment. Now I will try and highlight accomplishments from every committee with the exclusion of finance. Outreach has done an incredible job of thinking of innovative ways to collaborate and engage the student body. They planned a wonderful Halloween/Dia de los Muertos movie event which included a costume contest. Amanda was also able to collaborate with the university program board for the upcoming drive-in movie event.

VP Gish began the semester with social justice committee collaborating with OIE to present and promote the defamation experience which was attended by over 200 students and faculty members. I need to give Mia another shout out for our wildly successful elections. The student and academic affairs committee has been busy getting Bob's cupboard up and running has begun to have students use the service. Additionally, Leif has been empowering the college senators to schedule meetings with their respective deans and we anticipate many future initiatives emerging. Finally, I have to say how proud I am of Parliamentarian Warmbein. This is his first year involved with the organization and he had no acclimation period. He dove in head first and has been consistently enabling the senators to lead constitutional revisions for potential jobs. We have been able to approve six new clubs with rules and policies and hard work. I am also so blessed to have Nate by my side. Personally, I was able to appoint two senators to every President's commission and have required them to report back to senate twice a semester. One of my goals is to increase the interactivity between students and commissions and I feel this is a solid first step.

Imagine you are sitting in my shoes. I am at a point where I am wrapping up reflecting on this incredible semester and have timidly began looking ahead. My main priority is ensuring that we maintain and harness this productivity and momentum. Timing wise there are a couple future plans that I am excited to mention. The first of which is that student and academic affairs committee will be analyzing the student life survey over break. Leif plans to spend the first week or so back brainstorming initiatives. Another exciting initiative is myself and the social justice committee have been working on a social injustice response plan that would lay out steps future senates will be expected to take when social justice issues occur on our campus and within the community. Finally, everyone will be able to hold the committees accountable as CHES senator Caleb Covey has been working to publish goal checklists on the SRSGA website. This will enable everyone to watch the progress of our senate as we strive to complete every goal.

Thank you all so much for your time and I wish you all the safest and happiest holiday!

Dr. Lia Paradis offered comment: From the perspective of a professor, I would like to commend Joey and his team of student leaders. They have been active, proactive and engaged in many activities in these especially challenging times. You have shown great time management skills to achieve these impressive accomplishments. Congratulations.

### **Presentations**

Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees presented the following commendations honoring the service of:

Dr. Jerry Chmielewski (Appendix C)

Mr. Paul Lueken (Appendix D)

In recognition for the incredible service to Slippery Rock University. Enjoy retirement!

### **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

Congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Jerry Chmielewski and Mr. Paul Lueken as they move on to the next chapter of their lives enjoying retirement. I express my heartfelt thanks for their exceptional service as their roles were central to my experience at Slippery Rock University and I will miss them terribly.

As you can imagine, COVID-19 has dominated campus activities this semester. I believe I share the same feelings with all of you in that we would like to leave behind unprecedented times and return to precedent times. My hat is off to our students, faculty and staff as we could not have accomplished what we have without the collaborative efforts and hard work from all of you.

We are in the process of finalizing an agreement with Shippensburg University to provide overnight COVID testing for next semester. As a result, we are building a testing infrastructure so that we are in a position to implement widespread testing when students return in January. We hope that broad-based testing on campus will allow us to resume some additional in-person social and co-curricular activities on campus next semester. It will also support spring athletics. We expect that sometime in the next year our testing infrastructure will evolve into a vaccine distribution infrastructure.

These efforts will support an increased in-person delivery model for the fall. We have already communicated with prospective first-year students that they will all be welcome to live on campus and will have at least two courses in person. Over the course of the next few weeks, we hope to publicly announce plans for greater in-person course offerings for all other students. By February, we will have the fall schedule in place so we have a pretty close model for what the fall will look like and can prepare for registration. Our plan moving forward assumes continued societal progress in fighting COVID-19.

There is some important non-COVID news that occurred over the past few months. SRU has submitted its first draft of its institutional report to the Middle States Commission on Higher

Education (MSCHE) and had a very positive initial set of meetings with our visiting committee chair. Our virtual visit is planned for March 28-31, 2021.

We also had successful accreditation visits for several of our programs:

- Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) – reaccreditation on 04/28/2020 of the DPT with the next visit in fall of 2029, accreditation expiration 06/30/2030;
- North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) – initial NAAEE Accreditation of the Master of Education in Environmental Education awarded on 11/19/2020 for a period of 7 years;
- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) – initial accreditation on 11/30/2020 for a period of 5 years with reaccreditation in fall of 2025.

Other programs making significant progress toward accreditation during fall of 2020:

- Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) virtual site visit in October 2020 with status change from candidacy to pre-accreditation;
- Commission for the Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) virtual site visit November 2020 with preliminary positive feedback.

