



**Essex County College
Board of Trustees
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

May 18, 2021

4:30 pm

Via Zoom Webinar

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, Trustee Lewis, called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm. Following roll call, a quorum of eight trustees present was declared for the meeting.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement

Trustee Grimes read the Open Public Meetings Act announcement as follows:

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey, adequate notice of this regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Essex County College was provided in the following manner:

Advance written notice of this virtual meeting was filed on January 7, 2021 and written notice for this meeting was provided to the Essex County College Community, indicating that the meeting will be held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975 c 231 and the Governor of New Jersey’s Executive Orders 102 and 104 regarding COVID 19 Emergency Actions. Notice of the meeting was also posted on the College website at www.essex.edu. According to records of Essex County College, we have not received written requests or prepayment from any parties for advance notice of meetings.

Minutes

Trustee Grimes moved minutes of the April 20th Board meeting for approval. Trustee Morales seconded her motion. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Communications

Trustee Grimes announced that there were no communications.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Ms. Congleton read the comments that were submitted by Lev Zilbermints (see Appendix A).

Finance Committee Report

Trustee Zarra reported that the Finance Committee met and recommended the ratification of the following actions:

3-1.1/4-2021S	Authorize the Award of a Five-Year Contract for CRM Recruit System Ellucian Company, LP, Chicago, IL College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Funded / Operating Expense	\$254,544.00
3-1.2/4-2021S	Authorize the Award of a Change Order to the Sidewalks, Steps, and Retaining Wall Repairs Arcari & Iovino Architects, PC, Little Ferry, NJ Chapter XII Funded / Capital Expense	\$28,300.00

3-2.1/5-2021S Acceptance of FY '20 Audit and Recommendations

The actions presented for ratification were moved for approval by Trustee Cruz and seconded by Trustee Morales. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Trustee Zarra then presented the following actions, as recommended by the Finance Committee, for approval:

3-1.1/5-2021	Authorize the Award of Eight (8) Maintenance Renewals for Hardware Technical Support Services Oracle America, Inc., Dallas, TX College Funded – Operating Expense	\$151,390.98
3-1.2/5-2021	Authorize the Award of Seven (7) Maintenance Renewals for Software Technical Support Services Dell Computers, Round Rock, TX College Funded – Operating Expense	\$34,905.95
3-1.3/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Maintenance Renewal for Software and Equipment Support Services Kronos, Inc., Lowell, MA College Funded – Operating Expense	\$20,387.36
3-1.4/5-2021	Authorize the Award of Additional Purchase for the Two-Way Radio System Mobile Communications America, Inc., Spartanburg, SC Minor Capital Funded – Operating Expense	\$304.63
3-1.5/5-2021	Authorize the Award of Five (5) Blanket Orders for Utility Services PSE&G Co. Constellation New Energy, Inc. Direct Energy Business City of Newark/Water Township of West Caldwell College Funded – Operating Expense	\$760,000.00 200,000.00 130,000.00 110,000.00 6,000.00 <hr/> Total \$1,206,000.00
3-1.6/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Blanket Order for Miscellaneous Items for the Physical Plant Grainger, Inc., Palatine, IL College Funded – Operating Expense	\$75,000.00
3-1.7/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Two-Year Renewal for Supplemental Life Insurance Dearborn National, Lombard, IL College Funded – Operating Expense	\$38,000.00
3-1.8/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Bid for Perkins Engineering Supplies Apostolico Aniello, Paterson, NJ Carl D. Perkins Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$20,000.00

3-1.9/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Purchase for Instructional Equipment CDW-G, Vernon Hills, IL Dell Computers, Round Rock, TX Minor Capital Funded (\$22,685.03) – Operating Expense Carl D. Perkins Grant Funded (\$681.47) – Operating Expense	\$15,410.85 <u>7,955.65</u> Total \$23,366.50
3-1.10/5-2021	Authorize the Payment for Legal Services Genova Burns Attorneys-At-Law, Newark, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	\$455.00
3-1.11/5-2021	Authorize the Payment for Legal Services O’Toole Scrivo, LLC., Cedar Grove, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	\$4,300.00
3-1.12/5-2021	Authorize the Award of a Six-Month Contract for WP Engine Hosting provider Hubspire Corporation, Matawan, NJ Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Funded – Operating Expense	\$20,100.00

