

5/9/2024 – Science Fiction Forum Meeting with Campus Life Centers and Student Engagement & Activities

Attendance:

Science Fiction Forum

Samuel Haviland
Christopher Shamah
Jennifer Adams
Thomas Wilson
Janelle Quindala
Aaron Burke
Jacklyn Yeh
Leian Simon

Campus Life Centers (CLC) / Student Engagement & Activities (SEA)

Ric McClendon
Daniel Soszynski
Valerie Cheransky

Ric McClendon: How's the last week - this is the last week, right?

Samuel Haviland: Yeah.

Ric: Exams end on Tuesday, so...

Daniel Soszynski: Wednesday, next Wednesday I think is like the final.

Sammy: Yeah, May 17th is the last day.

Ric: How's it? How's exams going?

Christopher Shamah: Good.

Ric: We're all getting A's, right? 4.0, solid, right?

Sammy: Ideally.

Ric: Well, thanks for making the time. We really appreciate it.

Sammy: Thank you.

Daniel: And so we'll start off with introductions. We've interacted with some of the same faces, but just so that we have that level of familiarity. To introduce myself, Dan Soszynski, Director of Campus Life Centers.

Jennifer Adams: Jennifer Adams, Senior Emerging Technologist. Work for Diana Boss over in Academic Technologies and I'm a former President and Head Librarian at the Science Fiction for.

Tom Wilson: Hi, my name is Tom Wilson. I'm a professional for the last 41 years at the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences Engineering Laboratory, and I've been a member of the Science Fiction Forum since 1978 and I'm also an alumnus at Stony Brook.

Valerie Cheransky: Great, thank you for joining us. Valerie Cheransky, pronouns are she/they, I'm one of the Coordinators for Student Engagement & Activities. So I work with our clubs and organizations and the future Program Advisor for Sci-Fi Forum.

Ric: Ric McClendon, Dean of Students.

Janelle Quindala: Janelle Quindala, my pronouns are she/her. I'm Vice-President of the Science Fiction Forum.

Aaron Burke: Aaron, former treasurer of the Science Fiction Forum.

Sammy: Samuel Haviland, outgoing president of the Science Fiction Forum.

Chris: Christopher Shamah, incoming president of the Science Fiction Forum.

Jacklyn Yeh: Jacklyn Yeh, incoming Secretary of the Science Fiction Forum.

Leian Simon: I'm Leian Simon, Head PR of the Science Fiction Forum.

Valerie: Congrats y'all on your eboard positions.

Daniel: So thank you all for joining us. We intend to continue the conversation individually with groups regarding their club space and also identifying and discussing a lot of the issues and roadblocks and all the contents of your presentation, by the way, which was very thorough. Of course, we took the entire hour on that and it was very thorough. I appreciate y'all providing that level of thoroughness and allowing us to review that collectively. Since then, we've been meeting individually with organizations to continue the conversations and identify opportunities where we can further enhance, build community and address some of those concerns. So with that... In particular, I also want to further clarify that a move-out date has not been established and specifically we're talking to the effect of the lounge space, not necessarily the library space. And so we want to continue that conversation of what that looks like and also that futuristic lens of what that looks like going into the 2025-2026 academic year. Sounds good so far? Then I'll leave it to my colleagues just to see if there's any check-in point with regards to this.

Valerie: Yeah. I mean— do you want me to just jump—

Daniel: Sure. Yeah, go for it.

Valerie: So obviously this conversation is sort of different than the conversations we've had with LGBTA and Animated Perspectives because they have, like, an active plan that is happening for December. So we're kind of adjusting how that has gone. I know y'all have been very proactive and reaching out to Scott and then myself for concerns about the future. So one thing that we just really want to make clear right off the bat is that we have no intention of getting rid of the Science Fiction Forum library. That is never something that was on the table. We super valued all the really wonderful things that you folks do and the history of your organization. We just are kind of looking forward in terms of how we can serve a lot of organizations with the spaces that we currently occupy, and that might involve some work from y'all with us in terms of, like, how we can see the future moving forward for Sci-Fi Forum.

Daniel: Yeah, so—

Ric: The best part about this is that we want to make sure that you walk away from this conversation knowing that whatever that transition looks like, it's to ensure that the operation, the program, the services that you provide to the community remains intact as best as possible and minimize any disruptions that causes. We recognize that this is a change, but we hope that you can see the benefit that we're trying to accomplish for the greater Stony Brook community while also supporting the mission that your operations needs to get that too. So we're balancing that out at the same time, too.

Chris: I just did want to question, well, do we have a plan as of right now what the lounge that we have will be used for if we are evicted from that space?

Daniel: Yes. So our plan and comprehensively throughout Campus Life Centers as we are looking to identify spaces and places to meet the expanding needs of our over 415 clubs and organizations. Our intent with this footprint is to convert it to a space of an open gathering place, for folks to be able to take advantage. So thematically, very much along the lines of what it is now, but not dedicated to a specific club or organization, but more so along the lines of a connection made to a lending library, but also a space to gather. If you wanted to read a book, great, you could do so. If you wanted to watch a show, if you wanted to do that, you could do that as well in one of many of our spaces throughout Campus Life Centers.

Tom: Can I—? First of all, I mean it's nice to hear that the library is gonna have a space, even though the space is really quite inadequate compared to previous spaces. As you are probably aware, the vast majority of the 17,000 volume library is—

Chris: 23,000 now.

Tom: 23,000, and I haven't even— I've got another couple of boxes to donate. The vast majority of our 23,000 volume library, including rare books, stuff from the 1950s and '60s, things that are

collectibles. They're off campus. They have to get rotated in. They're all— I believe they're all cataloged. But we— at one time, the Forum had sufficient space to have all of that shelved. So a lot of this, a lot of the collection is not there. Now you're proposing to turn the Forum's lounge into a hotel space, basically. A, you know, a space where people reserve the room for an hour or two hours or five hours. The problem with that is that the Forum's collection is not just books, there is memorabilia. There is artwork. In fact, I have several pieces of fairly valuable artwork. I have a poster signed by Leonard Nimoy, Star Trek 2 poster signed by Leonard Nimoy that I intend to frame and give to the Forum. Well, I'm not going to put that. I'm not going to give that and put that in a room where anybody could come in, anybody could walk away with it. And there are, there are many alumni who have given— we have memorabilia signed by Kenny Baker, a Star Wars actor. And those are things that are just as important as the library. You know, a real connection. And they need to be preserved and have a space and I don't think they should be sitting in a storage locker somewhere.

Chris: In addition to the communal space thing, we actually took a look earlier just before this meeting at the reservable spaces that you guys have here in the Union, and just— we only took a look at two of the spaces. But in the past two months, each of the two spaces that we looked at had only been reserved 10 times across all of the available times and dates that were available. There's enough room for the people who are requesting space. Yeah, there's plenty of people who have been requesting space. I don't think any additional space is currently in that regard.

Valerie: So I can speak to that, just because you know Brend— Brandon, I'm so sorry. You know, I work on the Clubs/Organizations side, so we actually process all the reservations. We have 5,700 reservations this year that were processed through our department: there's an enormous need for extra space. So despite those small meeting rooms not being used, particularly for, like, the needs of our clubs and organizations, we wouldn't turn the lounge space into a hotel space by any means. I don't think the intention was for it to be a reservable space on 25 Live in the same way that those meeting rooms downstairs are more so. It was more so to be— more so to exist as like a holistic student life space where more folks can kind of be exposed to the wonderful things that you have to offer.

Tom: They walk through the door and they're exposed. I mean, that's one of the things—

Jennifer: That is one of the things about this organization, is that it is not restricted to a creed or—

Valerie: Yeah.

Tom: Any tribe.

Jennifer: ...Any religion or any kind of thing, like anybody can walk in. Anybody from any type of group can walk in, be welcomed. I have separated myself out, even though I've been on

campus this whole time because I believe students should run their own ships, right? So. But I know that when I was on campus that it wasn't a wasted space. This was always, always—

Valerie: At no— We do not mean it is wasted space whatsoever.

Jennifer: Well, I mean, but well-utilized, always used space. So if your idea is that this is going to be an open space that anybody can come in and use it, it's already happening. I mean, there was— I'm also interested. I was the advisor for Animated Perspectives for several years and I am a member of the queer culture. I [?] membership from the queer group that was across the hall all the time to join our group. It— it's so, like... it almost— It really sounds like it's already what you guys want it to be. Like, it—

Tom: Don't mess with a working system!