While all accreditations are important, initial accreditations are particularly strenuous and deserve special recognition. My congratulations to all who worked on the NAAEE and AACSB accreditations. The AACSB credential should strengthen our position in the business program marketplace, particularly at the master's level.

Next semester will be dominated by planning. We are sun-setting our current strategic plan in the spring. Provost Abbey Zink will be leading our next strategic plan. Our goal is to have the bulk of the work on this plan done by the summer, with final vetting in the early fall. As mentioned earlier, we will also be deeply engaged in near-term planning for the fall. We currently have planning groups focusing on academics, facilities, technology, residence life/housing, testing and vaccination, emergency management protocols, and communication.

As is customary, I'll leave you with several items of note, from the fall semester, by our students, faculty and alumni as well as institutional recognition.

## STUDENTS

- SRU social work students interning with local police departments: Three Slippery Rock University students in the Master of Social Work program are embedded within local law enforcement operations as police social workers, working alongside officers in the field, helping de-escalate situations and applying their area of expertise.
- SRU students learn remotely from farmer presenting in the field: Slippery Rock University students taking an online class might not be able to gather as a group to visit an expert in the field, so an expert literally standing out in the field is coming to them. That's the premise of

“Farmer Fridays,” where a guest farmer conducts synchronous online presentations for SRU’s Sustainability in Food and Hospitality course.

- SRU biology researchers study the effects of acid mine drainage on local streams: While most Pennsylvanians witness leaves changing colors in fall, another color change has been occurring in local streams during a much longer period of time. And fallen leaves are helping provide answers for researchers at Slippery Rock University.

### FACULTY

- SRU researchers studying connection between moral reasoning and stress: There are a lot of factors that cause stress for college students, whether it’s an upcoming exam or decisions about their career. The COVID-19 pandemic has only compounded those stressors, where even a decision to go out in public requires principled awareness. With that in mind, researchers at Slippery Rock University are studying the somewhat paradoxical hypothesis that a heightened sense of moral reasoning may result in more stress among college students.
- SRU welcomes its first Frederick Douglass Institute scholars fellow: Slippery Rock University hired Clitha Mason as its first Frederick Douglass Institute scholars fellow, a position that was borne from a State System collaboration that provides teaching opportunities and other professional experiences to scholars while supporting the FDI mission to create inclusive university communities.
- Nwachuku selected as USOW Ambassador: Brittany Nwachuku, a Slippery Rock University assistant professor of public health and social work, was one of two women selected to represent Pennsylvania in the United State of Women Ambassador program. The USOW is a national organization dedicated to convening, connecting, and amplifying voices in the fight for gender equity.

### ALUMNI

- SRU alum on a mission to study NASA’s first returned asteroid sample: The influence of a Slippery Rock University education extends far beyond campus as alumni put their work out into the world. Andrew Ryan, a 2011 SRU graduate with a degree in environmental geoscience, has seen his work go even further – try 200 million miles into space on the surface of an asteroid. Ryan is a staff scientist at the University of Arizona Lunar and Planetary Laboratory who is part of the OSIRIS-REx mission to study and collect a sample from a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu.
- SRU alumnae elected to ATRA board: Two Slippery Rock University graduates were named to the board of directors of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association, the only national association for recreational therapists.
- Conley named president at Froedtert Hospital: Eric Conley, a 1990 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in health services, was recently named president of Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Froedtert Hospital, which has 735 inpatient hospital beds, is a teaching hospital and a Level I adult trauma center, one of only two such facilities in Wisconsin.

- Benninger wins Regional Emmy for PensTV project: Tyler Benninger, a 2020 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in communication, contributed to a video project that won a 2020 Mid-Atlantic Regional Emmy Award by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

### **INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION**

- SRU recognized in Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education national rankings: Slippery Rock University received a high-five in yet another college rankings service. For the fifth straight year, SRU was ranked in The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings 2021. SRU was among 797 institutions ranked nationally by WSJ/THE, which started ranking colleges and universities in 2017 based on its four “pillars” of resources, engagement, outcomes, and environment.
- SRU recognized in Princeton Review’s “Guide to Green Colleges: 2021 Edition”: Slippery Rock University continues to look good in green. The Princeton Review named SRU to its “Guide to Green Colleges: 2021 Edition.” SRU has appeared on the list each year since 2010 when the Princeton Review started annually recognizing the most environmentally responsible colleges in the country.
- SRU/SGA Preschool and Child Care Center earns national accreditation: The Slippery Rock University/Student Government Association Preschool and Child Care Center has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the world's largest professional organization working on behalf of young children.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Chairman Lautman, this concludes my report.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Academic and Student Affairs Committee (Agenda, Appendix E)**

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met this morning and trustees received several updates.

