



Board of Trustees

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2025 | 4:30 PM

Smith Hall – Main Campus

In Attendance

- Dr. A. Lewis, Vice Chair
- J. Grimes
- C. Martinez
- B. Robinson
- J. Wright
- J. Zarra, Treasurer
- M. Townes, Board Counsel
- Dr. A. Boakye, President
- S. Story, Recorder
- Ms. Jessica Colon (Students’ Representative to the Board)

Excused

- M. Bolden, Chair
- I. Cruz

Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice Chair Dr. Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. A quorum was achieved with 6 trustees in attendance. Dr. Lewis also recognized and welcomed Ms. Jessica Colon, Student Representative to the Board.

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 that the minutes from the June 17, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting be approved.

Trustee Robinson seconded the motion. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

Communications

Trustee Grimes announced that there was no new communication.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no comments on agenda items.

Finance Committee Report

Trustee Zarra read the finance report into the record:

Actions – Submitted for Recommendation for the Board’s Approval

3-1.1/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Contract for the College’s Annual Golf Scholarship Fundraiser Maplewood Country Club , Maplewood, New Jersey College Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$40,000.00
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3-1.2/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award a Two-Year Contract for Promotional Items <u>Company Names</u> Rising Star Amazon College Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$60,000.00 Per year
3-1.3/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the payment for Emergency Glass repair and the purchase of a walk-in freezer <u>Company Names</u> Belmont Glass & Mirror LLC, Irvington, NJ Celestial Air Group LLC, Paterson, NJ College Funded – Operating Expense and Chapter 12 Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$55,000.00
3-1.4/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a One-Year Contract Renewal for Supplemental Life Insurance Dearborn National , Lombard, Illinois College Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$50,000.00
3-1.5/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Two-Year Contract for Architectural Services <u>Company Names</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netta Architects, LLC • Arcari + Iovino • RSC Architects • DMR Architects • Design Resources Group Architects, Aia, Inc. (DRG Architects) • Paulus, Sokolowski and Sartor Architecture & Engineering PC (PS&S) • LAN Associates, Engineering, Planning, Architecture, Surveying, Inc. <u>Company Names</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Di Cara Rubino Architects • Studio Hillier LLC • H2M Architects & Engineers, Inc. • Kimmerly Newman Architects Chapter 12 Funded – Capital Expense	Amount not to exceed \$400,000.00
3-1.6/Sept-2025	Resolution Authorizing the Contract Increase for Legal Services Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri & Jacobs, LLC , Oakland, NJ College Funded - Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed \$50,000.00

Trustee Wright moved the Finance actions for approval. Trustee Grimes 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/Sept-2025 Administrative Confidential
William Tooma
Dean of Faculty & Academics
Academic Affairs
Effective: October 1, 2025
Salary \$120,000

4-2/Sept-2025	Administrative Porsha Davis Director – Daycare Center Child Development Center Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$80,000
4-3/Sept-2025	Professional Confidential Anissa Cochran Administrative Assistant Office of the President Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$47,000
4-4/Sept-2025	Professional Booker T. McLean Assistant Athletics Director Athletics Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$65,000
4-5/Sept-2025	Professional Jazlyn Johnson Evening & Weekend Services Coordinator Student Services Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$42,000
4-6/Sept-2025	Support Staff Stephanie Crespo Teacher Assistant Child Development Center Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$28,875
4-7/Sept-2025	Support Staff Catherine Chapman Library Assistant MLK / WEC - Library Effective: September 22, 2025 Salary \$34,700
4-8/Sept-2025	Security Association Nijha Smallwood Security Officer Public Safety Effective: September 17, 2025 Salary \$32,500

B. Promotions in Academic Rank (Faculty)

4-9/Sept-2025 Faculty
Akil Khalfani
Professor
Effective: September 1, 2025
Salary exclusive of contractual promotional one-time bonus amount, pending new contract ratification.

Faculty
Ines Figueiras
Professor
Effective: September 1, 2025
Salary exclusive of contractual promotional one-time bonus amount, pending new contract ratification.

Faculty
Sujatha Ramakrishnan
Associate Professor
Effective: September 1, 2025
Salary exclusive of contractual promotional one-time bonus amount, pending new contract ratification.