Jennifer: And this is also historically happened to this club before, which is really unfortunate. It's got a lot of stuff to move. We had two huge rooms down in the basement of Harriman Hall. We were told that we had to get out, and we did get out. We had to get out because the building was going to be renovated. It has *never* been renovated, and this was like over a decade ago. So I—I just don't— it's such a beneficial thing. The students that come in, they make maybe more substantial connections in their own lives than they're making in any of their classes. They are taking responsibility, holding offices, holding shifts, even people who are not officers. There's— they'll get keys, they're responsible, they come in for all hours, they show up when they're supposed to be there as an open, working library. I have books out right now because I have a friend who's terminally ill and I took a couple of books out to bring him in Brooklyn. It's— I don't know. It just does everything that you guys could possibly want a club to do. It's a model for other clubs in terms of bringing that type of a feeling of love for this campus.

Chris: We also do it for free.

(light laughter)

Chris: You would have to hire people to maintain that space, that would cost additional resources. As it is, the Club Hub is closed pretty frequently. We actually just had some people today coming to our club because the Club Hub was closed, when you know, I believe this should be your normal operating hours. *[Editor Note: Club Hub should be open 3-11 PM, this meeting took place around 4 PM]* But you don't have the people to fill that in. Are you planning on hiring more people to maintain these spaces? Because that would be an additional cost and concern.

Tom: And the Forum makes connections across tribes. Across sexualities, and across religions, and across ethnic groups.

Jennifer: Across political spectrums.

Tom: Across the political spectrum. And you know what? We've learned how to get along, we write in the logbook. How— what log[book] are we on now?

Sammy: 90.

Tom: 90. 90 spiral [?] books, handwritten. And if you go through, you will find in fact we have the Historian goes through and posts particularly excellent and interesting, you know, controversies from years gone by. But at the end of the day, we are all together. We are not— we are not tribes warring across the room, we are a group. We are together and we recognize the diversity and we celebrate it. And those are all things this university and— we provide a community and we provided a community for decades when this university was sorely in need of it. So, I am super happy there are 450 clubs on campus - that's a great thing. But it doesn't mean that you have to, you know, you don't have to clear cut what you've had for all these decades.

Jennifer: I mean that's— the space in Harriman [Hall] had astronauts, actors, authors come in, sign the walls. There were things that were left behind because of that. We re-tiled the whole floor to look like our symbol with the rocket and the starship. We had actually people from maintenance and stuff bringing us tiling and stuff so they could help us with repatterning the floor. I don't know what happened to that, but we worked really hard on that.

Tom: We had to throw away half our shelving! Because we had no place to put it. We saved the books, we lost shelving for tens of thousands of books. And, you know, it's— I'm glad we have— and as Jim said, you know. The alumni, which there are hundreds - I think our alumni email list has close to 800 people on it, plus we have a Discord, plus we have a Facebook group. You know, we have a very strong tradition that the current students define what the Forum is, although it's kind of interesting after all these decades at the Forum, is what it is, is what it was. This has all happened before and this will all happen again. I come in sometimes and sit in the corner, and I look at the reincarnation of people I knew 40 years ago. And— but that's— and that's good and we are here to support them as we are today. But I think that they do a great job and I think that should be recognized that should be— you should give them the opportunity to continue to do what they're doing. And in terms of other clubs on campus, other organizations on campus, you know the Volunteer Ambulance Corp has a space. The WUSB has a space, the Statesman has dedicated space appropriate to their mission, appropriate to the needs of the campus, and I just think the Forum needs that too.

Janelle: I also want to add that as a freshman, I feel like campus life, or just student life in general, is looking a little bit dead. And, no offense to Stony Brook, but we kind of have a reputation of not having the best student life. And I feel like as a freshman, I was stumbling around trying to find my community and such. And spaces like the Club Hub, I feel like they have a kind of clinical vibe to them because there's people walking around these red shirts that are clearly paid by Stony Brook and this is a Stony Brook facility, it doesn't feel like it's for the students. When I walked to the Science Fiction Forum, after leaving the Club Hub because I did not like it, I saw, like, a group of people who are welcoming to me and are also my fellow students. And I feel like stepping up as Vice-President has helped me grow so much as an

individual, and clubs like this are so important for student life, and leaving students to run their own organizations and do their own thing and control student life, instead of organizations or people that aren't even involved with students and don't know what students want because they aren't involved, I think it's much better for us to have control over those kinds of things.

Ric: So I want to be very clear when it comes to the mission and purpose of why your organization exists, we're not trying to take that away from why you've existed and why you continue to exist at Stony Brook University, okay? What we are recognizing is that we're looking at all of our organizations, and what the campus culture needs, and trying to meet that demand. Because we have very finite spaces to be able to do those things within it. Okay? And so, for us, what we're trying to accomplish, and changing, and— The space, the lounge space itself being open to all students so that way and allows for us— Yes, you guys are welcoming to get people, but they still have to come through your organization to get access to that space. And what we're doing is we are opening it up for that— It's not— it doesn't— When you put a name on something, okay, it says this is my space, period. Even though it is welcoming for everybody, the name of a space still says this is my space. okay? When you walk into other common areas around campus, nobody owns that space, okay? The name suggests that it's for everybody to have access to it. The name suggests that when you want to use it, you can do so with that. So originally the space was going to be considered office space because we are expanding our operations. We were looking at our craft room as creating for that space. We were looking at the dance performing groups and them needing spaces. And so we've been, we've been moving things around and what we've seen through some of these conversations is what students have also asked for is when you go to the UCC [Uniti Cultural Center] and the way that it's designed or you go to some other social hangout space, those things were of value to people. And so we decided, okay, let's put some of these things in a different perspective and space. So we moved things around and we said, okay, because the lending library is close to that space and we have other groups who also have a lending library, let's keep the focus where it's open to everybody and it's owned and ran by the university as the lending library. I'm gonna check things out, go over here, very close in proximity. I'm gonna read, watch movies, do whatever I'm doing in that space. We're trying to keep this space as true to the collective groups' need, because that was also on our list but it felt lower on the priority given where student clubs and boards were and what those needs were, so we continually assess some of that. So I want to be very clear that the change there is: instead of us having one club have its name on it and its the "Science Fiction Forum" thing, that this is now the Stony Brook University Lending Library, Lounge, whatever we may call that thing. So any organization has access to it, has a right to use it, and it's not a your thing vs. my thing kind of thing. But also we get to a place where there's no question about how I get access to it, or what I use it for, and we're honoring that through this whole system process because we had other needs for it, but we changed the priority order given the conversation we've had over the past couple of weeks. So I just want to put that out there as well, that the lending library, as Val said earlier, we're gonna keep that. We see the importance of that. We know that other groups have storage spaces off-campus and they bring things back to campus to keep the library fresh and renewed. And we love all of that. We want to support that, which is why we then reprioritize, say "Okay, let's open this up more

and let's do this with this space instead." So I just want to make sure that we're talking on the same language here.

Tom: Alright, let me just ask a couple of questions about this.

Jennifer: Oh, I had my hand up first.

(light laughter)

Tom: Sorry, sorry, please.

Jennifer: What we— What you lose on that is the feeling of belonging. Nobody's going *(overlap begins)* to leave Stony Brook University and remember that lounge.

Ric: *(overlapping)* [?] We are going to have to agree to disagree on [?] - we will have to agree to disagree—

Janelle: *(overlapping)* But I am a student and I – I'm gonna tell you that— *(overlapping voices end)*

Ric: Some of your experiences I can appreciate and respect [?] doing for you, but we have so many organizations that create a sense of belonging, and they don't have that dedicated space. They've utilized our current footprint, and we've actually expanded by taking over Bauman and DeVries Center. So I want to be conscious about what we're saying when we say "You just lost a sense of belonging to a dedicated space," we have all of our spaces to create that sense of belonging.

Jennifer: What do they feel belonging to? The Bauman Center. I mean—

Ric: No, the clubs and organizations and what they bring to the table, what their purpose and existence are.

Jennifer: But if it's an open room that anybody can just walk into, they're not walking into a club meeting, right?

Ric: I'm talking about the clubs themselves, right, why they exist. They create this sense of belonging. It's the organizations.

Janelle: But you just said that—

Jacklyn: Well [?] the reason of science-fiction. That's the whole purpose of our organization. Stony Brook itself doesn't exist to further the benefit of science-fiction, or media, or fantasy, or any of that. That's something that the Forum does specifically. When you take away the Forum

space like that, how are people going to learn about– or like organize or debate or anything over, over the culture itself of science?

