



ESF Board of Trustees Meeting

February 28, 2020

Chair's Remarks

I want to thank Dr. William Powell, Professor, and Director of the Council on Biotechnology in Forestry, for his presentation on ESF's American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project. It has been remarkable to see Bill advance this incredible project that has brought great notoriety to the College, and now so very close to restoring this tree to its native range in North America. Over the next five years, Bill and his team have the goal of growing ten thousand blight-resistant American chestnut trees. Dr. Powell, the Board is committed to helping you achieve this vision. We look forward to working more closely with you.

Recognizing the departure of Trustee Talbot, this leaves our board with a vacancy in the Officer position of Vice-Chair. In accordance with our Bylaws, I would like to make a motion to nominate Trustee Fisher to serve in this role for a one-year term. I would like to begin Discussion by stating that, at our May meeting, I will identify a nominating committee which will spend the summer identifying officer candidates for Chair and Vice Chair to begin serving a 2-year term at the next annual meeting. Until then, I note that Trustee Fisher has demonstrated exceptional dedication and acumen since coming on board last summer, specifically in supporting our Lands Into Trust Committee, as well as Finance Committee. With my ongoing commitment to Chair the Presidential Search Committee, it is critical we have a Vice Chair that can be present on campus as needed and provide leadership support to this Board. I look forward to working more closely with him.

Speaking of the Presidential Search, I know many of the Campus Community are interested in an update. Proposals for Search Consultants to aid the Search Committee in its search were received this week, and we will begin a process to select the search firm next week and enter the contracting phase. I have met with all constituencies that make up the Search Committee, and they are all either deliberating or have selected their participant. The final membership of the committee will be advanced soon, well in advance of the contracting of a consultant. I will continue to keep the college community informed of Presidential Search activity, primarily by working closely with Academic Governance leadership.

I will note that the Chairs and leaders of the College's eight academic departments and programs have advanced a letter to SUNY Chancellor Johnson, of which I was copied, advocating for an internal search. The Chairs raise important and relevant reasons for this request, including timeframe of search, engagement of community, continuity of progress on campus, and financial and other costs of an extended search process. I look forward to discussing this letter with the Chancellor and SUNY Board of Trustees in the coming weeks.

Now, we have an important line-up of business items today, and we must get to it; specifically, discussion about campus diversity, equity, and inclusion; budget and progress on our deficit reduction plan; faculty workload; facilities master plan; and accreditation.

Remarks made by Trustee Matthew Marko, Board Chair.