

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES
Monday, November 20, 2017
Room 320, Smith Student Center**

A special meeting of the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees convened Monday, November 20, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill William McCarrier.

The purposes of this meeting is 1) to understand the current membership of the SRU Presidential Search Committee pursuant to Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education Board of Governors' Policy, Section B2 (b) (1-8) of *1983-13-A: Process for Recommending a Presidential Appointment*, and (2) to determine which, if any vacancies on the Search Committee are for positions appointed directly by the Council under the provisions of Board policy. The outcome should be a Council determination as to whether to fill those vacancies and with whom.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Chairman McCarrier called for a moment of silence in memory of Officer Brian Shaw. As you may know, Officer Brian Shaw, a New Kensington police officer and a 2013 graduate of Slippery Rock University, was shot and killed Nov. 17 in the line of duty.

This was a senseless tragedy and our thoughts and prayers are extended to his family, his friends, the community he served, and the lives he touched. We will remember Brian's success both in the classroom as a criminal justice major, and on the field as a member of The ROCK football team. Those close to Brian say he had an engaging personality, sensitivity to the needs of others and a passion for serving in law enforcement.

Attendance:

Trustees Participating: Alfonso Angelucci (by phone), Matt Lautman (by phone), Robert Taylor, Suzanne Vessella (by phone), Richard Wukich, William McCarrier, Jeffrey Smith, Senator Mary Jo White (by phone)

Trustees Not Participating: Thomas Breth, Monica Traggiai

Public Comments

Dr. Ben Shaevitz, President (SRU APSCUF); Professor, Physics and Engineering, SRU

On behalf of faculty and SRU APSCUF I wish to thank the Council of Trustees for affording me the opportunity to make a brief statement.

Presidential searches lie at the heart of an institution and the principle of shared governance. Even the **Association of Governing Boards** has stated: "The manner in which a governing board conducts a presidential search is a reflection upon the entire institutional community. It is

the responsibility of the board to ensure that the search is conducted as fairly and openly as possible, consistent with the values of the institution.”

Pennsylvania Act 188 Section 20-2009-A provides the legal authority for the SRU Council of Trustees to make a Presidential Appointment. In addition, PASSHE Board of Governors Policy 1983-13-A outlines the details for the “Process for Recommending Presidential Appointment.” This Board policy implores the Council of Trustees to elect or select 5 persons to the Search Committee from various constituencies. SRU APSCUF respectfully requests that the Council elect or select all 5 persons under its purveyance.

Section B.2.b.7 of the BOG Policy 1983-13-A also gives the Council of Trustees discretion to select 3 additional members to the Search Committee from within the University. SRU APSCUF respectfully requests that the Council use this discretion to select 3 additional students to the Search Committee in consultation with SRSGA. Our rationale is as follows – students are the largest stakeholder population at SRU and deserve proportional representation. SRU APSCUF believes that this discretionary action of the Council will send an extremely powerful and purposeful message to the University Community about the importance and worth of the student voice in the Presidential search process.

Thank you for considering our requests.

Dr. Itzi Meztli, Associate Professor, English, SRU

“Twist a Tourniquet on the Drip, Drip of Bad Publicity”

Good morning. Mr. Chair, Commissioner Bill McCarrier, Sen. Mary Jo White, Butler City Council Member-Elect, Jeff Smith, Members of the Council of Trustees, Interim President Philip Way, and my fellow colleagues, my name is Dr. Itzi Meztli; I’m an Associate Professor of English at SRU.

Respectfully before you, I am here today because I’m asking you to put “a tourniquet on the drip, drip of bad publicity,” pertaining to the way the University’s presidential-search process has been “mishandled,” especially in the treatment of one of its finalist candidates, Amir Mohammadi, our Vice-President of Finance and Administrative Affairs.

Having submitted more than 20 references from three different universities, as well as, having impeccable, managerial credentials, Dr. Mohammadi did not deserve to be defamed by the likes of a search-committee member—who is currently in the Council of Trustees--Bob Taylor.

Gleaned from the paper trail as posted on the online-Rocket newspaper, it’s obvious that the search committee was forced to deal with such a “Bully Taylor” because of his hurling—in the last moment—a baseless, “unethical” attack against Amir Mohammadi and two members of the search committee, resulting in embarrassing and negative publicity to our fine institution of higher learning.

