



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

January 26, 2021

4:30 pm

In attendance: Trustees: M. Bolden; I. Cruz; J. Grimes; L. Guyton; A. Lewis; C. Morales; B. Robinson; J. Wright; J. Zarra; A. Boakye, Interim President; M. Townes, Board Counsel

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:38 by the Board Chair, Trustee Bolden. Following roll call, a quorum of trustees was declared.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement

Trustee Grimes was called upon to read the Open Public Meetings Act. She did so 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 the minutes for approval. Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. ***The motion was approved by acclamation.***

Communications

Trustee Grimes announced that there were no communications.

Comments on Agenda Items

Public comments submitted Mr. Lev Zilbermintz were read into the record of the meeting. Those comments are attached at Appendix A. Madame Chair advised some of that Mr. Zilbermintz's comments would be addressed during the President' report.

Finance Committee Report

Trustee Zarra, reporting for the Finance Committee, indicated that the committee recommended that the Board approve the following actions 3-1.1/12-2020S through 3-2.4/1-2021:

Actions - Submitted for Ratification

3-1.1/12-2020S	Authorize the Award of an Emergency Purchase of a Heating Boiler for the West Essex Campus DeSesa Engineering Company, Inc., Livingston, NJ Chapter XII Funded – Capital Expense	\$32,903.00
3-1.2/12-2020S	Authorize the Award of Professional Service for Ellucian Elevate Ellucian Company, L. P., Chicago, IL CARES Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$14,910.00
3-1.3/12-2020S	Authorize the Award of a Purchase for Nursing Programs and License Assessment Technologies Institute, LLC (ATI), Leawood, KS Perkins Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$154,612.38
3-1.4/12-2020S	Authorize the Award of a Proposal for Advertisement Services Capstar dba: iHeart Media, New York, NY CCOG Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$10,230.00

Actions - Submitted for Recommendation to the Board

3-1.1/1-2021	Authorize the Award of Maintenance Renewals for VRTX Servers and EqualLogic Server Dell Computers, Round Rock, TX College Funded – Operating Expense	\$6,647.72
3-1.2/1-2021	Authorize the Award of a Purchase for Equipment for Sanitization and Supplies for Reopening Imperial Bag & Paper Co., LLC, Bayonne, NJ W.B. Mason Co., Secaucus, NJ CARES Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$1,414.74 \$10,296.00 <hr/> Total \$11,710.74
3-1.3/1-2021	Authorize the Award of Services for 1905-C and 1094-C Forms Clifton Larson Allen, LLP., Minneapolis, MI College Funded – Operating Expense	\$4,800.00
3-1.4/1-2021	Authorize Payment for Legal Services Genova Burns Attorneys-At-Law, Newark, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	\$250.00
3-1.5/1-2021	Authorize Payment for Legal Services O'Toole Scrivo LLC., Cedar Grove, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	\$2,600.00
3-1.6/1-2021	Authorize Payment for Legal Services Scarinci Hollenbeck, Lyndhurst, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	\$45.00

3-1.7/1-2021	Authorize the Award for two Educational License Subscriptions to the Bloomberg Professional Services and Bloomberg for Education Bloomberg Finance L.P., New York, NY Perkins Grant Funded – Operating Expense	\$21,200.00
3-1.8/1-2021	Authorize the Award for Child Development Center Food Services Karson Food Services, Inc., Ocean, NJ Grant Funded – Operating Expense	Not to exceed \$36,000.00
3-2.1/1-2021	Tuition and Fee Schedule	
3-2.2/1-2021	Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2021-2022	
3-2.3/1-2021	Chapter 12 Budget Request Fiscal Year 2021-2022	
3-2.4/1-2021	Resolution Fixing Date for Board of School Estimate Public Hearing	

Trustee Zarra’s recommendation was moved for approval by Trustee Lewis and seconded by Trustee Cruz. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Personnel Committee Report

Reporting for the Personnel Committee, Trustee Grimes asked that the Board approve the following actions, 4-1/1-2021 through 4-3/1-2021:

Appointment

4-1/1-2021 Ekem Karl-Agbee, Coordinator – Participation, Retention & Completion Track
 Business
 Effective: January 20, 2021
 Salary: \$55,000

Retirements

4-2/1-2021 Milena Rubinstein, Associate Professor
 Bilingual Education
 Effective: December 31, 2020

