

## SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES MINUTES

September 29, 2023

The Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees held its quarterly business meeting Friday, September 29, 2023, in the Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center and via ZOOM conferencing. Chair Domenic Ionta called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

The video recording of this meeting in its entirety can be found on the Council webpage, <https://www.sru.edu/about/administration/council-of-trustees/video-recordings>

### Recording of Attendance

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

Trustees absent: Mr. Dan Lavallee

Council welcomed Dr. Danette DiMarco, faculty liaison to the SRU Council of Trustees. Dr. DiMarco is a professor in the Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Writing Department at SRU.

### Approval of Meeting Agenda

Trustee Angelucci moved, second by Trustee Michaux, approval of the September 29, 2023 meeting agenda. Motion carries. **(Tab 6, Appendix A)**

### Approval of Minutes

Trustee McCarrier moved, second by Trustee Young, approval of the quarterly business meeting minutes of Friday, June 9, 2023. Motion carries. **(TAB 13, Appendix B)**

### Public Comments

None.

### Presentations

#### **Innovation: Inside and Outside of the Classroom**

- Trustee Cierra Mitchell, political science major, Student Internship Experience,
  - Life of a DC Intern <https://www.livebinders.com/b/3433151>
  
- Dallas Jackson, Ph.D., CAPE, associate professor, Physical and Health Education
  - Excellence in Teaching and Learning <https://www.livebinders.com/b/3433151>

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**  
**Karen S. Riley, Ph.D.**

Slippery Rock University  
SRU Council of Trustees Quarterly Business Meeting  
September 29, 2023  
9:30 a.m.  
Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center

Thank you all again for this remarkable opportunity. The past couple of months have been a wonderful immersion into Slippery Rock University. As I mentioned in my initial acceptance interview, I am both humbled and honored to serve as President, and I am committed to doing my very best to advance this institution. We have a great deal of talent and dedication across the University and our goal now is to create and implement a plan that builds on our laudable history while positioning us well for the next several decades. We are striving to be a First-Choice institution, meaning the top preference for people who want to learn and work at SRU, as well as partner with us.

First 90-Day Communication Plan: Prior to my July 1 start date, I met with the communications team, and we drafted a 90-day communication plan. The goal was to ensure that we started out with a clear and consistent approach to communicating across the internal and external community. The plan included engaging with students, parents, and the campus community as quickly as possible following my arrival. A town-hall meeting was part of the communication plan. At the annual Fall Assembly/Town Hall, September 14, 2023, I had the opportunity to address the University community and share my observations and campus updates. The slides provided at the town hall are similar to those provided during the Council of Trustees meeting on September 29, 2023. The goal of the Town Hall was to provide faculty and staff with a state of the University summary, to initiate a culture of transparency and provide time for questions. This report provides highlights from that address. [Fall Assembly/Town Hall Slide Deck: file:///C:/Users/tina.moser/Downloads/Town-Hall-Fall-2023%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/tina.moser/Downloads/Town-Hall-Fall-2023%20(1).pdf)

Welcome Back Videos: We shared welcome back videos with the campus on the first day of class, one with a message for students and another directed toward employees. Then, we started the Town Hall with a celebratory video, depicting the events of the first few weeks of the semester.

Enrollment: Enrollment has increased 1.4% compared to last year. There were 8,362 students enrolled as of the 15th day of classes in the Fall 2023 semester, which is 119 more students compared to the same day last year. These numbers are subject to change as Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education will verify and report enrollments by Oct. 9. Census data for each school is taken on the 15th day of the semester for national and state reporting purposes. Included in the 8,362 students are a record 1,547 graduate students, surpassing SRU's previous high of 1,503 in Fall 2021, as well as 1,535 first-year students which was the largest class size since 2019 and reflects a 5.2% increase from last year.

Financial Picture/Budget Scenarios: According to the data provided by the Budget and Finance committee the FY 23 budget has closed with a balance of \$222,000. This money will be transferred to the reserve accounts within the facilities department for deferred maintenance projects. The FY 24 budget is currently incomplete due to the lack of a CBA with APSCUF. We are currently engaging in various scenario planning and will complete a budget when the compensation for our APSCUF

employees is determined. The budget must balance, and we are engaged in activities now to ensure that this occurs. The Comprehensive Performance Plan was submitted to PASSHE on September 15, 2023. It too will be amended once additional compensation information is available.

Construction Projects: There are several projects that have been completed and/or are in various stages of completion:

- The President's House was completed on July 28, 2023, with the inventory tour being completed on August 2, 2023. The kitchen and upgrades to the facility look good and will be good investments in the future. The intent is to use the facility to house the president and their respective families and as an entertainment space. The first group to have a formal recognition in the completed facility was the staff who worked on the house. This was a delicious upscale lunch for all of the carpenters, painters, grounds crew, plumbers, electricians and custodial staff. We wanted to recognize this group first, and it sent a message to our entire staff about the culture that we want at SRU.
- We established a few new programs for the President's House. Dr. Judy Silva, SRU archivist, will be providing materials for the first-floor library. This space will be an extension of the University Archives with rotating material and artifacts. Additionally, the first-floor art will be curated by the SRU Art Department. Sean Macmillan, associate professor and department chair, selected the collection for current display. Student and faculty art will be displayed and rotated three times per year. We have created a new award for students, President's Student Art Award in Residence. The space in the entry way over the large credenza will display a piece of art that was created by a student. Students will compete and the Art Department has created a process by which the pieces will be selected. This will also be rotated two times per year. Many thanks to Theresa Antonellis, Gallery director, for working together with us on establishing the student award.
- The engineering labs received the necessary certification prior to the start of the fall semester, which allowed for student use on day one.

