



**Board of Trustees**

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

October 21, 2025 | 4:30 PM

Multipurpose Room – West Essex Campus

**In Attendance**

- Dr. A. Lewis, Vice Chair
- I. Cruz
- C. Martinez
- B. Robinson
- J. Zarra, Treasurer
- M. Townes, Board Counsel
- Dr. A. Boakye, President
- S. Story, Recorder

**Excused**

- M. Bolden, Chair
- J. Grimes
- J. Wright

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

Vice Chair Dr. Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. A quorum was achieved with 5 trustees in attendance.

**Open Public Meetings Act Announcement**

Trustee 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 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](http://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 Martinez moved that the minutes from the September 16, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting be approved. Trustee Robinson motioned, and Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

**Communications**

Trustee Martinez announced that there was no new communication.

**Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Two people made comments on agenda items.

- Mr. Lev Zilbermintz submitted his comments as a hard copy and read them into the record:

## LEV'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Greetings, Board of Trustees, Faculty, students, guests, everyone,

My name is Lev D. Zilbermints, Class of 1993. I was absent from the last meeting because of being very busy. So here are my remarks.

To begin with, I submitted a Communication to Trustee Secretary Jewelne Grimes for a reason. Our Cafeteria has no electric outlets for students and the ECC community to charge their computers, tablets, cell phones. So, how are students supposed to study for a midterm or final exam when their electric devices are not at full power? This is not 1993, when we had books. This is 2025, when everyone uses Internet. How is this Students First?

The Wi-Fi access is also a problem at this school.

We had these electric outlets before the Cafeteria repairs. Now they are gone. I would propose you make these outlets in the walls or the floor. Wi-Fi access needs to be improved.

WEC has ~~but~~ electric outlets everywhere. Main Campus Cafeteria does not.

**4-1 through 4-6/October 2025:** Congratulations to those appointed to their positions. We know you will do a great job at Essex County College.

Those retiring or resigning from our school, please accept my thanks for everything you did for the ECC community. May your retirement be free of worries and full of love. May your next chapter after your resignation from Essex County College be free of worries and beneficial.

**Student Government Association report:** I address my comments to the President of the Student Government Association. My question is, what has the SGA done to address the problem of having electric outlets in the Cafeteria? Wi-Fi access?

— where is the student rep to the BOT?

- Professor Jennifer Wager comments:

Hello. My name is Jennifer Wager and I live in Newark and teach on the Main Campus, teaching in and coordinating various media programs at ECC since 2008. I drove all the way out here in rush hour traffic because it seems like the Board may not be getting the whole picture about the teaching faculty and I wanted to make sure you know some things about us.

We have been working for going on two years without a contract. The majority of us make less than the average salary for a NJ teacher of \$82,000. When I started, I made about \$45,000 or the average salary of a teacher in Mississippi. I now make a base salary about \$65,000—the average salary of a teacher Ohio. So after 17 years here, I make the starting salary for new ECC professors. Obviously, that's not enough to live on in one of the most expensive metro areas in the US. Contractually, we teach 10 classes a year, but the vast majority of us also work year round teaching overload courses at ECC at about \$3-4,000 a class, or if we're lucky, adjuncting at higher paying institutions just to make ends meet.

We also work overtime without pay coordinating programs, advising student clubs, doing community work, etc. I can't speak for all faculty but I've coordinated up to 5 programs at one time—often without pay or stipend for multiple years. I have advised multiple clubs over the years, from the college's first Gay Straight Alliance to the film club to the student newspaper. Because of my decade of volunteering as Submissions Coordinator for the Newark International Film Festival, I've helped students over the years get their work accepted—and many of them won!--into this and other festivals. We are counselors as well to our students and that work is 24/7. Have you ever gotten a suicidal text from a student in the middle of a weekend and had to work with local public health officials because at that time ECC had no mental health services to get

the student help WITHOUT turning it into a police brutality case? I have. Multiple times. Have you taken a student to lunch, or bought food for a student event or cashapped a student who is homeless and getting evicted? Myself and my colleagues have. I have given students a place to stay when they were homeless. I have consoled them when they had a meltdown at school. I have walked them personally all over the school to make sure they got what they needed to enroll or register or graduate.

Outside of class hours, my colleagues and I have facilitated many visits around the region—from the Brooklyn Museum where they met Spike Lee to the Cityplex Theater where they interviewed Michal B Jordan. My colleagues and I have marched side by side with our students at rallies from Black Lives Matter to immigrant rights. We even organized successfully to keep a students’ parents from being deported! We continued to teach through multiple bouts with COVID, with diabetes, cancer and other disease of capitalism. We have been a fierce advocate for neurodivergent students, including many with severe learning challenges, because we ourselves know what that is like to deal with this in our families. As much as I have done, most of my colleagues have done even more.