Trustee Cruz moved the actions for approval. Trustee Wright seconded the motion. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Personnel Committee Report

Trustee Grimes reported that the Personnel Committee met and after reviewing and vetting the actions recommended the following appointments for approval:

Appointments

- 4-1/5-2021 Kadidja Coulibaly
Administrative Assistant
Business Division
Salary - \$35,568
Effective July 1, 2021

- 4-2/5-2021 Aaron Butisingh
Security Officer
Public Safety Department
Salary - \$24,960
Effective May 19, 2021

- 4-3/5-2021 Emmanuel Molina
Security Officer
Public Safety Department
Salary - \$24,960
Effective May 19, 2021

- 4-4/5-2021 Chinnara Smith
Security Officer
Public Safety Department
Salary - \$24,960
Effective May 19, 2021

The Personnel actions were moved for approval by Trustee Zarra, seconded by Trustee Morales and **carried unanimously**.

Educational Programs Committee Report

On behalf of the Educational Programs Committee, Trustee Lewis presented for approval action 7-1.3:

7-1.3/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: East Orange Board of Education

Trustee Zarra moved the action for approval. Trustee Wright seconded the motion. On a vote of seven affirmed, one abstention, **the motion carried**.

Trustee Lewis called for a motion to approve action 7-1.4 as follows:

7-1.4/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: Essex County Schools of Technology: Newark Technology High School, Donald Payne, West Caldwell

Trustee Wright moved the action for approval. Trustee Zarra seconded. On a vote of seven affirmed, one abstention, **the motion carried**.

Trustee Lewis then presented the remaining actions for approval:

7-1.1/5-2021 Application Submittal for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21 Century Act (Perkins V) Grant Application

7-1.2/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: Belleville Board of Education

7-1.5/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: Irvington Public Schools Board of Education

7-1.6/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: Newark Public Schools Board of Education

7-1.7/5-2021 Dual Enrollment Program: Orange Public Schools Board of Education

7-1.8/5-2021 Joint Admissions Agreement: Caldwell University and Saint George's University LTD

7-1.9/5-2021 Program Deactivation: Degree Programs

Trustee Grimes moved approval of the actions. Her motion was seconded by Trustee Robinson. **The motion carried unanimously**.

Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Morales indicated that the committee did not meet; however, had the following action to present for approval:

7-2.1/4-2021S Acceptance of Equipment: Chromebooks

The motion to approve was made by Trustee Grimes and seconded by Trustee Wright. **The motion carried unanimously**.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee Cruz reported that the Policy and Governance Committee did not meet; however, was recommending the ratification of the following action:

7-3.1/5-2021S Resolution for College Name Change

Trustee Zarra moved the action for approval, Trustee Wright seconded his motion. **The motion carried unanimously**.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee Wright advised that the committee did not meet this month and therefore had nothing to report.

Alumni Association Report

Bertheleau Ngakam, ECC Alumni Advisor submitted and read the Alumni Association Report. The report is attached at Appendix B.

Trustee Lewis responded on behalf of the Board that it is great to hear of the Alumni Association's resurgence of energy. Also, the Board is encouraged to know President Boakye is engaged in the revival.

Student Government Association Report

A report was not submitted by the Student Government Association this month.

Faculty Association Report

Prof. Michael Frank's report is summarized at Appendix C

President's Report

Dr. Boakye submitted his report to members of the Board of Trustees and read it into the record of the meeting. His report is attached at Appendix D.

New Business

There was no new business to report.

Public Comments

Public Comments from Kadidja Coulibaly and Lev Zilbermints are attached at Appendix E. Trustee Lewis welcomed and wished Ms. Coulibaly much success in her full-time appointment. In response to Mr. Zilbermints concerns regarding the Presidential Search, Trustee Lewis advised that they will be taken into consideration; the goal is for the process to be transparent and to take it to its rightful end.

Notice of Executive Session

Mrs. J. Grimes was called upon to read the Notice of Executive Session. She read as follows:

WHEREAS, The Open Public Meetings Act, 1975 (N.J. Law Chapter 231) permits a public body to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which certain topics are discussed:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Essex County College shall hold, following this meeting and prior to its next scheduled meeting on June 22, 2021 at 4:30 PM, an Executive Session to discuss the following topics, the general nature of which is limited to Collective Bargaining Agreements, Pending and Existing Contractual Negotiations, Litigation and Personnel Matters. The discussion of these said topics shall be disclosed to the public as soon as reasonable.

