



Board of Trustees

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

November 18, 2025 | 4:30 PM

Smith Hall – Main Campus

In Attendance

- Dr. A. Lewis, Chair
- C. Martinez, Vice Chair
- I. Cruz
- J. Grimes
- B. Robinson
- J. Wright
- J. Zarra
- M. Townes, Board Counsel
- Dr. A. Boakye, President

Call to Order/Roll Call

Board of Trustees Chair, Dr. Lewis, called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. A quorum was achieved with 7 trustees in attendance.

Open Public Meetings Act Announcement

Trustee 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 Grimes moved to approve the October 21, 2025, meeting minutes. Trustee Wright seconded. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

Communications

Trustee Grimes announced that there was no new communication.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Several individuals provided comments related to items listed on the meeting agenda.

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

LEV'S REMARKS ON PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

Greetings, everyone,

Here we are, mid-November 2025. Thanksgiving will be here soon, and before long Christmas and New Year! With that being said, let me talk about the agenda.

4-1/Nov-2025 thru 4-4/Nov 2025. Congratulations to those appointed to their positions! You will be a great asset to Essex County College. Those retiring and resigning, thank you for your service to Essex County College. You have served the students well, and we thank you for that.

Site, Facilities and Equipment Report: My question is, what have you done to install more electric outlets in the Cafeteria? Finals will be here soon. Students need to have their laptops, cell phones, tablets charged. Yet the Main Campus Cafeteria does not have enough outlets. Some are by the ceiling, too high to reach. I am 5'8, and I cannot reach these.

You say Students First, right? Well, how are students to succeed academically if there is a lack of electric outlets to charge their electric devices?

- Professor Jennifer Wager stated that she would provide her full remarks during the public comment portion of the meeting, but requested a moment of silence in acknowledgment of a recent mass shooting that occurred on Saturday at approximately 4:00 p.m. in Newark, NJ.

She reported that two individuals—a two-year-old boy and a 21-year-old woman—were killed, and two teenagers remain in critical condition. She also thanked Dr. Khalfani for visiting the site of the incident in Newark's South Ward.

- Chair Lewis read the resignation letter of Board Chair Marion Bolden into the record. It reads as follows:

Essex County College
Marion A Bolden
Chair

November 13, 20205

Board of Trustees
Essex County College
303 University Ave
Newark, NJ 07102

I am writing to formally resign my position as a member of the Board of Trustees of Essex County College, effective November 17, 2025.

It has been my pleasure to serve both as a member and chair of the Board for the last several years. My initial hesitancy to accept a position on the board quickly changed to that of an honor and privilege. I am grateful for the chance to have contributed to the success of the college's accreditation, the selection of a new president and the opening of the new West Caldwell Campus. The greatest pleasure however has been serving with my colleagues and supporting staff as we push for student success and advocating for funding.

Unfortunately, my personal issues related to health, and after careful consideration - I have determined it is the right time to step down. I am confident that the Board will continue their steadfast leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve New Jersey's ever improving Essex County College.

Sincerely,
Marion A Bolden
Chair
Essex County College

- The trustees expressed their appreciation to Board Chair Trustee Bolden for her service. Trustee Wright noted that Trustee Bolden would be missed and shared that she had served as a school superintendent before joining the ECC Board of Trustees. Trustee Zarra described Trustee Bolden as legendary, attentive to opinions, and committed to maximizing the student experience. Trustee Lewis recognized her as strong, dedicated, and steadfast, with significant accomplishments. Trustee Grimes thanked Trustee Bolden for her leadership, noting she was a strong leader and would be missed. Trustee Cruz acknowledged her care for students and leadership. Trustee Martinez highlighted her wisdom and strength as a leader and wished her the best. Trustee Robinson reflected on starting at the same time as Trustee Bolden and said she instilled confidence in her as a trustee. Trustee Lewis concluded the comments by acknowledging Dr. Bolden’s legacy as the Chair of the ECC Board of Trustees.

Finance Committee Report

Trustee Zarra read the finance report into the record. There was only one item for the Board’s consideration.

3-1.1/Nov-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Renewal of a One-Year Contract for Mental Health Software Calm.com Inc, Palo Alto, CA College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$21,408.00
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Trustee Zarra motioned for the approval of the Finance action. Trustee Lewis moved for approval. Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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/Nov-2025 Sheena Everette
Student Advisement Specialist
Welcome Center
Effective Date: November 24, 2025
Salary \$42,000

4-2/Nov-2025 Bryan O’Connor
Police Officer
Public Safety
Effective Date: December 8, 2025
Salary \$45,000

B. Retirement

4-3/ Nov-2025 Adelaida Ramos-Lopez
Assistant – Computer Support
Training Inc
Effective Date: December 31, 2025

C. Resignation

4-4/ Nov-2025 Joyce Okoth
Instructor - Mathematics
Mathematics, Engineering Technologies and Computer Science Division
Effective Date: October 24, 2025

Torrone Khan
Police Officer
Public Safety
Effective Date: October 23, 2025

Trustee Robinson motioned for the approval of the Personnel actions. Trustee Cruz moved and Trustee Martinez seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously

Educational Programs Committee Report

Trustee Dr. Lewis reported that the Educational Programs Committee met last week and recommended approval of several items. Dr. Lewis requested that the vote on the last resolution be separated. The Board conducted two separate votes: the first vote covered the first two items of the resolution, and the second vote addressed the final item.

