

## SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES MINUTES

**December 6, 2024**

The Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees held its quarterly business meeting Friday, December 6, 2024, in the Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center and via Zoom conferencing. Chair Angèle Stoebener called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Meeting materials for this meeting can be found on the SRU Council webpage:

[COT Live Binder Dec 5-6 2024](#)

Trustee Stoebener opened the business meeting by first acknowledging the “Celebration of Giving” event held last evening. “For those of us who braved the weather last night thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful “Celebration of Giving” event hosted by President Riley, Vice President Troy Miller and the University Advancement team. The student performances were incredible and the opportunity to engage with donors and supporters of the University was a special time for all of us.”

“Many thanks to our talented student performers. All of the students who performed for us are acting majors with a concentration in musical theatre. Joseph, McKenna, Sofie, Lily, and Courtney are sophomores and Tyrese is a junior. The pianist, Dominico, is a sophomore piano performance major from the music department.”

“This was a wonderful collaboration with our Theatre and Music Departments. A special shout out to Ms. Emily Scott, head of Theatre Voice, and to Michael Boone, our technical director at SRU’s Performing Arts Center, for his technical expertise. Thank you.”

### **Recording of Attendance**

Trustees present: Dr. Alfonso Angelucci, Mr. Domenic Ionta, Mr. Matt Lautman, Mr. Dan Lavalley, Dr. Elise Michaux, Ms. Charli Severo, Mr. Jeffrey Smith, Ms. Angèle Stoebener, Mr. Robert Taylor, Mr. Joshua Young

Trustees absent: Mr. William McCarrier

Dr. Danette DiMarco, faculty liaison to the SRU Council of Trustees, was present.

### **Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Trustee Angelucci moved, second by Trustee Young, approval of the December 6, 2024, meeting agenda. Motion carries (TAB 6, Appendix A) [Business Meeting Agenda 12.6.24](#)

### **Approval of Minutes**

Trustee Young moved, second by Trustee Angelucci approval of the quarterly business meeting minutes of Friday, September 27, 2024. Trustee Taylor was recorded a negative vote on the motion. Motion carries (TAB 7, Appendix B) [COT Meeting Minutes 9.27.24](#)

Trustee Lautman moved, second by Trustee Angelucci, approval of the Governance Committee meeting minutes, Tuesday, November 19, 2024. Motion carries (TAB 8, Appendix C) [COT Gov Committee Meeting Minutes 11.19.24](#)

Trustee Young abstained from voting on the motion because he was not present at the meeting.

### **Public Comments**

Ms. Ella Bloom, SRSGA President presented an update of student government activities to the Council.

- We just had Safety Week about two weeks ago, so that is a week where we promote student safety across campus. So, this can include things like cyber security being prepared if there's a power outage and different things along those lines to help students really be prepared and safe on campus. We had a great event.
- And we just had our final Senate meeting on Monday. We were able to approve money to send students and the Marching Pride to the football game this weekend. So, Go Rock!
- We also were able to improve our dismissal and social media policy for student government to help put into policy what we are already following to inform the student body and make sure that everybody's aligning with our expectations.
- Looking ahead to next semester. Myself and my executive board will be meeting on December 16th to have our executive retreat to discuss moving forward into the next semester and hopefully putting out some great projects for the students. We are going a little bit wider scope on future initiatives.
- As far as my presidential duties are concerned, I sit on the Board of Student Government Presidents Committee for PASSHE, and I was nominated as vice chair, so the group is planning a presidents meeting so that all of the student government presidents can come together and meet each other and really build the connection among PASSHE schools. Because we really all should be super connected. But it can be really hard because we're all spread it out. We are hoping to meet, connect, and collaborate on some bigger projects moving forward.
- Speaking of bigger projects within that, I have started a project across PASSHE looking at all the food contracts for each of our schools. We did this thing in our meetings where we share one good thing happening on our campus and one that's not such a good thing.
- And pretty consistently we've seen across the merged campuses and the individual institution that all of the students are feeling a little displeased with the food that's being provided to us and the process for that.
- So, I have decided as I share, to start looking through contracts, looking through the inconsistencies that we're seeing across the universities and hopefully being able to put forward a letter to our food provider across the passive system saying, listen, this is what the students are upset about. So, we are going to do this through contract review, but also through surveys. This work will be addressed at our president's retreat so together we will be able to put out one survey across all the campuses. This will allow us to get some consistent data on the topic.
- With that, the project that I feel like we're always excited to talk about is the turf project.

