



**Board of Trustees**

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

February 24, 2026 | 4:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

**In Attendance**

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

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

Board of Trustees Chair, Dr. Lewis, called the meeting to order at 4:38 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 8, 2025, 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 Grimes moved to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2026, meeting. Trustee Robinson seconded. ***The minutes were approved unanimously.***

**Communications**

Trustee Grimes announced that there was no new communication.

**Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

**Finance Committee Report**

Trustee Zarra advised that the **Finance Committee** convened on February 18th and recommended the approval of the following item:

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

3-1.1/Feb-2026	Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Two-Year Contract for the Nursing Program Learning Management System <b>Elsevier Inc</b> , Maryland Heights, MO College Funded – Operating Expense	Amount not to exceed <b>\$500,000.00</b> Per year
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***Trustee Zarra motioned for the approval of the Finance actions. Trustee Wright moved the motion for approval. Trustee Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.***

## Personnel Committee Report

Trustee Robinson advised that the Personnel Committee met on February 17<sup>th</sup> and recommended the approval of the following items:

### Actions – Recommended for the Board’s Approval

#### A. Appointment

- 4-1/Feb-2026 Delia Calderon  
Admission Specialist/Recruiter - West Essex Campus  
Community and Continuing Education Workforce & Development  
Effective Date: March 2, 2026  
Salary \$46,000
- 4-2/Feb-2026 Christopher Encarnacion  
Administrative Assistant  
Enrollment Services  
Effective Date: March 2, 2026  
Salary \$40,000
- 4-3/Feb-2026 Hameen Bing  
Security Officer  
Public Safety  
Effective Date: March 2, 2026  
Salary \$33,475

#### B. Retirement

- 4-4/ Feb-2026 Treacy Watson – Rogers  
Security Officer  
Public Safety  
Effective Date: March 1, 2026

#### C. Termination

- 4-5/ Feb-2026 Lilian Palacios  
Human Resources Generalist  
Human Resources  
Effective Date: February 6, 2026

***Trustee Robinson motioned for a vote on the Personnel actions. Trustee Cruz moved the motion, and Trustee Martinez seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.***

## Educational Programs Committee Report

Trustee Dr. Lewis reported that the Educational Programs Committee met on February 18<sup>th</sup> and recommended approval of the following items.

- 7-1.1/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Belleville Board of Education
- 7-1.2/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Montclair Board of Education
- 7-1.5/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Irvington Board of Education
- 7-1.6/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Newark Public High Schools Board of Education
- 7-1.7/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Orange Board of Education
- 7-1.8/Feb-2026 Acceptance of Funds: New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Award for \$93,600

***Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Programs actions. Trustee Zarra moved the motion,***

**and Trustee Robinson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Trustee Dr. Lewis requested a separate vote on the following item.

7-1.3/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the Essex County Schools of Technology: Newark Tech HS, Donald Payne, and West Caldwell Tech

**Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Program action. Trustee Cruz moved the motion, and Trustee Zarra seconded. Six trustees voted in the affirmative, and one trustee abstained. The motion carried.**

Trustee Dr. Lewis requested a separate vote on the following item.

7-1.4/Feb-2026 Dual Enrollment Agreement with the East Orange Board of Education

**Trustee Lewis motioned for a vote on the Educational Programs action. Trustee Grimes moved the motion, and Trustee Cruz seconded. Six trustees voted in the affirmative, and one trustee abstained. The motion carried.**

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

Trustee Martinez reported that the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee convened on February 18<sup>th</sup> and recommended approval of the following item.

7-2.1/Feb-2026 Resolution Authorizing Participation in the PSE&G Clean Energy Future – Energy Efficiency Program and Approval of Collaborative Partnership

**Trustee Martinez motioned for a vote on the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee action. Trustee Zarra moved the motion, and Trustee Wright seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The motion carried.**

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

Trustee Cruz reported that the Policy and Governance Committee convened on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss Board Policy 5. There were no actions to bring before the Board at this time.

### **Community Relations Committee Report**

Trustee Wright stated that the Community Relations Committee convened on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, and recommended approval of the following item.

7-3.1/Feb-2026 Resolution Authorizing a Limited Waiver for Alcohol Service for the Laptops4Learning Wine Tasting Fundraiser

**Trustee Wright motioned for a vote on the Site, Facilities, and Equipment Committee action. Trustee Cruz moved the motion, and Trustee Robinson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The motion carried.**

### **Alumni Association Report**

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

### **Student Government Association Report**

There was no formal report from the Student Government Association.

