

A&S Senate Update, David Wrobel, CAS Dean

Summary of remarks from Dec 8, 2025

I: Introduction: Thanks to the A&S Senate leadership for this opportunity to present an update on CAS before the close of the semester and calendar year. I've had the good fortune to be in my position for almost a year and a half now, working closely with the great team in CAS, and the great teams across all the college's nearly 40 departments, centers, and institutes.

II: Advancement: In FY 2025, CAS raised \$25M in philanthropic support for our units:

- This total included approx. 40 major and principal gifts, ranging from endowed chairs and professorships to graduate fellowships, student scholarships, and endowed research and creative activity excellence funds, and including a \$10M gift for one of our centers.
- We are concluding the second quarter of FY26 and are on course for another successful year, with approx. \$7.2M pledged to CAS to date, and an additional \$3M expected to close by the end of this month. Several other major and principal gifts, including multiple seven-figure opportunities, are already in play for the second half of the fiscal year.
- I want to offer a big thanks to Mike D'Ambrosio and his team--Jill Ashton and Brianna Goodfellow--for their good work in building the relationships with our alumni base that facilitate this kind and generous support for our students and faculty.
- I think of Advancement as "advocacy in support of our strategic goals" and I am pleased that the efforts of the team have resulted in enhanced support for every area of the college--Arts, Humanities, SBS, Natural and Physical Sciences.

III: Infrastructure: We continue to face challenges as we work to meet pressing needs:

- The Chemistry Department is still recovering from the August 2024 flood and suffering the absence of adequate faculty research infrastructure. We must continue to advocate for new infrastructure for this department.
- The Art and Music departments are still working hard to navigate the pending two-stage closure of the Staller Center and potential move to "Stony Brook-Setauket Arts Campus" (the structure formerly known as the King Cullen grocery store).
- The Life Sciences building has major challenges that the university is working to address and, unfortunately, a flood over Thanksgiving has necessitated major remediation.

There has been some positive movement on the infrastructure/space front:

- SBS is about to undergo a major renovation project, likely to begin in Summer or Fall 2026, including replacement of all the windows. The CAS team will be working closely with CPDC on the schedule for this renovation work to ensure that the complications associated with faculty offices going offline (about 10 or so at a time for a month at a time), and classroom spaces, are met. We will work to ensure swing space for affected faculty.

- If all goes according to plan, the six common areas in SBS, floors 1-7, will see a new furniture installation and some new flooring (and additional plug-in points) over the Winter Break. Thanks to the Provost's Office for funding this project.
- We are working on a two-stage project for brightening up UG Bio/Life Sciences space.
- We are hoping to make some improvements to the Psychology A building lobby.
- The Arts Everywhere initiative is underway. If you haven't seen the installation in the Chemistry building, please stop by.
- If you would like for any of your department or center spaces to benefit from an Arts Everywhere installation, please reach out to the initiative director, Jason Paradis.
- Our DSLAC students continue to be a great source of inspiring ideas for improving our spaces and we continue to engage them directly to benefit from their input.

IV: New Economic Framework: Andreas Koenig, CAS Faculty Fellow for NEF, is presenting to CAS Chairs, Dept. Administrators, and Center and Institute Directors, on Zoom today at 1PM.

- This is the second of three presentations from Andreas designed to help our Department, Center and Institute-level leadership and administration navigate the NEF. The CAS budget team (Ming Huang, Sheri Levy, and Andreas) are working hard to address the many questions related to NEF. We ask for your continued patience as we continue to ask the right questions to ensure that the College is as successful as possible under the new pending budget model, while remaining a great partner with every other college at SBU.
- We know that there is still some uncertainty re/ the implementation start-date for NEF (July 1, 2026?), and questions re/ its implications for our CAS units. It is hard to make firm guarantees when we are waiting on clarification regarding various aspects of the NEF. So, I'd like to at least restate some core principles that guide the college leadership team.
- The NEF is designed to give deans and department, center and institute leaders more agency by having an expanded role in determining what happens to the revenues (state allocation, tuition, research, and advancement). This is a good thing, and it will encourage all of us to work carefully to ensure that we are strategic in advancing our core goals of research and creative activity excellence and student success.
- However, I want to reiterate a point that I have made consistently over the past year and a half: CAS is the cornerstone college of a public research university that serves a diverse student body with major financial need. Every dollar we generate should go to ensuring student success and excellence in research and creative activity.
- A major public research university and AAU member has a social and ethical obligation to offer a wide range of programs of study to ensure that the needs and interests of all our students and faculty are met and that we advance human knowledge across many disciplines. We will work in the New Economic Framework to advance all those needs and interests across all our areas.
- Our goal is excellence over the long term, not financial advantage in the short term. We'll work together as a college community to succeed in the NEF, and we will not engage in a "Student Credit Hours Hunger Games." Our depts must work together to ensure success.
- A last note (for now) on the NEF: Andreas Koenig will conclude his service as CAS Faculty Fellow for NEF at the end of this month. He has helped our current AD for Budget gain knowledge and expertise in NEF. He has done brilliant work for CAS and for the university in asking the tough questions that will improve our ability to succeed in

this new model. His commitment to our college, to the Anthropology Department, and to this university are exemplary and we all owe him a very big debt of gratitude. Please, if you have a moment to thank him, do so.

