

Redactions hamstring AIM Photonics emails search

WATCHDOG (WWW.DEMOCRATANDCHRONICLE.COM/BLOG/WATCHDOG/)

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Dr. Alain Kaloyeros, founding President and CEO of SUNY Polytechnic Institute, left, and Michael Liehr, Executive Vice President of Innovation and Technology, Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, right, brief Vice President Joe Biden, center, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, second from right, and Defense Department Undersecretary Frank Kendall, as they visit SUNY Poly Canal Ponds in this 2015 file photo. (Photo: SHAWN DOWD/@sdowdphoto/, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Seven months ago, when two factions of local leaders were fighting over the AIM Photonics headquarters, the *Democrat and Chronicle* wanted to get to the bottom of the scuffle.

Both sides spoke in pleasantries when the cameras were turned on and microphones were in their face, but week after week a new chapter in the brouhaha came to light. It was such a noticeable back-and-forth that it even worried Gov. Andrew Cuomo.



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[Photronics HQ squabble a clash of egos](http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/local/2015/08/18/photronics-fight-goes-beyond-headquarters-location/31951301/)

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Midway through the bickering, the *Democrat and Chronicle* filed a public records request (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/305871004/AIM-Photonics-e-mails-FOIL-request>) with SUNY Poly (the state agency with the lead role in AIM Photonics). We were hoping the emails would shed light on why there was so much infighting. We were hoping the emails would give us a sense for why the Sibley Building was chosen over Legacy Tower. That never happened.

It took university officials more than six months to supply the documents, but once they did, the results were uneventful. Most of the 933 pages of emails that were pulled were fully redacted, except for the sender, receiver and email subject line.

In a response to the *Democrat and Chronicle*, the public records keeper laid out reasons why most of the pages were blocked from view. Here's one noteworthy reason:

Further, section 87(2)(g) of FOIL authorizes an agency to withhold records or portions thereof that are inter-agency or intra-agency materials constituting expressions of opinions or recommendations of agency staff, including, but not limited to, drafts of "Q & As" and press releases (see, e.g., Smith v. New York State Office of Atty. Gen., 116 A.D.3d 1209, 984 N.Y.S.2d 190). The records retrieved include drafts of documents prepared in connection with the announcement of the Institute that represent opinions and recommendations and, as such, have been redacted from the records provided in response to your request.

Let's open this up for the public to discuss. We're making all the documents open for you to see, Rochester.

If you'd like to read the entire SUNY Poly response for AIM Photonics headquarters email records, have a look [here](https://www.scribd.com/doc/305871630/AIM-Photonics-e-mail-request-response) (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/305871630/AIM-Photonics-e-mail-request-response>). Or, maybe you'd like to sift through the 900-plus redacted pages. Have a look [here](https://www.scribd.com/doc/305869633/AIM-Photonics-HQ-e-mail-records) (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/305869633/AIM-Photonics-HQ-e-mail-records>).

The next step is for the *Democrat and Chronicle* to appeal some of the redactions. We will let you know how that goes. In the meantime, have fun going through those emails.

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