MEMORANDUM

November 17, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. Jim Malatras, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Appointment of Distinguished Professors

Action Requested

The proposed resolution appoints the faculty members listed below to the rank of Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York campus indicated.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the Board of Trustees has proudly established a historic tradition of acknowledging and honoring extraordinary faculty achievement through appointment to the Distinguished Faculty Rank; and

Whereas the appointment to Distinguished Faculty Rank at the State-operated campuses is both a system-wide distinction and a promotion in rank; and

Whereas the SUNY Board of Trustees has the authority to bestow system-wide distinctions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that each faculty member listed below be, and hereby is, appointed to the rank of Distinguished Professor at the State-operated campus indicated, effective November 17, 2020:

Professor JoAnne Carson, State University of New York at Albany;

Professor Laurie Beth Feldman, State University of New York at Albany;
Board Resolution

November 17, 2020

Professor Robert F. Goeckel, State University of New York College at Geneseo;

Professor Axel K. Drees, State University of New York at Stony Brook;

Professor Claude R. LeBrun, State University of New York at Stony Brook;

Professor Peter W. Stephens, State University of New York at Stony Brook; and

Professor Styliani-Anna E. Tsirka, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Background

Appointment to the rank of Distinguished Professor recognizes and honors faculty who have achieved national and/or international prominence and a distinguished reputation within their chosen field. This distinction is attained through extraordinary contributions to, and impact on, the candidate’s field of study, often evidenced by significant research and/or creative activity. Moreover, the candidate should be a role model for students and other faculty and their work must be of such character that it has the potential to elevate the standards of scholarship or creative activity of colleagues both within and beyond their academic fields. Their work must be of such quality that students and scholars on other State University of New York campuses would wish to benefit from lectures and seminars, or other appropriate presentations the faculty members might provide. Further, to be eligible for nomination, a faculty member must have attained and held the rank of full professor for five years, and must have at least one year of full-time service at the nominating institution.

Candidates have contributed meaningfully and consistently in several notable areas, including extensive and superior service to the profession; leadership and ongoing participation on influential disciplinary committees; membership on prestigious editorial boards; service as reviewer or consultant on regulatory, advisory, and award-making bodies; and status as an invited presenter at conferences and symposia. The candidates are also often considered outstanding teachers, setting the highest academic standards for their students.

Brief summaries of the accomplishments of each candidate are provided below:

Professor JoAnne Carson – Ms. Carson, Professor of Art and Art History at the University at Albany, is an internationally renowned sculptor and painter. With 20 solo and 63 group exhibitions, Ms. Carson has been interviewed, profiled, and examined in 84 publications. Her work has appeared in galleries and museums across the United States, including
the National Academy Museum in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Frederick Weisman Collection in Los Angeles, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, in addition to others. Among her many awards, Professor Carson received the prestigious Prix de Rome Fellowship in Painting from the American Academy in Rome, the Guggenheim Fellowship in the Fine Arts, and in recognition of her skill as a sculptor, the Purchase Prize in Sculpture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2012, Professor Carson was the recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence for Scholarship and Creative Activities.

**Professor Laurie Beth Feldman** – Dr. Feldman, Professor of Psychology at the University at Albany, is a global leader in the cognitive science of language. She incorporates psycholinguistic methodologies to examine how multilingual individuals concurrently develop and manage multiple linguistic codes. Editor of *Morphological Aspects of Language Processing* (1995), she has authored or co-authored 108 articles that have shaped the field and influenced the way educators deliver language instruction. Her work in psychology contributes to many related fields, such as linguistics, multilingualism, language development, and language education. She has made significant contributions to understanding what is universal in language processing and what is not. Dr. Feldman has been awarded two Fulbright Specialist Scholarships, two visiting research appointments with the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, and a continuous appointment as a Senior Research Scientist with the Yale University-affiliated Haskins Laboratories. A fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, Dr. Feldman is recipient of the University at Albany’s 2009 Excellence in Research Award and Radboud’s University’s 2017 Netherlands Excellence Initiative Award.

