



Board of Trustees

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

January 28, 2025 | 4:30 PM

Smith Hall – Main Campus

In Attendance: M. Bolden, Chair; A. Lewis, Vice Chair; J. Grimes; L. Guyton; C. Martinez; B. Robinson; J. Wright; J. Zarra
A. Boakye, President; M. Townes, Board Counsel; S. Story, Recorder

Excused: I. Cruz

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Chair M. Bolden, called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. A quorum was achieved with 8 trustees in attendance.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement:

Trustee J. Grimes 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 December 3, 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 J. Grimes moved that the minutes from the December 17, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Trustee Zara. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

Communications:

Trustee J. Grimes announced that there were no communications.

Public Comments on Agenda Items:

Two people made comments on the record:

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

Hello,

My name is Lev D. Zilbermints, Class of 1993.

3 - 1.3/Jan. - 2025: You increase the blanket order for Dining Services to \$500,000. My question is, what do we get in return? There is much that needs to be improved in the Cafeteria. One, more employees are needed in the afternoon. Two, mini-milk cartons in the freezers would be good. It is inconvenient to fill the milk from the big gallon every time. Three, employees need hours. Four, having trays would be a good idea. Five, have you asked the Essex County College community their opinion as to how Cafeteria service would be improved? Who is responsible for the Cafeteria? Whoever it is, that person needs to step up and address the issues I just mentioned.

I would also like to see a Cafeteria Committee appointed by the Student Government Association to meet monthly regarding Cafeteria issues.

4-1/Jan - 2025

4-2/Jan-2025 : We would like to welcome those newly appointed to Essex County College and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors!

ECC tried to hire new faculty last month, but that person said the salary offer was too low. So, the point is, you have to offer competitive salaries in order to attract talented faculty.

4-3/Jan - 2025

4-4/January 1, 2026 : We would like to thank Naser Moheb and Jeffrey Lee for their services to Essex County College. They served the ECC community well over the decades. We would like to wish those retiring many happy years , long life, and best of luck in their future endeavors.

You have an SGA Report on the agenda. I would like to know why the SGA Forum has been postponed twice in two months. Is it the Student Life and Activities Office? Well, since you put signs all over the school advertising the forums, you can put similar signs informing the public about the event's cancellation. Seems like common sense to me.

This concludes my public comments on agenda items.

- Professor Jennifer Wager also made comments. She mentioned that her comments were related to the budget and our goals for being here as an institution. She suggested that we the rank-and-file faculty workers of ECC fall on the board of trustees, the administration, and the NJEA leadership to follow the example of rank-and-file education students and workers across the country in denouncing and refusing to comply with warrantless, illegal, and unjust ICE raids, banning of anti-racist initiatives like DEI programs, and a multitude of other attacks against Black, POC, immigrant and LGBT students and workers, including attacks on the federal Department of Education itself.

She said that Newark is a sanctuary city, and it must remain so. She said schools are sanctuary sites and must remain so. She said that they are inviting all ECC administrators, union leaders, Board of Trustees, workers, and students, to prepare a collective response in the face of an imminent raid on the school by organizing a series of “Know Your Rights” trainings, here at ECC. She said we must all come together to defend our students and our workers against these fascist attacks.

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/Jan-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Two-Year Blanket Order for Biology, Chemistry & Physics Lab Supplies/Equipment	Amount not to exceed \$200,000.00 Per year
	<u>Company Name</u> Carolina Biological School Specialty, LLC. VWR International, LLC. Fisher Scientific Co. Pasco College Funded – Operating Expense	

3-1.2/Jan-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Vending Services Culinary Ventures Vending, Union, NJ Revenue Generating Partnership	Amount not to exceed \$00.00
3-1.3/Jan-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Increase of the Blanket Order for Dining Services Dining Partnership Group (DPG), Verona, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$500,000.00
3-1.4/Jan-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Contract for Repairs of the 5th & 6th Floor Windows Cherokee Glass Inc, Wharton, NJ Chapter XII Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$378,000.00
3-2.1/Jan-2025	Operating Budget Request Fiscal Year 2025-2026	
3-2.2/Jan-2025	Chapter 12 Budget Request Fiscal Year 2025-2026	
3-2.3/Jan-2025	Fixing Date for Board of School Estimate (BOSE) Public Hearing	