Louella Harris, Administrative Assistant
 Business
 Effective: December 31, 2020

Supplements

4-3/1-2021 Teryn Cha – Project Investigator
 National Science Foundation
 Dates - January 4, 2021 – June 30, 2021
 Supplement - \$6,250 (grant funded)

Rosa Reyes – Additional Responsibilities
 Purchasing
 Dates – October 23, 2020 – December 31, 2020
 Supplement - \$1,750.00
 Dates - January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021
 Supplement - \$2,500.00

Jean Wilner-Alexander – Coordinator
Bloomberg Terminals Lab and Finance Program
Dates – January 4, 2021 – June 30, 2021
Supplement - \$5,220.00 (grant funded)

Trustee Morales moved the Personnel Committee recommendation for approval; Trustee Lewis seconded. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Educational Programs Committee Report

Trustee Lewis indicated that the Educational Programs Committee recommended the ratification of action 7-1.1/12-2020 and the approval of actions 7-1.1 & 7-1.2/1-2021 as follows:

Action – Submitted for Ratification

7-1-1/12-2020 Approval Grant Agreement between the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) and Essex County College for the Acceptance of Funds for the Implementation of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG)

Actions – Submitted for Recommendation to the Board

7-1.1/1-2021 Acceptance of Funds: Blessed Ministries, Inc.

7-1.2/1-2021 College Readiness Now VII Project Agreement of the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges

Trustee Lewis's recommendation was moved by Trustee Guyton and seconded by Trustee Robinson. ***The motion was approved unanimously.***

Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Morales announced that the Site Facilities and Equipment Committee did not meet this month; therefore, there was no report.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee Cruz stated that there was no report from the Policy and Governance Committee as they did not meet this month.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee Wright advised that there was no report from the Community Relations Committee and that the committee did not meet this month.

Alumni Association Report

No report was submitted from the Alumni Association.

Student Government Association (SGA) Report

Mr. Nicholas Mendez, SGA Treasurer submitted the report for the Student Government Association. His report is attached at Appendix B.

The Board Chair commended the SGA on a thoughtful, well planned strategy and for their compassion in giving back to the community. She and Trustee Wright volunteered to assist the SGA in their efforts.

Faculty Association Report

Prof. Michael Frank commended the SGA report as well, commenting that it was well done. Continuing with his report, he expressed the following:

- Concern that enrollment is down once again for Spring.
- The new student cohort is the most concerning. Returning students will continue to reach their goals; however, attracting new students will remain a challenge which is common for the entire community college sector and four-year institutions.
- [In his opinion] the outlook for ECC is doubtful meaningful increase in new student enrollment until the return of in person instruction. He said the population of potential students desire and deserve in person learning.
- We must provide students with everything they need.
- The need for education majors is obvious; K-12 educators are leaving the profession in great numbers. He expressed hope that administration would invest in the necessary personnel to bring back the successful Education Program we had as well as other programs which will assist in making the College viable. Prof. Frank said under the leadership of Dr. Boakye, Dr. William and Emeritus Professor Don Yee and with the support of faculty that this issue will be addressed in a responsible manner.
- Prof. Frank acknowledged that faculty are primarily and fully invested in academics and Middle States preparation.
- He stated, again this month, that there are no simple solutions. We need to continue to plan, change with circumstances and have a Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C.
- Prof. Frank expressed worries about the corona virus and mutations stating that prognosticators predict this new normal may last as long as 5-years. He suggested that everyone would benefit from a good biology course at ECC.

In closing, Prof. Frank wished everyone a happy and safe New Year – better than last year.

Madam Chair noted that Prof. Frank's concerns are our concerns as well. She said we cannot predict the future; she, however, preferred to be optimistic and hopeful. She and Trustee Wright will affect additional efforts to recruit student when it is safe. She also expressed hope for recovery and new staff in the fall.

President's Report

The Board Chair called on Dr. Boakye to present the President's Report which is attached at Appendix C.

Following his report, Dr. Boakye responded to Mr. Zilbermintz comments; he offered the following:

- We make sure the children in the Child Development Center are taken care of and implement the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control to keep them safe.
- Regarding the tuition and fee changes, the administration met with the SGA, explained everything to the student leaders, and gave them an opportunity to ask questions.
- When the College budget was \$55M we had more students; now with a lesser number of students enrolled, the budget is reflective of that and reduced to \$51M.

Addressing Mr. Zilbermintz and Prof Franks concerns about faculty retirements and replacement, Dr. Boakye assured them that consideration is being given to those concerns and that they are part of the administration's discussions. Updates will be provided as we move forward.

