SUNY Old Westbury Faculty Senate

**Draft Resolution on Carbon Footprint**

**Whereas,** the **Resolution on Parking Lot Concerns** passed by the Faculty Senate (3/16/18), requested that “all final decisions for locating and initiating the construction of additional parking spaces on the campus be deferred until the processes resulting in the decision be evaluated for best fit and best outcome to meet the expectations of College Mission and Values for community engagement, transparency and best practices of sustainable environmental decisions and operations for the specific and sensitive land to be affected”; and,

**Whereas,** at the Faculty Senate meeting of April 3, 2018, President Butts reported that the Parking Lot Project is moving forward as planned; and,

**Whereas,** environmental sustainability is a stated integral part of Old Westbury’s Mission and Values; and,

**Whereas,** as a result of an Act passed by the New York State legislature in 2001, the college is required to maintain and safeguard natural resources according to a campus stewardship plan subject to periodic review, and in 2017 the college was recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus USA; and,

**Whereas,** approximately 8 acres of mature trees are slated for removal during the Parking Lot Project, which is of particular concern since trees play a critical role in stabilizing drainage in sensitive areas, in providing natural habitat, and in absorption of carbon emissions, with each acre of mature trees absorbing twice the carbon emissions produced annually by the average vehicle − with an average vehicle emitting about 4.6 metric tons CO2 per year (according to EPA and the International Society of Arborculture, ISA), and;

**Whereas,** SUNY Energy and Sustainability Policy enacted by the Board of Trustees (November 2007) includes mandates for energy efficiency and renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and the ambitious goals of existing SUNY policies were expanded upon by Chancellor Johnson in her first State of the University Address (January 22, 2018), by calling for **zero-net energy,** **zero-net emissions,** and by positioning sustainability as one of four foundational pillars of SUNY’s excellence moving forward; and,

**Whereas,** the removal of significant acreage of mature trees during Old Westbury’s Parking Lot Project will − in the absence of aggressive mitigation measures − increase campus carbon footprint by removing an important natural mechanism for **carbon sequestration**, since each mature tree absorbs approximately 48 lbs. of CO2 emissions per year and thereby sequesters about 1 ton of CO2 over four decades of tree life; and,

**Whereas,** the Faculty are empowered under Article X of the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees to exercise their authority through campus governance consistent with UFS standards and practices, including the authority of the Faculty to review administrative policies and to participate through joint effort in areas that include campus development, budget, planning, operations, energy and sustainability;

**Whereas,** Old Westbury’s Mission underscores the principles of trust, transparency, accountability, and commitment to participatory governance as foundational values of the College;

**Therefore Be It Resolved,** that the Faculty Senate of SUNY Old Westbury requests that the college undertake, with assistance from appropriate professionals such as ISA-certified arborists, an **inventory of trees** to be removed during the Parking Lot Project, including identification of the various species, number and approximate size of mature trees to be removed, and that the college provide this inventory as a report to the Faculty and the campus community; and,

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college analyze the impact on campus carbon footprint of the Parking Lot Project and tree removal, and that the college provide to the Faculty and the campus community a report on **Campus Carbon Footprint**, per expectations under SUNY and NYS policies regarding energy, sustainability and climate action planning, and consistent with best practices in higher education; and,

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college, consistent with institutional values of environmental sustainability, and in support of NYS policies regarding greenhouse gas emissions and SUNY’s goal of zero-net emissions, undertake an **accelerated program of tree planting across the campus,** as an action to partially offset the impact of removing acreage of mature trees, and to partially mitigate the impact on campus carbon footprint of increased emissions on campus (buildings, operations and vehicles) due to continued growth; and,

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college, consistent with institutional values of environmental sustainability, and in support of NYS policies regarding GHG emissions and renewable energy, and in support of SUNY goals of zero-net energy and zero-net emissions, undertake a **carbon offset program** consistent with best practices in higher education, through such measures as: (i) **purchase of renewable energy credits** as provided under NYS policies, which allow institutions and individuals to earn “credit” for electricity purchased from green sources such as wind, hydro and solar PV; (ii) development and accelerated deployment of **solar photovoltaic** projects on campus; (iii) engineering studies for all planned buildings to include feasibility of **geothermal energy** (ground-source heat pumps); and,

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college, consistent with respect for transparency and meaningful consultation in matters under the authority of the Faculty (including campus development, budget, planning, operations, energy and sustainability), engage in an effective process for **faculty participation in capital planning** and sustainability initiatives cited in this resolution, with faculty representatives to be selected through established governance structure, to include the Faculty Senate Chair or designee, and additional faculty to be identified depending upon the scope of project.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Dolan (Math/CIS), Parliamentarian

For consideration by the SUNY Old Westbury Faculty Senate

April 23, 2018