



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

January 23, 2024 – 4:30 PM

Essex County College – Main Campus - Smith Hall

In Attendance:

M. Bolden; I. Cruz; J. Grimes; L. Guyton; A. Lewis; B. Robinson; J. Wright; J. Zarra; A. Boakye, President; M. Townes, Board Counsel

Call to Order/Roll Call

Madame Chair, Trustee Bolden, called the meeting to order at 4:43 p.m. Seven Trustees answered roll call. A quorum was declared for the meeting.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement

Trustee Grimes was asked to read the Open Public Meetings Act Announcement. She read as follows:

Advance written notice of this meeting was filed on January 2, 2024, 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. 2020 c. 11) and Board Policy 1-1.

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 that the minutes of the December 19, 2023 meetings of the Board of Trustees be approved. Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Communications

Trustee Grimes announced that there were no communications.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. James E. Harris, Immediate Past President of the New Jersey Association of Black Educators (NJABE), and a very strong, longtime supporter of Essex County College first commended the leadership for getting the College past the Covid crisis and on a trajectory for a very good year. He then presented his comments on agenda items:

- Regarding the increase in budget and tuition for FY'25 – Mr. Harris stated that ECC provides a golden opportunity for many first-generation college students and those from low income families. His question was, “with the tuition increase, is financial aid also increasing?” He noted that TAG pays the tuition, but does not address the fees which are also increasing.
- With regard to the budget, Mr. Harris asked what portion of the budget is covered by the County or by the State. He noted that when Community Colleges were established the finance ratio was: 1/3

County, 1/3 State, and 1/3 Tuition. He said, it appears that over recent years, students bear an unfair and disproportionate burden of the budget.

- Mr. Harris asked if there was anything the NJABE or other groups need to do to send a message to both the County and State about increasing funding community colleges.
- Mr. Harris then expressed support for the Colleges' Joint Admissions Agreement with Caldwell University. It noted how advantageous it is for our students to transfer there as Juniors.

In closing, Mr. Harris reiterated the NJABE's willingness to provide the College with any help or support needed.

Madame Chair thanked Mr. Harris for his comments. She indicated that it was not something the Board typically entertains, but she asked Dr. Boakye to respond to Mr. Harris' inquiries.

Dr. Boakye thanked Mr. Harris for advocating for the College and the Community. He then responded that the State is providing 19.5% and the County is providing 27.9% of the \$56 million FY25 operating budget. With regard to the tuition increase, the President indicated that tuition would strategically increase a minimal \$2.68 per credit; and, fees by \$.45 for FY25. The President also advised that the administration met with the student leaders and discussed with them said increases before coming to the Board for approval. They also agreed to the minimal increases for FY25 through FY27.

Dr. Boakye further advised that each year, the federal government considers increasing financial aid by small margins. He noted that he and others will soon travel to Washington, DC; one of the things they will fight for is for students to get more aid.

Finance Committee Report

Trustee Zarra reported that the Finance Committee met and reviewed the items presented. He noted that there were questions on one item which was separated out and will be presented as a goldenrod action by the Board's Counsel. Trustee Zarra then asked the Board to consider and move forward the following board actions:

3-1.1/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of the PeopleAdmin Talent Management System Subscription Renewal Power School Holdings, LLC. Db: PowerSchool Group, LLC., Folsom, CA College Funded – Operating Expense	\$33,284.92
3-1.2/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award to Purchase Eighteen (18) Phenolic Worksurfaces Formaspace, Austin, TX Perkins Grant Funded	Amount not to exceed \$40,703.18
3-1.3/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of a Blanket Order for Copier and Specialty Paper for the Print Shop Sharda Paper, Brooklyn, NY College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$80,000.00
3-1.4/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of Additional Funds for Legal Services Walsh Pizzi O'Reilly Falanga LLP, Newark, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$30,000.00

3-1.5/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of Chiller Repairs D&B Service Group/Daikin Applied Americas Inc., Minneapolis, MN College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$60,000.00
3-1.6/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of a Blanket Order for Facility Improvements JM Beauty Construction, LLC, Palisades Park, NJ Michael Anthony Poth Services, Bloomfield, NJ Stone Gate Associates, LLC, Middletown, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$124,800.00
3-1.7/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of an Additional Change Order for the Parking Structure at West Essex Campus Dobco, Inc., Wayne, NJ Grant Funded – Minor Capital Expense	\$110,000.00
3-1.8/Jan-2024	Authorize the Award of Blanket Orders for Food – Supplies and Services LaCocina, Newark, NJ Shop Rite, Newark, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$100,000.00
3-2.1/Jan-2024	Payment of Arbitration Award – Grievance: Sharron Green	
3-2.2/Jan-2024	Tuition and Fee Schedule for FY25, FY26, and FY27	
3-2.3/Jan-2024	Operating Budget Request Fiscal Year 2024-2025	
3-2.4/Jan-2024	Chapter XII Budget Request Fiscal Year 2024-2025	
3-2.5/Jan-2024	Fixing Date for Board of School Estimate Public Hearing	