So I hope you can appreciate that as someone who, after 16 years makes less than the starting salary for Newark Public Schools, how incredibly demoralizing it is to hear that we are being offered a 1% raise—which in reality is a 10% or more paycut because of inflation, with housing, food, insurance and energy bills skyrocketing.

It’s demoralizing particularly at a time when the Trump administration is waging an all out war on public education. And let’s be clear—it’s been under attack by both parties for over 75 years, ever since the civil rights movement demanded Black and Brown students deserve an unsegregated, equal public education. This week, I had to explain to students why it’s not OK for the president to post AI slop of himself dumping excrement on people because 7 million workers, we dared to protest growing fascism. I have nightmares about ICE raiding our campus and hauling off students. Many of our students are living this nightmare.

So we need the board to have our back, as frontline workers, in this fight. We need a unified institution to stand up to this fascist takeover. Airports are refusing to air ICE ads, the Mayor of Chicago is calling for a general strike, multiple universities are refusing Trump’s edicts so it obvious can be done. If we don’t, it won’t just be fake excrement we have to deal with getting dropped on us. Thank you.

**Finance Committee Report**

Trustee Zarra read the finance report into the record:

**Actions – Submitted for Recommendation for the Board’s Approval**

3-1.1/Oct-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Contract for the Second Floor East Wing Corridor Renovations <b>Cynna Enterprises LLC</b> , Clifton, NJ Chapter 12 Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$353,200.00
3-1.2/Oct-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a One-Year Blanket Order for Janitorial Supplies <u><b>Company Names</b></u> <b>Central Poly-Bag Corp</b> <b>Imperial Bag &amp; Paper Co</b> College Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$44,000.00 Per year
3-1.3/Oct-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Payment for Athletic Medical Accident Coverage <b>Acrisure NJ Partners Insurance Services, LLC</b> , Grand Rapids, MI College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$49,144.00

- |                |  |                                      |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 3-1.4/Oct-2025 | Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Two-Year Contract for General Counsel Services<br><b>Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri &amp; Jacobs, LLC</b> , Oakland, NJ<br>College Funded - Operating Expense   | Amount not to exceed<br>\$300,000.00 |
| 3-1.5/Oct-2025 | Authorizing the Award of Contracts Under \$44,900 to a Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA)<br><b>Trustee Zarra motioned for the approval of the Finance actions. Trustee Martinez moved for approval. Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.</b> |                                      |

**Personnel Committee Report**

Trustee Robinson advised that the Personnel Committee met last week and recommended the approval of the following items:

**Actions – Submitted for Recommendation for the Board’s Approval**

**A. Appointment**

- 4-1/Oct-2025      Shirlgandy Saint Jean  
Director – Student Development and Career Services  
Student Affairs  
Effective: October 27, 2025  
Salary \$80,000
  
- 4-2/Oct-2025      Timothy Greene  
Technical Assistant  
Effective: October 27, 2025  
Salary \$35,000
  
- 4-3/Oct-2025      Ishmale Douglas  
Security Officer  
Public Safety  
Effective: October 27, 2025  
Salary \$32,500
  
- 4-4/Oct-2025      Alyesha Mckenith  
Security Officer  
Public Safety  
Effective: October 27, 2025  
Salary \$32,500

**B. Retirement**

- 4-5/ Oct-2025      Tanya Wright  
Associate Director  
Training Inc  
Effective Date: October 31, 2025

**C. Resignation**

- 4-6/ Oct-2025      Cristhian Altamirano  
Associate Dean – West Essex Campus  
Academic Affairs  
Effective Date: October 3, 2025
  
- Rihanata Sana  
Teacher Assistant  
Child Development Center  
Effective Date: September 3, 2025

**Trustee Robinson motioned for the approval of the Personnel actions. Trustee Cruz moved and Trustee**

***Zarra seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously***

### **Educational Programs Committee Report**

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

#### **Actions – Submitted for Recommendation for the Board’s Approval**

- 7-1.1/Oct-2025 Newark Board of Education Middle School Academic Enrichment Program
- 7-1.2/Oct-2025 Acceptance of funds: Victoria Foundation \$90,000
- 7-1.3/Oct-2025 Contract for Services - Newark Day Center

***Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Programs' actions. Trustee Robinson moved the motion and Trustee Zarra seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.***

### **Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee Report**

Trustee Martinez stated that the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee did not convene, and there were no actions.