Janelle: To me, what it sounds like is you're taking the same thing and just putting the Stony Brook label on it, and making it controlled by your people. Which I think is very strange because student life should be controlled by students. I will always stand by that. And as a freshman, like, coming– coming into this school, if I saw, like, the Science Fiction Forum, if it said it was run by Stony Brook or whatever and I saw a bunch of red shirt people in there, I would turn around and leave. Because I came to this club looking for community, looking for friends, and that's what I found. And I feel like having it being controlled by Stony Brook is just very strange and sets a very uncomfortable precedent for student life in the future.

Jennifer: Are you actually saying that you're gonna run the library? Is Stony Brook?

Ric: Not at all.

Jennifer: OK, I just wanna make that clear because you did say something about a lending library run by staff or something.

Valerie: I think the lending library is language that we've used before in these conversations because that's what– the Science Fiction Forum do call it a lending library, maybe we're using the wrong terms.

Jennifer: No, no, no, I was– you specifically said something about Stony Brook staff working the library.

Valerie: The conversation about the space is just about the lounge space. We're not trying to take away the library space or the way that the Science Fiction Forum functions. I feel like I should let you [Tom] speak before I go on to my next.

Tom: Okay, so I have - point - two questions. First of all, what is gonna happen to the collectibles, to the memorabilia, to the art that's on the walls and the art that people are donating? It's not gonna– you know, I wouldn't feel comfortable putting a poster that's worth a couple of hundred dollars, it's a collectible.

Valerie: And I don't think you should.

Tom: Well, and then so what happens? What happens to that, is it gonna sit on my lawn?

Valerie: Well, what if there's a leak in the basement? And–

Tom: Well, that I'm willing to risk, but having it just sitting where people are... now, so the second question I had is about process. Yeah, I'm also a member of the University Senate. And all the time, I hear the President of this University, I hear the Provost of this University saying

how the processes are supposed to be open and transparent and that we are going to hear from the community that we're going to get input from the community. Can you please describe the process that you made these decisions by? And in what way was there a public process? Was—what, did you speak to— did you make a public pronouncement and allow input from everyone? Or is this something that was, you know, decided by 6 people around a conference room?

Ric: These spaces you have to annually apply for, period.

Tom: Okay.

Ric: Okay, so every group that applies for space goes in knowing when they sign on the dotted line that like this space can be renewed for another club in the next year, you know. Because these spaces had not existed, it allowed for that continuation every year to say, “Okay, we see the growth, we see the value. We welcome what is happening in these spaces and therefore we just renew it every year.” Okay. We have grown as an institution, we have grown in Student Life. I— It saddens me when someone says that the student life or the campus life isn't what they imagine it to be, because we wouldn't have had so many clubs if they didn't contribute to student life the way. It's *thriving*, and *especially* in a post-COVID era, you know. Because we have so many clubs that are not tied to a space, they're tied to their mission. They use our services, our spaces to create that kind of environment. So I'm happy to talk through what that transition looks like to keep that as part of your mission and and why you exist and think what that looks like, but it has to be an alignment with the mission of the group. So when it comes to the spaces, it's the application process itself. Two: we have conversations with USG [Undergraduate Student Government], we have conversations with our program advisors who talk to clubs/organizations, they talk about what their needs are, and we use those determinations through our process to say, “Okay, well what's the future?” You know. When we rearrange a space to meet our performing groups' needs, and we add mirrors to something and make it into a dance studio, it's because they go over to this faculty building and they're like, “Sorry, you can't be here.” And so we have to say okay, let's change the space based on numbers, based on data, based on the information of what the students' needs are. But we also recognize, we're not gonna pitch student group to just student group, because if we were to ask, we're gonna poll our 400 clubs right now and we said we got five offices, who wants it? Who gets it? Who's prioritized with it? Every single one of our organizations who has been around for 30+ years would say the exact same things that you're saying. So what we're looking at is how do we take our current space that we control? We don't have control over administrative spaces, we don't have control over the faculty spaces, We have control over student spaces. And once we have gotten to a place where we've exceeded our bandwidth, then we have to talk through, okay, what's university strategy on a capital campaign to build out our current spaces, you know. Phase two of the SAC, or phase two of the Union. Because we need more club storage, we need more dance space, we need more XYZ, whatever that looks like, you know. If we were to take a meeting room offline and clubs/orgs said well, you now pushed us out into the faculty building. But they close at this time or there's no resource or no staffing within it. I mean, we're putting a lot of energy and effort into ensuring that our current spaces meets more than just Individual clubs' needs. While we understand that the transition and having the “we own that

space” as a lounge is gonna look different, what we're asking you to do is to help us think of some of the challenges. Like if you're saying like earlier and you're not the first person, I've heard this again today where someone says, “I went to the Club Hub, and it was not operating.” *What?* That's *crazy* to me, you know, because if you wanted go in there from your library to, you know, hang out with your friends and play pool or, you know, reading a magazine or book or if you want to check out DVD or whatever, like that should be a thing that's already created, you know, within our spaces. And it's something that we should be doing for all— so right now we only know of 3 clubs that actually do a lending library kind of need. So that's why we say, “OK, that's interesting, let's, let's kind of think through that. How do we get that space for that as well, so that doesn't get lost in that process”, but the things that we offer and they're not working? We should fix them. You know, and so, for us—

Tom: Well, the Club Hub is not open, so...

Val: We're working on it.

Dan: Well, I like clarity, actually I was at 3 PM at the door, I opened the door and my staff was there. But I'll look deeper into what the impression was. Maybe somebody came at 2:50 [PM] and they weren't able to come in...?

Ric: And Club Hub is— even though— yes, ran and owned by the administration. Students are working there, you know. And so, when they come up with ideas for programs on how to use that space, they're part of that process. We have a whole committee around Campus Life Centers that students are on that kind of staff. So as— as we grow our programs and operations, we do our best to grow with our community and these decisions aren't just made-up like a “Huh, I think I'll make this thing happen today.” You know, we understand. We wholeheartedly understand the feeling of loss. What we're hoping is because we have expanded our facilities and activities, because we manage the space reservations. We're hoping that you utilize Student Engagement & Activities in partnership with Student Life to assure that, like, your mission and vision and purpose still thrives within our current footprint, while we also try to meet our expanding needs as as a department.

Tom: So as your needs have expanded, the space for the Forum has contracted.70-80%. And now you're gonna cut it by another 50%: What is gonna happen to the memorabilia? What is gonna happen to the games? What is gonna happen to the computing stuff that we had in there? I built the first computer—

Ric: Gotcha. So let me answer it this way-

Tom: —what's gonna happen to all of that?-

Ric: -So let me answer it this way. First one was up to the club's decision about what happens to their property. It's the club's property—

Tom: Okay, well, they got no place to put it, it's gonna be in somebody's room—

Ric: Are we gonna have *that*? Are we gonna— you know, I wanna be—

Tom: Go ahead, go ahead.

Ric: I wanna have respectful dialogue, and I wanna model that for our students. Okay. So it is your decision what you do with those items, okay, in the space. What we are also suggesting is like, let's say you have DVDs, board games, all that kind of stuff. Within our current footprint, we would like to walk you through some ideas of how the— you know, like, for example, with LGBTA and our center, we are creating a space where their library can exist within a current footprint and put it under lock and key. So that way the membership has access only to it. Or does it get donated to the center and the university's responsible for it? There are some items that are high-value, once in a lifetime, like... there's no replacing this thing that, like, the club we were putting things into place so only the club has access to it, period, you know? We're looking at our hours of operation and we're expanding those things for the membership has access to the space because the design like that. The Club Hub is not the only space that you guys have access to. If you said, hey, in our current library space, we would like your help in getting something that we could put on the walls to put up our memorabilia. We would help you do that. If you said, hey, we would like to, you know in the current footprint of Club Hub, have a space where we could put our board games, we would do that kind of thing and make a lock and key and put up signage saying, "Hey, want to check out these games? Want to view these games? The members of the Science Fiction Forum has a spot where you can kind of do that" and computers, whatever. And then there's your storage room where the things that are only open to members, you know, because people that you trust, these are people who are gonna take care of the items. And you have your own system in place where if somebody wants to gain access to those things, you know, like, how do I verify this person's going to be taken care of it? You've got a system in place, so maybe those things go into your campus storage that you have. But in terms of hosting your programs, being visible on campus, making sure that you know you have access to *all* of our spaces, from Devries, to Bauman, to the Pit Stop [*Melville Library Commuter Lounge*], to, you know, the SAC and Union. And you're being integrated into that footprint of, like, "We've got our space, we've got our place to do those things." But the storage and the library piece, we can figure out like how that all, you know, gets connected.

