

Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting of the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees

February 23, 2018

Room 321, Smith Student Center

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Slippery Rock, PA 16057

I. Call to Order/Recording of Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Alfonso Angelucci, vice-chair, with all trustees present:

Dr. Alfonso Angelucci

Mr. Thomas Breth

Mr. Matthew J. Lautman

Mr. William L. McCarrier (by phone)

Mr. Jairus Moore

Mr. Jeffrey W. Smith

Mr. Robert S. Taylor (by phone)

Ms. Suzanne Vessella (by phone)

Senator Mary Jo White

Mr. Richard Wukich

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Trustee Breth, second by Trustee Lautman, approval of today's agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Selection of Continuing Candidates for Position of University President

Vice-chair Angelucci explained the purpose of today's meeting and the only agenda item for Council to act upon is to select the finalists for the position of the 17th President of Slippery Rock University. The Council of Trustees will consider the recommendations of the Presidential Search Committee and forward two names to the Board of Governors for final selection.

IV. Public Comments

Rachel Lawler, SRSGA President

Council of Trustees,

Thank you for allowing me to speak today on behalf of the Slippery Rock Student Government Association. At this time, I would like to address the Council directly as it relates to the Presidential Search. First, I would like to thank the Council and the Presidential Search Committee for reopening the search and restructuring the on-campus visitations to allow more members of the campus community to take part in the decision making process. SGA was put to the challenge in order to reach out to more students informing them about the search and how to make their voices heard. Therefore, #mySRUPresident, a campus wide campaign was created to ask students what they wanted to see in the next university president. Each student who participated wrote down their thoughts on a flyer and posted it on social media utilizing the hashtag. Our #1 tweet reached 8,883 impressions or views. Job well done goes to Dallas Kline the VP of Campus Outreach and Victoria Davis the Social Justice Chair for spearheading the campaign and making it a great success.

In regards to the new pool of candidates, based on the conversations I have had with members of the campus community, I feel comfortable in saying that this pool of candidates possesses the qualities and attributes that our community is looking for in a President. I commend the search committee on their hard work and dedication to the process. I have faith that 3 of the 5 candidates would serve our university with genuine honesty, humanity and determination to be the best, but most importantly with ROCK pride. However, we would not be here today if it wasn't for the student voice. Our voice is powerful and if the students do not feel that decisions are being made in our best interests or for the benefit of our education, we have no fear in speaking out as the largest stakeholders of this university.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Jairus Moore, our new representative as Student Trustee. SGA is looking forward to growing our relationship as elite student representatives on this campus and creating a level of transparency to the student body we serve.

Again, thank you for allowing me to speak today. Have a great weekend!

Dr. Itzi Meztli, Associate Professor, English (SRU)

Why the Rush with the Second Presidential Search?

Trustees, my name is Itzi Meztli, and I'm an English Department faculty member. Your first search was an utter disaster: You had fellow Trustee Bob Taylor throw a wrench into the entire process by making unfounded, slanderous allegations against

one of our own beloved administrators of color, SRU's Vice-President for Finance-- baseless accusations that were never substantiated by any credible state agency.

Why? Because Taylor's accusations were mere fabrication, something obvious after I confronted him via telephone about why he had not heeded PASSHE's decision that there was no conflict of interest involving any members of the Council's initial search committee. He told me he didn't believe PASSHE's resolution of the matter because he had not read it in writing, as if he thinks he is the final arbiter of conflict-of-interest questions at this university.

Not only did Taylor disrupt the lives of two other SRU employees, after publicly hurling a "conflict of interest" claim against our university, so damaging, that he besmirched our integrity while tainting the public image of our fine institution by writing to the Butler Eagle newspaper about it. While serving as a member of our council of trustees, to attack SRU blatantly for political machination or palace intrigue, to me, is unconscionable. Where was the outrage when four original, search committee members resigned in disgust, and then the Council still had the gall to put Taylor back into the second search committee?

Now, in your subsequent, search attempt—which Amir Mohammadi again applied, he was NOT—I repeat NOT-- even a finalist for the top ten contenders for the job. This is shocking because he was almost one of two finalists in the first search, but in the second one, he was completely sidelined—proving that Taylor's outrageous allegations did considerable damage to Amir's academic reputation.