Adjournment

There being no other matters to on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned by Trustee Lewis at 5:19 pm.

Hello, everyone,

Let me begin by saying that I am glad we made it thus far, with graduation in a few weeks. This shows that ECC can be inventive in times of crises. The same must be said for humanity as a whole. It took the cooperation of multiple nations to come up with vaccines against the coronavirus. Having said that, let me get to the agenda comments at hand.

First, I must comment on the minutes of board meetings. How come Board of Trustees Minutes for March and April have not been put up on the essex.edu webpage? That's public information. Could you put that up like you did with the other minutes?

Second, we have 3.-2.1/4-2021S on the current agenda. I would ask that when you make the repairs, check not just the bridge but the damaged staircase going from just from the underpass on MLK Blvd to Essex County College. Some of the siderails need to be fixed as well.

Third, 3.-1.3/5-2021. We are talking Maintenance Renewal for Software and Equipment Support Services here, right? Is the Board of Trustees aware that there are areas in Essex County College where signal reception is poor to non-existent?

3a) Business Division, where Dr. Boakye was chairman. I have trouble getting signal on my iPhone there.

3b) Just outside Computer Lab 3404 on the third floor. You have to walk past the elevators in order to get a good signal.

These are two examples. I am quite sure there are more. Perhaps the audience will inform the Board and President of places where poor to non-existent signal reception happens?

Point is, you talk about maintenance? How about getting these areas maintained properly so the signals can come through better?

Fourth, 3.-1.5-2021. You authorize 1.2 million for utility services. Are you aware that not all bathrooms at ECC have the latest technology? The bathrooms in Information Commons still use buttons instead of electronic sensors. So on the third floor you wave your hand, the flush works automatically. In Information Commons, it is still manual.

Fifth, nice to see you are hiring new security officers. That should be under 4-1/5-2021 et sequence, as the lawyers say. I would like to note we need more faculty here.

Sixth, 7.1.1/5-2021 et sequence in VIII, Trustee Dr. A. Lewis. Wonderful to see that we are signing all these Dual Enrollment programs. Again, the more students we get, the more faculty, especially tenured faculty, we need.

Also, we need to enroll more students than we graduate. Thus, if we graduate 1400 students, we need to enroll at least two to four times that number.

Nice to see you have Dual Education Programs with Irvington Public Schools Board of Education. I attended Chancellor Avenue School and Union Avenue Middle School for grades 3-6 in 1975-1979. Oh yeah, I very briefly attended second grade for two days in 1975 at some other school in Irvington. They said that at 8, I was too smart, so I was sent to third grade in September/October 1975.

Seventh, Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report. Trustee Morales, would you note what I mentioned earlier about repairs, signal reception, and utility services? Would that fall under your committee? What can be done to address these issues?

Eighth, Resolution for College Name Change. What a surprise! I had no idea the formal name on IRS was Board of Trustees Essex County College. This just shows why it is important to be informed about college history. And yeah, the 55th anniversary is this year! Any plans in place?

Stay safe and keep in touch.

Lev D. Zilbermints

Class of 1993

**Essex County College Alumni Association
Report to the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

- Good afternoon to Board Members and to the ECC family.
- After a noticeable absence, we are happy to resume the ECC Alumni Association report.
- It is known to all that our association faced some serious challenges during the past two to three years and these got progressively worse since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic;
- But, the Essex County College Alumni Association was always of great interest to Dr. Boakye, even before assuming the Interim Presidency. The support of the previous administration had been stagnant, this is a new beginning for the association.
- Dr. Boakye and I have had several informal discussions since October of 2020 on means and ways to revitalize the Alumni Association, including rebuilding our database and organizing an election to install a new executive board by the beginning of the next academic year.
- With that vision we worked with IT to start a clean-up of our database; this is an ongoing task that will continue into the future
- In February, Dr. Boakye put together a group of about 20 student alums whom he called the “ECC Alumni Champions”. He has been meeting with the Champions regularly, about twice a month.
- A sub-committee among these champions was created to plan an election of Officers and create a timeline for the election. The election committee has now issued a call for nominations to the various positions. A virtual election week is scheduled toward the end of June.
- Additionally, the Student Life & Activities Office (SLAO) and Alumni Association are working diligently to ensure the BOT’s student representative position is filled for the upcoming academic year.
- The next Alumni general body meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 5 pm. It is important to mention that this will be our third (3) general meeting in the past five (5) months and Interim President, Dr. Boakye, has attended all of them.
- It is very encouraging to have an administration that is willing to go the extra mile to show and offer the kind of support that we need; it places value on our efforts and what the Alumni Association can provide to the College.