### **Policy and Governance Committee Report**

Trustee Cruz reported that the Policy and Governance Committee met on October 14<sup>th</sup>. She noted that there were no action items at this time. The Committee is currently reviewing policies and will present proposed changes to the Board for approval once they are finalized.

### **Community Relations Committee Report**

Trustee Cruz stated that the Community Relations Committee met on October 14<sup>th</sup>, but there were no actions to present to the Board. The discussion was focused on the Golf Tournament, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Africana Institute, and the Cultural Heritage Month celebrations.

### **Alumni Association Report**

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

### **Student Government Association Report**

The Student Government Association Report submitted to the Board of Trustees was read into the record by C. Fancher and is attached as Appendix B.

### **Faculty Association Report**

The Faculty Association Report, submitted electronically to the Board of Trustees, was read into the record by Professor Alexandre and is attached as Appendix C.

### **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 D.

### **New Business**

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

### **Public Comments**

Three people made public comments:

- Mr. Lev Zilbermintz submitted his comments as a hard copy and read them into the record.

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Lev D. Zilbermints, '93

RE: Electrical Outlets needed in Cafeteria and Executive Suite; Wi-Fi access

DATE: 14 October 2025

①

Stall + Facilities  
Trustee Martinez

I served in  
the 1991-92  
1992-93  
SGAs  
1996-97 SGA

Dear Board of Trustees,

You have always known me to be a straightshooter, so I will get to the point. Our newly-opened Student Hall in the Cafeteria lacks electrical outlets for computers, cell phones, laptops. This means that students cannot recharge their electrical devices. The same problem exists in the Executive Suite, formerly the Faculty Lounge. There are plenty of tables and chairs, but only one or two electrical outlets in the walls.

2014-15  
SGA

The Cafeteria Pit is only marginally better. There are two electrical outlets, with two sockets each. This means that at most, only four (4) people can recharge their cell phones, computers, laptops. Four out of dozens who are present in the Cafeteria at any time? Seems very illogical to me.

at WEC  
there  
are  
plenty  
of  
electrical  
sockets

What if students have an exam and need to eat and study in the Cafeteria? This is where having electrical outlets become of paramount importance. Since there are no physical textbooks, students use Internet. Thus, having their laptop, tablet, cell phones charged becomes very important. Without an electrical outlet students run the risk of their devices running out of power.

in  
Cafe.

A related problem is Wi-Fi access. I have it from multiple sources that Wi-Fi access is spotty in some areas of the college. In order to address that, I would suggest going around with a cell phone and finding which areas have poor Wi-Fi access. Once that information is found, the problem can be fixed.

Failure to resolve Wi-Fi access and having no electrical outlets in Cafeteria might cause some students to transfer to schools that do not have these issues. I am just telling you how I see it. Students and faculty need electrical outlets and Wi-Fi access to be successful academically.

I hope you can address these important issues.

Yours,

Lev D. Zilbermints, '93

Lev D. Zilbermints, '93

**LEV'S PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Greetings, everyone,

②

Lev D. Zilbermints, '93, speaking. Is it possible to be worse than President Trump? Yes, it is. How so? Well, the government shutdown is not even a month old, but the ECC faculty has not had a contract in two years. I think you need to think about how the lack of faculty contract affects the faculty and the students of this school.

Who wants to work with no contract? Some people may just leave for better places. Then who will teach our students? How is this Students First, about which you shout from the Internet?

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I think you need to cut the <sup>politics</sup> ~~political balance~~ and start doing the right thing. The leadership of this school, ~~from President on down~~, needs to get involved in getting the contract issue resolved. You also need to listen to what the faculty says, what the students say, what the alumni say. A give & take approach is needed. The sooner, the better, how about a third-party <sup>State of NJ mediator?</sup>

3 - shutdown may affect SNAP + WIC. It means 800,000 people in NJ. ~~that's a lot~~ You may see increased use of food pantry at Essex

- Professor Wager thanked the President for the renovation work happening on the main campus. She sees the differences it has made. She said the cafeteria and library are beautiful. She mentioned that many students and staff are affected by food insecurities. She hopes something can be done about food. She mentioned that we need a school nurse for when a medical emergency happens on campus. One of her students vomited recently on campus. She tried to help as best as she could.
- Ms. Shirigandy Saint Jean thanked everyone for her new appointment and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to help the students. She wants to enhance student services for improved retention and graduation rates.

**Notice of Executive Session**

Trustee 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 November 18, 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.