C. Retirement

4-10/ Sept-2025 Faculty
Leola Taylor-Bandele
Reference Librarian
MLK Library
Effective: August 1, 2025

Faculty
Maria Cecilia Rozak
Professor of Physics
METCS
Effective: August 31, 2025

Faculty
Hossein Assadipour
Professor of Engineering
METCS
Effective: August 31, 2025

Support Staff
Sharon Morris
Clerk-Career Resource
Registrar's Office
Effective: December 31, 2025

D. Resignation

4-11/ Sept-2025 Monica Matos
Instructor – Mathematics
METCS
Effective Date: August 26, 2025

Dominique Spagnolo
Legal Assistant / Paralegal
Compliance and legal affairs
Effective Date: July 17, 2025

Arcadio Cruz
Junior Graphic Designer
Marketing and Communications
Effective Date: August 15, 2025

Marie-Esther Buh
Administrative Assistant
President's Office
Effective Date: August 4, 2025

Shirley Rojas
Coordinator Admission/Call Center
Enrollment Services
Effective Date: August 20, 2025

Patricia Cuestas
Security Officer
Public Safety
Effective Date: July 3, 2025

Alex Pupo
Security Officer
Public Safety
Effective Date: August 1, 2025

E. Rescind

4-12/ Sept-2025 Administrative Confidential
Asif Mehmood
Chief Financial Officer / Senior Comptroller
Finance
Effective Date: July 7, 2025

4-13/Sept-2025 Faculty
Fabian Amilla
Instructor – Criminal Justice
Social Science Division
Effective Date: September 2, 2025

4-14/Sept-2025 Faculty
Serra Kocak
Instructor – Sociology
Effective Date: September 2, 2025

4-15/Sept-2025 Faculty
Nicole Brown
Instructor – Nursing Medical Surgical
Effective Date: September 2, 2025

F. Termination

4-16/ Sept-2025 Karon Johnson
Police Officer
Public Safety
Effective Date: August 21, 2025

Trustee Robinson moved the Personnel actions for approval. Trustee Grimes requested that Action 4-1 be considered separately. Trustee Zarra motioned to rescind the actions, and it was seconded by Trustee Martinez. The motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Robinson moved that the Board approve Personnel action 4-1. Trustee Dr. Lewis motioned, and Trustee Martinez seconded the motion. The motion carried with five affirmations and one no vote.

Trustee Wright motioned the approval of Personnel actions 4-2 to 4-16, and Trustee Zara 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/Sept-2025 Acceptance of Funds: Consolidated Adult Basic Skills and Integrated English
- 7-1.2/Sept-2025 Approval of Agreement and Acceptance of Funds - Central Jersey Family Health Consortium of New Jersey
- 7-1.3/Sept-2025 Capital Facilities Grants Application - Higher Education Facilities Trust Fund (HEFT)

Trustee Martinez moved the Educational Programs actions for approval. Trustee Robinson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Lewis requested that the Board vote for an amendment to action 7-1.3. The resolution’s format was changed, but the substance stayed the same. Trustee Robinson motioned, and Trustee Lewis seconded the motion.

Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee Report

Trustee Martinez stated that the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee met on September 9th. There were no formal action items on the agenda. However, a Goldenrod action was presented and read into the record.

Mr. Townes read the goldenrod action 7-2.1 for the Adoption of the FY2026-FY2029 Facilities Master Plan Addendum into the record. It reads as follows:

WHEREAS: Essex County College (“College”) adopted a Facilities Master Plan (“Plan”) for the period 2019–2023 to guide strategic capital development and infrastructure improvements; and

WHEREAS: The College experienced substantial, unforeseen demands for facilities improvements between FY2019 and FY2026, requiring urgent investments to ensure the health and safety of the campus community, which impacted the original timeline and resource allocation of the Plan; and

WHEREAS: These emergent needs resulted in the deferral of several high-priority infrastructure upgrades and capital projects, creating a backlog that must be addressed to maintain operational integrity and support institutional growth; and

WHEREAS: The College has updated the Facilities Master Plan 2019-2023 with 2025 Addendum Extension to extend the original Plan through FY2027, focusing on short-term capital planning and the prioritization of deferred maintenance, safety and accessibility enhancements, sustainability initiatives, and productivity capacity improvements; and