Strategic Plan: The strategic planning process was initiated in 2020. There were various iterations of an outline, and the process was disrupted for a variety of factors, including but not limited to the pandemic and multiple leadership changes. Prior to beginning my tenure, I met with the leaders of the steering committee regarding the progress of the plan. Although there was a framework, the plan had not been shared with the broader community, nor was there a narrative or implementation plan. Upon my arrival, I met with the leaders of the strategic planning committee and invited them to the cabinet retreat. There was a lack of clarity regarding previously articulated next steps. We agreed to move forward quickly with several small and large group meetings intended to distill the original plan into pillars for the new plan. The overarching goal is to be a First-Choice institution. The proposed strategic plan has four pillars that represent the University's commitments to:

- Robust, supportive and inclusive culture;
- Academic discovery and human growth;
- Community impact and collaboration;
- Financial sustainability and resource stewardship.

The framework developed by SRU's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan Committee is a crucial component woven into the fabric of the institutional strategic plan to ensure

that our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is more than just rhetoric. This comprehensive plan will serve as a roadmap to guide our collective efforts in fostering a truly inclusive and equitable campus. It reflects our shared vision of an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

The DEIB Strategic Plan outlines four key themes that will shape our journey toward a more inclusive future:

- The People (students, faculty/staff, community)
- The Policy
- Creating a Stronger Sense of Belonging
- Improving Cultural Competence

The DEIB Strategic Plan is not merely a document, it represents our shared commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable campus. We invite you to join us in this vital work, bringing your unique perspectives, insights, and experiences to the table. Together, we can make a lasting and positive impact on the lives of our students and the larger community we serve.

The foundation of the overall strategic plan is our continuous mission to provide the highest quality education at the lowest possible price. We have already started with several initiatives that fit into the pillars and are based on the data that was gathered over the course of the last few years. A sampling is provided.

### **Pillar #1 Robust, supportive and inclusive culture**

Develop a culture of recognition and engagement

#### The You Rock Initiative to **recognize kindness**

SRU is starting an initiative called “You Rock” to maintain a positive campus culture and recognize people for their acts of kindness.

#### *If you want to recognize someone for their kindness,*

1. Visit Old Main, Room 201, to pick up a small rock that says, “You Rock.”
2. Give the rock to a kind person as a token of appreciation.

#### *If you receive a rock,*

1. Take it to the information desk attendant at either the Smith Student Center, Bailey Library or the Aebersold Recreational Center.
2. Receive a card to fill out with your name and email address and drop it in the “You Rock” box.
3. Give your rock to someone else who performs an act of kindness to keep the cycle going. Cards will be drawn occasionally from the “You Rock” boxes to select random winners of prizes.

### **Pillar #4 Financial sustainability and resource stewardship**

Improve decision-making to appropriately fund initiatives that generate value

Investment vs. Expenditures: Recent concerns over the financial health of our PASSHE peers has raised concerns regarding the SRU reserves. PASSHE has developed a Financial Health scorecard, which is used to determine the overall financial health of each university. The score card has four separate but related categories.

- Annualized Student FTE-combines full-and part-time student credit loads and equates those totals to an annual full-time equivalency (July 1 through June 30). Green requires increases or relatively stable, which is characterized as less than a 2% decline in the past two years. SRU is currently considered yellow but will be moving into the green category with the data from the AY 23-24 entering class.
- Annual Operating Margin-shows the impacts of both pricing and operational decisions on financial health. Annual revenues minus annual expenses divided by the annual revenue. Green requires a 2% or higher increase with a 3-year moving average. SRU is green in this category demonstrating a sound operating margin without the use of reserves. Deferred maintenance and capital projects could decrease this margin as reserves would be invested.
- Primary Reserve Ratio-showing how long an institution could function using its expendable net assets. Expendable financial resources (unrestricted plus temporary restricted) divided by annual operating requirements (total expenses). SRU is in the green category. Reserves necessary at our operating budget requires \$79 million in reserves.
- Minimum Reserve-Cash within all funds, with the exception of restricted and agency, to cover at a minimum 90 days of operating expenses based on prior year financial statement. SRU is currently in the green. 180 days of operating expenses requires \$71.5 million in cash reserves.

These metrics provide guidelines for how we can and should utilize our reserves. In order to ensure our overall financial health, we will adhere to the current guidelines and as such will ensure that we maintain at least \$79 million in cash reserves. This allows us to invest approximately \$10 million. We are adopting an invest-not-spend approach to utilizing our reserves. We will approach each investment with an approach that considers long and short-term return on investment. We will also be considering investments that advance our strategic plan. Additional information on this approach will be provided in the Finance Committee.