- We met with our engineers and our credit managers a couple weeks ago to help kind of finalize some things and they were in agreement to request permits on November 25th. So, we are hopeful that we will be able to move forward with this project. We're talking about some more tedious design things right now, but once we get that ironed out, I'm super excited. I have mentioned the project a couple times to students in passing and I've heard nothing but excitement, especially from our students that do utilize that space for intramural sports. They're super excited to be able to utilize that space all year round.
- One final note, SGA adopted five children for the Angel Tree project as a way to give to the community and it was really fun. This was our way to say, we are here, and we want to support everyone.
- Ella completed her report and asked if there were any questions from the floor. Trustee Angelucci congratulated Ella on her excellent report and her appointment as Vice President on the state-wide SGA Board of Presidents. Trustee Angelucci shared that whenever the topic of the food service/food selections is brought up, I'm wondering have you met with the appropriate department/administrative representatives on campus to make sure that those concerns are being heard? Ella replied that she has met with ARAMARK administrators and one of the actions addressed was to negotiate the reduction of a 10-minute wait to 5 minutes. We are looking at a survey and coming together and meeting with them again but having more solid and concrete evidence to share with them. They are very evidence based. Each time I meet with them; they want examples of student complaints and evidence of the issues. We are collecting data to present to them. So, this ends my report. Thank you. Are there any questions?
- Trustee Lautman shared that his comment is more of a request. "Keep us in loop and keep reporting back as you and the other presidents from the other PASSHE schools get together and let's hear about the survey, how it's going and reported findings. It's important to have the student voice and having the student presidents getting together and meeting in this way. This maybe will expand to other areas, so good work. Keep us in the loop."
- Trustee Smith added, "that it's really great to get all the SGA presidents together, that they are meeting and getting to know one another. From a trustee perspective, it's good to know the different markets and products, because not everyone is the same. I think you'll really enjoy the experience and make a lot of friends. So, congratulations."

### **Commendations**

- Jennifer Cichra, Renfrew, Mechanical Engineering, NCAA Elite 90 Award Winner
- Brayden Long, Hanover, Health and Physical Education, William V. Campbell Trophy Finalist
- Anna Igims, McKnight, Special Education, NCAA Division II All-American
- SRU Women's Cross County Team, 2024 Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Champions

### **Presentations**

Partnership between College of Education and the SRU/SGA Child Care Center

- Julia Williamson, SGA Child Care Center
- Amy Orville, assistant professor, Curriculum, Instruction, Education Leadership

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Karen S. Riley, Ph.D.

President's Report  
Council of Trustees  
December 6, 2024, 11:00 a.m.  
Alumni House and Conference Center  
Slippery Rock University

### **Enrollment:**

Our attention has moved to Fall 2025, although we are working hard to make up some of the gap that was created by the lower number of transfer students for fall 2024. The information provided is as of November 17, 2024. These numbers change continually and as such the numbers presented in the presentations may vary from those listed below.

Winter 2024 numbers are down overall by 6.1%. Undergraduate headcount is down by -10.1% while graduate headcount is up by 4.6%. Overall FTE is down by 2.5% with undergraduate headcount down by 5% and graduate headcount up by 2.5%. Overall credit hours are down by 2.9% with undergraduate down by 5% and graduate credit hours up by 2.5%. These numbers are historically low but do appear to represent a movement away from undergraduate students taking courses during winter term. This will be evaluated moving forward. Future numbers will be presented rather than percentages.

Spring 2025 numbers reflect an increase year over year at this point in time. Headcount overall is up by 4.7% with undergraduate headcount up 4.7% and graduate up 4.9%. Credit hours are up 5.8% with undergraduate enrollment up 5.8% and graduate enrollment up 5.6%.

New spring deposits are typically small. We have a mixed result with new first-year deposits being up with transfers showing a decline.

The pattern of decline in transfers is concerning and has been an issue for several years in a row. This is something that our VP for Enrollment Management is aware of and is working to address.

### Spring 2025 NEW FIRST-YEAR DEPOSITS:

- First-Year Spring Deposits: Deposits are up by +28.
- First-Year Spring Domestic Deposits: Deposits are up by +16.
- First-Year Spring International Deposits: Deposits are up by +12.

### Spring 2025 NEW TRANSFER DEPOSITS:

- Transfer Spring Deposits: Deposits are down by -21.
- Transfer Spring Domestic Deposits: Deposits are down by -21
- Transfer Spring International Deposits: Deposits are even with last year.

### Fall 2025 NEW FIRST-YEAR DEPOSITS:

- First-Year Fall Deposits: Deposits are up by +60.
- First-Year Fall Domestic Deposits: Deposits are up by +56.
- First-Year Fall International Deposits: Deposits are up by +4.

**Fall 2025 NEW TRANSFER DEPOSITS:**

- Transfer Fall Deposits: Deposits are down by -91.
- Transfer Fall Domestic Deposits: Deposits are down by -8.
- Transfer Fall International Deposits: Deposits are even with last year.
- Transfer Fall QUIE Deposits: Deposits are down by -83 (timing).