Valerie: And if I can just jump in, this— the—

Ric: Sorry.

Val: No— wait, why are you sorry? This meeting is not for us to say, "Hey, here's what we're doing with all your stuff, this is exactly what's happening, we have all this planned." First of all, '24-'25 is our planning year: we're gonna work together, we're gonna come up with solutions. We're going to look at what we can do with the assets that you currently have, with the books that you have in storage, how the club is going to look moving forward. And we're gonna create a plan together. None of this is meant to be, "Student life is imposing something on you where

this is the answer to the problem and that you feel like a problem.” That's not what's going on here. We're going to create a plan together for how all of that is going to look. But the goal of all this is just to holistically serve student life as a whole, which I know hurts to hear because you do serve student life as a whole. And I want to make that clear—

Ric: Absolutely—

Val: that we feel that way, that like what you do, serving student life as a whole, serving the student body is incredible. And we love that. And we don't want that to stop. We just want to see how we can make it look different so that other folks feel included as well. Because I have a lot of clubs that do a lot of really incredible work. Different work from you guys. You do your own awesome thing. But I have a lot of groups that do similar work that also serves hundreds of people. They do not have an office space and they are still thriving. They're connected to their members. There's a lot of things they can do and they don't have any space right now and they're still kind of doing those big meetings. So I know this is really hard to hear, especially because you're such a historic and like really, really connected club, but it is an ongoing conversation and one that will continue having with you as we go through this planning year and think about what everything's gonna look like going forward.

Ric: Absolutely

Janelle: I just don't think equity should ever be “taking away” because it's not very equitable.

Val: We're not taking away, we're changing it so that it's workable for everyone else.

Tom: Well, we will agree to disagree and we'll continue to talk. But at this moment, I still think the Forum is the longest continuously operating student organization on campus. Longer than WUSB, longer than the Statesman, longer than the Ambulance Corp, longer than any of the other 450 clubs.

Ric: And we're not disputing that.

Tom: Okay, but I'm just saying that there *is* a— there's a reason. And that I think this club has earned the right for an appropriate amount of space. And what you've done over the past 10 years, Jennifer said, we've lost probably 80% of the square footage we had. We've had to put a large portion of the collection into storage. Now what you're proposing is to lose another 50%. And yes, they'll be sharing and the— you know, all of that, but again. The artwork won't be able to be on the walls. The memorabilia won't be able to be in the cases.

Val: That's necessarily true, and what I'm saying is we have a full year of planning moving forward. So there's a lot of different ways that can look and I think it's great that you have so much artwork and so many historic things and we don't want that to either be dispersed to God knows where or to be put in the trash or whatever. Like, none of us are saying, “Hey, you have this really valuable stuff and it should go. I don't care where, but not in my house.” Like that's not

what's happening. But we have— I cannot come up with a solution for you right now because it wouldn't be fair to you to say, “Well, we're gonna do this, or like this is my proposition for you.” So we have a lot of time where we kind of consider that and talk to the other students about what's going on.

Tom: What are the other two organizations that have lending libraries?

Val: So we've already had conversations with those organizations. I'm not trying to keep it a secret from you. The two organizations were already met with. We're having those conversations. They're ongoing conversations. But I think right now what we're talking about is, we have time to plan, especially because you have not been given any formal notice of, like, leaving your space. This meeting is really to say, “We are all going to be working together.” I also, you know, I've lost my train of thought, but this is all going to be done with the utmost respect that we can manage for upkeeping the mission of the Science Fiction Forum because we do respect it. What has happened in the last 10 years: Not— None of the three people in leadership in this room were here when you were taken out of Harriman, right? You weren't here yet. So I apologize for that happening. It's really frustrating. But we are- like student life, just genuinely by the numbers, is growing. There's so many people that want to do so many incredible things, and the world just has to adjust to know those wonderful things.

Ric: And I can also appreciate the— for those of you that were around from one space to then another, and I get that that frustration of like, “Gosh, here we are again, losing something again.” I completely understand that piece, which is why this conversation is where it is. And we're saying, “Okay, how do we protect the integrity as best as possible without it feeling like a complete loss? Well, if we don't have this, we're not existing anymore.”

Tom: Well, I think it's — what is it? Seven, eight, or nine moves in the time I've been here.

Aaron: I think it's eight.

Tom: Eight. So yeah, we've been there.

Ric: And thank you for sharing that, I appreciate that.

Tom: But this— I actually don't know your name but I just.

Janelle: Janelle.

Tom: As Janelle eloquently put it, it's really, and it's, we have our tradition that the students are the best, have real, have a real talent for figuring out what students want and need. So, do you have a problem with the Forum connecting— contacting the other two lending libraries and perhaps brainstorming? We might, they might come up with an idea that we all applaud.

Val: So, obviously— y'all have obviously been in contact with the other two orgs [Animated Perspectives/Smash and LGBTA] because you were at all the other the meetings that we've had so something that's been happening and a presentation that happened, a wonderful, very thorough presentation that happened. Everyone's— the students are working together.

Tom: So you guys, though—

Ric: Which is— as a result of that presentation and further thinking this whole process why we *reprioritized* the lending library space itself. You know, I wanna make that very clear that like if we didn't have the presentation, if we didn't have, you know, some of the good conversations and working through those processes, it'd be a different conversation today, you know. So that's why we want to commend you for the good work that you have done and for giving us some of this historical context that we don't, you know, come with and 10, 15 years from now those folks won't have that context either. But I think again, it's the job of this Office of Student Life to look at *holistically* campus life and the impact of student life, and work through those challenges. And as we grow, you grow, the operation, the program, services grow, the spaces gotta look different to meet the students of those times. And so as I said earlier, our feedback came from not just three organizations but from the past two years of talking to all clubs and organizations about their need. We didn't create some open form and bring everybody in because we know what your needs are different than these folks' needs and their needs are different from these folks' needs and we go back and forth. And then it's like, "So who gets prioritized?", you know? And so we didn't wanna create that club versus club kind of conversation. We looked at the collective data that we pulled in to make the best decisions possible.

Janelle: But the thing is like, you guys keep speaking for students, but most students don't even know that we're getting kicked out of our room. They have no clue. So why was there no vote about this? Why was the general body not informed of this? Why did you guys just decide that? I was just wondering, because you guys keep speaking for students and saying these intangible things like "data and what the greater good needs or the greater body". But who is the greater body? Who decided that?

Val: Sure. So first of all, once again, you were not formally told that you're moving out of your space. So it wasn't like something publicly announced. Also, I work with our 415 clubs and organizations and I have the knowledge of the groups that currently don't have a formal meeting space that they own that is their own to meet constantly. We had, like I said, like over 5700 reservations that were processed this year and groups are consistently meeting. You folks used the Campus Life Center spaces this year, you put on a gala in the winter, right? Or was it a banquet?

Chris: The masquerade?

Tom: No, it was the 55th reunion.

Val: Yes, the 55th reunion.

Tom: I believe we had about 150 alumni at that.

Val: Which is amazing, which is great. So you know, your club is growing as well. You're putting on more programming. I'm new to the Student Engagement side, but I was told that like this year, Sci Fi Forum has done a lot of really amazing stuff that you weren't doing prior and you deserve to be commended for that as well. So you know that, that programming footprint, we have a lot of groups that are doing a lot of programming consistently. Not only those weekly meetings, those general body meetings, but large programming that serves the entire campus community and things like that. So I know it seems like arbitrary and like I'm saying "data and like students as a whole," but you know there's 1600 executive board members that that communicate with SEA. I cannot tell you the amount of folks that have had frustrations with the lack of performance space or their needs for GBM crafting rooms and things like that, which again, this is a planning year, so we don't know what the future looks like right now and it's always a planning year in student life because we're constantly evolving. But what I can tell you with the utmost truth is that the student leaders, student leaders just like you, student leaders and wonderful flourishing clubs also need spaces. They just do.

Tom: You said there were 5,500 reservations last year,

Val: 5,700 reservation requests.

Tom: 5,700 reservations. What percentage load is that? I mean what percentage of the available space— reservations were used? Were taken up?

Val: Couldn't tell you that, our—

Tom: Would be a good number to come up with.