Actions – Submitted for Recommendation for the Board’s Approval

7-1.1/Nov-2025 George Brown College Distance Education Agreement (renewal)

7-1.2/Nov-2025 College Readiness Now XII Project Agreement of The New Jersey Council of Community Colleges (NJCCC)

Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Programs' actions 7-1.1/Nov-2025 and 7-1.2/Nov-2025. Trustee Zarra moved the motion and Trustee Wright seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

7-1.3/Nov-2025 Transfer Articulation Agreement between William Paterson University and Essex County College

Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Programs' action 7-1.3/Nov-2025. Trustee Martinez moved the motion, and Trustee Robinson seconded. The motion was approved with six votes and one abstention.

Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Martinez stated that the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee convened on November 10th, and there were no actions.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee Cruz reported that the Policy and Governance Committee convened on November 11th. There are no action items to present at this time. The committee is currently reviewing and revising several policies and will bring them to the full Board once the review is complete.

Community Relations Committee Report

Trustee Wright stated that the Community Relations Committee convened on November 11th, but there were no actions to present to the Board. She provided an update on the recent Golf Scholarship Tournament, noting that the event raised approximately \$25k in scholarship funds and had about 100 golfers. She recognized the Dufferettes of New Jersey for their long-term support of ECC's Golf Scholarship event and their recent appearance on the Today Show.

The committee also discussed exploring additional fundraising opportunities, including a wine-tasting event at the new campus and expanded use of the Mary Burch Theater for events benefiting students. Trustee

Wright highlighted the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Africana Institute and the strategic planning efforts led by Dr. Khalfani and Dr. Shabazz.

She also reflected on the recent rally held at Essex County College, expressing pride that the College was chosen as the host site and acknowledging the efforts of staff, particularly Security and Dean Seddiki, for their support. She noted that the event received positive attention and concluded her report with appreciation for everyone involved.

Alumni Association Report

The Alumni Association Report was submitted to the Board of Trustees electronically and is attached as Appendix A.

Student Government Association Report

The Student Government Association Report was presented by the SGA President, Ms. Fancher. She stated that the SGA held a meeting on November 11th to discuss the upcoming holiday celebration and to begin planning a play focused on the role of community at the College. She noted that the November 5th SGA forum attracted fewer students than usual.

Ms. Fancher informed the Board that the SGA has begun issuing a weekly letter to students to highlight campus events and ensure students are informed and engaged. She also reported that she met with Dr. Bello-Bryan on November 4th to discuss strategies to strengthen SGA leadership. She concluded her remarks by thanking the Board for its time.

Faculty Association Report

Professor Alexandre wished Trustee Bolden a happy retirement. He remarked that she was sharp, cared about the College, and would be greatly missed.

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

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

Ten people made public comments:

- Coach Lionel Leech addressed the Board, stating that he served as the Men's Head Track and Field Coach for eight years. He highlighted several program accomplishments during his tenure, including 21 NJCAA All-Americans, 16 Academic All-Americans, top-20 national rankings, an Olympian who recently signed a professional contract, two world championship athletes, and 78 student-athletes who transferred to Division I and II institutions on full scholarships. He also noted that two current athletes recently received full scholarship offers.

Coach Leech expressed concern about the non-renewal of his contract and stated that false information had been circulated about him. He reported that he was told the non-renewal was related to actions taken at the national championships and raised additional concerns that he said were never addressed, including an alleged threat made by the Athletic Director and issues related to student-athlete scholarship eligibility. He concluded by stating he intends to return at the next Board meeting to discuss these matters further.

- Ms. Tanisha Garner introduced herself as the President of Homes for All Newark and an alumna of the College. She stated that her organization is a coalition of tenants, homeowners, and business owners working to protect the community, particularly in the Ironbound, which she noted is designated by the EPA as an environmental justice area. She expressed concerns about large-scale development projects proposed for the Ironbound, including plans by Iberia Realty to construct multiple high-rise buildings. She stated that these developments pose issues related to infrastructure, rising rents, displacement of residents and students, traffic congestion, and cumulative environmental burdens from existing facilities such as the incinerator and sewer plant.