#### **Pillar #4 Financial sustainability and resource stewardship**

##### **Engage in environmentally sustainable practices**

There has been a great deal of discussion during previous Council of Trustees meetings regarding the Green Fund. The policy has been amended in accordance with the agreed upon language, and as such the bylaws will be voted on during the September 2023 meeting. Additionally, we have been exploring other green projects.

- *Recycling during WOW.* During move-in 2024, we will be providing a receptacle for all of the cardboard used by students to move into student housing. During the move-in process for the 2023 fall term, we noticed significant amounts of cardboard being thrown away. We feel that we can significantly reduce the amount of trash and increase the amount of cardboard sent to recycling if we provide instructions, additional trained staff, and a large recycling receptacle. The Green Fund will be used to fund any expenses related to this activity. This will be organized by Student Life.
- *Digital Rock.* We are exploring converting the majority of The ROCK magazine to a digital format. We have begun discussions for the Spring 2024 edition. Recipients of the fall 2023

paper version will be surveyed regarding their format preferences. The PR and Communications team is exploring various vendors to support the move to a digital format. We will continue to offer print versions to a small percentage of our alumni and community readership. We estimate significant savings with the move to the digital format as well as a significant decrease in the use of paper. There will be initial expenses related to migrating content into a digital format. As such we will use the Green Fund to cover some of these expenses.

- *Digital Commencement.* We will be converting the commencement programs to a digital format. We will print a very limited number of programs. We will provide graduates and their guests with a QR code which will allow them to download the commencement program. Limited copies will be available. We estimate significant savings with the move to a digital format. We also estimate a significant decrease in the use of paper and in the amount of paper waste created by the ceremony. We do not foresee the need for any investment from the Green Fund to support this shift to a digital format.

#### **Pillar #4 Financial sustainability and resource stewardship Increase gifts, grants, internships, and sponsored research**

*Comprehensive Campaign.* As is clear from the strategic plan, financial security and resource stewardship is paramount to the long-term success of the University. A capital campaign was initially launched in 2019, but momentum stalled, and the process has not moved forward over the past several years. Prior to my official start date, I met with Dennis Prescott from bwf consulting in Denver. Dennis shared the Feasibility Report dated December 2019. The report is attached as an appendix to this report. Samantha Swift and I met with him on September 14, 2023. The plan that has been proposed is out dated at this point, and additional data is necessary prior to moving forward with a comprehensive campaign. Dennis will provide SRU with a proposal for next steps with an accompanying proposed budget. After this has been reviewed, we will determine next steps. The goal is to engage all of the affiliated entities in a collaborative approach to “work together, purposeful planning, address challenges, celebrate achievements, great expectations.” As is customary, I’ll leave you with a sampling of news about our University, students, faculty, staff and alumni:

#### **SRU’s computing program receives reaccreditation**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-092123a>

SRU’s computing program received its reaccreditation with the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology through September 2029.

#### **SRU receives Telly award for advertising video**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-092123e>

SRU received a Telly Award in the education institution category for regional television advertising.

#### **SRU recreational therapy program recognized by ATRA**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-092123d>

SRU’s recreational therapy program received several honors at the American Therapeutic Recreation Association’s 2023 Conference, Sept. 9-12, in St. Louis. SRU earned the ATRA’s Excellence in Education Award, which recognizes an institution of higher education that has distinguished itself through outstanding contributions to the recreational therapy profession.

### **SRU among PASSHE universities to receive Keystone LSAMP Alliance grant**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-092123c>

SRU and three other universities from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education recently received approval for funding of the Keystone Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation Alliance. SRU, along with East Stroudsburg, Millersville and West Chester, are collaborating to increase and retain unrepresented minority students in higher education to prepare them to graduate and work in STEM fields or progress to graduate school.

### **SRU named a top 50 'Best Regional University' in 2024 U.S. News Best College rankings**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/091923a>

SRU was recognized within several rankings published in U.S. News & World Report's 2023-24 Best Colleges guidebook. SRU ranked 50th on the "Best Regional Universities North" list, up 35 spots from last year, and 17th for "Top Public Schools – Regional Universities North." SRU also ranked 22nd among regional universities in the North for "Best Colleges for Veterans."

### **SRU group receives award for conservancy research in Pennsylvania state parks and forests**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-091223a>

A group from SRU received a \$19,990 award from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy through Indiana University of Pennsylvania. As part of the grant, the group will document indigenous forest resource practices and create interpretive media meant to foster inclusive community engagement in Pennsylvania's State Parks and Forests.

### **SRU earns validation for cybersecurity program from the National Security Agency**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-091223c>

SRU's cybersecurity program has been validated by the National Security Agency for a National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Program. The NSA awards designations to institutions that commit to producing cybersecurity professionals who will reduce vulnerabilities to national infrastructure.

### **SRU signs six articulation agreements with Butler County Community College**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/090623a>

SRU and Butler County Community College have signed six new articulation agreements creating more opportunities for BC3 students to transfer to SRU and earn their bachelor's degrees. These agreements will help save students time and money by opening 13 new formal transfer pathways, bringing the current total of formal pathways between the two Butler County schools to 46.