**GRADUATE:**

- Graduate Winter Deposits: Deposits are up by +15.
- Graduate Spring Deposits: Deposits are down by -6.
- Graduate Summer Deposits: Deposits are down by -3.
- Graduate Fall Deposits: Deposits are up by +12.

Our campus daily visits, high school programs, Saturday campus visits, and Open Houses are all reporting strong participation numbers. We are continuing to prepare for the pending enrollment cliff and are exploring the implementation of the Common App to increase the top of the enrollment funnel. We will provide additional updates as this progresses.

Financial Picture/Budget Scenarios: The revenue and expenses are consistent with the proposed budget and are consistent with FY 24. There have been no unanticipated events resulting in significant changes in revenue or expenses.

Construction Projects: There are several projects that have been completed and/or are in various stages of completion. The Women's Softball Field is on track for both time to completion and budget. The revenue raised for the project will be applied to offset the cost of the project. The renovations to the Student Success Center have been completed and we will be moving departments and individuals into their new places beginning the third week in December. We will have a ribbon cutting in January and a small open house event for the community. The drawings for the conversion of Rhodes from the Health Center to additional student housing have moved from conceptualization directly to planning.

**Strategic Plan:****Implementation**

The strategic planning process involved meaningful contributions and thoughtful work from across the campus community. In fall 2024, we began the formal implementation phase with the SRU faculty and staff. There were previous activities that started during AY 23-24; however, these initiatives were primarily unit specific and led by cabinet members. With an emphasis on support and accountability, we are progressing toward our ambitious goals.

**Highlights****Pillar Working Groups**

Eighty-four Slippery Rock faculty and staff volunteered to support implementation of the four pillars. The pillar working groups are led by pillar co-chairs and are responsible for maintaining a broad view of the pillar's progress and leading specific activities.

## Implementation Plans

Each of the strategies in the strategic plan has several actionable activities. Cabinet members and pillar working groups assumed the lead on various activities and are planning action items by semester. At the end of the semester, leads will update their implementation plans and submit evidence of completed action items.

### Action Items in Fall 2024

More than 40 action items are currently underway. Examples:

**Goal 1.1:** Develop a culture of recognition and engagement and live the identity across the campus.

**Strategy 1.1.b:** Strive to create an environment that encourages wellness and emphasizes teamwork and problem solving.

**Activity:** Introduce wellness sessions through OPTUM/SEAP in collaboration with Leadership Development

**Action item:** Contact OPTUM to schedule on site wellness sessions to take place by Spring 2025.

**Goal 2.1:** Support the expectation of excellence and goal attainment.

**Strategy 2.1.a:** Offer a mission-driven and market-responsive mix of academic programs.

**Activity:** Develop new program in Nursing

**Action item:** Send restructuring plan to SBN.

**Goal 3.4:** Engage in environmentally sustainable practices.

**Strategy 3.4.a:** Implement infrastructural improvements and renovations using the Climate Action Plan/Carbon Neutrality plan as a roadmap to create greater efficiencies, cost savings, and increased reliance on renewable energies.

**Activity:** Decrease the amount of waste by increasing the use of digital formats.

**Action item:** Implement DocuSign into most frequently used forms.

**Goal 4.1:** Structure the university for success.

**Strategy 4.1.b:** Use robust data analytics and relevant information to provide actionable insights to enhance student success and operational efficacy.

**Activity:** Participate in a space utilization study.

**Action item:** Create scope of work and commence project.

Although there are many initiatives within the strategic plan that could be highlighted, the following represent a sampling of activities within the various pillars.

### Pillar #1 Robust, Supportive and Inclusive Culture

**1.3.a:** Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan.

Elevate the reputation of SRU through earned media.

University Marketing & Communications has joined with Enrollment Management to create the Integrated Marketing Committee (IMC) to bridge the gap between divisions across campus. The

IMC's charge is to collaboratively identify and prioritize activities that advance the academic reputation, digital presence, and brand perception of the University. The goal is to crystallize our position in new and established markets.

By investing in peer-reviewed research with a leading higher education digital strategy agency partner, the group will conduct vital market research as part of brand platforming. This is the first time the University will develop market intelligence to most effectively elevate its perception and desirability with key audiences in new and established markets. This strategic investment will help further position us for growth in advance of the anticipated decline in high school graduates, which is particularly acute in our area and throughout the Middle Atlantic and New England region.

Core research includes a competitive analysis, a brand-lift analysis, and a website and analytics audit. The group will also workshop new creative design concepts. UMC and EM will steward the research activities this academic year with essential input from representatives across the university, including alumni, advancement staff, prospective and current students, faculty members, and others.

Strengthening our position in the marketplace with traditional-age college-bound prospects and their households is an important step in enrolling best-fit students and is a key contributor to further strengthening our excellent retention and persistence rates. The IMC plans to identify strategic working groups, such as graduate programs, transfer and "finish what you started" students, social media engagement, mapping and wayfinding, and pluralism and diversity, to further refine and focus its efforts.