**Trustee Martinez motioned for a vote on the Notice of Executive Session. Trustee Robinson moved the motion and Trustee Cruz seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Adjournment**

Vice Chair, Dr. A. Lewis, motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm by a vote of acclamation.



## **Essex County College Alumni Association (ECCAA)**

### **Report to the Board of Trustees**

*October 21, 2025 @ 4:30 p.m.*

#### **1. October 1–5, 2025 — Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser**

The Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser generated \$733 in total sales, earning \$366.50 for ECCAA. The proceeds will help offset event expenses and support future initiatives.

#### **2. October 7, 2025 — Building Bridges & Unlocking Potential Program**

Alumni Liaison Adewale “Tosin” Thompson played an integral role in the Building Bridges & Unlocking Potential program hosted by Essex County College. As an alumnus, he gave back to the College through service and leadership by coordinating and facilitating a paneled discussion featuring three alumni he personally invited. The dialogue fostered meaningful engagement between alumni and students. ECCAA also tabled during the event to connect with attendees and recruit participants for an upcoming mentorship program, resulting in interest from sixteen individuals for the pilot phase.

#### **3. October 15, 2025 — Executive Board Meeting**

The Executive Board met to discuss important dates on the 2025 calendar and finalize the details for the Breast Cancer Walk. There will be no General Assembly meeting in October. Instead, the focus will be on organizing committees and expanding membership—both essential to supporting scholarships and sustaining ongoing alumni programs.

4. October 16, 2025 — **Golf Scholarship Fundraiser Dinner**

The Essex County College Alumni Association (ECCAA) purchased four (4) tickets for the Golf Scholarship Fundraiser Dinner. Executive Board members attended, along with Alumni Advisor Bertheleau Ngakam.

5. October 19, 2025 — **Making Strides of Newark Breast Cancer Walk**

ECCAA participated in the Making Strides of Newark Breast Cancer Walk, organized by the Office of Student Development & Counseling in collaboration with Student Life and community supporters. Led by Prof. Jennifer Chapman and Dr. Kathlyn Battle, the event brought together nursing students, members of the Student Leadership and Activities Organization (SLAO) led by Alumnus Samirah Scantling, including the cheerleaders, the Student Government Association (SGA), the Volleyball Team, Dare to Excel (DTE), and the Student Ambassadors. The ECC Alumni Association joined in solidarity and raised \$190 in support of the American Cancer Society, demonstrating strong campus unity and community spirit for a meaningful cause.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelby Robinson

President, Essex County College Alumni Association

# **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT**

## **Presented to the Board of Trustees**

**Date:** October 20, 2025

**Submitted by:** Daphnee Demervil, Secretary, Student Government Association

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This report provides a detailed overview of Student Government Association (SGA) activities from September through October 2025. It emphasizes organizational achievements, initiatives to strengthen student engagement, and leadership efforts that enhance governance and student representation within Essex County College.

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### **Fall 2025 Club Fair**

The Fall 2025 Club Fair, held on September 24, 2025, provided a strategic opportunity to expand student participation. The SGA hosted an informational table, where recruitment efforts were carefully coordinated to highlight leadership and service opportunities.

By guiding interactions and encouraging sign-ups, E-board members facilitated increased membership, strengthening SGA's ability to serve and represent the student body effectively. This proactive engagement demonstrated a commitment to cultivating student leadership and building a dynamic organizational presence on campus.

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### **SGA Online Meeting – September 29, 2025**

The Student Government Association (SGA) held an online meeting on September 29, 2025, at 2:00 PM. Attendees included President Cynthia Francher, Vice President Yamile Rivera, Secretary Daphnee Demervil, Senator of Communications Jeri Johnson, and general members Yasmin Perez De Souza Lebre, Lauren, Anthony Williams, and Freya. The meeting focused on reviewing

member schedules to determine optimal meeting times and discussing hosting options for future online sessions.

During the meeting, Jeri Johnson presented updates from the recent Inter-Club Council (ICC) meeting, noting that only 21 clubs attended, and no clubs had current events planned. During that meeting Yamile Rivera and Jeri Johnson introduced themselves to ICC members and encouraged them to prepare their concerns for the next meeting.

Jeri Johnson also reported that he had submitted proposals to Dean Bello and was awaiting her response. In response, Cynthia instructed Jeri to include her as a CC on future emails. Daphnee emphasized the standard that any proposals or communications sent on behalf of SGA must first be reviewed and approved by all E-board members and must CC the full E-board. This directive reinforced organizational transparency and accountability, ensuring all actions reflect collective responsibility and proper governance.