Val: Sure, our student staff processes the 25Live reservation requests. So all organizations other than the ones that currently had office space, or you know folks in specific departments request through 25Live. That's the process. So something that we're kind of gonna— which you've done as well, because you had your—

Ric: But that information would not dictate this being that kind of resource lounge. If we turn into a meeting room, then that information would be helpful, but this is not a meeting room in the traditional sense.

Daniel: And I just wanted to chime in— the whole purpose of this meeting and I think it's intent fully set up to provide clarity because there was the perception that everything was being taken away with haphazardly, and we want to provide that clarity and then also have y'all as the co-authors of what the future vision looks like for this open space that creates and welcomes folks and that social component and what that looks like. So the intent is we have time on our

side to create something together that fulfills that collaborative mission and takes care of also other needs in terms of other clubs and organizations' needs.

Tom: And just so that I know it, what are those two other organizations?

Val: Would you like to chime in? Since you know.

Chris: Yeah.

Daniel: I think you wanted to talk to us.

Chris: There's two in particular organizations, that's Animated Perspectives and LGBTA

Tom: So those two organizations have lending libraries?

Chris: Yes.

Aaron: There much smaller, but they are.

Val: Certainly not 2,300.

Aaron: Yeah, They have shelves—

Val: 23,000. I missed a 0.

Ric: A whole 0.

Chris: Even still, I don't think they're at 2,300.

Val: No, no, no, no. Yeah, y'all have the most impressive collection *for sure*.

Aaron: I wanted to know more about— Yeah, I want to know more about the vision for this space because our lounge is a small room that has, I believe, 17 maximum people.

Chris: Max occupancy.

Aaron: And I don't know, maybe if you change the furniture layout, maybe it's a little different but.

Sammy: It's about 320 square feet.

Aaron: It's not very big. Most clubs have more than— because, so the forum is a little different, because you know it's not like we're gonna have, you know, we have dozens and dozens of members but they're not all gonna be in the room at the exact same time. Some come in the

mornings, some come in the evening, some things balance out. But obviously most other clubs who do schedule things through 25Live, they have their General Board Meeting, their GBM, and they do whatever event their club does, They're gonna have probably more than 17 people. Now, you said that we're not– they're not gonna reserve the space through 25Live, but like, clubs can come in and just use the space. But how are you gonna fit more than, you know, their club members into this?

Val: Yeah so, this vision has changed in the last three weeks, right? So like what have we discussed? I would like, y'all know, y'all were sitting with me the first time we talked when I was like, "Here's the information I have, you guys." And it has changed since then, so you know. One of the things that we're doing here and like establishing that is, and I'm gonna say it again, "We have a planning year." We're gonna talk about it. So again, it's not gonna be like CLC and Student life is like, "Well, this is what's happening. Boot out of here." We're gonna talk about it, we're gonna figure out what works for everybody. So like, Student Life as a whole, CLC, as well as you guys. I can't give you a concrete plan other than like the vague stuff that we have told you right now, which is frustrating for sure. It's good to know. Like, hey, "here's the stuff we're doing with your space." If we have that information, I would love to tell it to you. Actually, it would be a disservice to tell you, like, "This is what's going in your space" because that would mean that it's already set. And it's not. It's something that we're talking about, so, with your input as well, with your ideas, with what needs to happen, that's that's how it's gonna move forward.

Daniel: And I think a lot of the variables that we discuss and co-author will dictate what that ultimately looks like within that space and allow for a design to be created.

Aaron: Okay. Well, earlier in this meeting we kind of established, you kind of wanted the space to be like this more open lounge style, a bit like what the Forum is like now, but not necessarily with the Forum name on it, right? So would it be safe to say you kind of want to keep it sort of similar in that you know, there's board games on the wall or maybe there's a TV, you can do things. Because–

Ric: Yeah, all of that's still on the table for our discussion. Again as I said earlier, because we've had so many of these conversations, we've reprioritized what the room's originally going to be used for, you know. And so that is out of respect for what the groups have said and what they brought to us as a table, but also our conversation we've had holistically. You know, and looking at the collective needs for our groups. We move things around in our original plan and other spaces to accommodate. So this *could* have *some* resemblance of what the current state of the vision is. So I'm trying to make that as clear as possible, and I'm not sure what more I can say to make that happen, but also you know. The things that are in the space that you wanna protect. You know, that's why, Val said, "We're gonna talk through like where does it go? What does it look like?" And then the other groups that we talked to, some folks, you know, when looking at their plans, some things they're contributing to this new plan, in this new process. So you may consider that, you may not consider that. That's, again, totally up to club leadership to make those kind of calls through that transition process.

Val: Yeah.

Aaron: Okay.

Val: Did you want to say something, Christopher? I feel like [?].

Chris: Well, I think one of the big concerns that we have is at the moment, it sounds like you guys have the plan to, and I know you're insisting it's not, but you're kicking us out of *this* room, at the very least, even if you're doing whatever stuff for us, you're kicking us out of this room. And you don't even know what you're planning on using the room for, you just essentially know you want the room? That's what it's—

Val: I don't know if that's fair to say.

Chris: —coming down to.

Val: I know it's frustrating and it probably does seem like that. We're not. We're not kicking you out of the room for the sake of having an empty room sit there. And you know, a lot of our plans have adjusted, just because of the context that we've learned about Sci-Fi Forum and like all the stuff that you have done and will continue to do. Again, I don't know about the future of that room, but only because we don't want to kick you out of that room. Like I wanna, I wanna make that as clear as possible. Like if we wanna kick you out of the room, we would just kick you out of the room. Do you know what I mean?

Chris: Yes.

Val: But the reason that it's a year of planning, a year of discussion, a year of where's your stuff going? What is that gonna look like? What serves the community that you serve? What serves people outside of your community and brings other communities in? It's a continuous conversation where, like, it's not "Sci-Fi Forum's out, someone else is in." Or something else is in there, or it sits there as a renovation that never happens. Like that is a nightmare to me. You know, we want it to be something that is for a lot of people to enjoy, which I know it is enjoyed by a lot of people, the Sci-Fi Forum. But we're not kicking you out of the room, and then we don't know what's going on with it, like we're kicking you out for the sake of kicking you out. We're not kicking you out and we're talking to you about what's happening because we don't wanna kick you out, and we wanna make it something that is... I know this is gonna be so hard to hear as a sentence, but *better* and *bigger*. I know there's nothing that feels better or bigger than Sci-Fi Forum cause you're huge and you're amazing. I just wanted to serve. Well, not me, but the the mission is that it would serve more folks.

Jacklyn: But what about the folks we already serve?

Val: I want to continue serving those folks.

Jacklyn: But how are we gonna do that without a room?

Val: Most organizations do so without a room, actually every organization does so without a room.

Jacklyn: But we've been serving them for so long without a room. It's not the fact that other organizations are serving them without a room. It's that we've been doing this for such a long time.

Val: Absolutely. I— yeah, I understand. This is just what the future needs to hold right now so that we can help more folks, including your folks.

Chris: I do think one of my main concerns with the idea of if you *are* gonna be turning into a “holistic room for all the clubs,” whoever wants to use it, whenever. One of the big concerns that I've had is that we've had this space for a very long time. And in some regard, we've learned how to use this space. It's, it is a thing you have to figure out how to do. We have a bunch of precedent on rules and things that have to be maintained within the club, among our members. Having different people, different clubs, moving into these spaces, even if it's not the hotel as said earlier. Even if it is just people coming in to use this space for what they need, it's... the level of efficiency, for lack of a better word, that each club is going to be using that space in is gonna be far less than the level that we use it in today.

Janelle: Mhm. To add on to what Chris said, I also think that not all clubs are made for the same purpose. Therefore, not all clubs are necessarily equal. For example, I'm also part of PUSO, which is like the Philippine blah blah blah. [Philippine United Student Organization] You know? They wouldn't necessarily need a space because they're a cultural club. Like, the reason why Sci-Fi has a space is because we watch movies on the TV, we watch shows on the TV, we play board games on the table. What would a cultural club do with that? You would just, I mean you could sit and hang out, but we actually utilize it for something that's tangible. Like, I just don't understand the us versus them mentality, in terms of like us versus the other clubs. Like, “Oh, other clubs are upset that we get the space and they don't.” But the thing is like, we have the space for a reason and it's not like we're this exclusive club that only certain people can join. Our club is for all Stony Brook students, even people that don't necessarily think they're part of Sci-Fi Forum. Like I know tons of my friends have borrowed books from the library. They're not technically Sci-Fi Forum, or they don't consider themselves Sci-Fi Forum. But they use our facilities, and like tons of people that just go there one-off, like they have tons of fun, they play board games, etcetera. So I just really don't like the narrative, which is like “us vs them,” “these clubs versus our club,” because we are Stony Brook.