Ms. Garner shared that her organization has been working with students and partners from Seton Hall Law School, Rutgers Law School, and NJIT to raise awareness and develop responses to these issues. She emphasized the importance of community advocacy and stated that Homes for All Newark has filed legal action against the Newark Planning Board and Iberia Realty Development. She invited attendees to learn more at the upcoming Planning Board meeting on December 8 and offered a petition for those interested in supporting the effort.

- Ms. Sameerah Rhodes, an ECC graduate from the Class of 2020, spoke in support of faculty receiving contract renewals. She shared that her time at ECC was foundational to her academic and personal development, crediting professors for their lasting impact and continued mentorship even after graduation. She stated that her experiences at ECC taught her the importance of Black struggle, multiracial solidarity, and civic engagement. She also referenced her participation in a student–faculty petition effort during the pandemic and noted her belief that teaching conditions directly affect student learning, based on her observations during the Rutgers strike.

Ms. Rhodes expressed concern that the administration has not permitted the establishment of a YDSA chapter on campus, stating that many colleges nationwide host such groups. She emphasized that ECC serves predominantly Black and Brown, working-class students and argued that students should have the ability to form organizations that reflect their political and social interests. She concluded by reiterating her support for faculty and staff, advocating for student organizing, and encouraging unity among students and workers.

- Professor Jennifer Wager spoke in support of wage equity and a fair contract for faculty, noting that starting salaries at the College are lower than those at Newark Public Schools despite requiring higher qualifications. She stated that many long-serving faculty members earn the same or less than newly hired faculty due to minimal pay increases and rising inflation. She added that wage inequity affects multiple employee groups across the College, including AV technicians, security staff, divisional assistants, and custodial workers. Professor Wager cited the Newark Public Library’s recent wage equity campaign as an example of successful, transparent negotiations.

She expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in current contract negotiations and stated that workers feel caught between the administration and union leadership. She also raised broader concerns affecting workers and students, including food insecurity and the impact of federal policies. Professor Wager asked the Board, administration, and union leadership to consider how the College would respond if federal immigration authorities were to come onto campus, stating that employees and students need a collective plan to ensure their safety. She concluded by urging all parties to uphold their moral responsibility to protect the College community.

- Professor Margaret Stevens expressed concern about the College’s priorities, noting that while the institution has hosted high-profile visitors, such as President Obama, students still lack sufficient resources, including access to academic copies needed for their courses. She also emphasized the sacrifices faculty make to support students—raising scholarship funds and investing significant personal effort—and questioned whether the College adequately supports faculty and their families in return.

Professor Stevens urged the Board to focus on the value of the workers and students who sustain the institution, not just on capital projects or facilities. She highlighted the essential labor performed by staff across campus and asked what value the College places on that work. She stressed the need for leadership to consider

the broader global climate—referencing rising geopolitical tensions—and to develop plans that protect and support the College community in an era she described as marked by increasing instability. She concluded by urging the administration to demonstrate that they are planning for the well-being of workers and students.

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

write administration needs to do the right thing + approve a contract with faculty.

LEV'S PUBLIC COMMENTS

- I should mention here that ECE needs to get its faculty contract in order. The federal shutdown has come + gone.

Thank you for listening to my ideas on Wednesday in the Cafeteria. Please let me elaborate in more detail on the Student Forum.

To begin with, politicians go to crowded places to be heard, not a desert. In this case, the crowded place is the Cafeteria, with a ready audience. By comparison, 2nd Floor Student Forum has no audience. There were barely any students passing through. I saw President Cynthia Fancher talk to several people. Hardly a large audience.

If you want to have a better Student Forum, hold it in the Cafeteria Pit at 11:30 a.m. That is the time lots of people congregate in the Cafeteria. You will at least get some people to step forward and ask questions.

Try using the Free Period for SGA Forums in the Cafeteria. Send text messages, emails, posts on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp. Post flyers on bulletin boards weeks in advance, distribute them in classes, ICC meetings. Combine current technology with the traditional approach.

When I served in the SGA, we had no Internet. Everything was done via flyers, bulletin boards, phones, word of mouth. Our SGA General Meetings were held in the Cafeteria Pit. We had Senators and Officers present. This was 1991 - 92, 1992-93. I was a Senator and Secretary in 1991-92, Senator in 1992-93. The first one in the new SGA to serve two terms. FYI, the current SGA was created in 1989.

The SGAs that followed mine continued the tradition of holding General Meetings in the Cafeteria Pit. This was true of the 1990s and through even last year. Whoever had the idea of moving the SGA Forum did not take into account the attendance.

Last month's SGA Forum did not attract many people. This month's forum did not either. Why? Because it was held in a place where students do not gather.