In short, this second search has been nothing but a sham: In fact, you crammed five candidates into less than one week of campus vetting, and why was there pitiful attendance to these on-site visits? Could it be that people, in general, were completely turned off with your discombobulated, selection process?

By the way, Millersville University's presidential selection run has three finalists being scrutinized over a three-week period while we had five candidates within six calendar days! So, why all the rush with our candidates' campus visits?

Could it be that the State System is currently engaged in an internal investigation on how our Council of Trustees' first search was conducted, especially focusing on Bob Taylor? PASSHE hired an attorney, Christopher J. Moran, from the Philly law firm, Pepper Hamilton LLP, and he's been interviewing certain SRU individuals on campus. I know because I was ordered to meet with him on Feb. 6th in Old Main for a one-hour interview about possible, "national origin" bigotry in the initial presidential search.

Thus, as trustees, you are ill-advised to finalize your second search until the internal investigation is concluded and its report issued. Don't think that by cramming candidates down our throats in a second rushed effort is somehow going

to vindicate you on your first, disastrous, search outcome—or rather lack of one. Hence, it isn't fair to the SRU community to rush a presidential search because of political expediency or careless irresponsibility of some of our trustees?

In conclusion, Dr. Amir Mohammadi, sir, I urge to go to the "Equal Employment Opportunity Commission" and immediately file a complaint about how you were ill-treated here at our University, and when this federal Commission gives you the green light to go after our institution for blatant discrimination because of "national origin," then maybe a sense of social justice will have prevailed. Amir, both you and I love this fine, educational institution but this is the 21st Century, and "intolerance should not be tolerated" on this campus.

Look at Bloomsburg University: Last year, its council of trustees were instrumental in the State System's hiring of a new president and guess where he was born? In the Middle East, specifically in Syria, and when he was a ten years old, his family immigrated to America. I call it "Bloomsburg's open-mindedness," something seriously lacking here.

Finally, Dr. Mohammadi, I urge you earnestly, to sue Bob Taylor personally for his attempt to turn you into an "administrator pariah" in academia, one whom other universities will not consider, as this second, search committee has obviously reflected by completely shunning you in the process. For the sake of justice, do it Amir.

V. Recommendation of Search Committee

Mr. Jeff Smith, chair of the Presidential Search Committee, shared the report of the Committee and its recommendation of two continuing candidates for the position of University President in accordance with *Board of Governor's Policy 1983-13-A: Process for Recommending Presidential Appointment*.

The Council of Trustees, Slippery Rock University, recommends to the Interim Chancellor and the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education the following two individuals as continuing candidates for the position of President of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania:

William J. Behre, Ph.D.

Rodney S. Hanley, Ph.D.

A motion was made by Trustee Smith, second by Trustee Wukich that the two finalists be approved by Council as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Dr. Alfonso Angelucci YES

Mr. Thomas Breth YES

Mr. Matthew J. Lautman	YES
Mr. William L. McCarrier	YES
Mr. Jairus Moore	YES
Mr. Jeffrey W. Smith	YES
Mr. Robert S. Taylor	YES
Ms. Suzanne Vessella	YES
Senator Mary Jo White	YES
Mr. Richard Wukich	YES

Vice-Chair Angelucci welcomed Jairus Moore to his first official meeting. Governor Wolf officially appointed Jairus Feb. 21 to the SRU Council of Trustees. Jairus is a safety management major at SRU, he is a U.S. Army ROTC Cadet, a member of the New Brighton Fire Department, and Alpha Kappa Psi fraternity to name a few of his activities. Welcome Jairus!

Vice-Chair Angelucci provided accolades to the Presidential Search Committee and congratulated Mr. Smith for his outstanding efforts as chair of the committee. In addition, Chairman Angelucci commended the work of the senior leadership team at Slippery Rock University and thanked Interim President Philip Way for his leadership and dedication during this time of transition.


Vice-Chair Angelucci shared with the audience that the two approved names would be forwarded to Interim Chancellor Whitney and the Board of Governors along with a certified copy of the meeting minutes.

VI. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING


The next meeting of the Slippery Rock Council of Trustees is March 22 & 23, 2018.

With no further business, a motion was made by Trustee Lautman, seconded by Trustee Wukich that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Alfonso Angelucci, vice-chair

Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees

Minutes prepared by Tina L. Moser 
Administrative Liaison to the SRU Council of Trustees