Val: Yeah. I apologize if I made it seem like there was a narrative of us versus them, I never wanted it to be that because I serve all clubs and organizations. So, like, my— my take is not that like, “Everybody hates you guys because you have an office,” because that's not at all what's going on. I just want it to be clear that there are other groups that would benefit from an office, and right now no other groups have an office. So it's just something to take into consideration

that, like, there is a way for your club to thrive and grow and be great without having an office space. Even though that is traditionally part of Sci-Fi Forum, there are a lot of groups that don't have an office space and can also thrive and grow without an office.

Janelle: But why is it that you have to take away our office space rather than just giving them office spaces and making some kind of, like, I guess, like, some kind of arrangement that allows for them to have their own spaces, too. Like, why take away ours? That's my statement, I guess.

Val: So first of all, there's not enough space for everyone to have an office space. One of the solutions that goes within that would be rotating your office space then. So would you then want to move out of your office space and have an application process for like the very minimal small office spaces that we have? That also wouldn't really end up being an option that works for everyone either. If Sci-Fi Forum had to move out next year to make room for another club, and then a different club got it, and a different club got it, and six years from now, Sci-Fi Forum gets the space again, that wouldn't be really great either for anybody because that's one of 400 [clubs] that's getting office, you know what I mean? And, in *my* perfect world, every club would get an office. Wanna make that so clear! You'd have a *huge* office! And I want you to have an office! And I want you to have a big storage bin! And I want you to have GBMs every single day and every single building and have pizza in every single building because you can't have them in academic buildings. But I can't make that happen. I can only work with what I have right now and the resources that we have right now, this is just how they need to be distributed and I'm very, very sorry that you have to lose your office space. I *genuinely, genuinely* am very sorry, but it's just what has to happen.

Tom: I'm going to just to maybe correct some terminology. We do not— The forum, as I understand it, does not have storage space at all. The forum has a library, and the forum has an activity. The activity area has been allocated to the Forum because the materials that were used for activities are of such a way that they can't really come and go. It's not. And the other thing is, this is a room with a capacity of 17 people. How much more efficiently do you think that some central allocation could use this room than it's already being used? *And* who would be responsible? Right now, the Forum is responsible and operates that activity area and the library very responsibly. If the forum is no longer assigned that area, who's gonna, who *is* gonna take care of it and how it's gonna be taken care of? These are, I'm not expecting an immediate answer, I'm just throwing this out as things to be thought to get the last one.

Daniel: That one's easy, the last one is easy. That would be me or my team in terms of responsibility of managing furniture, layout, rehabilitation of the space, painting floor, all of it would be Campus Life Centers. That would be our charge, and that wouldn't be [the] responsibility of any users of the space. We would be utilizing our allocation from the state and/or the revenue that we generate from outside conferences to put those monies back into the experiences that our students have in our footprint. You know, I think there are many opportunities to essentially still fulfill all these missions collectively, and expand the opportunity for folks to use this space. Even if it were to remain within the capacity of 17 individuals, much like what it is today, but reformatting it to a matter which makes sense and factors in all the

feedback from y'all and additional stakeholders that seek to benefit from such a space, within our footprint. I think there's an excellent opportunity to help create what that future looks like and I think that is the thought process moving forward as having your own, as co-authors.

Valerie: And like y'all said, like you have more than 17 members that use office space. It will serve more than 17 people. It already does, so.

Aaron: I'm just— so we're talking here so that—

Valerie: Yeah.

Aaron: —we just get our thoughts out and, you know, future talks or whatever can...

Valerie: For sure.

Aaron: Yeah. So there is a similarly sized space very close to the Forum that is also open. I believe it's the Interfaith Lounge, which has chairs in it, they're kind of comfy and that's it. I think I haven't checked in a few months, but last time I checked it was just, you know, chairs and you can just sit there, it's a lounge. Because there's nothing in there, people usually just go there to study. And there's no one talking, or there's not many people because it's kind of dark. But, you know, it's the Interfaith Lounge. It's supposed to be for the religious centers, so it's fine. So I'm just imagining, trying to just logically apply [?]. So if our room turned into something that's just furniture— well, it'd probably turn into something pretty similar, I would think. Even if you label it as like, you know, "Club Space" or whatever you wanna call it. It would probably just end up turning into another study place. I know everyone outside is studying it's finals, but it ends up being that... we're smart kids and we're trying to study, you know. So what if we put things in there that are conducive to more social things, more fun things. You know, games, board games on the wall, stuff.

Valerie: Yes! Yes, let's do that!

Aaron: Well, they'll probably get stolen. Yeah. I think when the Club Hub was under construction, I think that was a problem that they learned. We learned the hard way, I guess. Yeah, I've heard, I don't know, rumors, whatever. That's why you have hired staff, just monitoring, making sure, you know, people don't mess up the TVs or whatever, because it's expensive stuff.

Daniel: It still happens with staff. People do mess with the TV, it's part of doing business. There are depreciating items throughout all of our footprint. And I think one of those— many of the points that you've made I think are excellent to incorporate into what the vision of what this space looks like.

Aaron: Yeah, I mean, I just wanted to bring up. It's like, okay, so we're gonna have to put fun things in there. But then we're also probably have someone watching it. Then it's just gonna turn

into the Club Hub. And you know, we do all this for free, you know, it's not like we have, like, a gated entry, "you can't just come in." You know, those kids who just came in to— like, they just saw our shelf [of] board games and like, "Oh, can we come in?" And we're like "Yeah, sure." You know, they just— some of them don't even ask, they just walk in. I've never seen some of these people, I stay in the room a lot. I've never seen them ever. And I never see them again after they leave sometimes because I guess they just, ah, you know maybe it's the end of the year and they're just exploring, I don't know. But, you know, it's just— you know, we— I feel like, brings up to his point, I forgot your name.

Tom: Tom.

Aaron: Tom. You know, I feel like the Forum does its job with our space very efficiently, and I think it would be very difficult, even if you open it up to the whole wider campus. Yeah, I think it would be difficult to be as efficient with, you know, trying to have as many positive experiences on people and... yeah, anyone else wanna talk?

Janelle: I also want, I guess more of a solid example in regards to, like, why other clubs need a space, like specific reasons why. Because for us, like, we need a space, for example, from like our hours from 10 [AM] to 6 [PM], you know, because we have movies on the TV, we have board games, etcetera. Like this is a current— like this is this space is always being used. But if you take, for example, a dance team. Like, they're gonna use the space for like one or two hours or what, you know.

Daniel: Mhm, good point. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Janelle: I feel like other clubs, like, don't necessarily need to have a space running for the same amount of time that we do, and I feel like it's not necessarily adjacent to our vision.

Valerie: Yeah. I think context is really important here. I don't wanna be like, "I know things, and you don't know things." But we do have groups that use spaces for extended periods of time, very often. Just off the top of my head, like: Women in Computer Science, they do like 5 to 6 hours study sessions, sometimes, Student Activities Center 3rd floor.

[Transcriber Note: Women in Computer Science (WiCS) hosts study session events called Workathons in their usual GBM room in Old Computer Science 2120 on Fridays at 3 PM. Only during the Fall 2023 semester did they host their Workathons in the SAC 3rd floor in recent times, likely due to a scheduling conflict with Old CS 2120. In addition, the petition has received signatures from eboard members and general body members of WiCS.]

Valerie: Also, like I said, this is a conversation we're gonna have. So like, if the thing that you need for your group is to have an open space with a TV where you can stream things, where you can show things. You know, [the] Club Hub we've established today for sure means a lot of work, it needs to change, and we're going to work on that. But you know, there's things that we

can provide and things that we can do moving forward to make sure that you still *feel* like you have an open space.

[Transcriber Note: This transcript really makes me feel like Valerie made a videogamedunkey reference just now.]

Valerie: I love that that happened, that someone just walked by and was like, “Hey, board games!” and walk in.

Ric: Yeah.

Valerie: I wanna preserve that as much as possible. We don't wanna lose that at all. And I think there might be a sense that, like, it seems so arbitrary to be like, we're gonna take off SFF, SFI— Sci— Science Fiction Forum. SFFF. I was right the first time?

Chris: 4M. We do.

Janelle: SF4M.

