

# Slippery Rock University

## President's Report

June 14, 2024

10:30 a.m.

Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center

The focus of the past three months has been on the hiring of the new cabinet positions as well as commencement. The Strategic Plan continues to move forward.

Commencement: We hosted 4 commencement ceremonies with an additional special event for the track team who was traveling to a regional meet on the weekend of the university ceremonies. There was positive feedback on the ceremonies and no concerns noted regarding the digital programs. There were some suggestions regarding the content of the script and those edits have been made for the December ceremony.

Spring 2024 Graduates			
Group	Awarded	Still Pending	Total
Total Undergraduates	964	261	1225
Master's	212	131	343
Doctorate	81	4	85
Other GR (certificate/principal cert)	6	6	12
Total Graduates	299	141	440
Grand Total	1263	402	1665

Enrollment: We continue to focus on enrollment for fall of 2024, while diligently attending to the retention and persistence activities that support our current students. The information provided is as of May 31, 2024. These numbers change slightly and as such the numbers presented in the presentations may vary from those listed below.

Currently, we are at 1600 deposits with a budget goal of 1545 for incoming first year students. With traditional melt we are projecting 1560 incoming first year students. This reflects an increase of 49 students from this time last year. We will continue to work to reduce melt over the next few months and will continue our practice of reviewing late applications that meet our criteria. We had planned for increases in student head count related to incoming first year students and an increase in retention. Provost Zieg worked with the deans to ensure that we have enough sections for all of our courses. Housing continues to be a bit of a challenge, but we have many options and Dr. Wilmes continues to work with the staff to ensure we are doing what we can to meet the needs of our students. Sophomores requesting off campus options have been granted and the number has increased from 30 to 151 over the last few months. Faculty contracts and obligations have been set with an understanding that things could change. The number of students who have signed up for orientation is up by 27. We will offer

additional sessions in the summer to ensure that we meet the demand of our incoming students.

Transfer total applications are down by 54 and deposits are down by 82. Although we have added several transfer articulation agreements, the decline in community college enrollment has had a significant impact on this transfer pool. We have implemented new practices to increase these numbers and will continue to work to close the gap.

Graduate summer applications and deposits are a small number and reflect the national landscape. Summer Applications are down by 66 and deposits are down by 27. Fall Applications for graduate programs are down by -95 and deposits are up by 8. There is confidence that we will hit our enrollment targets in the graduate areas.

Financial Picture/Budget Scenarios: The initial CPP has been submitted to PASSHE for the 2024-45 school year with projections to FY26-27. The numbers submitted for enrollment are based on the budgeted numbers. As the actual numbers of new students and continuing students fluctuate over the next couple of months appropriate modifications will be made. The salary projections are based on the current CBAs and faculty and staff **complements**. New positions are very carefully considered within the context of the national projections of an enrollment cliff. All open positions are carefully considered prior to them being refilled. The FY23-24 budget is set to close with a \$400,000 shortfall. This shortfall is expected and not a result of current year overspends, but rather a result of the historic practice of allowing units to maintain their own reserves. This practice is being phased out, which will allow for more clarity and control over the spending of the budget and the use of reserves. For SRU, purchase orders that are not received prior to June 30, are expended in the next fiscal year. In addition, departments are able to carry forward remaining budget balances to use in the new fiscal year. However, the University has a reserve strategy in place that provides for the centralization of reserves to support the allocation of resources to strategic initiatives. One recent example of a non-recurring strategic initiative is the review of IT operations by an outside firm. In addition to our base budget, we supplement our planned expenditures throughout the year with one-time dollars. One-time dollars are comprised of prior year surpluses and utilized in a future fiscal year to address new strategic initiatives and/or truly one-time costs and are not recurring costs.

Construction Projects: The summary of construction projects reflects activities within Pillar #2, addressing initiatives - *Enhance the quality, functionality, and aesthetic appeal of campus environment*, and *Provide state of the art facilities and technology*.

The project to replace the roof of the ARC started May 6, 2024. Completion is scheduled for **mid-June** 2024.

The project to install protective netting at Jack Critchfield Park will be completed in the first week in June 2024. Adding new fence pads in the outfield is a project scheduled for 2024-2025 budget cycle. New pads will help to decrease risk of injury for our student athletes.

The softball field construction is set to begin in June 2024. The bids have all been submitted and we will move forward as soon as possible.

The turf project for the IM fields is scheduled to begin August 2024, following the completion of the 2024 Can-Am Police-Fire Games taking place in the area July 15-21. Butler County is the host for this international event and SRU has volunteered to serve as a host. We do not want any of our construction to interfere with the games.