### **1.1.c Develop a culture of recognition and engagement.**

Last year we instituted a system of recognition for the coaches and athletes who perform exceptionally well. Any team that wins the conference will have a dinner at the President's Residence. For our fall sports Women's Cross-Country won the PSAC conference again. As such they were recognized through a dinner at the President's Residence. The Women's team took second place in regionals and as such will be traveling to Sacramento to compete at the national meet.

## **Pillar #2 Commitment to Academic Discovery and Human Growth**

### **2.3: Improve retention and graduation rates.**

SRU, BC3, and CCBC will participate in the Aspen-AASCU Transfer Student Success Intensive which is a year-long program for leaders and teams from pairs of community colleges and four-year institutions to develop scaled plans to improve transfer student outcomes. Transfer numbers are down and have been down year over year for the past six years. This is a concerning trend. We need to ensure that we are using the best practices to both recruit and retain transfer students and we are thrilled to have been selected to participate in this national training intensive. "Each year, 10 to 15 pairs of colleges—composed of one American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU) four-year institution and one community college—work together to build a Strategic Transfer Excellence Plan (STEP). The plan is designed to reform transfer practices so

that many more students who begin in the community college can successfully transfer and attain a bachelor's degree. Over 12 months of virtual sessions, participants learn from research presentations, examine customized data reports, and engage in facilitated conversations in order to create and revise plans to implement research-based strategies to improve transfer student success." (ASSCUE website). We will update the COT on the progress of this training and on the outcomes of the plan.

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

**4.1.d:** Implement policies and practices to optimize unit-level performance, including the acquisition and allocation of technological, financial, and physical resources.

During the past several months we have experienced some significant events that have highlighted the need for a complete and comprehensive update on our emergency and business continuity plans. We have engaged the administrative council. We are updating the business continuity plan which had not been updated for 10 years. We are establishing a crisis team and a communication cascade for various scenarios. We are also exploring the supplies and structures that we need to have on hand to deal with various emergencies.

When we hired the new director of Marketing and Communications, we asked him to do an audit of our systems. He realized that we did not have a centralized alert system and proposed the use of Omni Alert. This has been rebranded as Rock Alerts. Rock Alerts is Slippery Rock University's Emergency Notification System. The free service will announce weather delays and closings and provide real-time alerts about emergency situations. The utility of this system will be expanded for various uses. Marketing and Communications is also working with the SRU police to create single point communications and notifications. We have also used the ribbon on the website to inform community members about events. We will continue to expand the system as a part of our overall approach to improve our communications, emergency preparedness, and business continuity. The website has been created and can be viewed here. [Rock Alerts](#)

Cyber security is a huge issue in our society today. Institutions of higher education are one of the biggest targets. As such we have explored ways to mitigate our risk. One of the most effective tools for addressing threats is training. As such our IATS department has created an online training module. We have reviewed this at Administrative Council and will be asking our faculty and staff to complete it during the spring semester. We are also working on ways to educate our students about cyber threats and how to deal with them. This will be an evolving process as the threats continue to change. We will continue to do our best to mitigate risks to the university.

**4.2.a:** Increase gifts, grants, internships, and sponsored research.

Comprehensive Campaign. Troy Miller has provided each member of the COT with a copy of our Campaign Plan and will review during his presentation in the UA Committee Meeting.

Increase gifts and grants. We have submitted 9 grants since the last COT meeting totaling \$7,377,605. These grants are not only for faculty research and as such would be considered budget enhancing, but we are also submitting and receiving grants that are budget relieving. We



received \$26,000 to support the SRU police; a Small Rural Tribal Body Worn Camera grant for \$15,000; and a PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency grant for \$21,000 for hiring and training police officers. The DCED grant proposal for police equipment, that was submitted by Joe Saeler at the Butler County CDC in November 2023, is still pending. This proposal was submitted by Aspire (the old grant writing consultant we had here at SRU) through the Foundation Office. The total amount requested was \$53,237.84.

One of the largest grants we have ever submitted was to the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Lab. Pennsylvania launched its search for the host of the state's fourth animal diagnostic lab. The lab, which will conduct tests and research on animal diseases, will be housed at a university or other public institution west of Interstate 99. The winning applicant will have up to \$6 million from the state budget to use for lab space, staffing, testing equipment, IT services, supplies and overhead. The lab is intended to improve farmers' access to lab services as Pennsylvania's animal ag sector expands and disease threats mount. The new lab is expected to test for avian influenza, mycoplasma, equine herpes virus and other pathogens. The state's three existing vet labs are the Pennsylvania Veterinary Laboratory in Harrisburg, Penn State, and the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center in Chester County. Together they performed 595,000 tests last year. But all three labs are east of Interstate 99, which runs from Bedford to Bellefonte. As a result, farmers in the western half of the state have faced long drives to drop off samples, relied on vet labs in other states, or simply foregone testing. We have moved to the question phase and will know soon if we won the grant.