Come Spring 2026, the SGA Forums should be moved to the Cafeteria Pit to increase attendance. Also, increased publicity and social media awareness would help. Does the SGA have a Facebook group? Post there. Create a chat group for SGA and student organizations.

I know the alumni association has such a group.

Hope this helps. If you have any questions, I will be glad to answer them.

- Leo Martinez, an alumnus, expressed concern that faculty have not received a fair contract, noting that many of his formative experiences at the College came from professors whose work he deeply values. He criticized what he described as unfair treatment of faculty and compared it to broader national labor and student justice issues. Martinez stated that it is troubling that professors at the College can earn less than new teachers elsewhere, including in New York, and shared that the faculty inspired him to pursue a career in education.

He further commented on the larger political and economic context, stating that workers are being pushed

toward collective action and that union leadership should not hinder efforts to secure a fair contract. Martinez concluded by encouraging faculty to continue advocating for themselves and expressed that students and alumni stand in solidarity with them.

- Ugonma Chima, a 2025 graduate, spoke in support of faculty whose contracts have not been renewed for almost two years. She stated that strong student engagement and higher graduation rates depend on faculty being treated with professional respect and receiving fair compensation. She noted that it is difficult for employees to fully commit to their work when they are not compensated adequately, especially during a time when many people are losing benefits and struggling to meet basic needs.

Chima also expressed concern about reports that a student had difficulty establishing a Democratic Socialists of America chapter on campus. She stated that limiting students' ability to organize around their interests creates unnecessary barriers and reflects poorly on the institution. She emphasized that students should have opportunities to build networks and participate in campus groups that matter to them.

- Dora Castro submitted a hard copy of her public comments. It reads as follows:

Good afternoon Trustees, Dr. Boakye, and members of the Essex County College community,

My name is Dora Castro, and I stand before you today with a matter of great importance to the future of our institution. Before I share my request, I want to briefly introduce myself and also apologize for taking more time than usual. Please know that I would not do so unless I believe this issue truly matters and deserves your attention.

I've had the privilege of serving at Essex County College for nearly 31 years. Most of that time was spent at the West Essex Campus, where I built strong connections with our students, faculty, and staff and embraced the mission that drives this institution. In July 2021, when the WEC building closed for construction, I was reassigned to the Newark Campus under the leadership of Dean Mohamed Seddiki, with a primary responsibility to work alongside him on the WEC project. During my ECC journey, I have also come to appreciate and respect the important role our Board members play in shaping the future of the College.

Throughout my tenure, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education, including in my own life and the unwavering commitment of many who lead us. These experiences have fueled my passion for the success of Essex County College and my love for the work we do. But I would be less than honest if I did not acknowledge that my belief in the institution has sometimes been tested by moments of unfairness, lack of accountability, and decisions that seemed driven by personal interests rather than the mission we all share. These realities exist in many organizations, but they remind us why integrity and transparency must guide every decision we make.

Regardless of those challenges, I have always chosen to rise above and focus on what matters most: our students and our community. In doing so, I've even been told that I "bleed green and gold." I take that as a compliment because it reflects the pride, I feel in going above and beyond, sometimes on my own time and with my own resources to make things happen or make them a little more special. I do this because I believe in this College and in the extended family many of us have become.

Now, to the reason I am speaking today. As you know, the stakes for higher education are higher than ever. Community colleges face unprecedented challenges, and survival will depend on strong, knowledgeable, and united leadership; leadership grounded in understanding higher education, critical thinking, and effective problem solving. Essex County College is on a positive academic path our programs, faculty, and student outcomes reflect progress we can all be proud of. But academic success cannot stand alone; it

requires a solid foundation of operational strength to sustain and support it. That is where leadership matters most. As Trustees, your role is not only to oversee policy but to safeguard the mission and ensure that every decision strengthens the College for the future. The choices you make today will determine whether we continue this upward trajectory or risk losing momentum.

With that in mind, I respectfully urge the Board of Trustees to revisit the motion tabled on December 13, 2022, regarding the promotion of Mr. Mohamed Seddiki to Vice President of Operations / Chief Information Officer. This recommendation was fully supported by President Dr. Boakye, President Emeritus Dr. Yamba, and other key administrators, leaders who have devoted their careers to Essex County College and whose purpose has always been to serve the best interests of this institution. They would not have made this recommendation if they did not fully believe in Dean Seddiki's ability to lead. Furthermore, the recommendation went through the proper process, and Dean Seddiki applied for the position and earned the recommendation by the search committee. Yet, in truth, for a significant amount of time, he has been performing the duties of Vice President without the formal recognition or support that he, and the role deserve.