The removal of the asbestos on the old tennis courts should be completed by the end of August. The pace of this project is a result of a limited number of workers who can clean up asbestos. Concerns regarding the management of the team have been raised and are being addressed. We are exploring other options.

The construction and facilities staging area between the tennis courts and the baseball field will be cleaned up and excess dirt and old concrete will be removed from the premises. This project will be initiated in October. The excess equipment from our outside vendor will be moved off site by the end of July.

We will be moving the Police Station into the Campus Success Center. The blueprints have been completed and we are ready to move forward with the project.

The Governor's Blueprint for Higher Education: The Governor's plan is moving forward with some adjustments. The shifts will be shared in the executive session.

Death of a student: The COT was notified of the passing of one of our students. The protocol was followed on the evening of his passing. Student Affairs and Athletics were involved as the student was a football player, living in Slippery Rock for the summer because he was completing an internship. The Football Coach and the President both spoke to the father of the student the day after his passing. Several members of the community traveled to Delmont to pay their respects during the viewing and during the funeral, including the President, the Athletic Director, several coaches and trainers and several football players. The Head Coach of the football team provided remarks at the funeral and several players served as pallbearers. The university has been diligent in reaching out to those most closely associated with the students, to provide support. The football team is scheduled to engage in training sessions during the week of June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Counseling will be a part of these training sessions. Human Resources is providing group counseling for several of the coaches and staff members of SRU as well. We will continue to explore ways to support the mental health of our students.

Strategic Plan: The plan has been completed and the print version has been presented to all the members of the COT. Implementation teams have been selected as have the leaders for each pillar. The pillar leaders will be trained by Dr. Jessica Lerner on how to write smart goals and on the process of moving the plan forward. Tina Moser will serve as the point person for the Strategic Plan and will ensure that the data and documents of evidence are submitted in a timely fashion and will bring concerns and updates to the cabinet. The implementation plan will be shared during the President's Report. A sampling of activities are provided as an update on the overall plan.

## **Pillar #1 Commitment to a Robust, Supportive, and Inclusive Culture**

**Ensure that all faculty, staff and students have the support and resources necessary to thrive.**

*Embed the development of cultural competencies across the university through the integration of the diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging strategies and initiatives across curricular and co-curricular experiences, training and programming opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.* As an extension of inclusive efforts, initiated by our launching of the SRU Land Acknowledgement, we have been exploring options in connecting with members of the Indigenous people of our region. A conversation was initiated by Trustee Smith and we had a positive conversation regarding possible partnership opportunities with the Delaware Tribe. The provost was in the conversation and will be making those connections with faculty. He will also be exploring options for bringing members of the Delaware Tribe to campus to extend opportunities for our students to learn more about the history of the region and to learn more about the Indigenous populations of the region.

*Align individual performance evaluations and organizational assessment systems to support the university's core values and strategic direction.*

We held a manager's meeting in May to review the performance process from July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. We also shared why it will be important for SRU to reevaluate the annual review process for those not covered by a CBA. The data shows an issue referred to as "evaluation inflation". Supervisors are not differentiating between 4s and 5s on a 5-point scale. Very few employees received a score of 3, which denotes meeting expectations. The current approach does not allow managers to reward extraordinary performance and leaves many employees feeling as if the evaluations are not actually tied to performance. We will be working to create rubrics for managers and employees so that we can truly embrace a growth mindset and create an annual review process that accurately reflects annual performance.

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

**Support the expectation of excellence and goal attainment.**

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

The provost provided the COT with an overview of the request to approve several new programs including nursing, construction management, and electrical engineering. The faculty and staff are working with the Academic Affairs committee of the COT to ensure that we can get these programs up and running by Fall of 2025.

**Provide premier student experience.**

*Provide state-of-the-art facilities and technology.*

Please see [Construction Projects](#).

*Expand learning experiences and opportunities to meet the needs of varied learners and groups.*

We are currently exploring the options of creating partnerships with a couple of local school districts to offer concurrent enrollment. These discussions are in the early stages and would require a deep discussion with APSCUF. We are also exploring ways in which this can be funded. One possibility is to access EITC (Education Improvement Tax Credit). This fund was accessed in the past; however, we had allowed our application to lapse several years ago.

Dave Hollenbaugh is working with the various university partners to reinstate this funding opportunity. This is clearly an additional revenue stream that we want to continue to explore and could also be captured within Pillar #4. As previously noted, SRU had allowed their eligibility for this program to lapse. Dave Hollenbaugh is working to reinstate our eligibility. He submitted 14 reports in May 2024. These reports were delinquent and had to be submitted as part of regaining eligibility.