### **General Members' Session:**

During the general members' session, Cynthia Francher welcomed all new members, and E-board members introduced themselves. It was noted that SGA currently has two active senators out of eight, and members were encouraged to apply for open positions to strengthen representation.

The EOF Program was discussed with Yasmin Perez and Daphnee Demervil volunteering to help register new students and promote awareness of the program.

The meeting concluded with no further updates.

These interventions strengthened internal cohesion and set a clear standard for all future organizational communications.

## **2025 Collegiate Summit – October 9–12, 2025**

From October 9–12, 2025, the SGA was represented at the 2025 Summit in Washington, D.C., by President, Cynthia; Vice President, Yamile and Senator of Communications, Jeri. The summit provided professional development through workshops and leadership panels.

Secretary Daphnee coordinated follow-up communications to ensure that insights and strategies gained at the summit were integrated into SGA initiatives. This approach demonstrated leadership in knowledge management, ensuring external learning translated into actionable improvements in campus engagement and governance.

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## **Cafeteria Grand Opening – October 15, 2025**

On October 15, 2025, Essex County College celebrated the grand opening of its newly renovated cafeteria. President Cynthia Francher represented the Student Government Association and delivered a speech highlighting the importance of this achievement for the student body. She emphasized that the renovation marks a positive turning point for the college's dining facilities, showcasing innovation, accessibility, and sustainability.

Cynthia praised the addition of an accessibility ramp that ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, allowing all students to enjoy the space equally. She also commended the improved energy-efficient lighting and advanced surveillance systems, while stressing the importance of maintaining student privacy and safety.

Acknowledging the financial support from county leaders, Cynthia noted that the project symbolizes collaboration and progress during challenging economic times. She concluded by calling for continued efforts toward affordability, inclusivity, and community growth. Senator of Communications, Jeri Johnson, was present at the event and captured photos to document the occasion.

## **Breast Cancer Awareness Walk – October 19, 2025**

On October 19, 2025, the E-board members; Daphnee, Valerie, Yamile, Jeri, and Metisha participated in the Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk held in downtown Newark, New-Jersey.

This participation underscores the SGA's commitment to community service, modeling leadership through accountability, and exemplifying engagement that extends beyond campus boundaries.

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The Student Government Association continues to prioritize student empowerment, engagement, and the development of a cohesive campus community. Through structured planning, proactive leadership, and meaningful participation, SGA strengthens connections among students, faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees.

These efforts ensure that SGA not only functions effectively but also serve as a model of student-driven governance and initiative.

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**Respectfully submitted,**

Daphnee Demervil

Secretary, Student Government Association

Essex County College

**Essex County College Faculty Association (ECCFA)  
Memorandum**

**To:** Ms. Marion Bolden, Chair of the Essex County College Board of Trustees

**From:** Jean-Wilner Alexandre, Associate Professor economics and finance, ECCFA  
Representative to ECC Board of Trustees/ Class of 2003

**Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025

**Re:** Essex County College Faculty Association (ECCFA) Report to Essex County College Board of Trustees (ECCBOT)

**General Comment**

Thank you, Madame Chair; esteemed members of the Essex County College Board of Trustees; Dr. Augustine A. Boakye; Cabinet Members; and the entire College Community.

It is my great pleasure to present the October Faculty Association Report, even as we continue to await the long-delayed contract.

**In Memoriam: Professor Hossein Assadipour**

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our esteemed colleague, Professor Hossein Assadipour. Professor Assadipour served with dedication in the METCS Department and as a valued member of the Executive Board, where he held the position of Scholarship Chair. His passing occurred less than a week after his retirement was approved.

**ECCFA Executive Committee Activities**

1. Executive Committee Meeting: Held on Thursday, October 9, from 2:40 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Library Conference Room on the 3rd floor.
2. Faculty Senate : Thursday, October 9, 2025 4 PM
3. 25th Annual ECC Golf Scholarship Tournament: Ten faculty members attended the event on October 16, 2025.
4. ECEA LAT Meeting: Dr. Victor Stolberg, Professor Jean-Wilner Alexandre, and Professor Renita Mangru attended the meeting, where faculty members met with the candidates endorsed by the association.

### **Dr. Akil Khalfani and The Africana Institute Activities**

Dr. Akil Khalfani and the Africana Institute continue to demonstrate excellence, with Dr. Khalfani serving as both an outstanding faculty member and a dedicated ambassador for Essex County College. Through his leadership, the College remains at the forefront with well-organized and impactful initiatives that strengthen academic and community engagement.