Madame Chair referenced a report in the newspaper regarding the impact of enrollment across the state which indicated an overall 17% decrease in enrollment.

Dr. Boakye responded that Essex County College's enrollment is down 18-20%, but hopes with the Spring II semester, we will be able to improve that percentage.

New Business

There was no new business.

Public Comments

Public comments (see Appendix D) submitted by Lev Zilbermintz were read by the Liaison to President and the Board of Trustees, Ms. Congleton.

Madame Chair, on the behalf of the Board of Trustees expressed thanks and appreciation to retirees Professor Milena Rubinstein and Ms. Louella Harris for their service to the College.

Dr. Boakye then introduced Mr. George Peterson, the new Chief Financial Officer, who then addressed the Board.

Mr. Peterson stated that he was in his third week, and excited about the what he sees, the culture and leadership of Dr. Boakye. He expressed hope that he will have the opportunity to contribute to the growth of the organization. Mr. Peterson said he welcomed the opportunity to give back to a community much like the one where he grew up in Queens, New York. He commented that the role of the Community College is very important.

Madame Chair welcomed Mr. Peterson aboard.

Notice of Executive Session

Trustee Grimes, the Board Secretary, read the notice 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 February 23, 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

Madame Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Trustee Cruz and seconded by Trustee Robinson. ***The motion carried by acclamation.*** The meeting was adjourned at 4:47pm.

Comments on Agenda Items

From: Lev Zilbermintz <polyanker@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:28 AM
To: agendacomments <agendacomments@essex.edu>
Subject: Lev's Comments on Agenda Items

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello, everyone,

Hope all is well with you. Here are my comments on Agenda Items:

First, it looks like you are doing a very good job of keeping the college and the community safe from the coronavirus. Refer to 3-1.1/12-2020S , 3-1.2./1-2021 et al. My compliments!!

Second, 3-1.8/1-2021. Good job with thinking about children. Question is, will you have the tables separated by at least 6 feet to keep the kids safe while eating? You know, safety measures.

Third, 3-2.1/1-2021. Tuition fee and schedule. I suppose the President of the Student Government Association might want to inquire about this as well. My question is, then, will there be enough money generated by the student fee for student organizations to fund their events?

Fourth, it seems to me that ECC got less money, \$51,000,000+ for its budget. See 3-2.2/1-2021 and the next one. I recall in years past ECC getting from \$55 million - \$60 million. What happened?

Fifth, Milena Rubinstein has been here for decades. With her retirement, there are fewer faculty. Are you going to hire some more to boost up the faculty ranks? And oh yeah, you should give Milena the thanks of the Board for her dedicated service.

Sixth, as usual, no Alumni Report. Well, what can we expect when all the officers' terms have elapsed?

Thank you for your attention.

Good afternoon Members of the Board of Trustee, Dr. Boakye, and Essex Students, Faculty and Staff.

Please accept this report from the Student Government Association prepared by Nicholas Mendez, SGA Treasure.

SGA Endeavors for Spring 2021

VIDEO MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

The SGA team will record a video intro for SGA's COVID outreach. We'll need to assign who will develop content and point individuals for messaging. We'll need to also assign who will be tasked with uploading the content.

FOOD BANK GIVEAWAY

It is almost traditional to start every New Year with new resolutions, and although the numerous events of last year may have dispirited some of us, life still worth staying hopeful, positive, and helpful. Remaining loyal to these qualities, ECC Student Food Pantry and the Student Government Association (SGA) partnered to help in the minimal way possible Essex County College students, before embarking on the Winter/Spring Semester 2021, by organizing a food distribution.

It will take place on the main campus of Essex County College on FRIDAY from 2 PM to 4 PM. It will be held exactly by West Market Street near the Dasher Center.

From the beginning of this pandemic -and all the changes that it incited- until the end of the year 2020, we have endeavored to support you down the unsteady road, and we are definitely not stopping now! Therefore, we look forward to seeing you there, but most importantly to be of any possible kind of help to whoever needs it.

The SGA team has also developed a script for a video message promoting this event.