I feel confident speaking about Dean Seddiki's character and work ethic because I've known him since the beginning of my career. I've seen firsthand how he keeps progress moving forward, and for the past four years, I've worked directly under his leadership. As a leader, I can attest to his integrity, fairness, vision, assertiveness, and unwavering dedication to this institution. Every decision he makes is guided by what is best for Essex County College and our students, often in the face of challenges, criticism, and even personal attacks. Despite setbacks, he moves forward with resilience, never forgetting his humble beginnings as a facilities painter, a reminder of his commitment to making ECC better every day. His leadership has been instrumental in keeping operations stable and moving forward despite constant changes. And beyond his professional role, I've witnessed his faith, kindness, selflessness, generosity, and genuine care for others.

Some facts to consider:

- Dean Seddiki has taken on additional responsibilities without asking for any increase in salary.
- His qualifications and experience, spanning decades in technology and institutional leadership, are truly exemplary.
- The fiscal impact was already accounted for in the College's annual budget.

Since that Board meeting, Dean Seddiki has continued to oversee his areas and make remarkable strides performing every duty asked of him, stepping in to resolve issues no matter the challenge or who is involved, with professionalism and dedication. Working alongside our College President every step of the way. In effect, he has been doing the job of Vice President of Operations and CIO without the title. This not only undervalues his contributions but also risks morale and continuity in leadership.

I understand that concerns prompted the tabling of this motion, and while I would never expect the Board to approve something that raised doubts, I urge you to revisit those concerns transparently and ensure that decisions reflect the best interest of the College as a whole. If any previous concerns remain, please open the conversation to include diverse staff voices and gain accurate insight, not misleading perceptions from a few. In our roles, we know that not every decision will please everyone. But as Trustees, you hold the highest responsibility as overseers of this institution to act with fairness, uphold the mission of Essex County College, and ensure that every decision strengthens the College for our students and community. While it is wonderful to see trustees engaged and connected with our administrators, those bonds must never overshadow this responsibility. Your role is to help us secure a strong future, and Dean Seddiki is the person who will deliver that future.

Promoting individuals who have demonstrated capability and commitment is essential for institutional stability and progress. Dean Seddiki's leadership in operations and technology has been critical to our

success, and formalizing his role will strengthen our ability to serve students and the community effectively and ensure we have the leadership needed to face the many unknowns ahead.

I respectfully request that the Board bring this motion back as soon as possible for consideration and act in alignment with the College's commitment to merit, fairness, and excellence.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

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 Cruz moved the motion and Trustee Zarra seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Vice Chair, Dr. A. Lewis, motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 pm by a vote of acclamation.



Essex County College Alumni Association (ECCAA)

Board of Trustees Report -November 18, 2025

ECCAA Student Representative Report

Board of Trustees Meeting

1. Membership Committee Update

The Membership Committee held its first meeting November 12th to begin planning the revitalization of our membership program. The focus is on re-engaging alumni, strengthening outreach efforts, and increasing overall participation.

2. Upcoming Calendar Items

- Angel Tree Initiative:

Preparations are underway for this year's Angel Tree initiative to help brighten the holiday season for families in our community. Alumni volunteers and campus partners will assist with coordination and distribution.

- Spring 2026 Teen Summit:

Planning continues for the Teen Summit, held in partnership with Gems to Jewels, a nonprofit organization founded by Sharrah Gardener and dedicated to youth development and empowerment. This will involve youth from Essex county 7-12th grades.

Goals include:

- Introducing high school students to the college experience and encouraging enrollment at ECC.
- Offering workshops on financial literacy, financial aid, career pathways, and college readiness.
- Providing tabling opportunities for community groups, campus departments, and local leaders.

3. Mentorship Program Rollout

ECCAA is preparing to launch the application for the new mentorship program. We will be recruiting alumni mentors and finalizing the student application process.

- The E-Board will be meeting tomorrow to finalize the mentorship rollout details.
- Scheduling and mentor–student matching are expected to begin in January 2026. .

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, November 18, 2025

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

General Comment

Thank you, Madame Chair, distinguished members of the Essex County College Board of Trustees, Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, Cabinet members, and the entire College community. It is a true honor to stand before you once again to represent the faculty and the Essex County College Faculty Association (ECCFA).

Comment about the Organization

On behalf of the ECCFA, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Chair Dr. Marion Bolden for her dedicated service to the college and the community as Chair of the Board of Trustees. Her leadership was exemplary marked by vision, insight, and an unwavering commitment to the college. We deeply admire her sharp intellect and her genuine love for Essex County College.

We congratulate the incoming Chair, Dr. Arnold C. Lewis, on his election. The ECCFA looks forward to engaging in open, constructive, and two-way dialogue with him, believing that such communication is essential to advancing the college and achieving positive outcomes for our community. We hope these practices of meaningful engagement will continue as a permanent part of college leadership.