### **SRU recognized in Washington Monthly's 2023 national rankings and on its "Best Bang for the Buck" list**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/090523a>

SRU was recognized in the Washington Monthly's 2023 College Guide and Rankings as a top Master's University. SRU was also included among its "Best Bang for the Buck" colleges. Washington Monthly's editors rank four-year schools based on their contribution to the public good in three broad categories: social mobility, research and providing opportunities for public service.

### **Thirteen SRU faculty earn ACUE educator credential**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-083023a>

Thirteen SRU faculty members are part of the first cohort at SRU to become credentialed educators by the Association of College and University Educators, which is the only nationally recognized collegiate teaching credential endorsed by the American Council on Education.

### **SRU group performs at National Flute Association convention**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-083023e>

Cassandra Eisenreich, a SRU associate professor of music, performed and conducted at the National Flute Association Convention, Aug. 3-6, in Phoenix, Arizona.

### **SRU's homeland security program recognized by CollegeRank**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/082223a>

SRU's homeland security program was named to CollegeRank's list of the 35 Best Bachelor's in Homeland Security. CollegeRank's editors ranked SRU's homeland security program ninth in the nation. Rankings were based on potential salary for students after graduation, individual program accreditation and overall affordability.

### **SRU named a Money Best College for 2023**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/081523a>

SRU was recognized by Money.com on its list of the Best Colleges in America for 2023. Money evaluated more than 2,400 four-year colleges in the country and selected just over 700 of those for its list based on quality, affordability and student outcomes.

### **SRU signs agreement with Widener Law Commonwealth to establish 3+3 law degree program**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/080423b>

SRU and Widener University Commonwealth Law School have signed an agreement providing SRU students from most bachelor's degree program the opportunity to complete their undergraduate degrees and law degrees in six years.

### **Giant leap for women: SRU alumna Angela Baker among the trailblazing female coaches in the NFL**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/072623a>

A growing number of female coaches are making an impact on the sidelines of NFL games. More than a dozen full-time female coaches are now employed by NFL teams. Among them is Angela Baker, a 2021 SRU graduate, who is entering her second year as an offensive quality control coach for the New York Giants.

### **SRU students recognized for Up to Us case competition**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-072523a>

Three student groups from a SRU Policy Analysis and Evaluation course placed in the top five among national submissions for the Up to Us Civic Solutions Case Competition.

### **Irlbacher appointed to Gehring Academy's senior faculty**

Scott Irlbacher, SRU director of student conduct, was appointed as senior faculty for the Donald J. Gehring Academy, July 17-20, in Detroit, Michigan. The Gehring Academy is an annual summer institute hosted by the Association for Student Conduct Administration for new student conduct professionals and new directors of student conduct offices.

### **McGinty selected for NEH's Rust Belt Humanities Lab**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/good-news-072523c>

Patrick McGinty, a SRU assistant professor of languages, literatures, cultures and writing, was among 25 scholars selected for the National Endowment for the Humanities' Rust Belt Humanities Lab.



### **SRU named a College of Distinction for the 10th straight year**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/071023a>

SRU has been named a College of Distinction for the 2023-24 academic year. This marks the 10th straight year that SRU received this recognition for its commitment to providing a high-quality undergraduate education focused on hands-on learning, strong student-teacher relationships, a vibrant campus life and successful outcomes.

### **SRU professor and alumnus rocks the Tribeca Film Festival as a guitarist with The Vindys**

<https://www.sru.edu/news/061323a>

John Anthony, a SRU music instructor who also graduated from the University, is the lead guitarist for The Vindys, an emerging rock band based in northeast Ohio that is catching a lot of attention for their music, as well as in the film and sports industries. Earlier this year, The Vindys' music video for their song "Bugs" was selected for the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City, where it premiered with eight other music videos.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen S. Riley, Ph.D.

President

### **President Riley's ppt. presentation to SRU Council of Trustees:**

<https://www.livebinders.com/b/3433151>

## **Committee Reports**

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

Trustee Elise Michaux chairs the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and provided the following report.

Dr. Michael Zieg provided an update on faculty teaching, professional development, accreditation, and scholarship. This semester, faculty are teaching over 1500 sections of 850 different courses, along with supervision of internships, independent studies, and individualized instruction courses. Faculty participated in a wide range of professional development programs, including a series of workshops during the summer, building a sense of community along with individual skills. In addition to six programs accredited or reaccredited last year, Civil and Mechanical Engineering completed a very positive initial accreditation site visit just days before the council meeting. Faculty and staff have been active in scholarship, producing many research and creative works and last year received a record amount of external grant funding.

Dr. Anthony Jones reviewed the activities and accomplishments of the office of DEIB. The office has increased its programming with new initiatives during Week of Welcome and a new Awards Ceremony, along with the well-attended "Power of Stories" series. They are increasing outreach efforts, including the "Spotlight" series introducing students to Cabinet, Trustees, and SGA leadership through social media, and through the DEIB Debrief newsletter circulated to campus. The office is expanding its training activities, speaking to FYRST seminar sections, the University Forum, and will be engaging faculty at college-wide meetings. Finally, Dr. Jones updated Council on Search Advocates and alumni engagement efforts, as well as providing status reports on office renovations and the DEIB Strategic Plan.