Therefore, the SRU Council of Trustees should consider undertaking the following two actions:

#1) For the short-term, do not include Bob Taylor as a member of any, future, presidential-search committee for his attempts at sabotaging the initial, search process; and

#2) For the long-term, you should consider passing a “Resolution of Censure,” or of condemnation, against Bob Taylor, for his unprofessional behavior and asking him to resign immediately from the Council of Trustees; if he refuses, then pass along the resolution to PASSHE’s Board of Governors and let it handle it.

As a proud American of Mexican descent, I want to feel assured that a fellow person of color, someone such as Amir Mohammadi, a Persian-American, has every equal employment opportunity for advancement in rank or promotion—and that he or she be treated with utmost respect and be given full consideration—and not to be maligned for his or her “national origin.”

Therefore, I urge that you extend the presidential search by appointing new members to any vacancies of the search committee; that you send letters of apologies to those who were negatively affected by slanderous, false accusations; and that you move—without delay—to find two finalists for a new, permanent President of Slippery Rock University—without waiting for the appointment of a new State System Chancellor.

Finally, to Dr. Amir Mohammadi, I urge you, sir, to consider re-applying for the President’s position, as you are eminently qualified; you have an impressive and extensive list of administrative-job references; and you have, sir, in my opinion, unimpeachable integrity in the affairs of executive administration at the college-university level.

Introduction: Chairman McCarrier

Because this is a special meeting we will only be addressing the purposes for which the meeting was advertised.

I would like to say that this has been a tremendous amount of work done by the Committee Chair, Jeff Smith, through discussions with PASSHE to insure that as we proceed forward that it is done according to the rules. Jeff has also had many discussions with various members of the committee to encourage them to remain as members of the committee. Many of them were reluctant to stay on the committee for various reasons and a few chose not to continue. I would also like to add that at no time did Jeff Smith attempt to appoint committee members on his own.

I have also spent many hours on the phone over the past few weeks with the chancellor, vice chancellor, the deputy vice chancellor, the chief legal counsel and others at PASSHE. Again, this was to insure the process continues in a legal and proper manner. What we’re doing is not unprecedented, but I’m told it has not happened in over a decade.

Now this is where we stand in regards to the membership of the committee. I will go through the entire committee and their categories:

Council of Trustees:

Mr. Jeffrey Smith, chair
Mr. Thomas Breth

Mr. Robert Taylor

University Executive: (COT Appointed)

Ms. Molly Mercer, Associate Vice President, resigned from the committee
Dr. Amanda Yale, Associate Provost, Enrollment Management – suggested replacement (I have consulted with members of the administration and Amanda’s name was suggested. Amanda has been at SRU for more than 30 years and has participated in a previous Presidential Search Committee, so she is well aware of the process).

Non-instructional: (Appointed by the Union)

Ms. Amanda Nichols – resigned from the committee
Ms. Susan Elwell, alternate – resigned from the committee

Ms. Joan Allen, Architectural Designer II
Ms. Tina Renaud, alt., Clerk Typist II, Contracts

Non-Instructional: (COT appointed)

Mr. Michael White, Technology Applications Coordinator, Enrollment Management

Faculty: (appointed by faculty union)

Dr. Colleen Cooke, Professor, Parks, Conservation and Recreational Therapy
Dr. Kurt Schimmel, alt., Professor, School of Business

Faculty: (elected by faculty)

Dr. Christine Pease-Hernandez, Assistant Professor, Communication
Dr. Derrick Pitard, alt., Professor, English

Student: (Appointed by SGA)

Ms. Jaelyn Choma – will not serve (graduated)
Ms. Malika Fields, alt – will serve

Alumna/Alumnus (1) and an alt., selected by the Alumni Association:

Lisa Holmes – resigned from the committee
Don Huddart – will serve

At large: (COT Appointed)

Corinne Gibson, will serve
Seungku (Steve) Park, will serve
Scott Albert – resigned from committee

(Some of you have suggested that we should have a member of the SRU Foundation on the committee. I contacted the Foundation Board and Chair Doug McMullen has forwarded the name of Ms. Janet Sargert. Janet is a distinguished Alumna of SRU and a retired attorney with a very impressive resume.)