WHEREAS: This Addendum aligns with the College’s current Strategic, Academic, Enrollment, and Recruitment Plans, ensuring that facilities development supports ECC’s overarching institutional objectives; and

WHEREAS: The College continues to engage in a transparent and inclusive planning process, incorporating feedback from stakeholders, including staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees, and is concurrently developing a new comprehensive Facilities Master Plan for FY2027–FY2032; and

WHEREAS: The Site, Facilities & Equipment Committee of the Board of Trustees has reviewed and recommended the adoption of the Facilities Master Plan 2019-2023 with 2025 Addendum Extension;

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

The Essex County College Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the adoption of the Facilities Master Plan 2019-2023 with 2025 Addendum Extension to guide the prioritization and implementation of critical facilities projects and support the College’s strategic goals.

Trustee Zarra moved the amended action 7-1.3 for approval. Trustee Robinson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy and Governance Committee Report

Trustee Robinson reported that the Policy and Governance Committee met on September 9th. 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 J. Wright stated that the committee met on September 9th, and no actions were taken. The Committee discussed the 25th Annual Golf Scholarship Tournament, scheduled for October 16, 2025. Everyone is encouraged

to participate, recruit golfers, and contribute toward student scholarships. For those unable to attend, donations may also be made by sponsoring a student ticket. Trustee Wright further noted that the College is currently celebrating Cultural Heritage Month now through October 15, 2025. In addition, the 25th Anniversary of the Africana Institute will be commemorated, featuring events and invited guest speakers.

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. He officially welcomed Ms. Jessica Colon, Student Representative to the Board and to her new role. His report is attached as Appendix D.

New Business

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

Public Comments

Several people made public comments:

- Dr. Khalfani expressed his gratitude to the Trustees, the President, and his colleagues for their support in his promotion, noting that it was 20 years in the making. He invited everyone to participate in the 25th Anniversary events, which commenced on September 20th with a visit of King Pierre from Babouantou, Cameroon.
- Trustee Lewis, on behalf of Chair Bolden, extended congratulatory messages to Dr. Khalfani and all the newly promoted faculty members.
- Dr. W. Tooma expressed his gratitude to the Trustees, the President, the Vice President, faculty, administrators, and staff for their support in his appointment as Dean of Faculty & Academics. He shared that he started at the College as an adjunct in Spring 2010, later serving 12 years as a faculty member and four years as Chair of the Humanities & Bilingual Division. During his tenure, he contributed to the success of remedial English courses and helped revise and develop new curricula. Dr. Tooma stated that he is eager to bring vision and support to departments across the College, to collaborate with chairs and colleagues, and to continue advancing Essex in the right direction. He emphasized the collective responsibility to support students and the College community, affirming his commitment not to let the College down.
- Dr. R. Spellman, one of ECC's longest-serving faculty members, offered remarks. He commended the recent convocation as a success, thanking the Vice President, President, and committee for their efforts. He noted the Promotions Committee's enthusiasm for the new faculty promotions and expressed appreciation for Dr. Tooma's leadership during his tenure as Chair, acknowledging his many accomplishments. Dr. Spellman added that the faculty looks forward to working with Dr. Tooma in his new role. He further shared that President Boakye's convocation message challenged the community to be "difference makers," and he emphasized the faculty's commitment to this vision. He noted that a task force is currently working to ensure that all members of the College community succeed.
- Dr. S. Ramakrishnan expressed her gratitude to the Trustees, the President, the Vice President, the faculty, and

staff for their support in her promotion. She noted her 11 years of service as an adjunct, followed by five years as an Assistant Professor, and stated that she will continue to do her best in her new role.

- Professor J. Alexandre conveyed a message from Professor Figueiras. She expressed gratitude for her promotion and shared that she is excited to contribute to the success of ECC. She thanked the Trustees, President, Vice President, the members of the promotions committee, and her colleagues.

Professor Alexandre also raised three questions: first, regarding the faculty waiver required for travel and whether the College still maintains travel insurance; second, expressing concern that some staff are unhappy; and third, inquiring about actions being taken to address staff satisfaction.