### **Structured for success.**

#### Space Committee

The Student Success Center has been completed, and we will begin moving people and departments into their newly renovated spaces. These moves will create vacant spaces across the campus. There are many units and departments that would like to change locations for various reasons, including but not limited to; being closer to complimentary departments, serving students more efficiently, changing space needs, and accessibility. We need to approach these moves comprehensively in order to maximize our current spaces and to ensure that we are using our resources most efficiently. As such we have created a space committee to review proposals in a comprehensive context. This group is comprised of faculty, staff and administrators. The cabinet will make the final determination; however, these decisions will be made based on data provided by the committee and will include a holistic view of the needs of the university.

As is customary, I'll leave you with a sampling of news about our university, students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen S. Riley, Ph.D.  
President

### **UNIVERSITY RANKINGS**

#### **[SRU Named a 2025 Best Mid-Atlantic College by the Princeton Review](#)**

Editors of the Princeton Review have named Slippery Rock University one of the best colleges in its region for 2025. SRU was one of 97 institutions that appeared on Princeton Review's "Best Mid-Atlantic" list in the 2025 Best Colleges: Region by Region Guide.

**[SRU earns high ranking on Niche's list of 2025 Top Public Universities in Pennsylvania](#)**

Slippery Rock University is ranked No. 4 among public schools and first in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education, according to a new list released by Niche, a research company that produces an annual ranking of colleges and universities.

**FACULTY-STUDENT RESEARCH**

**[SRU faculty-student group presents at National Oral History Association Conference](#)**

A faculty-student group from the Slippery Rock University Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Writing Department presented research at the National Oral History Association Conference, Oct. 30 to Nov. 2, in Cincinnati.

**[Kemeny and students present at American Therapeutic Recreation Association conference](#)**

Betsy Kemeny, a Slippery Rock University professor of recreational therapy, presented two research projects with SRU students at the American Therapeutic Recreation Association conference, Oct. 12-15, in Kansas City, Missouri.

**[SRU faculty and students co-author and present articles about therapy dogs](#)**

Slippery Rock University faculty and students contributed to two articles about therapy dogs that were presented at conferences.

**[McClure and Yeh examines wrist-worn heart rate monitors](#)**

Payton McClure, a Slippery Rock University junior exercise science major from Reedsville, conducted research this summer to examine the validity of wrist-worn heart rate monitors under the advisement of Mingchia Yeh, an SRU assistant professor of exercise science.

**FACULTY SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE WORK**

**[Aroh co-authors book chapter and two articles](#)**

Adaeze Aroh, a Slippery Rock University assistant professor of public health services, recently co-authored a chapter of a textbook and two articles that were published in academic journals.

**[Jenny publishes first interdisciplinary textbook about competitive video gaming](#)**

Seth Jenny, a Slippery Rock University associate professor of exercise science, recently published and served as the senior editor for the book titled "Routledge Handbook of Esports."

**[Antonellis and Westman contribute to art exhibit in Pittsburgh](#)**

Theresa Antonellis, a Slippery Rock University gallery director and instructor of art, and Barbara Westman, an SRU professor of art, are having their art displayed at an exhibit hosted by the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh.

**[Abbs and Bechard co-author article published in Social Work Today Magazine](#)**

Kristie Abbs, a Slippery Rock University assistant professor of social work, and Thomas Bechard, an SRU assistant professor of social work, recently co-wrote an article that was published in Social Work Today Magazine titled "The Effects of Unconditional Acceptance on High-Risk Sexual Behaviors in Men Diagnosed with HIV."

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### [SRU students win competition and present research at American College of Sports Medicine conference](#)

Three Slippery Rock University students won the College Bowl competition hosted by the American College of Sports Medicine Mid-Atlantic Regional Chapter at the chapter's conference, Nov. 2, in Lancaster.

### [Three SRU students place fourth in National Student Production Awards](#)

Three Slippery Rock University students placed fourth in the Best Documentary category of the National Student Production Awards, hosted by College Broadcasters, Inc.

### [Mendenhall co-authors article about bird extinction in Science magazine](#)

Chase Mendenhall, a Slippery Rock University physician assistant graduate student from Pittsburgh, recently co-authored an article that was published in Science magazine titled, "The global loss of avian functional and phylogenetic diversity from anthropogenic extinctions."

## COMMUNITY IMPACT AND COLLABORATION

### [SRU event introduces local high school students to health care professions](#)

With nearly 2 million openings per year, health care workers are projected to be in high demand in the next decade, far more than other occupations, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Slippery Rock University is helping address the needs of the industry, not just by educating and training college students, but by introducing high school students to possible careers.