Revisions of Prior Resolution

3-2.4/Jan-2024	Chapter XII Budget Request Fiscal Year 2024-2025
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Trustee L. Guyton moved the Finance actions for approval. Trustee J. Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Committee Report

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

A. Appointment

4-1/Jan-2025	Elina Vassitska General Ledger Accountant Accounting Effective: February 3, 2025 Salary \$60,000.00
4-2/Jan-2025	Kevin Huang Technical Support Engineer Information Technology Effective: February 3, 2025 Salary \$50,000.00

B. Retirement

4-3/Jan-2025	Naser Moheb Instructor - Mathematics Mathematics, Engineering, Technologies and Computer Science (METCS) Division Effective: January 01, 2025
4-4/Jan-2025	Jeffrey Lee Professor - Biology Biology, Chemistry, and Physics Division Effective: January 01, 2026

C. Rescind

4-5/Jan-2025 Kristine Lo
Instructor - Mathematics
Mathematics, Engineering, Technologies and Computer Science (METCS) Division
Effective: January 13, 2025

D. Contract Ratification

4-6/Jan-2025 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Essex County College Essex and County College Professional Association - Temporary Pilot Program

4-7/Jan-2025 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Essex County College Essex and Essex County College Security Association

Trustee C. Martinez moved the Personnel actions for approval. Trustee J. Grimes 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/Jan-2025 Great Oaks Legacy Charter School Board of Trustees – Dual Enrollment Program Agreement

7-1.2/Jan-2025 Acceptance of funds for the FY 25 Consolidated Adult Basic Skills Grant Program from the State of New Jersey for \$166,666

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

Site Facilities and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Rev. L. Guyton stated that the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee met last week, but there were no actions.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee J. Grimes stated that the Policy and Governance Committee met last week, but there were no actions.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee J. Wright stated that the Community Relations Committee met last week and there were no actions. They discussed the Hall of Fame and its inaugural class. They are hoping to conduct the ceremony in the spring.

Alumni Association Report

The Alumni Association Report, submitted electronically 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, submitted electronically to the Board of Trustees, was read into the record by Cynthia Fancher 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:

- Professor Alexandre welcomed everyone and wished them a Happy New Year
- Faculty is worried about what is happening in the nation and is awaiting guidance and leadership on what to do if ICE raids the campus.

- The faculty association met last week and affirmed that their job is to educate the students.
- He asked what the stance of the College was on DEI in relation to what is going on in the world right now.
- The Faculty Association is preparing a statement and questioning where the College stands.
- He thanked Dr. Lee, who will be retiring.
- He thanked Professor Moheb, who will also be retiring, for his service in teaching Math.
- He felt it was unfortunate that Professor Lo declined the Mathematics Faculty position.
- He mentioned that the students were concerned about the cafeteria.
- The faculty and students were unable to afford the cafeteria's prices.
- The faculty association is reviewing their contract proposal from the College and they stated they will not have a contract for a long time. He proclaimed they had a very long road ahead.
- They had a meeting with the Vice President for 3 hours and discussed a lot of points about the future of the college.
- Professor Stolberg represented the Faculty Association recently at a County meeting.
- The negotiation team is still working on the contract and planning to meet with the administration.
- The faculty continue to attend conferences and meetings to improve their skills.
- Professor Hammond went to a seminar on Cryptocurrency.
- The deans and directors are learning about Crypto.
- They congratulated Dr. Stolberg on his new doctorate.
- Dr. Turner is inviting the College to the 1st conference on April 5th on autism for families and educators at the WEC.
- During the Faculty meeting, they voiced "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."

Trustee Bolden agreed with Professor Alexandre's quote. She asked about the tee shirts the Faculty Association wore in the meeting and thanked them for their hard work. She hopes that the President's report will address many of their concerns.