Dr. Amanda Yale provided an enrollment update for summer and fall student enrollment and registration. Summer term total headcount and credits were up, with undergraduate numbers slightly down and

graduate numbers up significantly. Fall term headcount and credits are up across the board, including all-time highs in graduate enrollment. The Fall 2023 freshman cohort is 1535, 76 up from last year, mostly from the primary market. Transfer enrollment is also up: 519 new transfers enrolled this fall, an increase of 44. New graduate students increased by 27 students for summer and 31 students for fall 2023. Freshman applications are up for next year by over 200. Daily visits and event participation are also up, which is a positive early signal. Finally, Dr. Yale provided a reminder of the projected changes in high school graduates, both state-wide and in Western PA. After small increases through 2024 and 2025, the number of high school graduates will decrease sharply over the following decade.

Dr. David Wilmes provided a summary of Student Affairs activities, particularly highlighting the impact of these activities on student retention. Week of Welcome was a great success, with over 500 volunteers welcoming over 2800 students to campus; over 6000 students participate in 40 events over 12 days. Student engagement is high. Activities and programs include Jump Start, campus recreation and intramurals, Rock the Weekend, and Hispanic Heritage Month. Dr. Wilmes also provided an overview of support being offered for Student Wellbeing, as well as his office's ongoing self-assessment and quality improvement. In response to a request from Council, he reviewed the current campus housing situation and temporary housing assignments being utilized this semester. He also discussed plans and options being considered for next year in light of the two-year residence requirement.

Trustee Michaux: Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.

Trustee Ionta: Thank you. Any questions?

There were no questions from the floor.

### **Finance and Administrative Affairs Committee (Agenda, Appendix D)**

Trustee Jeffrey Smith chairs the Finance and Administrative Affairs Committee and provided the following report.

The Finance and Administrative Affairs Committee met Thursday afternoon, discussed several topics, and submitted the following items for review.

Carrie Birckbichler, vice president for Finance and Administrative Affairs, presented the 2023/2024 budget to the committee that was based on the August budget workshop.

Carrie's presentation included some 2022/2023 highlights, enrollment data, budget assumptions as well as the actual proposed budget. Carrie also provided some information concerning the PASSHE Financial Sustainability metrics.

A motion to approve the budget will be made at today's meeting. I really want to publicly thank Carrie for all her work in preparing the budget information for us.

The committee received an update from Scott Albert, associate vice president, Facilities, Environmental Safety and Sustainability, concerning the Green Fund. Thanks to a greater awareness of the Green Fund during the past year, the balance of the fund has dropped from \$477K to \$330K. The bulk of the expenditures were made by staff and the remainder by faculty projects. No student initiatives were funded.

A resolution to sweep a portion of the fund to the general account and reduce the balance to \$75,000 will be brought forth today with the intent of maintaining the fund and encouraging its future use while eliminating the excess funds that currently exist in the account.

Holly McCoy, interim Chief Human Resources Officer, provided an update about employee retention. Employee exit interviews have shown that the biggest reasons for leaving the institution were the “lack of remote work options,” “non-competitive salaries,” and “lack of opportunities for advancement.”

Information items included:

- Report of contracts 4/1/23 to 6/30/23
- June Monthly Financial Report
- Facilities and Planning Projects List
- Human Resources Personnel Items
- BOG Summary/PPP Review
- Divisional Report

Trustee Smith: Chair Ionta, this concludes my report.

Chair Ionta: Thank you. Any questions for Jeff?

Trustee Taylor: Not a question for Jeff, but point of order for you, Mr. Chairman. You promised us in March that you were going to inquire with the accounting firm, CliftonLarson, regarding a provision of the report that they prepared related to the financial allegations and the allegations of financial impropriety here at Slippery Rock University in Feb. 2022. I will acknowledge I missed the June meeting, so perhaps you gave that report at the June meeting. What was the response from the accounting firm, CliftonLarson, who we employ and pay their fees, what was their response to our request, because when we had them here in December of last year at our meeting, we specifically asked them for a provision of that report, and in March we still didn't have that report, and you promised us you would address that issue with them. What was their response to you?

Chair Ionta: I said I would check into it. I talked with the Chancellor and again, he said the report is not being shared because it is a personnel item, he said there was transparency at Slippery Rock [University] and there was nothing wrong.

Trustee Taylor: Well, we don't trust the Chancellor and we do not know the Chancellor has credibility with regard to that report, if there was nothing wrong, I would think that sharing the report would be a very simple matter for the Chancellor to do.

Trustee Taylor: You never checked with CliftonLarson?

Chair Ionta: No, I checked with the Chancellor.

Trustee Taylor: Well, we asked that you check with CliftonLarson.

Chair Ionta: You asked that I check into it.

Trustee Taylor: We asked that you check with CliftonLarson because we pay Larson, they are the vendor and we spend money on them. We asked you in March to do so, you didn't do what we asked you to do. That's okay, but you didn't do that.