Valerie: SF4M! I know I knew that, I knew that. SF4M, we're gonna take SF4M and put Student Life, I see the logic and that may seem super arbitrary to you guys, I totally get it. There's just like, there's something also that came up with, like, our conversations with LGBTA, that I— with a student group running a space, I want you to have autonomy over that space. But there's also, like, dangers to that and there's concerns to, like, it all being your own space and by making it a Student Life space, we're not trying to take away your autonomy over that space. We're just trying to make sure that it's, like, managed in a way that it's not only accessible to everybody. But also, I don't know if you can speak better to this, Daniel, in terms of like the benefits of it being a Student Life space. But...

Daniel: Yeah, I think you've hit most of the main hidden points, but in terms of management and ensuring that the depreciating assets are being actively addressed on a regular basis, that would be within our wheelhouse to do so. In terms of providing access, the intent would be that when our building opens, the space is accessible. When our building closes, the space is closed, thus providing greater and wider access, not reliant on one individual or more than one individual to be present and unlock the space for the purposes of use.

Chris: Just with regards to the depreciating assets thing at the very least, we also handle that ourselves with our budget. You know, anytime something is broken or whatever, we use our own budget to fix it as it is, you know. Depreciating assets at the very least.

Janelle: I also wanted to kind of refute the example used for Women in Computer Science, because they're adjacent to a department, which is computer science. I feel—

Valerie: [?] for us though.

Janelle: But I feel like academic clubs still have that protection because they're associated with, you know, academics, and I feel like—

Valerie: Protection from what, my dear?

Janelle: I feel like, well, they could have their own space with that department, no?

Valerie: It's Student Activities Center, they book it through me.

Janelle: But they could, they could make arrangements and still have their space outside of—

Valerie: They don't have a space.

Janelle: Campus Life Centers, is what I'm saying. Like if they really wanted a space, they could try to advocate for that. They have more of a shot than us, at least.

Valerie: I don't, I don't know if that's true. Like I don't know if you have less of a shot to get space with a department than other folks. I think there are also like, not— and you know, I can't speak for the English department or anything like that, but like you do have a connection to a lot of things on campus. But regardless, Women in Computer Science does not have space with the Computer Science department. They do not have an established space or an established office with them. To my knowledge at least, [?] the secret ones they're not telling me about. But like academic groups and their connections to their departments, like...that's their own kind of thing but in terms of like the specific example that I gave, they booked through Campus Life Centers. They booked through Student Life and through Student Engagement & Activities, and like those programs all happen with the support of SEA. And they move forward that way, and they thrive in those kind of spaces and you're— especially with, like, this kind of period for us that's like moving to a new, whatever's happening. There's a lot of conversation that we need to have about, like, your needs specifically and looking through what Sci-Fi [Forum] does throughout a full academic year and looking through like what is the time that we need, what is the material that we need, the resources and things like that. And that's the benefit of this first meeting and the many meetings that we're gonna have afterwards is like talking through how those needs might change and what your vision is for the future of your club. Your club doesn't need to stay the same as it was this past year in the future either. But that that's kind of like a majority, I would say 98% of our clubs operate through booking their spaces, having their programs going through 25Live with the support of SEA and all that.

Daniel: I just wanted to chime in and provide additional context as part of the conversation and all the enhancements that are things to look forward going into the next academic year, which are already underway. Namely while I was in Club Hub right before 3 and opened the door to unlock it was, we're applying a lot of feedback from our clubs and organizations to make our spaces multi-purpose and accessible for a variety of needs. Namely for our performance

groups, we have modified the craft space. Are y'all familiar with that, within Club Hub, that upper level?

Aaron: Yes.

Chris: Mhm.

Daniel: We've added mirrors within that footprint. We're going to be reorienting a lot of the furniture throughout that space so that you can do arts and crafts in that space. You can do dance practice, you could hold a meeting, you could study. There's a variety of uses within that space. And continuing with that trend, we're retrofitting the lower level rehearsal space, also with mirrors to serve our performance arts groups. And then continuing with that, we'll look forward to adding further to our club storage capacity. So we will go from X number to a much larger number over the coming year plus years as we look to identify spaces, places, but also this is the full true year as part of the space and storage allocation process, where we're collecting data from our clubs and organizations demonstrating need for storage and inventory and what that looks like and being able to create now a scale of what kind of spaces do we need to be creating based off of that storage capacity needs. Because, yes, we can buy lockers. Yes, we can build the space. But if you have a very small need in terms of storage, you don't necessarily need the full depth of, let's say a Club Hub or Club Alley cage. And so we are creating those mixed [?] sizes for the purpose of serving more clubs and organizations. So that's something to look forward to as well.

Chris: For the Club Hub spaces, the mirror and all that. Do they have to reserve those spaces beforehand or can they just use those spaces?

Daniel: The rehearsal sp— the multi-purpose space as it's being rebranded or currently in the system in 25 Live, as the craft space, that is a reservable space. When it's not reserved, well then folks use it whenever they want to.

Chris: Mm. So I—

Daniel: I'll clarify, whenever the Club Hub footprint is open.

Chris: Yes. So the one thing about that. When I— when you start to generalize spaces like that, right? Right now, that is a club room and a performance arts room. Right? Or at least it will be, coming soon. That means now if either of those two things want to be used, someone's gonna book up both of those pieces, right? Well, one space is now multiple things. There's a reason that things are specialized overall. The more specialized something is, the, you know, the more efficient it is as a job. Again, we do what we do very well. We do it efficiently. We get a lot of use out of our room. If you do end up generalizing the room to be, you know, 100 different things, you're not actually providing more utility to all of those different places. Realistically, you're only doing it to one at a time. Just you, you lose the actual efficiency and functionality that you could have from a more specialized location.

Daniel: Okay.

Chris: Yeah, something to—

Daniel: Heard, and I think that is why we're having this intentional conversation. You may have seen a lot of the enhancements that we've incorporated into the lower, lower level specifically and that is through all of the feedback of our stakeholders, namely our students. So we've worked on splashing, at minimum, some color on the walls because while bone white is a good color in terms of managing stock and it's easy to paint walls with having just one color, honestly, it doesn't spark joy. And so we want to create that sense of belonging and vibrancy that's reflective of our clubs and organizations. And I think this is an opportunity for y'all as well as other clubs and organizations to help define what this space looks like, what is it called and how it functions. But with the intent that we have shared with y'all in terms of making it more inclusive and open to all clubs and organizations.

(brief pause)

Valerie: We're gonna have a few more meetings, in case I haven't said that enough times yet.

Chris: Yeah.

Valerie: I know we got a couple of graduating seniors in the room.

Daniel: Congrats!

Valerie: Anything y'all want to contribute before we move forward? I'm totally willing to meet with y'all over the summer as well, virtually. That's something we want to start as soon as possible, we totally can. But I don't have many closing notes.

Ric: No, I just wanna continue to reemphasize that the purpose of why your club exists, it's our goal and our hope that we help you realize that in our larger scope or footprint, and that it is minimally impacted as best as possible. And that you are hearing from us that we recognize and we value what you bring to the community. And that's why we're committed to this transition being as smooth as possible but also taking the feedback that you have given us and expanding on that for a holistic purpose for our clubs and organizations and just the students' experience collectively. 'Cause some of the things, as Dean of Students, that I'm hearing, I'm concerned about. Like if people don't have that connection or that feeling, you know, like that's your perspective and I respect your perspective. But being in the greater community, I see a difference. I think especially in the post-COVID moment, the way campus has become alive in the past couple of years, like, I just see it differently, you know? But it doesn't mean I'm trying to say that what you're saying is wrong. I just want to have more conversations about that and figure out what that looks like.

Aaron: Could I add my iota, closing arguments. Maybe, you know, we've been talking about spaces, you know, trying to be logical about this. I'll try to give it more, and try to tie into how you know other clubs and how we can, you know, give a positive impression. You know, as they leave college you can think back to their prime years, I guess you could say. You know, we've been talking "The Forum is special, we're the oldest club, blah blah blah." You know, there is something really special about the forum is that compared to other clubs, you do form a lot of lasting friends and memories here. And I'll try to juxtapose this with another club that I really enjoy and I know you guys enjoyed the Origami Club. You know, they've been featured—

Valerie: They've been winning awards a lot!

Aaron: Yeah, and they're fairly new, too, right. They're reasonably new, only a few years old, I remember when they were first created. And I went to their GBMs, it was fun, you know, I don't know anything about origami. I just went there and I learned how to do origami. I love Origami [Club], that's one of my favorite clubs. But, you know. It's not exactly a club you go to necessarily make friends per se. It's more something, you bring your friends you already have and you do something fun together. And you know, obviously that's fun. It makes you feel happy, it's happy, but. You know, when they graduate and you know, maybe 10 years down the line, they're thinking about their time at Stony Brook. I don't think many people will be thinking about their time at Origami Club.