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.

After reading his report, the President addressed the audience about the current nationwide concerns. He stated that before the presidential inauguration, they knew there would be changes, but they were not certain of what would come. The presidents of New Jersey colleges and universities met to discuss strategies. They do not want to do a confrontational or illegal approach. He assured the College that he would share information with the campus community once they gained clarity. They are talking to attorneys so they can create protocols. They are getting input from different areas such as the Secretary of Higher Education and lawyers. They are not trying to invoke fear or panic. They do not want to put the College out there so it can be attacked. The College is not afraid. He wants us to continue to be the College that can protect everyone.

New Business

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

Public Comments

Public comments were made by a few faculty, staff and alumni and are summarized below.

- Professor Chestnut, Biology Department, asked if the president could address the issue with the cafeteria. He averred it is time for something to happen.
- Dr. Boakye responded to Professor Chestnut's comments as follows:

He said they bought the leaders together. The students did a survey to check on the cafeteria prices in this and other schools and found that our prices are lower than the prices at other institutions. Their contract expires in a year. We are open to giving the Cafeteria to multiple vendors.

- Dr. Khalfani, Director of Africana Institute and Professor of Sociology, talked about the events that are going on. He talked about the MLK event that was held in the Mary Burch Theatre. He invited everyone to attend the Black History Month events. He said that the Flag Raising event will occur on Feb 6th. He announced there will be many events in February.

He wanted to address the fact that loans, grants, and other kinds of funding would be ending after the country received an executive order from the President that they would freeze at 5:00 pm on that evening. He wanted to know how the College stands on it and wondered what approach to take on it. He said it would have a huge impact on the College. We do not know how long it will last but know that it will impact all students across the country. We need to be proactive on that subject.

He also said that there was an ICE raid in Newark and that it had been going on around the country. We have to send something out to the College so that we know what to do when it happens to the College. We need to know how to respond as an institution if they come in the middle of events and other situations. We need to consider a set of processes and policies to address it. We need to find ways to be proactive across the board in looking at what changes are happening and not focus just on DEI. There are a lot of impactful things. We need an event where the students and staff can share how they feel about the things that are happening in the country. He said these are the kinds of conversations we need to have.

- Dr. Boakye responded that we have a task force in place to mitigate the Executive Order.
- Lev Zilbermintz submitted his report electronically and read it into the record. It reads as follows:

IN DEFENSE OF ALUMNI

LEV D. ZILBERMINTZ, '93

Today is January 28, 2025. This day we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a program at Essex County College. But it seems to me inequality against which Dr. King fought is still with us.

Let's talk about alumni. Here is my personal opinion. Who teaches, works in accounting, financial aid, and other departments? Alumni. Many alumni grade papers. Who gives money to this school? What about alumni who are Olympic Champions? Who serves as public relations for the school, helps to recruit students every year? Dozens, if not hundreds, of alumni. Who gives thousands of dollars in scholarships to graduating seniors and incoming freshmen? Alumni. So you see, we alumni have a big role in the affairs of Essex County College. We even serve on the Board of Trustees, the Essex County College Foundation, and other bodies.

Did you know Clara Dasher, the namesake of this center? I did. In fact, I stood up for her in January 1991 at an ECC BOT meeting. She was removed as BOT chair in November 1990, and Joseph Montuoro took over. Then, two months later, the students rose in Clara Dasher's defense. I led the applause to then professor Lenworth Gunther's speech. It was my first full college semester. By February 1991, Montuoro had resigned and Dasher was back as BOT chair. Point is, Clara Dasher, were she alive today, would be horrified at how the Student Center that bears her name does not allow alumni entrance.

My point is that alumni have been here since the first class graduated in 1970. We paid our dues, we took classes, we served in student organizations. We alumni contribute to this school.

The rights of alumni include free access to the gym, library, cafeteria, computer lab, and most important, the Dasher Center. This last point is important. The Dasher Student Center was opened in September 1999. Since that time and up until 2022, alumni were given free access, subject to showing the ID cards and signing in, to the Dasher Center. Then, without asking for

the advice, consent and input of the Alumni Association, you took away the right of alumni to access the Dasher Center. I think that is disgraceful treatment of alumni.

