SUNY Old Westbury Faculty Senate

**Draft Resolution on Carbon Footprint**

**Whereas,** the **Resolution on Parking Lot Concerns** passed by the Faculty Senate on March 16, 2018, 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, citing a need for additional parking related to growth; and,

**Whereas,** environmental sustainability is a stated integral part of Old Westbury’s Mission and Values, and the college’s Strategic Plan 2018-2023 includes multiple objectives and strategies in support of environmental sustainability, including development and coordination of policies, practices and initiatives to advance the college as a **green campus**; and,

**Whereas,** as a result of an Act passed by the NY State legislature in 2001, the college is required to maintain and safeguard natural resources through a campus stewardship plan subject to periodic review, and in 2016, 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, and loss of such acreage will have knowable measurable impacts, given that 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 and metrics for energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and the goals and metrics of existing policies were expanded upon by Chancellor Johnson in her first State of the University Address (Jan. 22, 2018), in her call for **zero-net energy** and **zero-net emissions**, and her goal of 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 − in the absence of effective mitigation measures − **will increase campus carbon footprint** by removing an important natural mechanism for **carbon sequestration**, considering that 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; and,

**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 an **Inventory of Trees** that are slated to be removed during the Parking Lot Project, including identification of the various species, number and approximate size of mature trees to be removed, with such inventory to include assistance, as needed, from appropriate professionals such as certified arborists, and with such inventory to involve, to the extent feasible, student opportunities and strategic links to applied learning, civic engagement and student research, and that the college provide such Inventory of Trees as a report to the Faculty and the campus community; and,

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college analyze the incremental impact on campus carbon footprint of the Parking Lot Project and associated tree removal, and that the college provide an updated report to the Faculty and campus community on **Campus Carbon Footprint,** consistent with SUNY and state policies and practices regarding energy, sustainability and climate action planning, and the Faculty Senate also requests, consistent with best practices in higher education and in support of sustainability strategies and objectives to advance the college as a green campus, that the college provide student opportunities and meaningful consultation of the Faculty and the campus community in the development or revision of metrics, policies, practices and initiatives related to campus carbon footprint; and,

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

**Be It Further Resolved,** that the college undertake, consistent with institutional values of environmental sustainability, and in support of state policies regarding GHG emissions and renewable energy, and in support of SUNY goals of zero-net energy and zero-net emissions, a **Carbon Offset program** consistent with best practices in higher education, through such known effective measures as: (i) **purchase of renewable energy credits** as provided under state policies, which allow institutions, public and private entities, and individual consumers to earn “credit” for electricity purchased from green sources such as wind, hydro and solar PV; (ii) development and strategic 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, with respect for shared governance, 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, green campus, and sustainability initiatives** (such as those cited in this resolution), with faculty representatives to be selected through established governance structure to include the Faculty Senate Chair or designee, and with additional faculty to be selected depending upon the scope of project or initiative.

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

For consideration by the SUNY Old Westbury Faculty Senate

April 23, 2018; revised May 13, 2018