- Dr. Boakye responded that the College's travel policy has not changed. However, Students traveling with Faculty and staff are required to sign a waiver to facilitate communication with our insurance company in the event of an incident. Dr. Boakye offered to meet for further clarification on these matters and requested specifics regarding staff concerns.
- Professor Nash, who has served at the College since 1999, expressed concerns regarding the Africana Institute and the launch of the field of African Studies in 2006. He noted that the program has not attracted significant student enrollment or produced substantial outcomes. He also expressed frustration over repeated promotion denials and a lack of clear communication regarding eligibility.
- Booker McClain thanked the Trustees, Dean Kirkland, and Dr. Bello-Bryan for his appointment as Assistant Athletics Director and expressed enthusiasm for his new role.
- Porsha Davis expressed gratitude for her appointment as Director of the Child Development Center. She shared her excitement to continue building connections with the community and families, emphasizing her passion for supporting ECC's early learners.
- Catherine Chapman thanked the Trustees and College leadership for her appointment as Library Assistant. She noted that her journey at ECC began over 10 years ago in the Youth Program. She expressed enthusiasm for bringing the Library to life, enhancing the Information Commons, and engaging with the College community.

Notice of Executive Session

Trustee Robinson read the Notice of Executive Session. She read as follows:

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, 1975 (N.J. Law Chapter 231) permits a public body to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which certain topics are discussed:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Essex County College shall hold, following this meeting and prior to its next scheduled meeting on October 21, 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, and Trustee Lewis seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Vice Chair, Dr. A. Lewis, motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm by a vote of acclamation.

I Jessica Colon Alumni Representative to the board of trustee am pleased to provide updates regarding the ECCAA

Essex County College Alumni Association (ECCAA)

Board of Trustees Report – Key Updates from August 27, 2025 Committee Meeting

Prepared by: Shelby Robinson, ECCAA President

Leadership Update

□ On July 17, 2025, the ECC Alumni Association hosted its Handing Over Ceremony, where the newly elected officers were formally inducted.

□ Newly Inducted Officers:

- • President – Shelby Robinson
- • Vice President – Asia T. McClain
- • Recording Secretary – Naomi Browne
- • Corresponding Secretary – Juanita Simon
- • Treasurer – Angela Anokye-Boateng
- • Member at Large – Essence Vines
- • Member at Large – Sharief Williams
- • Member at Large – Tykedia Tolbert
- • Alumni Relations Officer – Bertheleau Ngakam
- • Alumni Liaison – Adewale Thompson

- Alumni Engagement & Membership

- The Alumni Association Tabled at the Afro Beats Festival in Newark on July 12, 2025, to increase ECCAA visibility, connect with alumni, and engage the wider community.
- Due to rain some of our scheduled summer tabling were cancelled
- The Alumni Association Tabled at ECC Welcome Week, September 2–3, 2025, led by Shelby Robinson, to raise awareness of ECCAA, connect with incoming students, and promote future alumni membership.
- On August 13, 2025 the Alumni Association participated in creating video content in efforts to increase Alumni awareness
- Fundraising & Community Outreach
- Additional alumni-led initiatives under consideration:
 - Popcorn fundraiser (previously proven successful).
 - Exploring events that specifically support evening and commuting students, strengthening inclusivity.
 - Planning ECCAA participation in the Breast Cancer Walk with an alumni table to increase visibility and demonstrate community commitment.
- The Alumni Association are planning to collaborate with CCA in the upcoming College retreat October 7
- The Alumni are planning to contribute to this year's Golf Scholarship tournament

Alumni Events & Assemblies

- First General Assembly meeting is set to be held September 24th
- The ECC Alumni Association remains committed to strengthening alumni engagement, enhancing student support, and expanding ECC's

presence in the broader community. These initiatives reflect ECCAA's focus on visibility, partnership, and sustainability.

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

My name is Cynthia D Fancher, president of the Student Government Administration, and I am here to present the September report of SGA activities.

INDUCTION & INTRODUCTION

The 2025-26 SGA induction ceremony was held on August 20th, 2025, where Dr. Boakye, Dean Kirkland and Dean Bello-Bryan, Mr. Graham, Mr. Ott, and former SGA secretary Ameerah Sanni were present. Inducted members were President Cynthia D Fancher, Secretary Daphnee Demervil, Senator of Communications Jeri Johnson, and former general member Metisha Monroe, who was promoted to Senator of Academic Affairs by Dean Bello during the proceedings. Vice President Yamile Arcela Rivera and Treasurer Valerie Ramirez were inducted at later times, as they could not attend the ceremony. Each of us took vows and were inducted by former secretary Sanni, Mr. Ott, and Dean Bello-Bryan.