In Memoriam

ECCFA is deeply saddened by the passing of one of the college's pioneers, Professor Pat Bartinique, who faithfully served Essex County College for more than 50 years. She began her tenure in September 1968, just two years after the college was founded in 1966, making her a true founding member of our institution. We are grateful for her decades of dedicated service and extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and to the entire college community.

Working Without a Contract

Our faculty members are increasingly frustrated by the absence of a contract as we enter our second year without one. This situation raises concerns about how much our contributions are valued. Nevertheless, we remain committed to fulfilling our duties with passion and dedication, continuing to serve our students, the college, and the community with the highest level of care.

ECCFA Executive Committee Activities

1. Some of our executive members participated in the NJEA Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit on October 24–25, gaining valuable insights and strategies to strengthen our advocacy and support for faculty.
2. ECCFA held the NJEA ABP Retirement Seminar on Thursday, October 23, from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM in the 3rd Floor Library Conference Room (3514). The session provided faculty with valuable strategies and guidance for planning a secure and comfortable retirement. Virtual attendance arrangements remained unchanged for those participating remotely.
3. ECCFA held its monthly membership meeting on Thursday, October 30, 2025, during which members were informed about significant upcoming changes to our insurance plans. Many members took advantage of these changes, achieving substantial savings and enhanced benefits, reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting faculty well-being.

The Senate meeting followed the membership session, providing an opportunity to continue discussions and collaboratively address key faculty matters.

4. Approximately 17 faculty members attended the NJEA 2025 Convention in Atlantic City from November 5 to November 7, 2025, one of the largest delegations we have had in the past decade. We extend our appreciation to our President, Ming McCall, for encouraging our members to attend, participate, and remain actively involved.
5. ECCFA organized a Benefit Fair for membership on November 18, 2025, providing an opportunity for members to learn about the full range of benefits available to them.
6. Finally, ECCFA is pleased that the new Dean of Academics and Faculty, Dr. William Tooma, took the time to engage in brief but meaningful conversations while touring the college. Such interactions are an important step in being visible and fostering constructive dialogue. ECCFA leadership strongly believes in open, two-way, and meaningful communication, and we hope these positive practices will continue as a permanent part of college engagement.

Faculty Members Activities

Business Division

JOHN D. HAMMOND

Assistant Professor Finance/Economics

- Professor John D. Hammond organized a Financial Literacy Seminar titled “*Building Wealth: The Foundations of Sound Financial Planning*,” held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 10:00 AM in Room 3234 (Green Snack Bar).
- The session provided students with practical guidance on budgeting, saving, and investing, equipping them with essential tools for long-term financial stability.
- The event drew approximately 130 students, demonstrating strong interest and highlighting the ongoing need to offer meaningful resources that support the financial empowerment of our student community.

Biology, Chemistry & Physics Division

Dr. Nidhal Marashi, Ph.D.

Program Coordinator, ECS Adviser, PTK Co-Adviser

1. Dr. Marashi proudly announced that the Essex County College Chemistry Club—ECS Chemical Society and ACS Student Chapter—earned first place at the 2025 National Chemistry Week ChemExpo held on Saturday, October 18, 2025, at the Liberty Science Center.
2. Competing against universities such as Drew University, Seton Hall University, NJCU, Caldwell University, Saint Peter’s University, and Ramapo College, the ECS team achieved the highest scores across all judging categories for their three outstanding experiments.
3. Accompanied by Chapter Advisor Dr. Nidhal Marashi and Co-Adviser Dr. Pablo Silva, the student team also received a Certificate of Participation from the American Chemical Society in recognition of their excellence. This remarkable accomplishment highlights the strength of our students, the dedication of faculty mentorship, and Essex County College’s continued commitment to academic distinction and STEM engagement.
4. ECS–ECC Chemical Society earned 1st Place, receiving a \$250 honorary award granted to the Undergraduate ECS–ACS Chapter of ECC.

Sujatha Ramakrishnan, B.Sc., M.S., Ed.D.,
Associate Professor
Biology, Chemistry, & Physics

1. Dr. Sujatha Ramakrishnan served as a judge at the Metropolitan Association of College and University Biologists (MACUB) Conference 2025, held on Saturday, October 25, at Molloy University in New York, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
2. As a scholarship contributor for the 25th Annual Essex County College Golf Scholarship Tournament on October 16, 2025, she actively participated at the Maplewood Country Club.
3. Demonstrating her strong support for both the college and our association, Dr. Ramakrishnan also attended the NJEA 2025 Convention in Atlantic City.

Student Development and Career Services

Jennifer Chapman, RN
Counseling Instructor MS, NCC, LAC

1. **Professor Jennifer Chapman: Became a National Certified Counselor (NCC)** by the National Board for Certified Counselors after successfully completing 3000 hours and meeting the criteria.
2. Per The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC): “The Certification shows colleagues and the public that you have voluntarily met high national standards for counseling.
3. **The New Jersey Integrated Black Nurse Association (NJIBNA) - awarded** Professor Jennifer Chapman, the Community Service Nursing award for Commitment, Dedication & Leadership in Guiding Our Future
4. Professor Chapman’s aim is to continue working along our community leaders on services and resources for the college Community.