1. **25th Anniversary of the Africana Institute:** This year marks a significant milestone celebrating 25 years of cultural and academic contributions to the College community.
2. **13th Black Writers Symposium:** Dr. Khalfani extends an invitation to the Board of Trustees and the entire College community to attend this special event on October 21, 2025.
3. **City of New York Recognition:** Dr. Khalfani was invited by the Mayor of New York to attend the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration at Gracie Mansion on October 9, 2025.
4. **Photography Exhibition – “Lens of the Streets”:** The attached photos represent the second major event in celebration of the Institute’s 25th anniversary. The exhibition, held in *The Gallery*, will run through February 2026 and has already attracted more than 160 attendees, including students, staff, faculty, and community members.

### **Business Division**

#### **Professor John D. Hammond,**

Professor John D. Hammond successfully organized the September Financial Literacy Seminar on 9/23/2025. The session, titled “Demystifying Cryptocurrency: Risk, Reward, and Responsibility,” offered our students invaluable insights into the rapidly evolving landscape of digital assets. This initiative empowered attendees to make more informed financial decisions. With over 135 students participating and receiving enthusiastic feedback, the seminar clearly had a significant impact on all who attended

#### **Professor John Hammond, Dr. John Olotero, Patrick Saint Fort, and Georges Antwi**

On Friday, October 3rd, 2025, Professor John Hammond, John Olotero, Patrick Saint Fort, and Georges Antwi attended the NJCBAA conference at the Mercer County College.

## **Humanities Division**

Mila Salazar-Bruan

Associate Professor/Coordinator

World Languages/Study Abroad Program

1. **Campus Community Engagement:** On October 7, 2025, Professor Mila Salazar-Bruan served as a panelist for *The Power of One: Building Bridges Through Connectivity of the Campus Community Alliance College-Wide Retreat*.
2. **International Collaboration:** On May 13, 2025, at the invitation of Dean Vieira, Professor Salazar-Bruan helped welcome Dr. Rual Martín Martín, Vice Rector for International Policy and Global Alliances, and Dr. David Carrascosa Cañego, Director of the Language Center at the Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha (Toledo, Spain), during their visit to Essex County College.
3. During the visit, ECC was offered scholarships to attend the International Conference on Spanish as a World Language: New Perspectives in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language—Theories, Practices, and Classroom Materials.
4. The conference took place from July 13–19, 2025, at the Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, which Professor Salazar-Bruan attended.
5. The event focused on the evolving understanding of Spanish as both an international and world language—a language of diplomacy and global business, as well as the second most spoken language in the world.
6. Scholars and professors from across the globe, including participants from China, Africa, Europe, and other regions, attended the conference. Professor Salazar-Bruan noted it was a refreshing and inspiring experience that highlighted the global importance of the Spanish language.

## **METCS Division**

### **Dr. Chengwen Wang – Recent Activities**

In September 2021, Dr. Chengwen Wang, together with Dr. Xiaomin Lin and emerging scholar Mr. Vakul Raghavan, presented their research “DNALaCT: Ultralong Genomic Sequence Modeling with Test-Time Training” at the 3rd Rutgers Chinese Faculty Research Symposium on AI and Medicine in New Brunswick, NJ. Their work highlights a breakthrough in applying artificial intelligence to genomic data, opening new frontiers in medical research and precision healthcare.

On September 23, 2025, Dr. Wang was invited to the United Nations 80th Anniversary Art Exhibition at UN Headquarters in New York City. Serving as the primary liaison between American and Chinese artists, he played a vital role in bridging cultures and strengthening artistic exchange on an international stage.

On September 28, 2025, Dr. Wang was honored with the Outstanding International Peace Ambassador Achievement Award, jointly presented by the China National Society for the Promotion of Arts and Culture and the American Artist Association. The award ceremony, held at the China Institute in America in New York City, celebrated Dr. Wang's longstanding commitment to cultural diplomacy, international collaboration, and the promotion of peace through art, education, and global understanding.

### **Social Sciences Division**

#### **Dr. Clare Kajura**

Faculty/Staff Session – CCA Retreat

Ms. Karen Bridgett (HR) and Dr. Clare Kajura planned and led the Faculty/Staff Session held in Seigler Hall during the College-wide Campus Community Alliance (CCA) Retreat on October 7, 2025.

#### **Dr. Bridget Turner, Education,**

Coordinator/Academic Advisor

Assistant Professor of Education

Dr. Turner would like to invite you to attend the 2nd Conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The event will take place on the West Caldwell Campus. We hope you will join us for this engaging and informative event.