Alumni who are here with me today, do agree with my opinion. They are here today at this Board meeting to tell you that what you are doing, not allowing alumni access to the Dasher Center, is wrong. I am sorry, but this is discrimination. How can you have Student Success, Students First without giving students the knowledge they need?

You do not allow returning students who are alumni to hold office in student organizations or SGA. You now have taken away alumni access to Dasher Center. But you want alumni labor, alumni expertise, alumni money, right? Well, if that is the case, you need to treat alumni right! Start by restoring alumni access to the Dasher Center. Other schools, such as Rutgers, NJIT, SHU, Bergen County College, and other county colleges, allow alumni access to their student centers. They also allow alumni who return to take courses to run for SGA or club positions.

Lastly, I am not here to be popular with certain people. I do the right thing, even say what may not be politically correct. I know many people here whom powers - that - be keep silent because they work here. I speak for those who cannot, for the alumni and for the truth.

- Dean Kirkland made the comments below:

One of the things that we take a lot of pride in here is the growth and development of students. We treasure their ability to grow and learn and take part in activities here on their own. One of the places where that happens is the Dasher Center and our Student Forum. We do not tell anyone not to get involved but we tell them to let the students make their own decisions and not interfere with that growth development, the operation of their club activities, the Student Government Association, and all these organizations. One of the things that I do not believe should happen is for alumni to interfere with the works of students. They can guide and support us but they should not be involved with the students and the student clubs and activities. We do not tell people to do that, but if the club or activity invites them, it is fine. But if you impose yourself on them that is a different story. What we're saying to them is we value all of our students including our alumni and work with you we do here to college. We must honor and give our students the chance to take advantage of the services that we offer and what they can use to grow and develop as individuals because it is all about the growth and development of our students. We take that very seriously and we do not feel as though people, not even anyone else or outsiders, should interfere with what we do to support our students' success.

He thanked everyone.

- Alumni Munirah El-Bomani, class of 2001 made public comments. She mentioned that she used to be in the Student Government Association. She said that Lev contacted her. She asked if they were trying to stop the alumni from having access to the Dasher building.

Dr. Boakye responded no.

She mentioned that she has been trying to get on the contact list of the Alumni Association representative, in the blue area. She heard from them one time. She said we need to strengthen the alumni association. She said the Alumni Association needs to help and be of service to the Student Government Association. She said she had one of the strongest Student Government Associations at ECC. They were in charge of the food. She said they were strong on the food conditions. The prices were high and the food was bad in the past. The person who has replaced the former president, Lola A., should reach out to people to get them involved. Lev asked her to reach out to people, but she felt that the person in charge should contact the Alumni and get them involved. She said the alumni want to help and get involved. She said they used to be involved with many events like the graduation and she wants the alumni to be able to strengthen the Student Government Association and help the professors. She said they worked perfectly together as a

team.

- Dr. Boakye said that some people were confused by the way the comment was stated. The President said that we have an alumni association office for the first time. The College is a public space, but some spaces are considered private. They are allowed to meet in private to discuss agendas and have club meetings. They do not want uninvited guests. The students have the right to say if they feel uncomfortable with the presence, questions, etc. of uninvited guests.

He said to Dr. Khalfani that the issue about the government pausing grants and other aid will not affect the College students. It will not impact our financial aid and our students. That's why he wanted us to touch base with the right people to get clarification on the matter before making certain announcements. We are working on DEI and several things before we react to what is going on.