Dr. Victor B. Stolberg

Dr. Victor Stolberg continues to be one of the most active and energetic members of the Faculty Association. He has represented the leadership at both the county and state levels while diligently fulfilling his duties as a counselor, serving the college, our students, and the broader community. His unwavering energy and dedication have been instrumental in strengthening our association. Below is a list of his outstanding activities over the past month:

1. ECCFA Contract Negotiation meetings (10/2, 6, 17, 22, 23, 30).
2. Caldwell Street Fair (10/5/25).
3. Cultural Heritage Month Closing Ceremony (10/15).
4. Dining Hall Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (10/15).
5. Campus Community Alliance meeting (10/1).
6. Campus Community Alliance Retreat (10/7).
7. NJAHEAD meeting: “Empowering Accessibility in Higher Education: How ChatGPT/AI Supports Students with Disabilities” (10/10).
8. Annual Employee Benefits & Information Session (10/14).
9. NJEA Presidents/Membership Chair Reconciliation Work Session (10/15).
10. 25th Annual ECC Golf Scholarship Tournament (10/16).
11. William Paterson University Community College Day (10/20).
12. State of Black Writers Symposium (10/21).
13. Catalog Meeting (10/21).
14. ECCFA Executive Board meeting (10/9).
15. Chaired Counselors and Advisors meeting (10/3).
16. Chaired Academic Standards Committee meeting (10/9).
17. Shared Governance Committee meetings: APAC (10/7), ASC (10/9), & AAAC (10/28).
18. ECEA Rep Council & Welcome New Member Event (10/21).
19. ECEA Human & Civil Rights Committee meeting (11/23).
20. NJEA Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit (10/24-25).
21. Student Development & Counseling meeting (10/27).
22. ECEA Association Rep Training (10/28).
23. ECEA Professional Development: “Advocacy in Action: Supporting Multilingual Learners and their Families” (10/29).
24. Business Week: Student Dev. & Counseling Information Table (10/30).

Training and Professional Development:

25. SafeColleges trainings: “Active Assailant Preparedness” (10/1), “Cybersecurity Awareness for Employees at Educational Institutions: Security Awareness Essentials” (10/2), “Human Trafficking Awareness,” “Customer Service Overview” (10/3), “Building Supportive Communities” (10/23), “Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Follow-Up” (10/23), and “Preventing Harassment & Discrimination” (10/23)..
26. NJ Division on Civil Rights: “Recognizing and Responding to Microaggressions” (10/1).

27. Disaster Ready Foundation: “Explosives Awareness” (10/8), “Stress Management and Mental Health for Everyone” (10/9), and “Becoming a Great Leader- Leadership Skills” (10/16).
28. Medscape trainings, including “Alzheimer’s Disease,” “Asthma,” “Cancer,” “COPD,” “Decision-Making & Patient Counseling,” “Diabetes,” “Meaningful Connections,” “Mental Health,” “Narcolepsy,” “Parkinson’s Disease,” “Psychosis,” and “Tuberculosis” (10/2-31).
29. Chronicle of Higher Education: “Campus-Wide Hazing Prevention: Translating Federal Mandates into Effective Action” (10/8).
30. NJWELL: “Creating a Budget” (10/15).
31. Institute for Curriculum Services Certificate “Teaching the History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict Using Primary Sources (10/28).

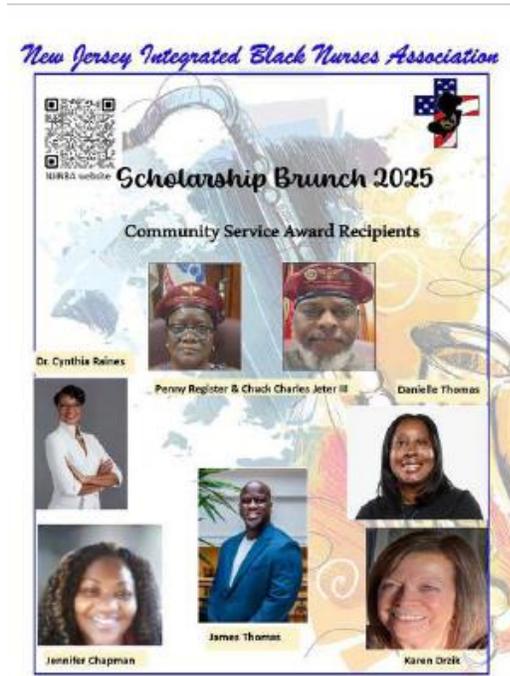
Concluding Remarks

On behalf of the ECCFA, I extend our warmest Thanksgiving wishes to the entire Essex County College community. We are grateful for a productive, uplifting, and rewarding academic year, and we remain committed to being a source of inspiration, guidance, and support for our students and the broader community.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Appendix



Memorandum

To: Ms. Marion Bolden & the Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, *President, Essex County College*
Date: November 18, 2025
Re: President's Monthly Report

General:

Our institution-wide strategic focus on Students First is moving our college in the right direction. We are experiencing increases in enrollment and credit hours, showing promising signs of a focused, college-wide implementation of our Strategic Plan.