*Increase the enrollment of non-traditional learners through online degree completion programs and graduate online programs.*

We have reached out to the Pittsburgh Pirates, Pittsburgh Steelers, and the Buffalo Bills to explore partnerships with their organization regarding our *Finish What You Started* degree completion program for those current and previous players who pursued their careers as professional athletes prior to completing their degrees. The discussions are in the early phases, but we have **garnered interest** from both the Pirates and the Steelers for some type of partnership.

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

*Increase FR first-to-second year retention by 0.5% annually to attain a goal of 85%.*

*Increase each upper-division FR cohort persistence by 0.5% annually to attain a second to third year goal of 78% and a third to fourth year goal of 72%.*

The current levels of persistence across cohorts have outpaced the targeted annual improvement of .5%. These numbers will continue to be monitored throughout the summer. If the increases continue until the September 15 deadline, we will re-evaluate the annual targeted increases.

Persistence:

F23 Cohort - +4.7% (85.8% vs. 81.1%)

F22 Cohort - +2.7% (74.8% vs. 72.1%)

F21 Cohort - +6.1% (65.0% vs. 58.9%)

#### **Pillar #3 Commitment to Community Impact and Collaboration**

**Expand educational learning and growth opportunities that add value to external constituencies.**

*Increase engagement, partnerships, and reciprocal relationships with K-12 schools, health care facilities, government, and business and industry at the local and state levels.*

Patrick Joyal has left the Governor's Office. We are not clear as to when there will be a scheduled meeting with the Governor. We will be developing an intentional and strategic approach to bringing our elected officials to campus so that we can share our plan with them and so that they are very familiar with the opportunities and challenges faced by SRU.

#### **Pillar #4 Commitment to Financial Sustainability and Resource Stewardship**

**Structure the University for success.**

We were able to hire several key positions within the university during the past few months.

#### **Michael May – VP for Enrollment Management**

Mike started at SRU in September of 2012. He has both a BA in History and an MBA with a concentration in Marketing from Yale University. For 23 years, Mike has worked in college

admissions for 4 institutions: Yale (1998-2001), West Chester (2003-2008), and Chatham (2008-2012). In his current role as Director of First-year Admissions, he serves as a member of the Enrollment Management leadership team and oversees a first-year staff numbering 11. He is responsible for leading a collaborative effort to meet the university's first-year enrollment goals including quality, diversity, and access indicators. He works closely with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships as well as the consultant Ruffalo Noel-Levitz for financial aid leveraging strategies, execution, and assessment. Mike serves on the enrollment management university marketing team and has also served as the Admissions Practices Chair and Finance and Budget Chair for PACAC (Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling). He was born in Mexico City, but spent most of his formative years in Portage, Michigan. In Mike's free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Tierney; son, Declan (12); son, Patrick (10); and dogs, Fletcher, Lily, and Monte. He also enjoys grilling year-round, learning about history, watching baseball and college football, and listening to country music.

### **Troy M. Miller - VP for University Advancement**

Troy M. Miller CFRE, CNP brings 30 years of development experience and 20 years of higher education advancement experience to his role at Slippery Rock University. Most recently, Troy served as the Vice President of Development at York College of Pennsylvania where he led the first comprehensive campaign in the college's 250-year history. The campaign raised nearly \$93 million with a goal of \$50 million. Prior to coming to York, he served as Senior Director of Development at Auburn University's Harbert College of Business in Auburn, Ala., Executive Director and Chief Development Officer at the Lock Haven University Foundation, and Director of Individual Giving at Penn State University. Miller earned his bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in Writing from Temple University and is studying for his licensed battlefield guide designation at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

### **Ken Bach – Senior Director of Marketing and Communications**

Ken brings an extensive background in communications and marketing, including more than 20 years' experience at three institutions. He was most recently the associate vice president of communications and marketing at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and prior to that he was executive director of university communications and marketing at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. He served as executive director at the City University of New York, Staten Island campus, and appointments outside of higher education included interim executive director and CEO of Historic Richmond Town of the Staten Island Historical Society and stage manager and handler for Liza Minnelli, the Academy Award-winning actress and singer. A native of Hawley, Ken earned his bachelor's degree in communication arts and English from St. John's University in Queens, New York.

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

The resignation of the Chief Diversity Officer has created an opportunity, similar to that created by the retirement of the Director of **IATS**, to re-evaluate the office, the mission of the office and the job description and responsibilities of the role. We are seeking input from the campus community as well as reviewing models from other universities and other industries. After the review has been completed, we will post the position and launch a national search.