SUPPLY BANK FOR STUDENTS IN NEED

We will assign someone to reach out to clubs (as a reservoir) to get an accurate snapshot on who may be in need of supplies. These clubs can connect with their members and see who is struggling with procuring supplies. We can then tally the supply list and review available funds and then develop an application or distribution process.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL RETAILERS

We will need to appoint two individuals to go out to community stores such as Walmart, Target, Staples, Best Buy who can coordinate with store managers and/or marketing personnel from these businesses for a donation program. These donations can be electronics and/or other supplies. Perhaps we should get an accurate

representation of need from ECC clubs and do video outreach so that individual students may share their needs with us. We will also develop a survey to be sent by Mr. Graham to the student body and determine an application process.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Nick will spearhead getting ECC signed up for future Jersey Cares opportunities in order to increase ECC visibility in the community and promote camaraderie amongst the student body. I will also look at other opportunities such as churches, soup kitchens and COVID testing sites (dependent upon regulations and comfortability of volunteers)

CHALLENGES

With the rise in COVID cases, we have become more restricted on possible in-person activities. While we did plan to record video messaging, it has become rather difficult to do so as many of our schedules have not allowed for this to happen. We will meet in the coming days to iron these details out.

Additionally, we share our thoughts and prayers with our president, Sapphire Rodriguez during these challenging times. Our Vice President, Jessica Lopez will oversee duties at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Mendez

Memorandum

To: Dr. M. Bolden & the Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, Interim President, Essex County College
Date: January 25, 2021
Re: President's Report

General:

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

- ❖ Our records indicate that 8 individuals working for the College tested positive with mild symptoms after the Christmas holiday break. It must be noted that these happened in isolation. We have implemented a self-guided contact tracing log to help keep everyone alerted to the amount of time spent in interaction for those on campus.
- ❖ We continue to encourage all employees and students to participate in the multiple free COVID-19 testing exercise as well as the vaccinations as they become available. ECC Gymnasium is a site for COVID-19 vaccination.

Academics:

The Spring 2021 semester re-opened on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. As of 01/25/2021, our total unduplicated headcount is 5,178 students. Registration is still scheduled for late start courses and Spring II that will begin in February 4th. It is worth noting that we maintained the Welcome Center open for students during the Christmas break and over 150 students benefitted from the additional services we provided. We truly appreciate everyone who supported eMr. Hamza Wedam, mr roy harte, mr ssean madeline mendez and his team for their dedication and hard work.

Projects:

The County Executive, Mr. Joseph DiVincenzo, coordinated and provided financial support to the College to upgrade all the Gymnasium lights to a new LED system. It must be noted that the original lights had passed their life expectancy and were starting to make unusual loud buzzing noises and needed urgent replacement.

During the holidays break, the College also took care of the heating problems that led to the temporary closure of the West Essex Campus. Also, both the sidewalk project and the renovation of the bathrooms are moving at a fast pace and it is anticipated that the completion will be ahead of schedule.

AOB:

I (Dr. Boakye) held a successful college-wide Zoom meeting to discuss the current state of the institution. Over 280 employees participated in the meeting. The financial status, enrollment, COVID-19 and Middle States related topics were discussed. The College community also had the opportunity to ask questions and get answers to assuage some of their concerns.

Madam Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.

From: Lev Zilbermintz <polyanker@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:48 AM
To: publiccomments <publiccomments@essex.edu>
Subject: Public Comments by Lev Zilbermintz, Class of 1993

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Greetings,

Here are my public comments.

First, I think we are on the right track with restrooms being made contact-free. This is something that should have been doing long ago, but better late than never. The current crisis just brought this matter into closer perspective.

Second, like I said before, the Lisa Durden, Rasheedah Hasan and Gale Gibson cases are going to drag out for a long time. This is not looking into a crystal ball, this is simple logic. It has been now what, 4 or 5 years? Look, you do not want to have these become the longest legal cases in school history. So why don't you find some face-saving way of settling the cases? Otherwise, I predict, these cases will drag on and on, consuming money and resources that could be used elsewhere.

Third, the College Readiness Now VII Program sounds like a very good idea. Years ago, between 1994 - 2007, we had the Freshman Center. It was located on the fourth floor, and did exactly what its description said. The center helped freshmen make the transition to college. Back then, members of the student government used to work and tutor in the Freshman Center. Lisa Donato was the head of the Freshman Center. Perhaps the Board should consider bringing back the Freshman Center?

Fourth, once this coronavirus ends, I would like to see ECC bring back the ECCOLOG yearbook, the student newspaper, ECCO. 2021 marks 55 years since the college was founded. Perhaps you could create an ECC online history page, with photographs and chronology of Essex County College history from 1966 to the present.