Trustee Lewis moved the Finance Actions for approval. Trustee Wright provided the second. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Mr. Townes, Board Counsel, was asked to present the following goldenrod action, which he read into the record of the meeting, for approval:

Goldenrod 3-2.6/Jan-2024

Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Legal Services

WHEREAS, Essex County College has a need for outside counsel and Jackson Lewis P.C. proposes to provide services consistent with the engagement letter for legal services, in the matter of the Unfair Practice Claim filed against the College on December 20, 2023 by the Adjunct Faculty Association; and

WHEREAS, Essex County College has determined and certified in writing that the value of the services exceed \$5,000 and the contract is being awarded pursuant to a non-open and non-fair process; and

WHEREAS, Jackson Lewis P.C. has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that Jackson Lewis P.C. has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the County of Essex in the previous year, and that the contract will prohibit (the firms) from making any reportable contributions through the term of the contract, representation will continue until the matter is resolved; and

WHEREAS, Essex County College has determined that the funds are available for this purpose;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: by the Board of Trustees of Essex County College Board as follows:

1. The Board of Trustees of Essex County College ratifies retention of Jackson Lewis P.C. to provide legal services for legal services consistent with the terms of the retainer letter sent to Essex County College at a rate not to exceed \$345.00/hr. and for a maximum not to exceed \$30,000.
2. The Business Entity Disclosure Certification and Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution.

Trustee Zarra moved Board Action 3-2.6 for approval. Trustee Guyton seconded his motion. ***The motion carried*** – seven yeas; one nay.

Personnel Committee Report

Trustee Robinson presented for approval the following four actions which she read into the record of the meeting:

Appointments

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 4-1/Jan-2024 | Tiago DosSantos, Assistant Director - Athletics
Athletics
Effective January 24, 2024
Salary \$65,000 |
| 4-2/Jan-2024 | Solange Amaya, EOF Program Manager
Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)
Effective January 29, 2024
Salary \$57,000 |

Faculty Emerita Status

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 4-3/Jan-2024 | Ladylease White, Professor Emerita
Accounting
Effective February 1, 2024 |
|--------------|--|

Resignations

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 4-4/Jan-2024 | Rosa Reyes, Associate Director
Purchasing
Effective January 19, 2024 |
| | Habiba Jamali, Assistant Director
Purchasing
Effective January 3, 2024 |
| | Fatima Matos, Manager – Auxiliary Services
Information Technology
Effective November 20, 2023 |

Trustee Cruz presented to motion to approve the personnel actions which was seconded by Trustee Lewis. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Educational Programs Committee Report

Trustee Lewis indicated that the Committee met and recommended the approval of the following action:

7-1.1/Jan 2024 Joint Admissions Agreement – Caldwell University

Trustee Cruz provided the motion to approve the action; Trustee Robinson, the second. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Guyton announced that the Committee met but had no actions to present for approval. He announced that he wanted the Board and the public to know of plans to share a PowerPoint presentation highlighting various facility developments occurring around the College.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee Cruz indicated that the Committee met, had no actions for the Board's approval, and shared that the Committee will meet on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with new policies and requirements of the state.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee Wright reported that there were no actions to present on behalf of the Committee. She indicated that the committee met and received updates and plans for the Hall of Fame and the College's 55th Anniversary. She also shared that the Committee engaged in a discussion about enrollment at the West Essex Campus.

Alumni Association Report

The Alumni Association report was submitted electronically. Ms. Congleton read the report into the record of the meeting as follows:

**Essex County College Alumni Association
Board of Trustees Report
January 2024**

- ❖ Good evening, board members & fellow ECC Alumni.
- ❖ My name is George Nti, and I am the ECCAA Vice-President. It is my pleasure to provide the following updates on behalf of the Executive Alumni Association electronically.
- ❖ Since the last BOT meeting, we have not held any meeting in 2024.
 1. The board is planning to hold the first meeting by the end of January.
 2. The board has reserved a table to participate in the upcoming ECC club fair on January 24-25.
- ❖ On behalf of the alumni association, we would like to wish everyone a happy new year!

Student Government Association Report

The Student Government Association (SGA) report was submitted electronically and is attached at Appendix A. The report was read into the record of the meeting by Mr. Mark Anifowose, President of the SGA.

Faculty Association Report

Prof. Alexandre welcomed everyone back from the winter break with wishes for a Happy New Year.