STUDENT FORUM #1

The first student forum of the Fall 2025 semester took place on September 8th, where members of the SGA introduced themselves to the student body, and told the students about various support programs offered by the college. Questions and student concerns were also taken in, with the room becoming especially animated on the topic of the cafeteria. We were also able to recruit additional general members who were in attendance.

CLUB FAIR

The Fall 2025 club fair is to be held on September 23rd and 24th, and clubs have been preparing in preparation for the event. We look forward to seeing what each club brings to the festivities, and the influx of new members that will follow.

E-BOARD & GENERAL MEMBER MEETING

The first SGA E-Board and general member meetings took place on September 9th, members discussed the upcoming club fair, ICC dates, office hours, and attendees for the upcoming SGA student summit, and attendees for the meeting with Dr. Boakye the following week. Members also took advantage of the occasion to make introductions as it was the first time all 6 E-Board members were in one room together.

MEETING WITH DR. BOAKYE

On September 11th, the entire SGA E-board had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Boakye, with Dean Bello-Bryan, Dean Kirkland and Mr. Graham also in attendance. After introductions had been completed, the SGA discussed various topics with the president, chief among them being Dr. Boakye and the SGA's respective visions for the school's future. Dr. Boakye highlighted the importance of student retention and focus on clear objectives while SGA members expressed the desire to strengthen communications between the college and the students, and discussed ways to increase student participation on campus. A future meeting with DPG was planned, as well as ideas for events that would build the ECC community.

Student Survey

As a result of our meeting with Dr. Boakye and discussion about the Cafeteria, we were able to modify last Fall's Student Satisfaction Survey. The survey will be administered to all students in an effort to gauge their views on the quality of services, quality of food, food offerings, pricing and overall satisfaction. The survey results will prepare us to meet with College Administration and DPG Management in the near future.

INITIATIVES FOR THE REST OF SEPTEMBER AND ONWARD

- September 23rd & 24th: Club Fair
- September 26th: First ICC Meeting
- October 9th-12th: SGA Summit in D.C.
- October 14th: Student Forum #2
- Meeting with DPG

We look forward to a new year of collaboration between the student body, faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,

SGA Executive Board
Student Government Association

**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, September 16, 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 both an honor and a privilege to once again address you on behalf of the faculty and the Essex County College Faculty Association (ECCFA).

We are very pleased to be back on campus. At the same time, we are extremely disappointed to begin a second academic year without a contract. Nevertheless, our faculty remain fully committed to serving our students with the dedication and enthusiasm they deserve.

That said, our Executive Committee has begun exploring ways to send a clear and strong message that we are profoundly dissatisfied with this ongoing situation.

Special Thanks

We are pleased to report on our appreciation for both the Public Safety Department and Convocation 2025.

On behalf of the ECCFA, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Department of Public Safety for their prompt and professional response to every concern brought to their attention. Director Cromartie and Director Parm, we greatly value your leadership and the dedication of your entire team. Recently, when some of our professors faced challenges, your department addressed the issues swiftly and effectively. You set an outstanding example for all of us to follow.

ECCFA is also proud to highlight our faculty's active participation in Convocation 2025. We extend special thanks to Professor Jhestarri DePasquale for the exceptional work on the *Faculty Accomplishment Brochure* distributed at convocation, which so effectively showcased the achievements of our colleagues.

Promotion Appreciation and Congratulations

On behalf of the ECCFA, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the President, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Promotion Committee for selecting three outstanding colleagues for promotion:

- **Professor Akil Khalfani**
- **Professor Ines Figueras**
- **Dr. Sujatha Ramakrishnan**

We also extend our appreciation to **Dr. Boakye** for continuing the tradition of supporting and recognizing faculty excellence through the annual promotion process.