### [SRU recreational therapy students partner with older adults to hone phone skills](#)

Talking on the phone has become a lost art. A class at Slippery Rock University is helping students develop phone skills, all while establishing connections with older adults from the local community.

### [SRU installs deer exclosures on campus](#)

Imagine a world without deer. Organizers of a project at Slippery Rock University are providing students and the public a glimpse, albeit in two small, fenced-off sections of forest on campus known as "deer exclosures."

## FACULTY AWARDS

### [Bright named Member of the Year by the American Therapeutic Recreation Association](#)

Heather Bright, a Slippery Rock University assistant professor of recreational therapy, received the Member of the Year award at the American Therapeutic Recreation Association conference, Oct. 12-15, in Kansas City, Missouri. The award recognizes a current and active member who has made a significant contribution through exceptional committee work that supports and advances the recreational therapist profession.

### [Abney honored with 2024 PASSHE Keepers of the Flame Award](#)

Robertha Abney, a Slippery Rock University associate professor of sport management, received the 2024 Keepers of the Flame award from Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.

## ALUMNI STORIES

### [SRU alumni prepared to start teaching careers around the world](#)

Laura Jasinski came to Slippery Rock University to study elementary education and Spanish, but instead of teaching children a foreign language in the United States, she is now teaching English to kids in Spain. Jasinski is one of more than 15 recent SRU alumni who have taught abroad in the last year, and, like many, the opportunity was realized from experiences she had as a college student.

### [SRU alumna helps rescue animals for displaced families in hurricane-ravaged North Carolina](#)

Tera McIntosh, a 2006 Slippery Rock University graduate with a degree in therapeutic recreation services, has responded to recent devastation in her community of Clyde, North Carolina, through the animal rescue organization that she and her wife, Amy, operate. They mobilized volunteers, made sure donated supplies reached families in need and helped find temporary homes for dozens of animals that were displaced after Hurricane Helene hit the mountainous region of western North Carolina.

## ATHLETICS UPDATES

**FOOTBALL**, ranked No. 11 in the nation, has advanced to the quarterfinal round of the NCAA Division II playoffs for a second straight year with an 11-1 record. SRU has qualified for the national playoffs for six straight years, which is the second longest active streak among all Division II teams.

**MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY** placed fourth Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Championships and fifth at the NCAA Atlantic Region Championships.

**MEN'S SOCCER** finished 9-4-5 and 5-2-3 in PSAC play for its best season in nine years, including a 1-0 win over Seton Hill in the PSAC quarterfinals for The Rock's first PSAC tournament win since 2015.

**WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY** won their second straight PSAC title and the fourth in program history. The Rock also finished second at the NCAA Atlantic Region Championships to qualify for the NCAA Division II National Championships, where Anna Igims became the team's first All-America finisher since 2010 while leading The Rock to a 27th place finish.

**FIELD HOCKEY** posted a 4-12 record with the season highlight being a 2-1 overtime win on the road at Division I Mercyhurst.

**WOMEN'S SOCCER** went 9-6-4 and 8-3-3 in PSAC matches before knocking off nationally ranked IUP in the PSAC quarterfinals for their first playoff win since 2019.

**VOLLEYBALL** compiled a 12-14 record, including 5-9 in PSAC matches to tie for sixth in the West division.

### [Long named national finalist for Campbell Trophy](#)

SRU senior football player Brayden Long was named a national finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy®, becoming one of 16 scholar-athletes from all levels of college football considered for this prestigious award that recognizes the best in the nation for combined academic success, football performance and exemplary leadership.

### Cichra wins prestigious NCAA Elise 90 Award

SRU junior cross country runner Jennifer Cichra was named the 2024 NCAA Division II Women's Cross Country Elite 90 Award winner. The NCAA Elite 90 Award is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade point average at each of the organization's 90 National Championship finals sites.

## Committee Reports

### Academic and Student Affairs Committee (Agenda, Appendix D)

Dr. Alfonso Angelucci chairs the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

Dr. Zieg provided an update on two initiatives aimed at academic innovation. The search for an Associate Provost of Academic Innovation is underway, with the search committee currently conducting screening interviews and anticipating on-campus interviews at the start of the spring semester. SRU is also taking the lead in multiple innovative course-sharing opportunities. SRU is receiving French classes and offering Arabic and Japanese in partnership with East Stroudsburg and IUP. Physics has developed a comprehensive course-sharing program with IUP that will allow both universities to offer their Physics programs in a more efficient manner.

Dr. Wilmes provided an update on fall semester student engagement numbers and connected these efforts to the importance of recruiting and retaining students at SRU. He also provided an overview of student counseling and student support services, paying particular attention to how these areas address issues related to student mental health. Finally, Dr. Wilmes provided an update on Housing and Residence Life including fall 2024 occupancy, application timelines for fall 2025, and a timeline for the renovation of Rhoads Hall, which will add 40 additional beds to campus.