Dr. Abbey Zink, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, shared news that five academic programs/schools had positive accreditation visits in Fall 2020. She also provided an overview of academic planning for Fall 2021. In addition, Dr. Zink recognized the SRU Center for Teaching and Learning for hosting the first annual PASSHE West Virtual Teaching and Learning Conference with 200 faculty participants from SRU and our four sister campuses.

Ms. Mary Hennessey and Dr. Rebecca Morrice, Co-Chairs of the MSCHE Steering Committee, shared updates about our Fall 2020 virtual Middle States accreditation pre-visit and upcoming Spring 2021 virtual visit. Despite COVID challenges, we continue to be on track for a successful Spring 2021 reaffirmation visit.

Amanda Yale, Chief Enrollment Management Officer, provided a report on winter and spring enrollment. A preview of fall enrollment was also presented.

Winter enrollment is currently up 7.9% in credit hours generated and 6.0% in headcount. Most of the increases are at the graduate level.

Spring enrollment is currently down about -2.9% in headcount and -4.1% in credit hours generated. Many outreaches are underway with students who are not registered and with students who are registered for fewer credits in the spring than the fall term. New transfers for spring are down currently about 70 students, which is the pattern we see with other institutions as well.

Fall freshman applications are down over 200, but offers are up by about 90 and transfer applications are down about 70, while offers are down by about 3 students. Graduate applications are up for winter, spring and fall as are offers for these timeframes.

The recruitment process is much later this year due to COVID. For example, transcripts for review are coming in later from the high schools because of the challenging environments they are experiencing. We are looking forward to a very active winter/spring recruitment season.

Ms. Carrie Birckbichler, Chief Financial and Data Officer, presented an update on the net revenue generated by 25 new academic programs for FY 2019-20. In addition, a list of academic programs identified as open to sharing within the System was reviewed.

Ms. Karla Fonner, Director of Student Support, provided updates on the “Evolution of Student Support” with an emphasis on how SRU has moved from a reactive approach to student needs to a more proactive method for engaging students before their issues reach a crisis level.

Dr. Dan Bauer, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, presented a video drone tour of the Performing Arts Complex.

Dr. Terrence Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, shared updates about the diversity and inclusion strategic planning process.

Many thanks to our presenters for sharing these updates with us. Chairman, this concludes my report.

Chairman Lautman, this concludes my report.

#### **Finance Committee (Agenda, Appendix F)**

The Finance and Administrative Affairs Committee met with the Council of Trustees earlier this morning and discussed several topics:

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Dr. Amir Mohammadi, Senior Vice President for Administration, Global Engagement and Economic Development provided clarification on how Clery and Title IX intersect. Dr. Mohammadi also shared the Facilities and Projects Report as well as his Divisional Report.

Mr. David M. Jacobson, CPA Principal, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP presented the audit results for FY 20. Highlights of the presentation included a clean unmodified opinion on the audit with no material weaknesses and no corrected or uncorrected misstatements, financial statement highlights, and future GASB statements for the council's awareness.

Ms. Birckbichler, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Financial and Budget Update for the first quarter of FY 2020/2021 and an update on the projections for future years. The projections were included in the Comprehensive Planning Process, a new planning initiative established by the State System. The projections highlighted an expected budget gap as a result of regular cost increases and no or limited tuition increases. Additionally, information was shared regarding the impact of recently ratified collective bargaining agreements.

The following action items approved to move forward for action in today's public session include:

- Affiliated Entities: Certification of Compliance

Information items shared with trustees in the materials:

- Facilities and Planning Project Report
- Financial Report
- Contracts, Fixed Assets, Service and Supply Purchase Orders

Chairman Lautman this concludes my report.

#### **University Advancement Committee (Agenda, Appendix G)**

The committee met earlier this morning.

Chairman Taylor thanked committee members Jeff Smith, Bill McCarrier, Dan Lavallee, and Josh Young for their participation. This committee has been a bit more engaged and active this year because of a variety of challenges including COVID and consolidation of services.

Chairman Taylor thanked Dennis Washington, Samantha Swift, Kelly Bailey and all members of the team for their good work and efforts on behalf of University Advancement.

Dennis Washington, vice president for University Advancement presented:

- The Dr. Cottrell Naming Opportunity
- The DRAFT Slippery Rock University Naming Policy
- Provided a report on the University Advancement Reorganization

The reorganization is generally complete and we are pleased to have an engaged and enhanced team of members in the Advancement Office and appreciate Mr. Washington's leadership in this area.

Ms. Samantha Swift, executive director, University Development and Advancement Services, provided a summary of the 2020-21 first quarter fundraising activities and results. This is the



most challenging and difficult time in fundraising and friend raising that any of us have ever experienced and I am astounded we have had the results we've experienced. This is a testament to the advancement team working diligently to stay connected with students, alumni, corporate partnerships and many others.

