



Board of Trustees
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

December 17, 2024 | 4:30 PM

Smith Hall – Main Campus

In Attendance: A. Lewis, Vice Chair; I. Cruz; C. Martinez; J. Wright; J. Zarra
A. Boakye, President; M. Townes, Board Counsel; S. Story, Recorder

Excused: M. Bolden, Chair; J. Grimes; L. Guyton; B. Robinson

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Vice Chair A. Lewis, called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm. A quorum was achieved with 5 trustees in attendance.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement:

Trustee C. Martinez read the Open Public Meetings Act into the record. It reads 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 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 C. Martinez moved that the minutes from the November 19, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting be approved. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

Communications:

Trustee C. Martinez announced that there were no communications.

Public Comments on Agenda Items:

Mr. Lev Zilbermints read his report into the record and it reads as follows:

Greetings, everyone,

Here we are with the end of yet another year. Like everyone else, I would like to know where the drones in New Jersey are coming from, Mars, Saturn, or somewhere from Earth? Since we do not have the answer to that yet, I will start my Public Comments on Agenda Items.

VI. Finance Committee Report: I am curious about what the Finance Committee Report says. What is the status of ECC financially? Where can I get this information?

3 -1.2/Dec-2024: If we are talking about Physical Education Building Locker Renovation, how about installing security cameras in the locker room? Because you need to consider that lockers can be broken into by bad actors. Having security cameras in the locker room would help prevent theft and crime. Years ago I had stuff stolen from my locker while taking a Physical Education class. So, what do you think?

3 - 2.2/Dec - 2024: I would like to take a look at the Fiscal Year 2024 Audit and Recommendations. Where is this information available?

VII. Congratulations to all who were appointed to their positions. Welcome to Essex County College! We

wish you the best in your future career and endeavors. Also, congratulations to Dr. Boakye on his salary adjustment and bonus!

Finance Committee Report:

Trustee J. Zarra stated that the Finance Committee met last week and recommended the approval of the following items:

3-1.1/Dec-2024	Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of an Exterior Waste Receptacle Foremost Enterprises Inc., Bloomfield, New Jersey Chapter 12 Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$40,000.00
3-1.2/Dec-2024	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Change Order for the Physical Education Building Locker Renovation at Newark Campus Molba Construction, Little Ferry, New Jersey Chapter 12 Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$20,000.00
3-1.3/Dec-2024	Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Science Equipment Tito's Intermediate, Inc dba 626 OpCO LLC, Boca Raton, FL Carl D. Perkins Grant Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$80,000.00
3-2.1/Dec-2024	Settlement and General Release – Mr. Michael Corbitt	
3-2.2/Dec-2024	Acceptance of Fiscal Year 24 Audit and Recommendations	

Trustee J. Wright moved the Finance actions for approval. Trustee Martinez seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Committee Report

Trustee I. Cruz stated that the Personnel committee met last week and recommended the approval of the following items:

A. Appointment

4-1/Dec-2024	Debashis Sarkar Assistant Professor-Mathematics Math, Engineering, Technologies and Computer Science Effective: January 13, 2025 Salary \$71,590.00
4-2/Dec-2024	Kristine Lo Instructor-Mathematics Math, Engineering, Technologies and Computer Science Effective: January 13, 2025 Salary \$57,577.00
4-3/Dec-2024	Guerdie Nonez Instructor – Nursing Medical Surgical Division of Nursing and Health Services Effective: January 13, 2025 Salary \$70,186.00
4-4/Dec-2024	Bergenie Celony Instructor – Nursing Maternity Division of Nursing and Health Services Effective: January 13, 2025 Salary \$70,186.00

- 4-5/Dec-2024 **Candice McEwan**
Instructor – Nursing Medical Surgical
Division of Nursing and Health Services
Effective: January 13, 2025
Salary \$70,186.00
- 4-6/Dec-2024 **Mirian Ochoa**
Coordinator – Latinx Engagement Center
President Office
Effective: January 6, 2025
Salary \$55,000.00
- 4-7/Dec-2024 **Anisa Grant**
Admission Specialist
Welcome Center
Effective: January 6, 2025
Salary \$45,000.00
- 4-8/Dec-2024 **Alkuron Williams**
Administrative Assistant
Community, Continuing Education & Workforce Development
Effective: January 6, 2025
Salary \$40,000.00
- 4-9/Dec-2024 **Karon Johnson**
Probationary Police Officer
Public Safety
Effective: January 6, 2025
Salary \$42,000.00

B. Contract Execution - Salary Adjustment and Bonus

- 4-10/Dec-2024 **Dr. Augustine A. Boakye**
Office of the President
Effective: November 1, 2024

C. Contract Ratification

- 4-11/Dec-2024 Essex County College and Essex County College's Fraternal Order of Police

Trustee J. Zarra moved the Personnel actions for approval. Trustee J. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Educational Programs Committee Report

Trustee Dr. A. Lewis stated that the Educational Programs committee met last week and recommended the approval of the following items:

- 7-1.1/Dec-2024 Acceptance of Funds for EOF Winter Intersession Grant from the State of New Jersey
Office of the Secretary of Higher Education for \$53,449
- 7-1.2/Dec-2024 Acceptance of Funds for Training, Inc. from the Victoria Foundation for \$70,000
- 7-1.3/Dec-2024 Licensing Agreement between ECC and the Essex County Board of Education of
Vocational Schools for Authorizing the Use of the West Essex Campus Soccer Field

Trustee J. Zarra moved the Education Programs actions for approval. Trustee I. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report

Vice Chair Dr. A. Lewis stated that the Site, Facilities and Equipment Committee did not meet last week and there were no actions.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee I. Cruz stated that the Policy and Governance Committee did not meet last week and there were no actions.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee J. Wright stated that the Community Relations Committee Report did not meet last week and there were no actions.