Submitted by Bertheleau Ngakam, ECC Alumni Advisor

Faculty Association Report

Reporting for the Faculty Association, Professor Frank shared the following:

- His opinion that we completed the 2020 2021 academic year with a B+ performance rating, as the instructional modality was not optimal. He stated that we did the best with what we had - a valiant effort.
- Summer I is in progress and is 100% virtual as will be Summer II. He stated that “we are optimistically planning for the fall semester to be 70% in person with the rest of the courses being virtual and hybrid. The plans are contingent on the pandemic and whatever guidance is in place from the CDC and the State.” He added that Covid 19 will probably be with us indefinitely to some degree; however, we remain hopeful that we will return to some form or normalcy sometime soon.
- Due to the Presidency of Dr. Boakye and Academic Affairs, the College is prepared to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff and most importantly the integrity of our academic offerings.
- It is incumbent on the board to start planning what ECC will look like when our national nightmare is ended or mitigated. In order to continue with our long history of providing our students with the best educational experience available, the Board must work with the president and staff to rectify the shortcomings of the last three years.
- Prof. Frank opined that due to retirements and death the number of full-time faculty and gaps in support staff positions is inadequate to fulfill our mission.
- A good first step been the start of negotiations to rectify the appalling situation where employees have not had a raise in three years and have suffered financially consequences i.e., credit card debt, food insecurities and inability to pay mortgages or rent. Prof. Frank said, these same employees gave up 5% of their salaries in the Shared Sacrifice Initiative. The federal rescue plan has improved finances and he hoped the employees could be made whole.
- If we really care about **Students First** we must have the will to provide them with all the resources and infrastructure that they need to succeed which includes appropriate staffing. The actions we take will also align the College with Middles State requirements.

Prof. Frank closed his report with a question, “when do the trustees believe that Board meetings can be held in person?”

Memorandum

To: Dr. M. Bolden & the Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, Interim President, Essex County College
Date: May 18, 2021
Re: President's Report

General:

The College continues to implement precautions for preventing spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

- ❖ The number of cases reported at the College has reduced significantly over the last two months.
- ❖ We continue to encourage all employees and students to participate in the multiple free COVID-19 testing exercise as well as the vaccinations. ECC Gymnasium continues to be a site for COVID-19 vaccination.
- ❖ We are conducting employees-students anonymously survey on COVID-19 vaccination and the report would be shared as soon as it is available.
- ❖ We continue to provide face shields and face masks to the staff as well as hand sanitizers.

Academics:

The spring semester ended successfully and the summer 1 semester has begun smoothly with an uptick in the enrollment credit hours by 19% compared to last year.

Finances

The FY 20 Audit has been completed and submitted to the respective agencies.

The negotiations with the Collective Bargaining Units are in progress.

Projects:

The capital projects at the College are progressing nicely and additional future projects are under review and discussion.

Dr. Boakye had several meetings with the County Executive and architects to discuss plans for the rebuilding of the branch campus located in West Caldwell.

Community Relations:

Dr. Boakye continues to participate in all NJ Presidents Council Meetings to advocate for funds and contribute to the success of our state colleges. He also participates in regular meetings with the County leaders to share key updates on the College.

Dr. Boakye participated in meetings organized by Newark City Learning Collaboration (NCLC) and Newark Anchor Collaborative (NAC). These meetings allow for discussions on COVID-19 and its challenges as well as opportunities to support our community.

Dr Boakye had a successful meeting with the Superintendents in the Essex County with a follow-up meeting with Superintendent Roger Leon to build partnership with the High schools to improve enrollment and

service to Newark students. In addition, ECC program flyers and promotional videos were distributed to all the superintendents who in turn can share with their staff, students and parents in an effort to meet the needs of all residents of Essex County.

Also, Dr. Boakye successfully met with ECC alumni and is gaining their support to revitalize and rebuild the Alumni Association.