Highlights of Prof. Alexandre's report to the Board of Trustees were:

- All faculty were eager to come back to serve students. He noted that faculty have been helping students with their registration and anything needed to help them have a good semester.
- The Faculty Association team met to continue the review of their consolidated contract and make preparation for the new contract negotiations.
- The ECCFA is happy to see that the Board passed the FY25 budget. He commented that he hopes their raises are a part of that budget.
- On January 19th, the LPN Pinning ceremony was held. Prof. Alexandre remarked that the Nursing Faculty did an outstanding job. He stated that the ceremony was well attended by family and professors.
- A Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial program was held earlier that day. The event, sponsored by Dr. Khalfani and the African Institute featured renowned speakers. The program was attended by the ECC family and local officials.
- Dr. Alvin Williams hosted a very special and much appreciated Meet and Greet for faculty members.

President's Report

Dr. Boakye began his report with the College's continued efforts to keep students, faculty and staff safe and informed about COVID-19 protocols. He mentioned that a few cases were reported following the winter break. He then highlighted the following information:

- The 2023-2024 Winter Intersession was quite successful.
- The College is promoting the **Some College, No Degree** initiative. Funds have been received to support students who qualify for the program.
- The Spring I enrollment numbers are 5,145 students which is equivalent to 51,989 credit hours. 331 students are registered at the West Essex campus. Recruitment efforts are ongoing and now focused on Spring II which begins on February 12th.
- The President listed the many events he participated in during December '23 and January '24 which were listed in his written report to the Board of Trustees.
- Dr. Boakye shared that projects on the main campus are progressing and the Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the renovated cafeteria.
- Of the thirty (30) ECC student athletes who graduated in 2023, twenty-one (21) or 73% of those students are attending four-year institutions across the country. He expressed pride in those students and added that several of the thirty have secured jobs and are working.

New Business

Madame Chair called for new business. There was none.

Public Comments

- Dr. Akil Khalfani first thanked members of the Board of Trustees for the work they do. He then shared a few details about the Martin Luther King Memorial Program which was held earlier in the day; it went very well and he thanked Drs. Boakye, Kirkland and Williams for their support. He noted that Leonard Jeffries and his wife were in attendance and stated that we continue to have good relationships with African Counsel Generals from Morocco, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, some of which were also in attendance or on Zoom.

Dr. Khalfani also announced that the son of Marcus Garvey, Julius Garvey, who is in his 90s, will be at the College for the Garvey/Nkrumah Lecture Series in February. Dr. Khalfani indicated that he is reaching out to the high schools to invite students to the lecture series.

- Professor/Counselor Victor Stolberg came forward to express gratitude to the Board, on behalf of Solange Amaya, for approving her appointment to the position EOF Program Manager.
- Dr. Boakye announced the upcoming College Council meeting, work on the new Strategic Plan and developing strategies through focus groups.

Notice of Executive Session

Trustee Cruz was asked 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 February 20, 2024 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.

Trustee Robinson provided the motion to conduct an Executive Session as indicated. Trustee Lewis seconded her motion. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 pm by a vote of acclamation.

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION WINTER/SPRING 2024 (January)
REPORT**

Good afternoon to the Board of Trustee Members, Dr. Boakye, Faculty, and Administration.

My name is Mark Anifowose. I am the current President of the Student Government Association. I will be delivering the January BOT report for SGA this evening. I would like to thank the student body for their support in last year's SGA holiday celebration. We had the opportunity to connect with the students and show wonderful talents.

SGA CHANGES AND GUIDELINES

The Student Government has undergone some changes in officer positions, and we have also updated the school's website to reflect the change. Due to the changes in office positions this month, the Student Forum and all other major activities will be conducted starting in February. Also, we will be undergoing additional changes during the Spring semester like appointing new senators, opening newer senatorial positions, and getting newer SGA members to participate in the college academic committees. New guidelines will be enforced for Executive roles as well as the addition of new roles for Executives and Senators to help balance the workload. In the meantime, we will be recruiting new members through the ECC mobile App and advertising the new positions and academic committees open to students.

INITIATIVES FOR THE FEBRUARY 2024

- Amendments to the SGA guidelines and Constitution
- Recruit more members for Senatorial positions
- Resume Workshop for Students

Student Government Association (SGA) Student tuition and student activities fees increase.

A meeting was conducted on January 16, 2024, with Dean Kirkland in which the increase in the tuition and student activity fee was discussed. The reasons for the increase and the percentage were highlighted. At the end of the meeting, we agreed to the increase and proposed to have a student forum in which this information would be relayed to the students. The forum was then held on January 18, 2023, and the students were given information regarding the increase in fees and were also allowed to share their opinions and concerns.

We once again want to give thanks to the Board of Trustees and the College for allowing the SGA to help students have an easier transition toward their college experience. We hope to receive continued support in this new academic year.

Respectfully submitted,

SGA Executive Board
Essex County College
Student Government Association