**Professor Robert F. Goeckel** – Dr. Goeckel, Professor of Political Science and International Relations at SUNY Geneseo, is an internationally renowned scholar on religious policy in the communist world. Author of *Soviet Religious Policy in Estonia and Latvia, Die Evangelische Kirche und die DDR, The Lutheran Church and the East German State* as well as dozens of articles, Dr. Goeckel works comfortably across languages, engaging in archival work in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), and validating and expanding that research with first-hand interviews of leading church and governmental officials. One recommender calls his work “astounding in its range.” A major figure in his field, Dr. Goeckel has been frequently invited to speak in Cracow, Budapest, Moscow, and Berlin. He has received two Fulbright Research Fellowships (to Berlin and Moscow), a Visiting Scholar Fellowship at the Hoover Institute, and several International Research and Exchanges Board fellowships for research in the GDR and Russia.

**Professor Axel K. Drees** – Dr. Drees, Professor and Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Stony Brook University, has
profoundly contributed to experimental nuclear physics, particularly in his leadership of the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider at Brookhaven National Laboratory. His groundbreaking research has led to the discovery of the “perfect fluid” behavior of strongly interacting matter under extreme conditions of high density and temperature. Dr. Drees is best known for his leadership in the study of dilepton production from quark-gluon matter within the PHENIX Collaboration and his work behind the discovery of dilepton spectrum modification in nuclear collisions at the CERN laboratory (known as the European Laboratory for Particle Physics). Dr. Drees devised original methods for extracting the information about the properties of strongly interacting matter from the spectra of the produced dileptons and photons that are currently used across the world. A sought-after international speaker, Dr. Drees is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and a 2019 recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.

**Professor Claude R. LeBrun** – Dr. LeBrun, Professor of Mathematics at Stony Brook University, is one of the foremost differential geometers in the world today. His original and profoundly influential research over the past forty years has consistently changed the landscape of the field. Co-editor of *Essays on Einstein Manifolds*, Dr. LeBrun has published over 90 articles, including publications in top mathematical journals such as *Inventiones Mathematicae* and *Mathematische Annalen*. Using ideas from physics, such as Penrose’s twistor theory, the Gibbons-Hawking Ansatz, and Seiberg-Witten invariants, Dr. LeBrun has established results that no one expected, while disproving long-standing conjectures. As one recommender writes, “his proofs are both technically formidable and extremely beautiful.” A “clear, crisp and thorough” speaker and author of papers considered “gems,” Dr. LeBrun has made transformative contributions to a wide range of subjects, while directing the work of over 30 Ph.D. students. Elected a Fellow of American Mathematical Society in 2012, Dr. LeBrun was awarded a Simons Fellowship in Mathematics (2018).

**Professor Peter W. Stephens** – Dr. Stephens, Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Stony Brook University since 1980, is one of the world’s leading experts in synchrotron-based X-ray diffraction. In his work with powder diffraction, Dr. Stephens found a way to treat the broadening of the diffraction peaks due to internal stresses in the crystals, a phenomena that now bears his name—“Stephens line shape”—and is part of the standard analysis packages used worldwide to interpret X-ray diffraction patterns. For this work, in 2019, the International Center for Diffraction Data named Dr. Stephens the eighteenth recipient of the biennial Barrett Award. His research influenced systems ranging from magnetic materials to semiconductors to pharmaceuticals: for example, the computer code he created has become part of standard software packages used worldwide. A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Physical Society, Dr. Stephens received the 2015 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.
**Professor Styliani-Anna E. Tsirka** – Dr. Tsirka, Professor of Pharmacology at Stony Brook University, is internationally recognized for her studies of neuroimmune interactions in physiological and pathological settings such as glioma, stroke, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis. Her research, starting with a 1994 report in *Nature*, brought microglia, the innate immune cells of the central nervous system, to the forefront in the context of these diseases. She has authored 120 articles, many in top journals and served as a mentor to 27 Ph.D. students. At Stony Brook, Dr. Tsirka served as Director of the Pharmacology Ph.D. T32 NIH-funded training program and she founded and directs the T32 NIH-funded Scholars in BioMedical Science Graduate Certificate Program. Awarded Scholar Awards from both the Klingenstein and the Wadsworth Foundations and an Established Investigator Award from the American Heart Association, Dr. Tsirka has served on the Scientific Advisory Board of the National Parkinson’s Foundation. Named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2019, Dr. Tsirka received the 2016 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Faculty Service.

A copy of the nominating letter from each candidate’s respective campus president is attached. Complete dossiers are available in the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor.

Attachments