- Dr. Spellman said that he was around for 56 years and learned a few things. One thing we have done is been through sunshine and storms. There is an old hymn that says there's a storm out on the ocean and it is heading our way. However, the storm is here. There is another hymn that says "Stand the storm, it won't be long. We'll anchor by and by." His mother taught him to show in difficult circumstances, appreciation for people who are doing things. There are people in the College doing exciting things. We want you to know that we appreciate you. We have so many people and new faculty. He thanked Bundy and the graphics department for their professional and clean designs. He said we wanted him to know that we appreciate that. He also thanked Dean Seddiki and how he is reliable. Professor Stohlberg goes back and forth from here to WEC and counsels a lot of people. He commended Dean Kirkland and the students. They had a student club affair and he came across 30 clubs. He said they appreciate all that they do. He also mentioned the police force and their efforts to make the parking lots safer. He recalled an incident where he almost got hit by a vehicle but now there is a place for him to walk. He said we have had 9 Presidents and 2 stood out. Dr. Yamba took us through the sunshine and storm. Dr. Boakye is the other who stood out as he took over during a difficult time and moved the institution. His parents taught him to look at a person's heart and spirit, He will work as hard as he can to do what he can for the College. He stands to support the president and he said he is not alone. People asked what would happen. We have won all the battles at ECC by keeping a positive look and staying together in unity, and we made it. We are still making it. He said we are not afraid and quoted Psalm 27 which says, "The Lord is our Light and Salvation. Whom shall we fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life and your life. Whom should we be afraid of? When our enemies came upon us, they stumbled and fell. Though they camp about us, in Him will we seek."

He said he wants to commend everyone and we need to stay together. We run a great ship. It is not about the bricks and mortar but about the people. Some of us work in different parts of the ship. Stand the storm, it won't be long. We will anchor by and by.

He concluded with the quote, "We will do all we can for all the people we can in all the places we can as long as we ever can".

- Professor Saint Fort, former Treasurer of the Alumni Association, made the following public comments. He stated that he has been part of certain discussions about what was done and not done at the College. He wanted to express to the alumni that Clara Dasher is a Student Center, not for the alumni. He knew alumni who would want to enter the center. He said the students have priority to use the space. He commended Dr. Boakye for hiring a full-time alumni coordinator to handle all alumni issues. It is a process that is progressing. It is not perfect. Lev served with him. He said to be patient and to bring his concerns to someone. He said that they can work out their differences.
- Trustee Bolden said that hopefully the alumni issue can be resolved. She mentioned that Dr. Boakye explained what to do during this crisis and to make sure that nothing was lost in his message. They will be releasing protocols and guidelines on what to do in about a week because it is important for faculty and students to know. She said the trustees are listening to what they are saying and believe it is very important.

Notice of Executive Session

Trustee B. Robinson 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 25, 2025, 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

Chair M. Bolden motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm by a vote of acclamation.



**Report to Board of Trustees
January 28, 2025 @ 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 an Executive meeting on January 16, 2025.
5. A General Assembly Meeting has been scheduled for March 20th at 5 PM.
6. The process to conduct general elections has begun, with the advisor leading the formation of an independent election committee.
7. Term ends for all executive members at the end of the 2025 academic year.
8. Thank you.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
January 2025 Board of Trustees Report

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

My name is Naylah Young. I am the current President of the Student Government Association. I will be delivering the January BOT report for SGA this evening. I sincerely thank the student body for their support in last year's SGA holiday celebration. It was a fantastic chance to engage with students and highlight incredible talents.

MEETING WITH SGA EXECUTIVE BOARD

On January 11th, 2025, we convened a Zoom meeting to deliberate on plans for the upcoming semester. Additionally, we discussed strategies to enhance our organizational engagement and better address the needs of the student body.

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT

On January 24th, 2025, an emergency meeting was held with the President to address certain executive orders signed by President Trump on January 19, 2025. We were informed that while some of these orders may impact not only our institution but also other schools, it is crucial to maintain calm among the students during this period of uncertainty. To address this, we will be organizing a student forum in February to inform students about the steps the school is taking and provide guidance on how they can navigate such situations.

INITIATIVES FOR THE REST OF JANUARY AND ONWARD

- Club fair on the 28th and 29th of January
- Student Forums
- ICC meetings

We would like to once again express our gratitude to the Board of Trustees and the College for enabling the SGA to assist students in making a smoother transition into their college experience. We look forward to their continued support in this new academic year.