Dean Bello-Bryan announced that the SGA recently elected a new President and Vice President during a special election held at the end of January. Abby Akinsola was elected President, and Romissa Ashariff was elected Vice President.

Vice President Ashariff introduced herself to the Board of Trustees and reported that the SGA has held one executive meeting to date. She reported that the organization is planning to establish a student forum to encourage broader student engagement. She further stated that the SGA's initial meetings will take place this week and that she will provide a more comprehensive update to the Board at a future meeting.

### **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 B.

### **President's Report**

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

The Board Chair invited the Student Representative to present any plans or initiatives. The Student Representative reported that she had contacted Mr. Graham and is currently awaiting a response. She indicated that she will provide an update to the Board of Trustees at the next meeting.

Dr. Khalfani requested that formal recognition be given to Dr. Mirian Ochoa, Coordinator of the Student Excellence and Engagement Center (SEEC). Dr. Khalfani reported that during this year's African History Month celebrations, Dr. Ochoa collaborated with the Africana Institute to organize a panel discussion focusing on the impact of Afro-Latinos in society. He noted her exemplary contributions and assistance in ensuring the event's success.

### **New Business**

The Board of Trustees reported that there was no new business to discuss.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Notice of Executive Session**

Trustee Grimes 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 March 24, 2026, 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 Grimes motioned for a vote on the Notice of Executive Session. Trustee Robinson moved the motion, and Trustee Wright seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.***

### **Adjournment**

Board Chair, Dr. Lewis, motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 PM by a vote of acclamation.

# **ECCAA Board of Trustees Report**

Submitted by: Shelby Robinson, President  
Essex County College Alumni Association  
Reporting Period: February 2026

## **Membership**

ECCAA continues to prioritize increasing alumni engagement through strategic communication initiatives. Mr. Bundy and the Alumni office leadership has rolled out a text message outreach campaign to raise funds for the scholarship programs. In addition, a video campaign is on the ECC website to increase visibility of the Alumni Association, highlight alumni impact, and encourage participation through membership and scholarship support. This effort is expected to strengthen alumni engagement and support long-term growth in membership and alumni giving.

## **Mentorship Program**

The ECCAA mentorship program is progressing and represents a major step forward in strengthening alumni-student connections. We are currently interviewing alumni from a variety of industries who are eager to give back and support students. These mentors include both recent graduates and established professionals who share a common goal of helping students successfully navigate their academic and professional journeys. At this time, 23 students have entered the screening process, and alumni mentor recruitment is ongoing. The program is scheduled to officially launch in mid-March 2026.

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

**To:** Dr. Arnold C. Lewis, Chair of the Essex County College Board of Trustees (ECCBOT)

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

**Date:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026

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

**General Comment**

Thank you, Mr. Chair; distinguished Trustees; President Boakye; esteemed Cabinet members; and members of the Essex County College community. It is a privilege to appear before you once again on behalf of the faculty and the Essex County College Faculty Association.

**ECCFA Executive Committee Activities**

1. The ECCFA held its monthly Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. The primary highlight of the meeting was the formal announcement of the upcoming elections for a new Executive Board.
2. Approximately eight ECCFA executive members attended the NJEA 2026 Winter Leadership Conference (North) in Parsippany.

**Faculty Members Activities**

**Africana Institute**

**Africana Institute – 25th Anniversary Committee Report**

Under the leadership of Dr. Akil Khalfani, the Africana Institute 25th Anniversary Committee continues to advance scholarly engagement, global awareness, and cultural programming aligned with the College's mission.

**International Policy Engagement**

Dr. Khalfani participated in the International Conference on Colonial Crimes in Africa held in Algeria in late 2025. A declaration developed during this conference was subsequently adopted by the Algerian government and, on February 15, 2026, formally adopted by the African Union

through the Algiers Declaration addressing colonial crimes across the continent's 55 member states.

### **MLK Memorial Program**

The Africana Institute supported Essex County College's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Program held on February 12, 2026

#### **Afro-Latino Contributions Program (February 18, 2026)**

In collaboration with ALPFA and the Office of Student Excellence and Engagement Center, the Africana Institute hosted a campus dialogue highlighting the historical and contemporary contributions of Afro-Latino communities. The event promoted cross-cultural awareness and interdisciplinary engagement among students.