Michael May provided an enrollment update for the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2025 terms. The new nursing pathway has more than 70 applications to date while the new engineering programs are contributing to double digit increases in applications, offers, and deposits across the entire SRU engineering department. Nearly 2,000 prospective students and families have engaged campus through events hosted by the enrollment management division. Persistence scenarios were shared providing context as to how many students are impacted by shifts in retention rates.

Chair Stoebener, this concludes my report.

### Finance and Administrative Affairs Committee (Agenda, Appendix E)

Trustee Jeffrey Smith chairs the Finance and Administrative Committee who provided this report.

The Finance and Administrative Committee met this morning (December 6) at 8:30 a.m.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Chief The chief provided an excellent overview of the ASR / Clery Report and how it is compiled. Kevin Sharkey. The overall impression of his presentation was that the Slippery Rock Campus is a very safe place with an outstanding force.

The Chief was asked about the retention of officers, and he indicated it was difficult due to the salaries offered elsewhere.

On a personal note, I would ask that the President reiterate these retention issues during her meetings with PASSHE leadership prior to the next round of salary negotiations for these officers that do such an incredible job of protecting our campus.

Next, Carrie Birckbichler provided the quarterly financial update. As this is only based on the first quarter results, it is not as telling as future updates will be. One positive that was noted was that increased retention has aided the revenue numbers.

On the negative side, Carrie did foreshadow that the state appropriations may not be at the level requested. If the appropriations are not at the requested level, a tuition increase may be necessary.

Pillar #4 of the Strategic Plan items were highlighted during her presentation with progress being made around the Pillar points of Diverse Revenue Streams as well as Ensuring Alignment and Efficiency Between and Within Affiliated Entities. These Pillar updates help all of us keep focused on the Strategic Plan.

Upon the recommendation of the President, the committee moved the Affiliated Entities Certificate of Compliance to the full Council for approval.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 a.m.

Chair Stoebener this concludes my report.

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

Trustee Joshua Young, committee chairperson, provided the following report. The University Advancement Committee met this morning at 9:49 a.m.

Troy Miller, vice president for University of Advancement, updated the Council on the progress of the campaign and provided each council member with a copy of the campaign binder, which there will be a test on next meeting. (Laughs)

The plan includes prior consultant reports, campaign policies, manual development plan, a draft, five year plans for cultural philanthropy and alumni engagement.

Troy announced that Tony Robinson, Class of '93 and Regina Robinson, Class of '92 have agreed to act as campaign co-chairs and finally explained that the Advancement Office is being restructured to better manage the campaign and alumni engagement moving forward.

The case for support process for the campaign is on schedule. Projects have been approved and were allocated to five separate campaign buckets including Excellence and Innovation, Student Support and Engagement, Scholarships, Athletics, and another soon to be named.

Unrestricted internal subject matter experts are developing key case for support data and the Advancement Office will then transform that information into case statements that gift officers will use when working with donors and potential donors.

Finally, on September 30th, over 12 million was raised for the campaign and at the end of November, total raised is over \$14 million. (Applause)! That report was presented in the 'Campaign Bucket Report' that demonstrates how much cash is in the door, how much is pledged, and how much has been raised in planned gifts and gifts in common.

Don Huddart, Class of '87, Slippery Rock University Alumni Association Executive Committee member, updated the Council on Homecoming 2024 and announced that over 660 registered guests attended. Various other events took place during the semester including Veteran's Day ceremony, Backpack to Briefcases in Cleveland, and the 50th reunion of the classes of '72, '73, '74 PSAC Football Championship teams.

The association is also currently accepting nominations for the Board as well as for Distinguished Alumni Awards, Rock Solid 10 Under 10 awards, the Outstanding Seniors, and finally, upcoming events include the Erie Otters event, the annual Tour of Florida in March, and the SRUAA Scholarship and Awards Banquet.

Dave Hollenbaugh, executive director, SRU Foundation, Inc., on behalf of Mark Palmer, chair, who could not be with us today, provided a financial update, scholarship update, and an update on foundation activities. Dave reviewed the balance sheet and announced net assets of over \$54 million. Dave also shared the balance sheet summary for the SRUF Student Housing LLC and provided a detailed asset allocation report. He explained scholarship processes, including annual and endowed and merit scholarships, and updated the Council on updates and enhancements to the scholarship administration that will begin with the current campaign. Dave provided student housing, capital plan, cozy home update, and the fundraising portfolio that he manages with University Advancement.

Finally, Dave reminded the Council that the Scholarship Stewardship Banquet is scheduled for April 5th, 2025.

That concludes my report.

Chair Stoebener, this concludes my report.