Thank You and Best Wishes in Retirement

We thank the Board for approving these retirements, and we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and warmest congratulations to our esteemed colleagues:

- **Professor Maria Cecilia Rozak**, Physics, METCS – Effective August 31, 2025
- **Professor Hossein Assadipour**, Engineering, METCS – Effective August 31, 2025

We are deeply grateful for your years of dedicated service, scholarship, and unwavering commitment to our students and to the college community. Your contributions have left a lasting legacy, and you will always remain cherished members of the Essex family.

Welcome to Dr. Tooma

We would like to take a moment to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. William Tooma on his appointment as Dean of Academic Affairs. With the approval of the Board, and on behalf of the ECCFA, we wish you every success in this important role. We sincerely hope that your leadership will bring a fresh perspective, and we remain committed to fostering a respectful and collaborative two-way dialogue.

If I may, Mr. Vice-Chair, I would also like to share a personal reflection. I have had the privilege of working with an exceptional administrator, Dr. Keith Kirkland, Dean of Students. Whenever an issue arose, he would take the initiative to call, and together we would have a professional, cordial conversation before moving forward. That approach fostered a positive and collegial climate—one that I believe greatly strengthens our entire college community.

ECCFA Executive Committee Activities

- Dr. Victor Stolberg attended the NEA Representative Assembly Conference, the national conference of the National Education Association.
- Six faculty members participated in the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference 2025 this summer.
- The Faculty Association Newsletter is now available! It includes important updates, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities for engagement. Faculty are encouraged to review it and stay informed about our collective efforts.
- The ECCFA Negotiation Team held numerous meetings to fine-tune the contract. Their dedication and selfless commitment to this work are truly commendable.

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 the College. Through his leadership, Essex County College remains at the forefront with well-organized and impactful initiatives.

- This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Africana Institute, a monumental milestone that will be launched with a historic visit from His Majesty Kaleuk Monogoue Pierre, King of Babouant.
- In addition, Dr. Khalfani extends an invitation to the Board and the entire College community to attend the 13th Black Writers Symposium, scheduled for October 21, 2025.

Business Division

Professor John D. Hammond , Dr. John Olotewo, and Professor Patrick St. Fort

Three professors from the Business Division—Dr. John Olotewo, Professor John Hammond, and Professor Patrick St. Fort—attended, along with chair of the Business Division, the ACBSP Conference 2025 in Las Vegas to receive the reaffirmation of accreditation for the Business Division.

Business Faculty and Chair

As in previous years, the Business Division set the standard by conducting faculty training prior to Convocation, with the majority of its faculty members in attendance.

Professor Jean-Wilner Alexandre

During the summer months, Professor Jean-Wilner Alexandre visited Coimbra University in Portugal and the University of Bucharest, Romania, in to continue his work connecting Latin America and Europe, while further strengthening his expertise in Latin American and Caribbean studies.

METCS Division

Dr. Teryn Cha

Dr. Teryn Cha of the METCS Division co-authored and presented two papers and one poster at the **FLAIRS-38 Conference**, held May 19–23, 2025, in Daytona Beach, Florida:

- *Kernel Density-Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise*
- *Kernel Density-Estimated Linear Regression*
- *Facial Expression and Pose Recommender System Using Stereotypical Trait Identification*

In addition, Dr. Cha participated in the **2025 National Conference on Artificial Intelligence** at Houston Community College (April 9–11), where she accompanied two students and contributed to discussions on AI research, innovative teaching, and the integration of AI into the community college curriculum.

Humanities Division

Professor Jennifer Wager

Professor Jennifer Wager is pleased to share that the Film Club, which she advises, submitted three films to the Newark International Film Festival with her support. All three were accepted, nominated for Best Student Film, and one of them won the award. She will forward the press release currently being prepared by the PR Office.

Professor Wager accompanied the students to Opening Night and their screening, while also mentoring them on how to navigate film festivals as emerging filmmakers. Having served on the festival's founding committee for several years, she was especially proud to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2025.

Social Science

Dr. Bridget Turner

Dr. Turner would like to invite you to the Autism Spectrum Disorders Resource Day at Essex County College, which will be held on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM: [Autism Spectrum Disorders Resource Day](#)

In addition, Dr. Turner is honored to share that, as a Cultural Trailblazer for the Kean University Center for Positive Development of Urban Children, she has been featured in the latest publication, *The Cultural Trailblazers: The COVID Years*, authored by Ana L. Berdecia, M.Ed. The report is filled with data points and photos that capture their collective journey.