Over the past month, Community, Continuing Education and Workforce Development - Training, Inc. championed a marketing campaign to recruit students for workforce development in program offerings such as CNA, CCMA, and Patient Care Technicians as well as English Language Learner classes. The first group of 50 residents to take advantage of these 'no-cost to student' offerings sponsored by the Cares Act funding started this Monday, May 17, 2021. Training, Inc. also graduated a group of 40 Community Health Workers and 100% are employed at this time. A second cohort of 33 are currently enrolled.

Other Notes:

Dr. Boakye supported our Student Athletes at their intercollege's meet in the Newark Public School Stadium.

The college's leaders met with Ms. Michele Doughty, representative from the State of New Jersey Department of Education - Office of Career Readiness, to discuss the Method of Administration (MOA) report. This was the overall report after the visit that took place in December of 2020 to review the College's Career Training Education degrees and offerings. Recommendations, commendations, and short comings were highlighted and a detailed report will follow shortly.

This year's Virtual Graduation/Commencement event is scheduled to be held on June 4. A committee is overseeing the overall process to ensure its success. It is very exciting to see ECC graduates picking up their caps and gowns and taking photos to celebrate their academic accomplishments. We are very proud of our students that despite tough times have persevered. Join us on celebrating them on June 4th.

Mister Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.

I want to thank the Board of Trustees and President Augustine Boakye for the opportunity to be a part of the team in the Business Division at Essex County College.

I also am very grateful to my professors at the college, especially Professor Rachel Pernia, and Professor Jean-Wilner Alexandre in the Business Division who were instrumental in guiding me through my years at Essex as a student. Their hard work and commitment to help students succeed is something I intend to pass on to students as they interact with us in the division.

Finally, I want to thank Professor Luis Padin Coordinator of the First Year Experience and Acting Chairperson of the Business Division Professor Albuquerque in making me feel welcome and guiding me over the three months that I have been working as a part time Administrative Assistant.

Kadidja Coulibaly

Dear Board of Trustees,

I did not speak at the April meeting because there was not much to mention. Sure, different purchases were made, bills paid, contracts awarded. People retired, resigned or even passed away. A few promotions, granting tenure. For me, this seemed such a normal meeting that it even ended early. So why bother saying anything when there was nothing really interesting?

However, there were two important issues that Dr. Michael Frank, the Faculty Representative, raised. These are the presidential search committee and the fact that there are 75 or so faculty left. So without further ado, let me focus on these crucially important issues.

The strength of Essex County College lies in its community, the students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and yes, the board of trustees coming together as one to focus on issues affecting the school. However, when everyone except the Board sees a different viewpoint, then trouble lies ahead. To use an analogy from Biology 101, the body says one thing, and the head, another.

Why, I ask, do we need a presidential search? This school appointed A. Zachary Yamba president in 1980. Gale Gibson was appointed president in 2013. Both of these cases did not require a presidential search. The last presidential search, in 2016-2017, cost at least a million dollars. That is money the college does not have. We are not Rutgers, Harvard, Princeton or Yale. We cannot throw money around like water!!

A new president, if he/she is an outsider, will bring in his/her own people. We will have to pay the new president and his team big fat salaries. Heaven alone knows if any of them are qualified!! To give an example, Sanjay Ramdath was President Munroe's man. He was supposed to increase enrollment. Did he? You guessed it: he did not. The enrollment rate is less than when Anthony Munroe became president in 2017.

I say that we need to choose our next president from among those who are intimately familiar with Essex County College, not from outsiders who will see it as a step up the corporate ladder!

Second, the faculty. We have 75 or so faculty left. Whole departments, such as Engineering and others, cannot meet the minimum requirements. This means that students are being turned away because there is no one to teach them. That in turn, contributes to a decrease in both faculty and enrollment. Middle States is very likely keeping an eye on what is going on here.

You know me by now. I always speak my mind, even when it is not politically correct. This is not Putin's Russia where dissenters like Navalny are jailed or silenced, but a democratic America. My friends, Essex County College is like the Titanic, like Krypton. Unless we choose a captain, that is, a president that will be from the inside, one that will save the school, we may well fold within less than ten years. Like Upsala College in 1995.

The time is running out. I can only pray that you heed and listen to my warning before it is too late.

Lev D. Zilbermints

Class of 1993