Chair Ionta: I said I would check into it, we didn't say how we were going to check into it.

Chair Ionta: I did call the Chancellor and he said there is nothing wrong. He said, 1) personnel item 2) Slippery Rock [University] has transparency, and he said there was nothing wrong. So, that's what I got from the Chancellor and that is what I am reporting.

Trustee Taylor: This given the history of the emails that we received from Dr. Mohammadi in February, which didn't address personnel issues at all, simply addressed financial improprieties in the budget at Slippery Rock University. That was the issue brought to our attention. Now you can hide behind the Chancellor's answer.

Chair Ionta: I'm not hiding behind the Chancellor's answer.

Trustee Taylor: Well, you're not getting the answer for us.

Chair Ionta: I got the answer.

Trustee Taylor: You got A answer, but you didn't get THE answer. Which is, why can't we have that report?

Chair Ionta: Because it is a personnel matter.

Trustee Taylor: It's not a personnel matter, it's a financial matter. Read the emails, go back and read the emails from Dr. Mohammadi.

Trustee Vessella: I want to go on the record and make a comment about this. How can...

Trustee Taylor: Stupid.

Trustee Vessella: anyone say there is transparency when none of us knows what that report reveals. There is no transparency period. I don't care whether it's a financial issue, a personnel issue, we sit here and vote on things regarding our budget, regarding fiscal soundness of this university, we do not know what was in that report, it doesn't get any simpler than that. It's an unacceptable outcome.

Trustee Vessella; I do have one other question for you, Jeff. Please remind me where the money for the Green Fund comes from.

Trustee Smith: From the University.

Trustee Vessella: How is the money derived?

Trustee Smith: \$5 per FTE, I believe, is contributed.

Trustee Vessella: So, it is student money contributed by students through a fee.

Trustee Smith: No, it's not a fee. The University takes it out of their general fund, but it is based on student FTE. So, technically, the university is setting it aside on behalf of the students.

Trustee Vessella: Yes, but it is based on the number of students, so it is basically based on tuition, which the students pay.

Trustee Smith: Depending on how you want to trace back, tuition goes into the general fund, it comes out of the general fund and is based on student FTE.

Trustee Vessella: Are the applications for the use of the Green Fund retained?

Trustee Smith: My assumption is they would be, there would be some sort of record retention, because it's a financial document.

Trustee Vessella: I'd like to see the listing of the applications against that money in this fund for the last couple of years?

Trustee Smith: Sure. I believe Scott has given us some of that, like yesterday, he gave us last year's information on one of the slides. But, yes, I'll follow up on that.

Trustee Vessella: Thank you so much.

Chair Ionta: Any other questions for Jeff?

There were no additional questions from the floor.

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

Trustee Joshua Young, committee chairperson, provided the following report.

The University Advancement Committee met this morning.

Interim Vice President Samantha Swift presented the 2023 fiscal year-end advancement update. The \$3 million goal was surpassed, having raised \$3,103,357 in private support, 46 current scholarships were increased and 14 new scholarships were established, including two \$100,000 endowed scholarships. There were 564 Founders' Society members, those who give \$1,000 or more annually, up from 550 the previous year. And we received an in-kind gift of physics equipment valued at \$350,000. Planning is underway to embark on a comprehensive fundraising campaign and this year's goal is \$5 million. This year's Sunset Serenade, which benefits Storm Harbor Equestrian Center, is Friday October 27th.

Kelly Bailey, director, Alumni Engagement, provided an update of Alumni Association activities. Summer's Alumni Weekend was attended by 250 alumni and friends and featured 28 events for alumni to participate in. The Alumni Board Retreat, SRU Alumni & Friends Golf Outing and an event in Cleveland rounded out the summer's activities. Fall is in full swing, with Homecoming less than a month away. In addition to traditional homecoming spirited celebrations, alumni will also be recognized for their professional achievements at the SRU Media and Communications Hall of Fame Ceremony and the Distinguished Alumni Awards. Additional events are also planned for the fall, including Backpacks to Briefcases and the Alumni Speaker Series.

David Hollenbaugh, executive director, SRU Foundation, presented an update on repair work on the Residential Suites, Building B, the continued progress on projects in Technology Park, and the Foundation's financial reports. During the months of June, July and August, significant work was done to repair and restore a number of rooms in Building B due to a water supply line break. Through the

collaborative efforts of the Foundation’s insurance company, SRU Facilities, and contracted services, the building was ready for student move-in. Special thanks to all involved. The projects in Technology Park continue to advance. The Subdivision Plan has been submitted, approved and the Police/ROTC project is awaiting final permitting before entering into the bidding process. The Foundation and Facilities will continue to work closely on this project. The Senior Independent Living Development project is also in the permitting and design phase and is making good progress. Dave also presented the Balance Sheet Summaries for the Foundation and SRUF Student Housing LLC and the investment portfolio.

Trustee Young: Chairman Ionta, this concludes my report.

Chairman Ionta: Any questions for Josh?

There were no questions from the floor.