Alumni Association Report

The Alumni Association Report submitted to the Board of Trustees was read into the record by Mr. Lev Zilbermints and is attached as Appendix A.

Student Government Association Report

The Student Government Association Report, which was submitted electronically to the Board of Trustees, was read into the record by Dean Bello and is attached as Appendix B.

Faculty Association Report

The Faculty Association report was presented by Professor J. Alexandre. He reported the following updates from the faculty:

- Five new faculty members were congratulated and warmly welcomed to the college community.
- The Faculty Association will meet with lawyers and Human Resources on January 16, 2025, to discuss faculty contracts.
- Plans are in place to update and revamp the faculty lounge to enhance its utility and comfort.
- The New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) fair was held to inform faculty members about their benefits.
- The ceremony to recognize outstanding employees took place last week.
- The Africana Institute will host additional African Markets on January 5th, 11th, and 12th, 2025.
- The Business Division submitted its ACBSP reaccreditation Self-Study, a significant milestone for the department.
- Faculty members have been actively engaged in their professional responsibilities, including finalizing grades for students.

Professor Alexandre concluded the report by wishing everyone happy holidays.

President's Report

The President's Report was submitted electronically to the Board of Trustees and read into the record by Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, President. It is attached as Appendix C.

New Business

The board reported that there was no new business to discuss.

Public Comments

Lev Zilbermintz submitted his report electronically. It reads as follows:

Greetings,

Another year is ending. So, without further ado, here are my public comments.

First, the college cafeteria. There is much that could be improved. To begin with, in the afternoon I only see two employees working in the Cafeteria. One acts as the cashier/pizza man/sweeper etc., while the other

does the sandwiches and other food. This is absurd, especially when there are many customers in the cafeteria. Why cannot you have an additional one or two employees helping out when necessary?

The Student Government should have a Cafeteria Committee meeting at least monthly with the Cafeteria management and students. I think that the price of fruits is too high. Also, why are there no miniature milk cartons in the freezers? If you want to buy cereal with milk, then you have an inconvenience. You have to pour milk from a gallon. No other school has this sort of thing.

Second, and this may surprise you, there is a time capsule buried at Essex County College. It was buried in 1976, when this building was being completed. That capsule is supposed to be taken out in 2026, two decades after it was buried. From my research, it appears that the capsule is buried where the first part of the third floor is now. Mamie Bridgeforth would definitely know where it is. I remember her saying that the time capsule was buried and then it was built over. The Star Ledger from mid-September 1976 should have the details. Anyone who worked here in 1976 - Ned Wilson, Arthur Taylor, Patricia Richardson, et al - would recall the time capsule. Ground penetrating radar would easily locate the capsule. I think it is a big safe from the 1970s, full of old documents, yearbooks and other stuff.

You want to bury a new time capsule in 2026?

Madam Chair, this completes my presentation.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Notice of Executive Session

Trustee C. Martinez 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 December 17, 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.

Adjournment

Vice Chair A. Lewis motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm by a vote of acclamation.



**Report to Board of Trustees
December 17, 2024 @ 4:30 pm**

1. Greetings to BOT members, President Boakye, ECC staff and students, and everyone in attendance.
2. I am Lev Zilbermintz, ECCAA Treasurer, and I am pleased to provide an update on the association's progress.
3. First, we thank ECC President Dr. Boakye and his administration for their continued support.
4. The Alumni Association held a General Assembly meeting on December 4, 2024, to discuss activities for the rest of the 2024-2025 year. The activities include:
 - Angel Tree Christmas giveaway-December 2024
 - Bake or Book January/February 2025
 - Volleyball Game and Food Sales-March 2025
 - Alumni Business Fair-April 2024
 - Participation in Graduation Events-May 2025
 - Summer Fun Activities-June-August 2025
5. Three members have signed up to join standing committees
6. The association is working towards general elections in the Spring 2025 semester to fill vacant executive positions.
7. Thank you.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

December 2024 Board of Trustees Report

Good evening, Board of Trustee Members, Dr. Boakye, Faculty, and Administration.

My name is Michael Aghagi and I am the BOT Representative for the Student Government Association. I will be reading the December BOT report for SGA this evening.

E-BOARD MEETING

An emergency Executive Board meeting took place on December 16, 2024. Overseen by Dean Bello, the meeting addressed internal group matters, concluding on a positive note with a commitment to improvement in the upcoming semester. A part of this discussion was mentoring our General Membership to take on Leadership roles as some of the Executive Board members will be graduating in June.

