

Resolution Supporting the Improvement of The University at Buffalo Landscape

Approved by the Professional Staff Senate, September 21, 2017

Whereas, the landscape on the University at Buffalo’s three campuses creates a strong first impression on prospective students and other visitors and greatly supports the university’s mission of sustainability, public health and campus community; and

Whereas, over the past decade our campuses have lost an excessive number of trees due to the emerald ash borer, pine beetles, dry hot summers, and a variety of other environmental stressors; and

Whereas, the UB 2020 Master Plan (2010) found that, “Trees and other plantings on our campuses are severely challenged by poor soil conditions—especially on North Campus, where extensive earthmoving in the early 1970s mixed the loose, silty organic materials of the top soil layer with the dense, root-resistant clay of lower layers. Other areas have absorbed large amounts of de-icing salt.”; and

Whereas, the policy of “replace in kind” for dead trees on campus has produced poor results due to planting methodology, soil conditions, and after-planting care; and

Whereas, the existing UB 2020 Master Plan includes extensive plans to program the landscape, create formal placemaking, simplify landscape maintenance, among other important directives, plans that were never funded; and

Whereas, our AAU peers, including Stony Brook, University of Illinois–Urbana Champaign and University of Maryland, demonstrate continued investment in their campus landscapes (Tree Campus USA peer schools); Stony Brook alone has planted over 2,120 trees, saplings, bushes and perennials in the past two years (2013) and since 2006–07, has planted over 4,925 trees, saplings, bushes and perennials as a part of its planting program; and

Whereas, initiatives like Tree Campus USA can help give a strong framework and plan to engage the students, faculty, staff facilities management and community together toward a shared goal of greening our campus; and

Whereas, landscape projects such as the Grace Plaza plantings on the North Campus and Harriman Quad on the South Campus demonstrate what is possible and have been enthusiastically embraced by the campus community; and



Whereas, there are philanthropic development opportunities available for the university landscape that could help the university create a more inviting campus for the community in line with the 2020 Plan,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, the PSS encourages the University at Buffalo administration to invest in a tree inventory for the South and North Campuses without delay. With a clear understanding of the state of our landscaped environment we can usefully discuss paths toward stabilizing and improving it, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the PSS urges the administration to increase funding for the campus landscapes in order to maintain them in a manner that meets standards recommended by the American Association of Landscape Architects and the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the PSS urges the administration to work with its division of philanthropy and alumni engagement to create opportunities for potential donors to fund specific planned landscape projects, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the PSS urges the administration to form a Tree Campus USA advisory committee to guide our approach to a campus tree care plan and planting program with budgeted annual expenditures and student service learning projects to support the university's landscape goals.