You may view the full publication here: [The Cultural Trailblazers: The COVID Years](#)

- **Mentor Quotes** – page 6
- **Mentor Touchpoints** – page 20
- **Class Photos** – pages 21, 37, 38, and 40

Dr. Clare Kajura

Dr. Clare Kajura participated in the two-day Mental Health Academy Suicide Prevention Summit on August 23 and 25, 2025, further strengthening her expertise and supporting ECC's commitment to student mental health and well-being.

Dr. Victor Stolberg

Dr. Victor Stolberg is one of the most active and dynamic faculty members and counselors on campus, bringing high energy and a strong passion for serving both the College and the broader community. Among his many outstanding accomplishments this summer, we are proud to highlight that his article, "*Epigenetics of Neural Networks in Neurocognitive Conditions: A Review*," has been accepted for publication in the forthcoming issue of *Brain Network Disorders*.

In addition, we have included below a list showcasing the breadth of his hard work and contributions.

June 2025

- Delivered June ECCFA BOT Report (6/17).
- SDC "Faith, Courage & Hope Community Festival" (6/4).
- NJEA Representative Assembly State Caucus (6/7).
- NJEA Financial Advisors Meeting (6/10).
- NEA "RA Preview Priority Issues" (6/12).
- NEA "Federal Legislative Program" (6/16).
- NEA "Resolutions" (6/17).

- NEA “Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules” (6/18).
- NEA “Strategic Plan and Budget” (6/23).
- Updating Substance Abuse Bulletin Board

July 2025

- NJEA State Caucus (7/1).
- National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) meeting (7/2)
- NEA Representative Assembly 2025, Portland, OR (7/2-7).
- SUNY Cortland Alumni Association (7/17).
- NJEA Summer Leadership Conference, Atlantic City, NJ (7/29-31).

Aug. 2025

- ECCFA Contract Negotiations (8/4).
- Disaster Ready Foundation: “Fundraising Essentials Certificate” (8/4).
- Article: “Epigenetics of Neural Networks in Neurocognitive Conditions: A Review” accepted for publication in *Brain Network Disorders* (8/21).
- ECCFA meeting (8/25).
- New Faculty Luncheon (8/25).

Training and Professional Development:

- Medscape trainings, including “Alzheimer’s Disease,” “Asthma,” “Biomarkers, Genetics & Therapies,” “Cancer,” “Cultural Humility,” “Diabetes,” “HIV,” “Therapeutic Decision-Making,” and “Schizophrenia” (6/4-8/21).
- NJWell: “Getting Out of Debt,” “Staying on Track with Student Loans While in School,” “Understanding Credit,” and “Securing Market Volatility” (6/2-3).
- DisasterReady Course: “Comprehensive School Safety Framework” (6/6).
- JED Workshop: “Becoming a Mental Health Advocate at My School” (6/2).
- Workshop by NJ Division on Civil Rights “Understanding Implicit Bias” (6/11).
- Corwin Webinar: “AI, Inquiry, and Imagination: Designing Student-Centered Learning Quality” (8/14).

Concluding Remarks

On behalf of the ECCFA, I would like to extend warm wishes to the entire Essex County College community for a great, positive, and fulfilling academic year. As faculty, our goal is to continue serving as a bright light for our students and an uplifting presence within our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Faculty Attending Leadership Conference



Dr. Teryn Cha at FLAIRS38 (2025)



ECC at 2025 National AI Conference

Memorandum

To: Dr. M. Bolden & the Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, President, Essex County College
Date: September 16, 2025
Re: President's Monthly Report

General:

Our 2025-2026 Academic Year began with Convocation on August 25, 2025. This year's convocation theme, "**Building Bridges & Serving As One,**" centered on Discovering Unknowns and Breaking Down Operational Procedures to support our Progressive Retention Strategies and improve graduation rates.