Staff support – non-voting:

Mary Hennessey, Assistant to the Provost

The Chancellor has not yet named the State System Liaison or the University President who will serve on the committee.

ACTION

Chairman McCarrier called for a motion to approve the search committee as it stands. Trustee Smith moved, second by Trustee Angelucci, to approve the members of the search committee members as stated. Following questions/discussions, Trustee Wukich called for a motion to amend.

Motion to Amend: Trustee Wukich moved, second by Trustee Taylor, approval to appoint a student to the search committee, #3 position, at-large.

Roll Call: 3 yes; 5 no. Motion fails.

Alfonso Angelucci	N	Matt Lautman	N	Jeff Smith	N
Robert Taylor	Y	Suzanne Vessella	Y	Senator White	N
Richard Wukich	Y	William McCarrier	N		

Original Motion: Trustee Smith moved, second by Trustee Butch Angelucci, a motion to appoint Janet Sargert to the search committee, #3 position, at-large.

ROLL CALL: 4 yes; 4 no. Motion fails.

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Matt Lautman	N	Jeff Smith	Y
Robert Taylor	N	Suzanne Vessella	N	Senator White	Y
Richard Wukich	N	William McCarrier	Y		

Motion: Trustee Lautman moved, second by Trustee White, approval to appoint Amanda Yale to the executive position on the search committee, replacing Molly Mercer.

ROLL CALL: Unanimous. Motion carries.

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Matt Lautman	Y	Jeff Smith	Y
Robert Taylor	Y	Suzanne Vessella	Y	Senator White	Y
Richard Wukich	Y	William McCarrier	Y		

Motion: Trustee Lautman moved, second by Trustee Wukich, approval to appoint two non-instructional persons, one (and an alternate) selected by the non-instructional bargaining units. The persons recommended are: Joan Allen to the non-instructional position on the search committee, with Tina Renaud serving as alternate.

ROLL CALL: Unanimous. Motion carries.

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Matt Lautman	Y	Jeff Smith	Y
Robert Taylor	Y	Suzanne Vessella	Y	Senator White	Y
Richard Wukich	Y	William McCarrier	Y		

Motion: Trustee Taylor moved, second by Trustee Vessella, approval to reserve the #3, at-large position for a student.

ROLL CALL: 4 yes; 4 no. Motion fails.

Alfonso Angelucci	Y	Matt Lautman	N	Jeff Smith	N
Robert Taylor	Y	Suzanne Vessella	Y	Senator White	N
Richard Wukich	Y	William McCarrier	N		

Chairman McCarrier asked Mr. Ferguson, university legal counsel, to seek clarification from System officials in appointing the #3, at-large position. The question is whether that post can be filled by a member of an affiliated entity, such as persons associated with the Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc., or only those persons directly connected to the University such as students, faculty and staff.

In preparation to fill that final spot, the Presidential Search Committee is accepting applications to serve in that position. Students, faculty and staff interested in serving on the Search Committee should forward a letter of interest and resume by Dec. 1 to: Jeff Smith, Chair, Presidential Search Committee, 104 Maltby Avenue, Suite 308, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA.

Discussion

Trustee Taylor asked if there was clarification from PASSHE as to the process moving forward to advertise the position and review resumes. Also, is there a decision as to whether we continue with the current search firm or hire a new search firm?

Trustee Smith offered that the search firm (AGB) can continue at no additional cost. We will be advertising for new candidates, but the current candidates would also be considered, if they are still interested. New applicants will be combined with current applicants for review.

Trustee Taylor asked Chair McCarrier if there was discussion in his conversations with the Interim Chancellor re: the recent decision of the Board of Governors to select the interim president as the permanent president at Cheyney University. Is it her intent to recommend to the Board of Governors to simply appoint the interim president at SRU going forward? Chairman McCarrier indicated that this was a definite no, and that they would not override the policy established for this search.

Chair McCarrier announced the complete list of search committee members will be sent to the Chancellor's Office for final approval, once we have the complete committee. Thank you, trustees, for your participation in today's meeting. Happy Thanksgiving!

Having no additional items for discussion or action, Trustee White moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, *PLM*

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