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

Trustee Alfonso Angelucci, chair of the Governance Committee, provided the following report. Items addressed for action, discussion, and information were:

- Trustee Jeffrey Smith shared a brief PACT Update.
  - Announced there will be no PACT annual dues this year.
  - Trustee Angelucci thanked Trustee Smith for his report and for the spirited discussion sparked from his financial committee report-out.
- Trustees participated in a productive and thoughtful Council Workshop yesterday with President Riley.
  - Discussed board meeting structure and will further discuss this topic at the next quarterly business meeting.
  - Determine a one-day or two-day meeting format moving forward.
  - Trustees requested luncheon/dinners with groups of students – these will likely occur at the March and September meetings.
  - Developed “Meeting Norms” to move forward for Council action at the next meeting.
- Calendar mentions (fall 2023)
- SRU Council bylaws were included in the materials as information.

Trustee Angelucci: Chair Ionta, this concludes my report.

Chair Ionta: Any questions for Butch?

There were no questions from the floor.

### **Executive Session (Agenda, Appendix G)**

Council met this morning in executive session with President Riley and University Legal Counsel. No report; closed session.

## **ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

**Fiscal Year 23-24 Proposed Budget Request (TAB 7) (Appendix H)**

Trustee Smith moved, second by Trustee Angelucci, approval of the Fiscal Year 23-24 Proposed Budget Request. Roll Call: 8 Y, 2 N: motion carries.

## ROLL CALL:

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Domenic Ionta	Y
Matt Lautman	Y	Elise Michaux	Y
William McCarrier	Y	Jeffrey Smith	Y
Cierra Mitchell	Y	Robert Taylor	N
Suzanne Vessella	N	Joshua Young	Y

## Call for discussion:

Trustee Taylor: Mr. Chairman, this budget has no basis in fact or credibility as far as some of us are concerned because it is premised upon previous budgets that go back to 2020, 2019 and so forth. We've had notice of financial improprieties, allegations of financial improprieties in the budget, we have an audit form that keeps giving us clean budgets but never presents their report and as far as I am concerned this is a vote on a piece of paper that is completely unreliable and has no credibility. So, I am going to be a no vote.

**Green Fund Resolution (TAB 8) (Appendix I)**

Trustee Lautman moved, second by Trustee Smith, approval of the Green Fund Resolution.

Roll Call: 5 Y, 5 N: motion fails.

## ROLL CALL:

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Domenic Ionta	Y
Matt Lautman	Y	Elise Michaux	Y
William McCarrier	N	Jeffrey Smith	Y
Cierra Mitchell	N	Robert Taylor	N
Suzanne Vessella	N	Joshua Young	N

## Call for discussion:

Trustee Young: Mr. Chairman, we talked about this yesterday, but I just want to say something at the public meeting. So, a year ago this was brought up and I objected to that fund being swept. What happened in the time from then is that the Green Fund went back, revised its bylaws and did a more active promotion of the Green Fund which resulted in over \$200,000 in expenses out of the Green Fund in the time period. The Resolution to create the Green Fund was passed when myself, Suzanne and Bob were on the Council. Students came to us and asked for a student fee. At the time, the administration said that was not the best way to go forward, that we should take the funding based on student FTE out of the general fund and put it into a separate fund that would be administered by the administration. So, this was a student led initiative as I talked about yesterday. I don't know that students envisioned that students would be the ones always promoting and submitting grant applications or things like that, that it would be a fund that was innovative, mobile, unique, that we could do our part to become more sustainable and help the climate. As you've seen over the last year, our climate is in crises, we should be leaning into sustainability, not away from it. We should be doing more, if that means more promotion, more activity, whatever, it is, we should be doing that. We've seen over the last year that has happened and we have more grant applications from that. We can argue to the merit of those grants, or what not, but it's worked. So, I m asking Council to vote no on this, give it another year, [see] we where we are, and lean into this. Lean into sustainability, we are in crisis, and we need to do something and we need to do it fast. We can't

control what the world does, but we can control what happens here. So, I would ask my colleagues to vote no.

Trustee Lautman: I'll speak to the motion since I've spoken to it over the last six or nine months. When this came before us, it was because there was a balance of about \$477,000. The fund continues to get its annual distribution of \$67,000 or so and it's because it ballooned to almost seven times because it wasn't being necessarily used. My vote is not to eliminate, or to do anything but to put the remaining balance pit back into the general fund where it came from and keep the \$75,000 and then go ahead and use it because we learned through the last six or seven years, it wasn't being used. If it was being used as it was intended, then each year the grants would be given out, the fund balance would go to zero, and then the fund would be repopulated with \$67,000 this year. The money wasn't being used, that's how it came before us a year ago because we were looking to say here's money that is not being used. It's not to eliminate the reason or the purpose behind it, and I don't believe this doesn't promote it. It brings it back to where it would be if it was being used annually. That's why I moved for this motion and ask that everybody gives it consideration. I think Josh and I have had dialogue back and forth which I appreciate the different positions and I think it's just a matter of time, let's give it a vote one way or the other and move on with the issue.

Chair Ionta: Any other comments?

Trustee Vessella: I'd like to support Josh's stance on this. I don't think this was ever intended to be a zero-balance fund. I think it was supposed to be grown so that we could support student-initiated larger projects. To really show that we are a green university. I think it's time to put the money where our mouth is. I wholeheartedly support Josh on this and I encourage a no vote.