**Ensure alignment and efficiency between and within the affiliated entities.**

The group continues to meet and has drafted a mission statement.

“Establish and maintain an effective partnership to ensure that all SRU Affiliates collaborate for the benefit of the University. By harnessing the collective energy and resources of this integrated Alliance, we strengthen SRU's position as a leading institution of higher learning to make a lasting difference for the entire University community and all its constituents. Through exceptional financial and strategic planning, we are committed to maintaining our position as a leader in the PASSHE system while preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

The group is working to explore how each entity will support the comprehensive campaign.

**Diversify revenue streams.**

*Increase revenue streams through sponsored programs, grant awards, fundraising efforts, and other endeavors.*

BWF completed their analysis regarding the potential for success in a comprehensive campaign. BWF feels that the case is strong for us moving forward with a multi-year plan. A summary of their slide presentation was shared by the Interim VP for Advancement. BWF met with the Chair of the Foundation Board and with the Executive Director of the Foundation to share some questions regarding SRU Foundation processes and procedures. Dennis Prescott from BWF recommended a conversation with AGB regarding best practices for foundations. He introduced the Executive Director to his contact at AGB. The Foundation will update the President on next steps.

We are launching a Letterman's Club within the Alumni Association. This started with a football alum, who is also a very generous donor and the father of a current player. The idea would be that there would be various levels of membership with accompanying benefits. The funds will go to support the designated team. We will start the process with football as a pilot and plan to expand to other sports as we learn how to implement this well. The money will not go to the SRU Foundation but will run through the Alumni Association because the donors will be alums and the program is for alumni. They also currently have a structure set up to handle these types of alumni groups and have done so with some affinity groups as well as a fraternity.

We submitted appropriations requests to Senators Casey and Fetterman and Representative Kelly. We submitted two proposals to each. One for funding sim labs for our expanding nursing programs and one for surveillance equipment for our police department. We have heard that Representative Kelly was not accepting proposals under the submission category for our police equipment. Senator Casey's office has submitted our sim lab project in the amount of \$500,000 to the Senate Appropriations Committee for funding consideration. The Appropriations Committee still needs to review each project to determine eligibility and funding level, so this is just one step in a process with many variables and does not guarantee funding.

**Athletics**

We had a remarkable year in athletics both on and off the field and courts. A summary of the accolades is provided.

## Overall

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Dixon Trophy in school history and first since 2007-08**
- 8 of our teams scored at least 16 points in the Dixon Trophy standings
- 13 of our teams scored at least 10 points in the Dixon Trophy standings
- Led all schools in the PSAC with 8 PSAC Champion Scholar award winners for student-athletes that had the highest GPA at the championship finals site.
- Swept the PSAC honors for the DII 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary scholarships – Anna Igims and Brayden Long
- NCAA Inspiration Award winner - alumna Roxanne Dunn
- 4 PSAC Coach of the Year Awards (WXC, FB, WIT&F, WLAX)

## Awards totals 2023-2024

- 70 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 111 All-PSAC Honorees
- 76 All-Region Honorees
- 11 All-Americans
- 54 CSC Academic All-District Honorees
- 4 CSC Academic All-America Honorees (All teams not out yet)
- 4 PSAC Top 10 Awards (spring not out yet)

## Women's XC

- PSAC Champions for first time since 1995
- Second in the region
- NCAA National Qualifier as a team for first time since 2008
- 2 PSAC Athlete of the Week awards
- 5 All-PSAC honorees
- 3 All-Region honorees
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Steph Keelon
- PSAC Coach of the Year – Bobby Over

## Men's XC

- PSAC runner-up – highest finish since 2008
- Fourth in the region
- 2 individual qualifiers for National Championships
- NCAA Elite 90 Winner – Ethan Brentham (1<sup>st</sup> SRU athlete in any sport to win Elite 90)
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Ethan Brentham
- 5 All-PSAC honorees
- 3 All-Region honorees
- 1 Fall Top 10 honoree
- 3 PSAC Athletes of the Week

## Field Hockey

- 10 NFHCA Scholars of Distinction
- 13 NFHCA National Academic Squad honorees
- National Academic Team award
- 2 CSC Academic All-District