### **Vision Care Technology**

#### **Renita D. Mangru**

Professor Renita D Mangru reported the following Faculty Engagement and Representation:

- Attended the Vision Expo West, a major national optical convention.
- Participated in meetings in Kentucky with colleagues from the United Opticians Association.
- Met Phernell Walker, author of one of the textbooks currently used in the Optical program at Essex County College.
- Represented the College at the NJEA Summer Conference in Atlantic City.

## Dr. Victor Stolberg

### – Professor Victor Stolberg (September 2025)

#### Activities:

1. ECCFA Contract Negotiations: Participated on September 2, 11, 16, 19, 22, and 30.
2. Leadership Essentials Certificate – Disaster Ready: Completed September 15.
3. Core Humanitarian Certification – Disaster Ready: Completed September 23.
4. Code of Conduct Hearings: Participated on September 15 and 22.
5. Cultural Heritage Month Opening Ceremony & Art Exhibition: Attended September 16.
6. Campus Community Alliance Meeting: Attended September 17.
7. NJEA Financial Planning Workshop: Attended September 23.
8. ECCFA Meeting: Attended September 25.
9. Chaired Faculty Senate Meeting: September 25.
10. “Pioneers of Change” Student Excellence and Engagement Center Event: Attended September 30.
11. ECEA Legislative Action Team Kick-Off: Attended September 30.
12. ECC Tent – Caldwell Street Fair: Participated October 5.

#### Training and Professional Development:

1. SafeColleges Trainings:
  - o *Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging* (September 9)
  - o *Mental Well-Being for Faculty and Staff* (September 23)
  - o *Staying Healthy in a Changing Environment* (September 29)
2. Disaster Ready Foundation:
  - o *Focusing on Your Priorities, Pillars of Interpersonal Excellence, Defining Key Performance Indicators* (September 10–23)
3. Telehealth.org: *Telehealth Law 2025: What Changed, What’s Next* (September 12)
4. Medscape Trainings: Covered topics including *Alzheimer’s Disease, Anxiety & Stress, Asthma, Evidence and Empathy, Meningitis, Metabolic Dysfunction, Opioid Use Disorder, Parkinson’s Disease, Postpartum Depression, Psychosis, Schizophrenia, and Vaccination Gap* (September 2–30)
5. EdX: *AI for Everyone: Master the Basics* (September 16)
6. NJWELL: *Setting Up an Emergency Fund* (September 22)

## Concluding Remarks

Our goal, as faculty is to continue serving as a bright light for our students and an uplifting presence within our community, even as we move forward without a contract.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean-Wilner Alexandre

Appendix





## Memorandum

**To:** Ms. Marion Bolden & the Board of Trustees  
**From:** Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, *President, Essex County College*  
**Date:** October 21, 2025  
**Re:** President's Monthly Report

### General:

On October 7, 2025, we held our first Campus Community Alliance (CCA) retreat with the theme: *Celebrating Community Through Education: Building Bridges and Unlocking Potential.*

Dr. Yeurys Pujols, Vice President for Institutional Engagement and Excellence at Hudson County Community College, gave the keynote address.

The Retreat breakout sessions included:

- The Alumni Panel for students, which focused on *Cultivating Traditions and Change, while Building a Better Future.*
- A Faculty & Staff session led by Dr. Clare Kajura, Professor, Social Sciences Division and Ms. Karen Bridgett, Associate Director of Human Resources. This session focused on *The Power of One: Building Bridges Through Connectivity.*

The Retreat concluded with community activities, including: Student Art Exhibition, Student Musical Performances, Cultural Art Installation and Poster Presentations by ECC student clubs.

### Academics

We are proud to announce that the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA), at its October 7, 2025 meeting, voted to extend full accreditation status to Essex County College's Vision Care Technology Program to February 1, 2030. I am proud of Prof. Renita Mangru and the entire ECC team for their leadership and dedication.

On Saturday, October 18, 2025, the Essex County College Chemical Society (ECS) and American Chemical Society (ACS) Student Chapter team earned first place among all participating New Jersey chemistry clubs, including Drew University, Seton Hall University, New Jersey City University, Caldwell University, St. Peter's University, and Ramapo College. The team was accompanied by Dr. Nidhal Marashi, Chapter Advisor, and Dr. Pablo Silva, Co-Advisor.

This Fall semester, the Math Division is piloting an accelerated path for students who need MTH 100 to complete their degrees on time. The MTH 090S/100 was initiated by the faculty under the directives of the President and the VPAA.