ICC MEETING/FORUMS

We conducted an ICC meeting with the other clubs on the 18th of November 2024. A total of 9 clubs attended the meeting. The Student Forum has been postponed due to finals this month. In the Spring semester, the SGA will implement new changes, including updated guidelines for Executive roles and the introduction of additional Executive and Senator roles to better distribute responsibilities.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS/FACULTY GOVERNANCE

As a part of the SGA Constitution, the student body is represented through SGA representation on Faculty Governance and other College Committees. Our Executive Team has reported the following as a result of attending the below meetings.

ASC (Academic Standards Committee)- Our FYE (first year experience) was intended to help students register, understand teaching systems, and adapt to college life, but many still face challenge. Is the course effective, or should FYE be restricted by department- should they be promoted? These concerns will be reviewed at the next meeting.

FDC (Faculty Development Committee)- Working on Reducing the time spent on preparatory math classes. Faculty development course assignment, curriculum restricting, articulation agreement, resources, counseling and advisement. Awaiting Math 095 data, relevant to 10% of STEM students. Details will be discussed in the next meeting.

DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) College Wide Committee- Two members of SGA attended their first DEI College Wide Committee meeting. They were given the DEI plan and brought up to speed on how the committee functions.

HOLIDAY/CLUB EVENTS

The Holiday Show, held on December 5th in Smith Hall, was a resounding success, featuring outstanding performances. Skits, songs, and showcases were presented by the Music Club and other participating groups. We eagerly look forward to even grander celebrations next year!

SGA also assisted in the Holiday Tree Lighting, held on December 4 by distributing treats to the student body.

INITIATIVES FOR JANUARY 2025 AND ONWARD

- New Student Orientation
- Having the student Forums in different locations/times on campus for further engagement.
- Recommend new Policies toward the SGA guidelines
 - Recruit more members for Executive positions and succession planning for next year
- Increased civic engagement of General Members

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Board of Trustees and the College for supporting the SGA in making students' transition to college smoother and safer. Wishing you a joyful holiday season, we look forward to continued collaboration and enacting our initiatives in the coming year. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

SGA Executive Board

Essex County College

Student Government Association

Memorandum

To: Dr. M. Bolden & the Board of Trustees

From: Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, President, Essex County College

Date: December 17, 2024

Re: President's Monthly Report

General:

Our Fall 2024 term ends on December 21st. We served 7,026 degree-seeking students enrolled in 71,451 credit hours this semester, outperforming Fall 2023 in both categories.

I thank the entire college community, staff, faculty, alumni and our Board of Trustees for your commitment to student success and wish you a restful and safe winter break.

Academics / Enrollment / Student Support:

- Our Faculty are providing end of semester support and students are working hard for the final exams.
- This year's Winter Intersession will run from December 26th – January 9th.
- We will have a small staff in the Center for Technology (CFT) to support our Winter Intersession students and handle prospective student inquiries normally handled in the Welcome Center.
- The Business Division Faculty completed and submitted their ACBSP reaccreditation Self-Study.

The President's November/December engagements have included:

- November 20th: Held joint Cabinet/Chairs meeting at the West Essex Campus in preparation for the Spring 2025 semester.
- November 22nd: Attended the Social Science Division Assessment meeting.
- December 4th: Participated in the "NAC REW Q4" meeting.
- December 5th: Attended the Essex County Tree Lighting ceremony at the MLK building in Newark.
- December 6th: Attended the New Jersey Community College Presidents and Workforce Consortium Governance Board meeting.
- December 6th: Attended the retirement event of Dr. Alvin Williams, Executive Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs.
- December 10th: Participated in our Annual Employee Recognition luncheon held to appreciate staff members who have served the College for 5, 10, 15, 20, and up to 50 years.
- December 10th: Attended the High School Guidance Counsellor event at the West Essex campus.
- December 11th – 13th: Attended the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

Student Affairs

- Our Student Affairs office, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Assessment (IEPA), has launched the Social Benefits Survey for Pell-eligible students.
- Starting on December 12th, a mental health therapist will come to the Main Campus to support students. The therapist will be housed in the Student Development and Counseling Center on the 4th floor.

- Student Affairs distributed 2,214 pounds of food to 105 students at our West Essex and Main Campus locations for Thanksgiving.

Finances

- Our Finance team is working with PKF O'Connor Davies to finalize the FY24 audit.

Projects:

- We are making progress on the MLK Library and Learning Center renovation project.
- Final modification of the CFT construction documents is underway.

Community Relations:

- We raised \$1,300 on Giving Tuesday this year. We appreciate everyone's support.
- On December 13th, Dr. Boakye represented the College to show last respect to Hon. Mildred C. Crump - Newark Council President Emeritus who passed on Dec 1st, 2024. May her soul rest in peace.

Save the dates – Upcoming Events.

- Our college is closed from December 24th – January 2nd.
- Our Spring 2025 term begins on January 13th.
- May 29, 2025 – Commencement at the Prudential Center

Wishing Everyone Happy Holidays and A Prosperous New Year!

Madam Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.