#### **African Marketplace (February 19, 2026)**

As part of its 25th Anniversary programming, the Africana Institute hosted an African Marketplace on the main campus (Second Level Forum). The event provided educational, cultural, and community engagement opportunities celebrating African heritage and entrepreneurship.

### **Speaking Engagement**

At the beginning of February 2026, Dr. Khalfani was invited to speak at Newark City Hall during the City's Black History Month Flag Raising Program.

### **Biology, Chemistry & Physics Division**

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

1. Dr. Sue arranged a Zoom Orientation for the General Science Degree Majors today on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026, from 2:40 pm to 4:00 pm. There were 124 participants and many questions about Nursing and the Allied Health program were answered.
2. Dr. Sujatha Ramakrishnan, Associate Professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, participated in the professional development workshop, "*Communicating Hope Using HHMI BioInteractive Activity: Designing Solutions to Preserve Biodiversity*," held on February 7, 2026.

The workshop, facilitated by Elise Cooksley and Sam Loftus, focused on innovative instructional strategies for teaching biodiversity conservation through evidence-based, solution-oriented scientific engagement. Upon completion, Dr. Ramakrishnan earned a professional development certificate.

## Nursing

**Jennifer Chapman, RN**  
**Division of Nursing and Health Sciences**

The Student Nursing Association (SNA), under the advisement of Jennifer Chapman, RN, represented Essex County College at the 74th Annual New Jersey State Nursing Convention in Atlantic City. The delegation included 63 students, senior nursing representatives, and faculty leadership, including Division Chair Dr. York and nursing faculty.

Essex County College's SNA is now the third largest Student Nursing Association chapter in New Jersey, with 132 active members. Notably, Essex previously held the entire Executive Board of the New Jersey Nursing Students, Inc. (NJNS) during the 2023–2024 term, demonstrating the strength of our leadership pipeline.

## Social Science Division

**Dr. Bridget Turner**  
**Education Coordinator/Academic Advisor**  
**Assistant Professor of Education**

Dr. Bridget Turner would like to remind members of the Board of Trustees to attend Essex County College's 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Conference, "*Beyond Awareness: Action, Advocacy & Achievement in Autism*," scheduled for March 28, 2026, in West Caldwell. This conference highlights the College's commitment to inclusive education, advocacy, and community engagement, and Board members are warmly encouraged to attend and support this important initiative.

## Student Development and Career Services

**Dr. Victor Stolberg**

1. NEA: 2026 RA Delegate Engagement (1/20).
2. NJEA Region 29 Membership Chair Training (1/21).
3. Chaired ECCFA Faculty Sensate meeting (1/22).
4. ECEA Professional Development Committee (1/22).
5. ECEA Human and Civil Rights Committee (1/29).

### **Training and Professional Development:**

6. Medscape trainings, including "Alcohol Use Disorder," "Cannabinoid Intoxication," "Designer Opioids," "Party Drugs," "Sleep Disorders," and "Smoking Cessation" (1/6-29).
7. Workday: "Student Success 2.0: Insights for Higher Ed Leaders" (1/7).

8. Decera Clinical Education: “Bipolar,” “Care for the Brain,” “HIV Epidemic,” HIV Screening,” “HIV Testing,” “Major Depressive Disorder” (1/8-9).
9. SafeColleges trainings: “Preventing Harassment & Discrimination Training” and “General Ethics in the Workplace” (1/14-22).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Our faculty members have been diligent in reporting attendance and addressing no-shows, while continuing to work hard to ensure that students are fully prepared for the upcoming midterm exams. Their dedication reflects a strong commitment to student success and academic excellence.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

**Appendix**



Winter Leadership Conference 2026 North, Parsippany



Dr Akil Khalfani, Invited Speaker



Student Nursing Association and Faculty



Student Nursing Association and Faculty

## Memorandum

**To:** Dr. Lewis & the Board of Trustees

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

**Date:** February 24, 2026

**Re:** President's Monthly Report

### General:

The 2026 Spring II semester began on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Our combined Spring I & II enrollment stands at 6,792 students engaged in 67,124 credit hours, an increase of 2.8% and 1.8% respectively from last year. The College is mission-focused on implementation of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

The Essex County Board of School Estimate approved our FY27 budget on February 17, 2026, in Smith Hall. I thank the Board of Trustees, Commissioners, County Executive Joe DiVincenzo and our college staff & faculty for supporting mission-driven, student-centered programming for our students.