Mr. Washington brought committee members up-to-date with activities surrounding the Fundraising Campaign and the work of Bentz Whaley Flessner, contracted campaign counsel.

Ms. Kelly Bailey, director, Alumni Engagement, provided an update of alumni events through September 30, 2020 and provided an update about spring semester engagement opportunities and plans.

Mr. Washington provided a financial update on the Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc. and the SRUF Campus Housing as of September 30, 2020:

- Total Net Assets & Liabilities of the SRU Foundation, Inc., totaled \$42,625,295
- The Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc. investment portfolio value totaled \$35,948,528
- The SRUF Campus Housing Inc. & subsidiary Net Assets and Liabilities totaled \$106,785,368

Going forward we will be engaging our local elected officials and allowing them to understand more precisely what SRU means to the local economy, Butler County, Western, PA and the Commonwealth. Trustee Dan Lavalley has graciously agreed to guide us in this endeavor. This will be a new component to our advancement program and we look forward to engaging in this advocacy effort.

Chairman Lautman, this concludes my report.

#### **Governance Committee (Agenda, Appendix H)**

Trustee Joshua Young, chair of the Governance Committee, provided the following report.

The Governance Committee met earlier today. We had three items on the agenda for discussion

- We heard a PACT update from Trustee Jeff Smith.
- We agreed that we would create a committee within the Governance Committee for the purpose of reviewing current bylaws and determining any necessary amendments re: ACT 50 of 2020 legislation. Chairman Young will offer three dates to committee members to meet and discuss via ZOOM.
- President's Evaluation (2<sup>nd</sup> year, informal). Sent forward the draft evaluation letter and matrix to the full committee for final review.

We were pleased to approve the Commendations of Service in honor of Dr. Jerry Chmielewski and Mr. Paul Lueken.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

**Executive Session (Agenda, Appendix I)**

Council met this morning in executive session with President Behre. No report; closed session.

**ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Evaluation: President William J. Behre (2<sup>nd</sup> Informal)**

Josh Young moved, second by Trustee Ionta, that Council will authorize the Chair to sign the substantially completed draft evaluation letter with minor alterations and send the completed document to the Chancellor next week. Motion carries unanimously.

**Naming Opportunity: The Dr. Elmer B. Cottrell Aquatics Pool (TAB 8) (Appendix J)**

Trustee Michaux moved, second by Trustee Hawk, approval of a Resolution naming the pool in Morrow Field House, "The Dr. Elmer B. Cottrell Aquatics Pool". Motion carries unanimously.

**Resolution: Annual Certification of Compliance: Board of Governor's Policy 1985-04-A: University External Financial Support (TAB 12) (Appendix K)**

Trustee McCarrier moved, second by Trustee Lavallee, approval of Resolution: Annual Certification of Compliance: Board of Governor's Policy 1985-04-A: University External Financial Support. Motion carries.

Slippery Rock University Alumni Association  
Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc.  
SRUF Student Housing, LLC  
Slippery Rock University Student Government Association

Negative Vote: Trustee Taylor voted no to this motion because of the inclusion of the Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc. in the Resolution. Trustee Taylor is not opposing anything in this Resolution related to The SRU Alumni Association or the SRU Student Government Association.

**PACT Dues; July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 (TAB 13) (Appendix L)**

Trustee Smith moved, second by Trustee Ionta, approval of the PACT Dues for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) in the amount of \$1,750.00 Motion carries unanimously.

**INFORMATION ITEMS****Next Meeting:**

March 25 & 26, 2021

**Committee Presentations (Tab 11) (Appendix M)****Facilities and Planning Active Project List (Cabinet Report) (TAB 12) (Appendix N)**

CliftonLarsonAllen: Financial Statement and Audit Overview (TAB 13), (Appendix O)

Financial Report (TAB 14) (Appendix P)

Contracts, Fixed Assets, Service and Supply Purchase Orders (Tab 15) (Appendix Q)

HR Personnel Items (TAB 16) (Appendix R)

Naming Guidelines: Overview of Naming Guidelines and Procedures (TAB 17, Appendix S)

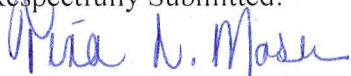
Divisional Reports (TAB 19)

### **FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Trustee Lautman on behalf of Council offered congratulations to our graduates. The virtual commencement ceremony is scheduled for December 12 at 10 a.m. President Behre commented that most academic departments worked very hard to put together special celebratory ceremonies for their students.

With no further business, Trustee Hawk motioned to adjourn the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees business meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Tina L. Moser, Administrative Liaison to the SRU Council of Trustees