## Football

- PSAC West champions
- PSAC Runner-Up
- NCAA Quarterfinals Appearance
- 10 PSAC Athlete of the Week awards
- PSAC West Coach of the Year – Shawn Lutz
- PSAC West Athlete of the Year – Brayden Long
- Super Region 1 Athlete of the Year – Brayden Long
- 13 All-PSAC honorees
- Finalists for Harlon Hill Trophy and Gene Upshaw Lineman of the Year
- 7 All-Region honorees
- 7 All-Americans
- 1 Fall Top 10
- 6 CSC Academic All-District
- 4 CSC Academic All-Americans
- DII 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship – Brayden Long

## Men's Soccer

- 2 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 4 All-PSAC honorees
- 1 All-Region honoree (1<sup>st</sup> in 7 years)
- 5 CSC Academic All-District

## Women's Soccer

- PSAC Tournament berth
- 6 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 6 All-PSAC honorees
- 2 All-Region honorees
- 6 CSC Academic All-District

## Volleyball

- 4 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 1 All-PSAC honoree
- 1 All-Region honoree
- 4 CSC Academic All-District

## Men's Basketball

- PSAC Tournament berth
- 7 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 2 All-PSAC honorees

## Women's Basketball

- NCAA Award of Excellence Finalist
- PSAC West Freshman of the Year – Regan Atkins (1<sup>st</sup> since 2000)
- 2 CSC Academic All-District

### Men's Indoor Track & Field

- PSAC Runner-Up
- 3 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 4 individual PSAC champions
- PSAC Most Outstanding Track Athlete – AJ Virata
- 9 All-PSAC honorees
- 8 All-Region honorees
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Joshua Gose
- 1 Winter Top 10

### Women's Indoor Track & Field

- PSAC Champions
- 4 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 6 PSAC event titles
- PSAC Most Outstanding Track and Overall Athlete – Anna Igims
- 13 All-PSAC honorees
- 1 All-American – Kendall Grossman (pole vault)
- 11 All-Region
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Regan Johnson
- 1 Winter Top 10
- PSAC Coaching Staff of the Year
- Atlantic Region Coach of the Year – Bill Jordan
- Atlantic Region Assistant Coach of the Year – Bobby Over

### Women's Lacrosse

- Program record 15 wins
- 1<sup>st</sup> PSAC postseason win since bringing program back in 2007
- 5 PSAC Athlete of the Week awards
- PSAC West Coach of the Year – Taryn Burkholder
- PSAC-high 8 All-PSAC honorees
- 4 All-Region honorees
- 1 Senior All-Star game invite
- PSAC Champion Scholar award – Charleigh Rondeau
- 8 CSC Academic All-District

### Men's Outdoor Track & Field

- PSAC Runner-Up
- 5 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 15 All-PSAC
- 4 PSAC event titles
- 15 All-Region
- 3 national qualifiers
- 1 All-American – Drew Layton (pole vault)
- 5 CSC Academic All-District

### Women's Outdoor Track & Field

- PSAC Runner-Up
- 6 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 3 PSAC event titles
- PSAC Most Outstanding Track Athlete – Anna Igims
- 19 All-PSAC honorees
- 1 All-American – Anna Igims (steeplechase)
- 19 All-Region
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Tiffany Jolayemi
- DII 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship – Anna Igims
- 5 CSC Academic All-District

### Baseball

- PSAC Tournament berth
- 6 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 5 All-PSAC honorees
- 1 All-Region honoree
- 1 All-American (Gage Gillott)
- PSAC West Pitcher of the Year – Gage Gillott
- PSAC Champion Scholar Award – Eoin Rossman
- 3 CSC Academic All-District

### Softball

- PSAC Tournament berth (2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, first time in 40 years)
- 3 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 1 All-PSAC honoree
- 1 All-Region honoree
- 5 CSC Academic All-District

### Women's Tennis

- PSAC Runner-Up, NCAA Tournament 2<sup>nd</sup> round
- 4 PSAC Athletes of the Week
- 5 All-PSAC honorees
- PSAC West Athlete of the Year – Amaia Balaguer Brau
- PSAC West Freshman of the Year – Nicole Kempton
- ITA Atlantic Region Player to Watch - Amaia Balaguer Brau
- 3 CSC Academic All-District

### Academics

- Spring Semester overall GPA – 3.387; Overall cumulative GPA – 3.398
- Women's Spring semester average GPA – 3.639; Cumulative GPA – 3.653
- Men's Spring semester average GPA – 3.153; Cumulative GPA – 3.128
- Highest semester GPA - Men's XC – 3.444      Tennis – 3.867
- Highest cumulative GPA – Men's Track and field – 3.380      Women's XC – 3.735
- General student body – 3.16
- 146 student-athletes with a 4.0
- 275 student-athletes with a 3.5 or higher (more than half our student-athletes)

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