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

Trustee Elise Michaux, chair of the Governance Committee, provided the following report.

There were no presentations, two items for discussion and one action item.

One very significant update is that Council completed the President's evaluation process, (first-year, informal), and submitted the evaluation to the OOC, PASSHE.

#### **Action:**

1. **A Resolution** was brought forward appointing Trustee Young to continue to serve as the trustee liaison to the SRSGA advisory group for a three-year term. Approved to move forward for consideration by the full board.
2. **There was a request by Trustee Smith to revise COT Bylaws as follows:**  
To act on this item, it must be added to the March quarterly business meeting agenda for the full Council's consideration..
  - Old Language:  
**ARTICLE IV Section 6. Voting.** Voting by proxy is prohibited. One or more members of the Council may participate in any meeting of the Council of Trustees by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other, with all rights, duties,

obligations and responsibilities as if such member were present in person for such meeting.

- **New Language:**  
**ARTICLE IV Section 6. Voting.** Voting by proxy is prohibited. One or more members of the Council may participate in any meeting of the Council of Trustees by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other, with all rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities as if such member were present in person for such meeting. **Trustees may only vote on a motion by conference telephone or similar communication equipment if they are continuously present from the introduction of a motion until the vote.**

### 3. Discussion to engage trustees in the Strategic Plan process.

- Developing a strategy around student, staff, faculty engagement. How can we engage the community as trustees. We have been active in WOW, Commencement and other University events, which is wonderful.
- How can we more conscientiously and strategically approach our meetings. This means we are respecting, listening and truly being part of the SRU Team.
- Aligning our committee work with Strategic Plan Pillars.

A Governance Committee meeting was held Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., via Zoom. The purpose of the Governance Committee meeting was to:

1. Review the current SRU COT Bylaws and deliberate on proposed amendments to the current bylaws as proposed by Trustee Smith.
2. Review the current committee structure and align our focus as a Board to support the strategies as established in the four pillars of the Slippery Rock University Strategic Plan, The First Choice.

There was discussion among the members for committee chairs to meet in a workshop to discuss ideas before the March quarterly business meeting.

#### **Information Items**

- Calendar Mentions
- COT Bylaws

Chair Stoebener, this concludes my report.

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

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

### **ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

#### **Resolution: Affiliated Entities: Certification of Compliance**



**(TAB 11, Appendix I)**

Trustee Angelucci moved, Trustee Young seconded, approval of the Resolution certifying that the affiliated entities make a financial contribution to the University or provide similar benefits on a regular basis, satisfactory to this Council of Trustees and to the President. Trustee Taylor was recorded a negative vote on the motion. Trustee Taylor asked for the numerical count on the motion: 8 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions. Motion carries.

**Resolution: Appointing Trustee Representative to SRSGA Board of Directors (TAB 18, Appendix J)**

Trustee Michaux moved, Trustee Angelucci seconded, appointing Trustee Joshua Young to the SRSGA Board of Directors, serving a three-year term. Motion carries unanimously.

**Next Quarterly Business Meeting Date:**

March 20-21, 2025

**Contracts: (TAB 14) (Appendix K)****Facilities & Planning Active Project List (TAB 15) (Appendix L)****HR Personnel Items (Tab 16) (Appendix M)**

- Instructional Appointments: Effective Academic Year 2024-2025
- Administrator Appointments
- Non-Faculty Athletics Coach Appointments
- Management Appointments
- Support Staff Appointments
- Retirements
- Resignations
- Emeritus Status

**Budget/Financial Updates (TAB 17) (Appendix N)****ASR/Clery Report (TAB 12)****CliftonLarsonAllen Audit Results 23-24 (Appendix O)****Committee Presentations (TAB 10)****Divisional Reports (TAB 9)**

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Trustee Angelucci offered thanks to Chair Stoebener for organizing the SRU Council Retreat on Thursday. There was thoughtful discussion with Deputy Chancellor Randy Goin, PASSHE, serving as the facilitator for the session. "I look forward to more opportunities like this in the future."

Trustee Smith: "I'd just like to say I think I've been doing this now for over a year. Retirement is a huge milestone in people's careers, and it really needs to be celebrated and recognized."

We have 3 retirees with a total of 108 years of service.

- Dr. Dean DeNicola, professor, Biology, 33 years
- Dr. Susan Zirpoli, assistant professor, Chemistry/Env. Geoscience, 35 years
- Laure Lokash, women's volleyball coach, 40 years

Thanks to all of them for their service to SRU.

I'd also like to, and I know we all do, wish Coach Lutz and the team all the best tomorrow and look forward to planning to listen to game next week after graduation after they win this week. And, finally, I wish everybody here a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

With no further business, Chair Stoebener called for adjournment. Trustee Young moved, Trustee Lautman seconded, to adjourn the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees business meeting. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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