V: College Team: Since I began as dean on August 1, 2024, I've received valuable input from all of you and the CAS leadership team to determine how to provide the most effective and efficient coverage of the college's needs.

- The current CAS Associate Dean team includes 4 AD positions (which are each .5 positions) and 2 Faculty Fellow positions (which are each .25 positions). I utilized the Faculty Fellow positions to help address particular timely needs of the college.
- The 4 Associate Deans lead Academic Affairs, Faculty Affairs, Budget/Operations, and Research/Communications, and the two Faculty Fellows have been serving needs in the areas of NEF, and Infrastructure. All 6 team members collaborate with one another because of the natural overlap and interconnections among all the college areas.
- While having 2 faculty fellows with 4 Associate Deans has been extremely helpful, I am planning to return to having 5 Associate Deans—a model that approximates what was in place prior to Axel Drees's Interim year. Having 5 Associate Deans will provide the most effective and efficient coverage of the college needs.
- Across different Deans of CAS, the titles of the Associate Dean positions have been tweaked, but roughly speaking the 5 Associate Deans will serve similar areas as earlier versions of the Associate Dean team and provide full coverage of the areas addressed by the current 4 Associate Deans and 2 Faculty Fellows.
- This is especially good timing to return to the model of 5 Associate Deans since 2 of the 6 college team members (1 Associate Dean and 1 Faculty Fellow) are stepping down from their roles this month.
- Over the past year, I have conducted two internal searches in the college, which have led to the evolution of the team. One search in June was for Finance, Infrastructure, and Strategic Planning, which was split into an interim Associate Dean for Budget and Operations, and a Faculty Fellow for Infrastructure. Andreas, who stepped down as Associate Dean for Budget and Operations, remained on the team as Faculty Fellow for NEF. The second and most recent search, in October, was for an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.
- With the departures of 2 of the 6 members, the current 4 members will continue their roles with minor tweaks to their titles, and a 5th member will be added from the October search.
- I would like to thank our team members who are stepping down. As already noted, Andreas Koenig is completing his service as Faculty Fellow for the NEF. Additionally, Surita Bhatia is completing her service in the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs role at the end of this semester. She is scheduled to take a sabbatical this Spring. Surita's service to CAS, and to Anthropology (which she served for a year as Interim Chair), and the university (she previously served on the provost's leadership team), have, like Andreas's, been exemplary. Surita has been deeply dedicated to serving the interests of our faculty, to building a diverse and supportive community, and to ensuring that there are good policies in place to guide us. Please, when you have a moment, thank Surita for the support she has provided our faculty and staff and the college.

- I would like to provide a few more details about the tweaked titles and roles of our 5-member team, which includes some shuffling of team members. These changes will go into effect Jan. 1.
- The current AD in the Research Development and Communication position will continue serving in this role, and in recognition of length of service on the team has been given the title of Senior Associate Dean.
- The Academic Affairs AD position will remain largely unchanged but will be re-titled Academic Affairs and Operations. The operations part primarily references the classroom/teaching lab infrastructure. The plan is for that AD to take the lead on managing CAS infrastructural issues more broadly (with help from the other AD's). The current Faculty Fellow for Infrastructure will step from that .25 position into the .5 Academic Affairs and Operations AD position.
- Our current AD for Academic Affairs will move into the Faculty Affairs AD position (focused on the core processes of tenure, promotion, sabbaticals, research assignments, and faculty searches).
- The AD for Faculty Development and Community will focus on junior and mid-career faculty development, IDEA, PRODiG+, faculty awards and honorifics, faculty onboarding, etc. As previously noted, in October we conducted a search for the AD for Faculty Affairs position, and the candidate selected from that search will be appointed to the AD for Faculty Development and Community position.
- Regarding Faculty Affairs, please note that the model approximates what was in place prior to Axel Drees's Interim year, when there was an AD for Faculty Affairs and an AD for IDEA. The AD for Faculty Affairs eventually took over the IDEA responsibilities. However, it has become apparent over the last three semesters that the volume of work in the AD for Faculty Affairs position is much too much for one position and one person.
- All these core CAS leadership team members came to their current positions through internal (CAS-wide) Associate Dean searches.
- So, to summarize: this academic year we've had 4 AD's and 2 Faculty Fellows (2.5 positions in total—4 x .5 + 2 x .25) and would move to 5 AD's and no Faculty Fellows (5 X .5, which also totals 2.5 positions). We are open to the option of adding a Faculty Fellow on occasion when there is a particular need.

VI: Let me close with the topic of Graduate Funding:

Provost Carl Lejuez and Grad School Dean Celia Marshik are working hard to address this complicated matter. We've had excellent feedback from several members of our CAS community. I'm asking that as many of you as possible respond to the request from Carl and Celia for feedback on a series of questions, and please include me, Paul Kelton, and Sheri Levy. Those questions are:

- What is the right stipend amount and strategy and how soon should we get there?
- What are the impacts for the strategies we pick and are there mitigation strategies we should consider?
- Does the transition to the New Economic Framework change how you think about this?

VII: This has been a quite full update. I have not covered everything and next time around I'd like to provide updates on a range of other topics including Research/Creative Activity, Faculty Development, Academic Programs, and Student Success.

I appreciate your patience and I welcome your questions. Warmest Holiday Wishes to All.

Thanks again for the opportunity to share these updates.