### Academics

- The Africana Institute, under the leadership of Dr. Khalfani, held a community-wide celebration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Mary Burch Theater on February 12<sup>th</sup>.
- On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the Africana Institute, the Student Excellence & Engagement Center and ALPHA, in collaboration with the college community, hosted a Panel Discussion in Siegler Hall on the Impact of Afro-Latinos on American society.
  - Citi Medina, Founder & CEO of *EqualSpace* and our very own Mr. Cesar B. Rodriguez-Cruz, a Technology Professional, Educator and Entrepreneur served as panelists.
- The search for the West Essex Campus Associate Dean is underway with interviews scheduled for this month.
- In conjunction with IEPA, the College Review Panel completed its review of the **Social Sciences AS** and **Paralegal Studies AS** programs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) has submitted recommendations to program leaders.
- The Panel has additionally evaluated the **Autism Spectrum Disorders COA**, **The Child Development CERT**, and the **Massage Therapy CERT**. Proposed recommendations are being sent to the VPAA for onward communication to the respective program leaders.

### Enrollment Services

- Our Enrollment Services team has scheduled two Spring semester Open Houses as follows:
  - West Caldwell Campus: April 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Newark Campus: May 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Continuing Education and Workforce Development:

- On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, our Continuing Education and Workforce Development office will launch the board approved NJDOL PACE Grant in collaboration with implementing community organizations.
  - This grant seeks to build a talent pipeline to support regional employer demand.

### The President's January/February engagements have included:

- February 6<sup>th</sup>: Participated in the NJ President's Council meeting.
- February 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>: Attended the ACCT 2026 National Legislative Summit with Board Chair, Dr. Lewis and Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, Mr. Bundy
- February 12<sup>th</sup>: Attended the Collaboration Operations Committee meeting with Dr. Fitchner of the NJCCC and other committee members.
- February 15<sup>th</sup>: Presented ECC community-focused programs to community members during a visit to the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Newark.
- February 17<sup>th</sup>: Hosted the County Executive, Commissioners and Board of Trustees for the Annual Board of School Estimate meeting. The ECC FY27 budget was approved unanimously during this meeting.
- February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Participated in the New Jersey President's Council meeting.

### Student Affairs

- Through the College's Mental Health Services program, Professors Torres and Johnson conducted two QPR workshops on Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup> during which 19 students earned certification as *Gatekeepers in Suicide Prevention*.
- ECC students have elected Oluwanajuolasimi Akinsola and Romissa Elsherif as President and Vice President of the Student Government Association (SGA) to lead the student body through the end of the academic year.

### Athletics

- Xiomara Rivera of the ECC Women's Soccer Team has been named the recipient of the Althea Gibson Leadership Award for Essex County. The award recognizes "*Students Achieving Today - Our Leaders of Tomorrow*". The award will be presented by the County Executive on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

### Human Resources

- In collaboration with the Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG), our Human Resources team and the IT department have made tremendous progress in transitioning staff to the upgraded HR, Payroll and workforce management solutions platform.

### Finances

- We have completed the BOSE process for the FY27 budget.
- Dr. Gandhi and the Finance leadership team are meeting regularly with PKF auditors regarding the FY25 audit, expected to be completed soon.
- Dr. Boakye, the CFO and the leadership of Financial Aid are working progressively on the Re-certification of ECC Title IV program due for submission by March 31, 2026.

### Projects:

- The Main Campus' 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor renovation project remains on track with RSC Architects' Principal, Ralph Walker, assuming full responsibility for project administration support. Projected completion date is end of March.
- We have received board approval to award architecture and engineering services contract to DMR Architects for the *One Stop Center* Project.
- In partnership with PSE&G, we are making steady progress on the Energy Conservation measures initiative under the *Engineered Solutions Energy Efficiency Program*.

**Community Relations:**

- Preparations are fully underway for the April 9<sup>th</sup> Laptop4Learning Scholarship Fundraiser at the West Essex Campus. Event tickets are available through the ECC website.

**Save the dates - Upcoming Events.**

- March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:30 AM: PACE Grant Partners Kick-Off Summit (4th Floor, Multipurpose Room).
- April 9<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 PM: Laptop4Learning Scholarship Fundraiser.
- May 26, 2026 - Commencement at the Prudential Center.

**Mr. Chair, this ends my report. Thank you.**