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: January 28, 2025

Re: President's Monthly Report

General:

We had a successful Winter Intersession. We provided student support services and kept the Welcome Center open to support students.

We started the Spring 2025 semester on January 13th and thus far enrollment numbers are **5,818** students enrolled in **57,942** credit hours. These are 8.7% and 6.3% higher than the prior year respectively. Enrollment at our West Essex campus is 65% of Fall enrollment. Our Spring II outreach is expected to increase overall enrollment, including at the West Essex Campus. Recruitment and enrollment activities continue for our February 10th Spring II start date.

Academics / Enrollment / Student Support:

- The ACBSP site visit for Business programs will take place on February 18-21, 2025.
- The President and Vice President of Academic Affairs engaged the faculty leadership in fruitful discussions on January 21st as the institution continues to expand learning opportunities for our community. I want to commend Dr. H. Shabazz for his dedication and openness to work with the faculty and other departments to execute our 2024-2029 Access to Success Strategic Plan.

The President's December/January engagements have included:

- December 18th: Participated in the Annual Holiday event organized by the County Executive.
- December 19th: Attended the Essex County Superintendent's meeting at the West Essex campus.
- January 6th: Attended the Annual Three Kings event held at the Cleo Hill, Sr. PEB at ECC.
- January 7th: Held a partnership meeting with Dr. Senese, President of Caldwell University.
- January 7th: Attended the 2025 Essex County Board of Commissioners Reorganization meeting.
- January 9th: Attended the New Jersey President's Council meeting at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ.
- January 10th: Met with Dr. Mirian Ochoa, the Coordinator of the Latinx Engagement Center - an initiative designed to capture the needs of our Latino/a students and support them to completion.
- January 13th: Participated in the New Jersey Council of County Colleges Funding Formula Task Force meeting focused on strengthening access, equity and student success.
- January 14th: Attended the 2025 Essex County Budget presentation.
- January 16th: Held an exploratory partnership meeting with Ms. Monica Slater Stokes, Regional Managing Director, Corporate and Government Affairs, United Airlines.
- January 17th: Attended the University Height Science & Technology Park (UHSTP) Board meeting.
- January 22nd: Engaged Cabinet in a discussion on positioning and strengthening ECC under the new Federal Policies and Executive Orders (EOs). A similar discussion was held with the SGA and the Union leaders.

Student Affairs

- Student Affairs launched the Spring 2025 Student Forums in the Cafeteria pit on January 22nd. The series will continue through February 19th.
- Athletics: The lady wolverines participated in the Dr. Sanders - a professional and collegiate championship on Saturday. Where the 4 × 400 relay team placed **third** overall, and place the highest amongst 2 colleges - beating teams like *Albany, University of Maryland, Felician, Delaware State and many others*. The men and women's track team will compete this Friday amongst 4-year colonies at the Metropolitan championship.

Finances

- The College, once again, completed its FY 24 Financial Audit process on time and without any findings.
- The College continues to execute CBA compensation adjustments following Board approval.
- After several discussions and analyses, the College is proposing a budget for FY 26 of \$55,866,567 a reduction of 0.6% from FY 25.

Projects:

- Renovation of the MLK Library is nearing completion. Storefront installation is 95% completed. We will announce a re-opening date at the end of January.
- Five firms participated in the Center for Technology (CFT) pre-bid walkthrough on January 13th.
- Four firms participated in the pre-bid meeting for the Cafeteria Dining Hall on January 13th.
- To enhance teaching and learning with modern technology, the Information Technology department has successfully upgraded the Open computer labs and classrooms with brand-new computers. A total of 179 Dell OptiPlex All-in-One 7420 computers were deployed and configured in the first week of January 2025. The following rooms were upgraded: 3404a, 4101, 4102, 4103, 4165a, and 4165b.

Community Relations:

- The College is making a progressive move to its inaugural Hall of Fame (HOF) which is expected to take place this spring.

Save the dates – Upcoming Events.

- February 11, 2025 - Board of School Estimate Meeting (BOSE).
- May 27, 2025 - Commencement at the Prudential Center.

Madam Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.