Breakout sessions included:

- Progressive Retention Strategies to Higher Graduation Rates and Student Success for faculty.
- Progressive Retention Strategies to Higher Graduation Rates and Student Success for non-teaching staff.
- An Interactive Library Tour
- Supporting Student Basic Needs and Mental Health
- Closing the Assessment Loop: Faculty-Developed Recommendations and Best Practices for Improved Student Learning
- Substantive Interaction in Online Courses
- Preparing our Students for the Future: AI
- EOF & Student Success
- Intro to Purchasing: Processes and Policies.

Since our June 17, 2025, board meeting, our ECC family has expanded with new hires across the College. I congratulate and welcome them to ECC.

We welcome Ms. Jessica Colon, our Alumni Student Representative to the Board of Trustees.

Academics

Dr. Cristhian Altamirano has joined us as Associate Dean of the West Essex campus. We welcome you to the ECC family.

Congratulations to the academic team for completing five new articulation agreements and pathways to support our students. Agreements have been established with the following institutions:

- New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN)
- Montclair State University
- William Paterson University (WPU)
- Boise State University &
- University of Phoenix.

Our inaugural pool of LPN students at the WEC campus graduated on August 21st. Thank you to Dr. York and her team for implementing programs that enhance the economic and social development of our residents.

We have received ABET accreditation through September 2029. Congratulations to the METCS Division, our academic team and Engineering students.

Enrollment Management

For the Fall I semester, we have a total credit hour of **60,381**, a **10% increase** from the prior year. We are making progress at the West Essex Campus. In-person headcount for the Fall 2025 semester is **616**.

Dual-Enrollment

We continue to expand our reach into the community through a growing Dual-Enrollment program that now includes 18 participating high schools.

Student Support

The Office of Student Affairs is recording success with Project Re-enroll. To date, we have re-enrolled 39 students with an average credit load of 10.5 hours.

The President's July/August/September Engagements have included:

- July 29th - Conducted my annual tour of the student athlete housing with Dr. Kirkland, Dean Seddiki and Mr. Shapiro.
- August 13th - Attended the Business Division Faculty Training in preparation for the start of the fall semester.
- August 14th - Attended the First Year Experience faculty training organized by the Business Division.
- August 20th - Attended the Student Government Association (SGA) Induction Ceremony in preparation for the start of the new academic year and met them again on September 11, 2025 to discuss a vision for the academic year. Congratulations to our 2025-2026 student leaders.
- September 3rd - Met with Dr. Khalfani and Dr. Shabazz regarding the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the Africana Institute.
- September 5th - Attended the NJ President's Council meeting at Middlesex College in Edison, NJ
- September 11th - Attended the County Executive's 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

Finances

ECC once again successfully completed the OSHE's Financial Assessment and Risk Monitoring process and came out to be one of the Least Risk institutions.

Projects:

- The Cafeteria Dining Area project is fully underway. We anticipate an early October re-opening.
- The CFT renovation project is in high gear. Faculty and teaching labs were temporarily relocated to the A. Zachary Yamba building in July.
- We completed waterproofing of the 5th & 6th floors of the Newark Campus this summer.

Community Relations:

- As part of the kick-off of the 25th Anniversary of the Africana Institute, we hosted His Majesty, Kaleuk Mongoue Pierre, King of Babouantou, Cameroon, on June 2nd, 2025.

Continuing Education and Workforce Development:

This summer's youth program attracted 125 youths to our Newark campus for academic and recreational engagement.

Other Important Information:

- August 6th - Held our joint Cabinet-Chairs meeting at the West Essex Campus.

Save the dates - Upcoming Events.

Cultural Heritage Month Celebrations

- September 16th - Opening Ceremony and Art Exhibition - 2 pm; 2nd floor forum
- September 16th - Salsa Class - 12:50 pm; Dance Studio
- Sept. 30th - Pioneers of Change Speaker Series - 2:30 pm; Siegler Hall
- October 9th - Latidos Del Arte - 5 pm; Siegler Hall
- October 15th - Fall Pop-Up Trivia Event - 10 am; 2nd floor event
- October 15th - Closing Ceremony & Luncheon; 1:30 pm; Green Snack Bar.

The Inaugural Campus Community Alliance Retreat

- October 7th - Celebration of Our Rich Diversity

The 25th Annual Golf Scholarship Tournament.

- Planning for our 2025 Scholarship Golf Tournament is fully underway. Please be on the lookout for more information related to the October 16 Scholarship Golf Tournament.

Madam Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.