John Palacios, a Physics major and President of the Physics Club, has been accepted into the prestigious Governor's STEM Scholars program. He is the only community college student selected for this year's cohort.

### Enrollment Management

Our 2025-2026 Academic Year is off to an excellent start. We exceeded our fall semester budget projections for student headcount and credit hours by 6.5% and 9.3% respectively. We also met our target of 700 students at the West Essex Campus for Fall 2025. I thank our Enrollment Services team and the College community for keeping the mission alive by supporting more students. Retention of all students is our priority.

### Dual-Enrollment

Our goal of increasing and enriching the dual-enrollment students for the Fall 2025 semester is being supported by the College staff and the School Districts. We appreciate the strategic partnerships between our high schools and Dr. Vieira's team.

### Student Support

We have contracted **Acenda Integrated Health** to provide mental health services for our students both at the Newark and West Essex Campuses.

### Athletics

We congratulate ECC Sophomore, Kristijan Penic, Garden State Athletic Conference Division II Soccer Player of the Week ending October 5<sup>th</sup>

### The President's September/October Engagements have included:

- September 18<sup>th</sup> – Met with Nayibe Capellan, CEO for Program for Parents, an organization that serves children and families throughout Essex County. Dr. Kirkland and Porsha Davis, Director of our Child Development Center, attended the meeting to explore partnership opportunities.
- September 26<sup>th</sup> – Met with the New Faculty members to discuss the vision and encouraged them to dedicate themselves to the College.
- September 26<sup>th</sup> – Attended Bishop Jethro James, Jr. 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday and 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the Ministry at Totowa, NJ.
- September 29<sup>th</sup> – Participated in the NJCCC Collaborations Operations Committee Meeting.
- September 29<sup>th</sup> – Welcomed the leadership of the New Jersey American Water Company to the College as they begin to train ECC students on the “Water Up Program”.
- September 30<sup>th</sup> – Invited to serve as Co-Chair of the East Orange School District's Strategic Planning and Transitional Process, 2025-2030.
- September 30<sup>th</sup> – Joined by some Senior Administrators from ECC, we participated in the NJCCC Statewide Economic Opportunity and Prosperity Convening at Middlesex College to discuss Agenda 2040
- October 9<sup>th</sup> - Participated in the Essex County Workforce Development meeting.
- October 9<sup>th</sup> - Attended the Annual Golf Tournament hosted by Essex County.
- October 9<sup>th</sup> - Attended the ECC Foundation Board Quarterly meeting focusing on student scholarships and community partnerships
- October 10<sup>th</sup> - Met with Visions Federal Credit Union regarding a potential partnership.
- October 14<sup>th</sup> - Attended the Essex County Latino Heritage Month celebrations.
- October 15<sup>th</sup> - Reopened the Cafeteria Dining Area following extensive renovations.
- October 16<sup>th</sup> - We held our 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament at the Maplewood County Club. We appreciate the support of our campus community, including:

- Students, Staff, Faculty
- Alumni Association
- Sponsors
- Foundation Board
- Board of Trustees and
- Our County Executive, Joe DiVinzenzo, Jr.

October 20<sup>th</sup> - Participated in the NJ Presidents Council meeting at Rutgers University - New Brunswick.

### Finances

Completed staff training on Purchasing Processes and Policies. The next training session is scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Our FY 25 Financial Audit process is underway. PKF O'Connor Davies is engaged to lead the process.

### Projects:

- We reopened our renovated cafeteria dining area at the Newark Campus on October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The demolition phase of the Center for Technology building is approximately 95% complete.

### Community Relations:

- We concluded our 2025 Cultural Heritage Month Celebrations on October 15<sup>th</sup> with an outstanding event:
  - **Closing Ceremony** with keynote address by Mr. *Carlos Medina, Esq.*, President and CEO, Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey. I thank Dr. Mirian Ochoa, our sponsors and the committed group of volunteers across the College who made this year's celebrations educational, engaging and memorable.
- On behalf of our Board of Trustees and the College community, I thank our Scholarship Golf Tournament organizing committee, sponsors and our Foundation Board for a very successful 25<sup>th</sup> Scholarship fundraiser.

### Continuing Education and Workforce Development:

Our Continuing Education and Workforce Development team is working with the NJCCC and education partners on several workforce development initiatives, including:

- Patient Care: electronic health records
- Patient Care: Building a Dementia Capable Healthcare Workforce
- Patient Care: Health Care credentials
- AI, Data & Computer Science in Fintech in collaboration with Bloomberg

Madam Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.