Valerie: Mean.

Aaron: I don't know, maybe it's a little mean, but yeah, a lot of clubs, it's to do something that's fun but maybe meaningful is not the right way to— I don't know, it's a little mean. It's hard to say.

Valerie: I didn't— I was teasing when I said "mean." (*light laughing*)

Aaron: I know, no, but it is true, because I don't want to detract from other clubs because they play a really important role too. You need a lot of activities to attract students, seeing an activity they like and they do it. So what does the Forum— how is the Forum different? I feel that is that, you know, you come to the Forum without any friends and you make friends there. There are a lot of people [who] are freshmen/ Janelle is a freshman, I'm sure you came from high school. A lot of high school friends are gone, they went to other colleges. Or you know, especially the COVID generation, you didn't really have a graduation in-person and all that, you know senior year sucked. You come to, you know, Stony Brook and you don't have friends, but you come to the Science Fiction Forum. You see people just having fun, playing games. And you kind of fit in, you find your role, you learn how to become actual adults. I know you're officially an adult when you're 18, but you don't really know what you're doing with your life. You kind of figure out your role, what you wanna do, what the kind of people you want to be, people you want to surround yourself with. And you know, I feel like the Forum has proven that we've done a good job of doing that because we have an alumni network that is 60 years old, you know. People are almost— 55 years old, not 60 quite yet. But you know, we wouldn't have that alumni network if people didn't care about the Science Fiction Forum after they left. And I just wanna, just

juxtapose, you know. We're trying to give you know the student body, the most positive experiences. But there there are different levels of positive experiences and I think the leisure clubs, like the Science Fiction Form, and yes the LGBTA and other clubs with the lounges do that to some effect as well. You know, having a permanent space, it does give you a sense of home, a second home, right. You know, I was, you know, after the meetings, at prior meetings, I was grasping for, you know, has the Forum— the Forum has had eight moves, have you ever like dealt with something like this? How can we, you know, find a solution to this? And you know, I come through old news articles, not even that old it was from only 15 years ago, like 2010s. And you know, it was people were saying the exact same things I'm feeling today, which is, you know, "They're making us move from the forum, it's a second home away from home," you know. "This is where I met all my friends," you know, blah blah, blah. You get that idea. I'm repeating the sentiments, but I just kind of wanted to impart, you know, the sentiments.

Valerie: Yeah. So, if I could just challenge you to think about how, you know, we have so many students and there are a lot of them that have their own Sci-Fi Forum that is not the Sci-Fi Forum, that is a different club, that is everything to them. I will give you a personal anecdote itself. I'm a double alum from Stony Brook. I was not part of a club, I was part of orientation. Orientation was moved from the library to the Union, I was devastated. Straight up cried. I was like, "They took away my couches! The couches have been there for 20 years! I loved that couch, I cried on that couch, I laughed on that couch!" And it hurts so bad. And then, just downstairs, and we had an office downstairs. I didn't like the layout of the office downstairs, still don't like the layout of the office downstairs. And then, last year they moved us from downstairs up here and then Orientation lost their office space completely because the professional staff have their own offices, and became the office of student life. We're seeing parallels here? I was very, very devastated because I lost what I thought was my sense of community with that group. I am tied to the alumni that I worked with...eight years ago now? And alumni that worked, that were my orientation leaders. 10 years ago, 15 years ago, orientation has been around for a long time. And I thought that was all gone and that the whole sense of community and everything that was great about it was gone. And it disappeared for like a second, and then it came right back because people bounce back and people find that love in that community and they look back at their time and they see, "Okay, this is different from what it was when I was there. But now it's thriving in a totally different way." And there's, there's so much beauty and so much wonder in the way that like you take that adversity of losing your space and you kind of become this thriving community again. And... there's nothing like [the] Sci-Fi Forum, I totally agree with you. There's nothing that has been around [for] 55 years, and there is nothing that will, like, make someone feel the same way that you feel about Sci-Fi Forum. But there are many other people, hundreds of people, thousands of people that have a club and it might be the president of the Origami Club that feels that way about their club. And 15 years from now, they're gonna say, "Holy shit, those four years were the best years of my life because I was part of the Origami Club." And like, they didn't have an office, they didn't do it, but they showed up every week. They came with these great programs. They won Program of the Year this year, I think, and like Organization of the Year last year, and like, they did all of that.

[Transcriber Note: In the 2024 Student Life Awards, Pokémon GO Club's PokeBash won Program of the Year, and in 2023, the Pre-Nursing Society won Organization of the Year. Origami Club won a Diversity & Inclusion Program Award in 2024 for their Hallo Steam Spooky Brook Craft Night event with the VIP BEAR program and SEA, and they won Program of the Year in 2023 for their Cranes for a Cause event. The Origami Club President Elizabeth Argiro won a Community Service Leadership Award in 2024 and the Theresa Montenegro 200% Student Leadership Award in 2023.]

Valerie: And like it is a leisure activity, but it's really, really meaningful to a lot of people, so I don't want you to lose that meaning. I don't want you to lose that community. I don't want anyone for 10 years from now [from the] Sci-Fi Forum or 10 years prior Sci-Fi Forum to lose that. But it's still gonna thrive. It will.

Tom: I'm gonna just jump in here. At our 55th anniversary survey in March, Anniversary party in March. We had— I don't remember, Jen were you there?

Jennifer: Mhm.

Tom: How many people lined up for the picture of "I met my spouse at the Science Fiction Forum"? 30? 40?

Jennifer: It was a lot of people, and a lot of kids too.

Valerie: I love that.

Tom: And there are people who are the second generation of Forumites [active member in the Forum] who came here because their parents were in the Forum.

Valerie: That's awesome.

Tom: That's the kind of community. Now, I agree the form is resilient. I've watched it be resilient eight moves. Uh, five, ten years ago. Yeah. I don't wanna hear about the second one. But it's not infinitely resilient. You know I'm an oceanographer, I'm an environmental scientist. And I've seen this happen when you, you know, you use a resource, you push a resource and sometimes you push it over an edge and it disappears, and it's too late. And I'm just saying, take care in what you do to say, "Oh the Forum is resilient, the Forum will survive." It shouldn't have to just survive, it needs to thrive.

Valerie: Absolutely. And when you say take care, I will absolutely take care of this group with my whole heart. There's no world where I don't want it to thrive, grow, expand and be better than it has been before.

Ric: And everything that you have said about why you exist is what we want for every single student who comes to Stony Brook University to find their tribe, to have a sense of belonging, to

have those memories, you know, that allows them to tell their future children or grandchildren about their college experience. It's about the Stony Brook experience and those who help make that. And your mission and purpose and why you exist is what's going to keep telling that story, period.

Jennifer: Definitely agree, you guys are still gonna rock this. And I think that you've got some good partners. I think that open space could totally be still used by you guys. You got some planning meetings to show up to.

Valerie: It better, please let's have [?].

Jennifer: But I mean, maybe, you know—

Daniel: Especially if you help create it, haha.

Jennifer: —some of the decorations could still go in there. So I think that there's still a lot of positive things, and time will change and we'll see what happens, right? Well. Whenever you need me, I've been here forever so I can talk to you offline and let you guys still run. I want you guys to be the ones that are speaking for you, because you are the force right now, right?

Chris: Yes.

Tom: But should you need us, as they say at the end of *Labyrinth* [1986 film], speak our name and we will appear.

Ric: Well, thank you all again. As I said, this has been helpful, very insightful over this past couple of weeks to learn more, because again we weren't here over the past decade or so. And we want to be intentional about our acts, and we hear your heart and your mission, your purpose and it's going to be our goal to help you get there and continue that. And again, we're excited to see where this good, where this can go. But please note that starting in the fall when you come back, you will start to have conversations with Val and Daniel and his team. And all the things that you want to see happen, we're gonna work through those things and be creative with those things. So finish your exams, prepare for your summer plans and activities and know that you have partners in us. This is not an us versus them, this isn't a club versus club thing. This is a “what's beneficial for our community collectively” as the university grows, as our programs go, as our needs grow, and how do we make that happen? And we're going to keep tallying on what the impact is, and we're gonna work through that throughout the whole year. So please know that's about this process too. So thank you.

Chris: Thank you.

Sammy: Thank you.

Jennifer: Thank you.

Valerie: Good luck on finals!

Sammy: Thank you.

Valerie: And happy graduation!