Academics/Enrollment

Table 1 below shows steady progress in the number of students served and their corresponding credit hours for the Fall 2021 - Fall 2025 semesters.

Table 1

	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Total number of students	6,245	6,706	6,996	7,057	7,673
Total credit hours	62,334	67,607	69,203	70,041	75,450

Office of IEPA October 30, 2025

Our Academic Department is offering 15 course sections during the Winter Intersession, scheduled for December 23rd to January 8th.

Registration for the Winter Intersession and the Spring 2026 semester opened on November 13th, 2025.

Student Affairs

- The Office of Student Care Services (OSCS) hosted its annual Fall Student Resource Fair on October 22nd. Twenty community organizations participated in the fair.
- We received the OSHE FY26 *Hunger Free Campus* grant for \$52,500 to support our students.
- In collaboration with the Business Division, the Career Resource Center supported more than 50 students with Dress for Success items during Business Division Week.

Athletics

- Our Athletics department is engaged in a food drive to support the community.
- Our undefeated Women's basketball is in second place in Division II, Region 19.
- The ECC Women's Basketball team has joined forces with Turned 2 Athletics (T2A), a community program that inspires young girls to pursue their dreams through sports.
- The Women's soccer team concluded the season as Region 19 semi-finalists.
- The Men's basketball team won its first game last week, holding a record of 1 & 2.
- The Men's soccer team finished the season as Region 19 Division II Runners-up.

The President's October/November Engagements have included:

- October 22nd – 24th: Attended the ACCT Conference in New Orleans with Trustee Grimes.
- October 27th: Met with academic leaders across the campus to explore the possibility of adding culinary arts to our program offerings.
- October 28th: Met with sixteen new faculty to officially welcome them to the College. Dr. Shabazz and Dr. Tooma offered continued support to help in their transition to Essex County College.
- October 28th: Attended the Newark Alliance Members meeting.
- November 1st: ECC welcomed so many dignitaries who participated in the Democratic Gubernatorial Election Rally for Mikie Sherrill. Among them was Former President Barack Obama.
- November 3rd: Attended the NJCCC Collaboration Operations Committee meeting.
- November 6th: Attended the MSCHE meeting with Presidents, ALOs, and System Representatives.
- November 7th: Attended the NJCCC Presidents meeting.
- November 7th: Attended the Investiture of the 22nd President of Rutgers University, Dr. William F. Tate IV at Rutgers Newark Campus.
- November 11th: Participated in the Essex County College Veteran's Day Flag Raising ceremony. I thank Dr. Kirkland, Prof. Yearwood, our veterans, and all those who continue to serve.
- November 12th: Attended the Newark Regional Business Partnership (NRBP) meeting with Mr. Bundy.
- November 13th: Attended the FOCUS 58th Anniversary Gala with Dr. Vieira and FOCUS staff.
- November 17th: Attended the NJCCC President's Council meeting.
- November 17th: Attended the New Jersey President's Council meeting at Middlesex College.

Finances

- The audit process is fully underway.
- We are making progress with work on the FY27 budget.

Projects:

- The Center for Technology renovation project is on schedule.
- The overhead bridge New signage is near completion.

Community Relations:

- The 2025 Scholarship Golf Tournament yielded \$25,000 to support students. I thank all the organizers, sponsors and participants.
- The 25th Anniversary celebration of the Africana Institute is ongoing - please follow the announcements.

Continuing Education and Workforce Development:

Fall 2025 Dual Enrollment program:

Seven school districts and 19 high schools are participating.

- Newark Public School District - 10 schools
- Essex County Tech - 3 schools
- Irvington Public School District - 2 schools

- Bellville High School
- Montclair High School
- Orange High School
- Spectrum360
- 1,216 students are enrolled in the dual-enrollment program this Fall.

Join us on:

- December 2nd - Employee Recognition
- December 3rd - President's Tea
- May 26, 2026 - Commencement at the Prudential Center

Appreciation:

The College Community and myself wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Marion A. Bolden for her extraordinary service and support to the College. We pray and wish Dr. Bolden all the best as she retires from the Board.

[This ends my report. Thank you.](#)