Trustee Taylor: Mr. Chairman, this is another issue of either walking the walk or talking the talk, if you do this and you sweep this money away and put it back in the general fund, you are absolutely acting and walking in a fashion that is 180 degrees removed from what you talk about. I don't think that if we do this that we can pat ourselves on the back about being a green campus or being environmentally conscience, or eliminate commencement programs or whatever because that's just talk and this is an opportunity to walk the walk again and demonstrate that this campus truly is a green campus and is sustainable and is worried about the environment, which I think our students are. I don't know what happens with this fund or why students do not apply for this money, but there must be a breakdown in the management of the system. If nobody is applying for available funds and they are just sitting there, we would be saying that anything we talk about regarding the environment going forward is a superficial gesture if we vote to put most or all of this money back into the general fund. I think this is a complete hypocrisy that we would do this right now after all the times we pound our chests about how environmentally concerned we are as a campus.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Meeting Dates:**

March 21-22, 2024

June 13-14, 2024

### **Contracts: (TAB 9) (Appendix J)**



**Budget/Financial Update (TAB 10) (Appendix K)****Facilities & Planning Active Project List (TAB 11) (Appendix L)****HR Personnel Items (Tab 12) (Appendix M)**

- Instructional Appointments: Effective Academic Year 2023-2024
- Administrator Appointments
- Non-Faculty Athletic Coach Appointments
- Management Appointments
- Support Staff Appointments
- Emeritus Status
- Retirements
- Resignations
- Promotions: Effective Academic Year 2023-2024

**BOG Summary/\_CPP Review (TAB 14, Appendix N)****Committee Presentations (TAB 15)****Divisional Reports (TAB 16)****FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Trustee Angelucci: Mr. Chair, I just want to share now that I have gathered my thoughts a little better. I want to thank Dr. Riley for putting up the slide as part of her report. And, I really want to thank Samantha for her work in establishing that scholarship. You were just tremendous and what a great asset you are to the university. I just want to thank you and that was outstanding. Thank you so much for the work you did.

Dr. Riley, I want to thank you for the norming session that you led yesterday. It was outstanding and I love the deep role you took in it, you grabbed the pen, you did the writing. Thank you. We talk about walking the walk, and right out of the gate you are doing that, so thank you. I would support a motion in the future at the December meeting possibly having Council consider voting on the meeting norms. Lastly, I am really proud of the faculty and staff, the instructional groups, the non-instructional groups, and the administrative team, and the work that you do day in and day out. Thank you so much for all of the support of the university and for the students. Thank you all so much for your support of the university. I'm proud to be an alum, I'm proud to be a trustee, and I'm proud of SRU!

I'd just like to take a moment to commend the staff of the on-line Rocket Student Newspaper. I've always enjoyed reading it. It seems to me that they have really taken the paper to a new level this year. It literally has become my primary source of what's going on at Slippery Rock. So far, this semester they have some really informative stories: the overcrowding of student housing, providing insight into what is a problem this year, and potential problems in the future. It was the Rocket that made me aware of the freedom of speech zone that was implemented last spring. The most recent article the Rocket did on student attendance at sporting events should be helpful to the administration and figuring out how to provide more support for our student athletes and non-attendees to try it out [go to an event] and enhance their college experience. And all this in just a little over a month. So, thanks to the Rocket staff and I don't believe any of them are here, but hopefully they keep doing what they do.

First, I want to welcome President Riley. This was a great two-days of meetings. I got a lot out of this. I think that everybody in the room feels your energy and we are ready to work with you to make this University better. I also thoroughly enjoyed the dinner last night and being able to talk to people and especially enjoyed my conversation with Cierra. We have some amazing students and I'd like to see more. I got to hear about her experiences, and I was maybe able to help a bit with her networking by sharing my experiences and learning about her future endeavors. Anytime I come here, I tell people on the eastern side of the state, you don't know what the rest of the state looks like and how beautiful it is if you don't come out here. This campus is one of the most amazing places on earth, and I am happy to be here and have the opportunity to give back.

President Riley: First, I want to thank Rachael Luther, she is our new administrative assistant in the President's Office. We wouldn't have all the materials and everything in this space without her help. So, thank you very much, Rachael.

Thanks also to Tina as well for making sure that everything runs on time. I never thought I would be a person who needed a handler, but apparently, I do. Tina does an amazing job with everything.

I also want to thank particularly the group [trustees] who was here yesterday and participated in our workshop together. We will do more of that as it will allow us to work together more effectively to the betterment of our mission which is why we are here. We had some good suggestions on the norms, some other procedural things, perhaps reading the mission at the beginning of our session, Josh suggested that to remind us who we are. I appreciate all of you and thank you very much.

Chair Ionta: Thank you to the staff, the Cabinet, the administration, and everyone who is out in the trenches each day. You are responsible for our success. We meet four times a year. On behalf of the Council, we appreciate all of your efforts.

With no further business, Trustee Young moved, Trustee Lautman second, to adjourn the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees business meeting. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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