

**New Jersey City University
Board of Trustees
July 15, 2024**

Public Session Minutes

ATTENDING:

Mr. Luke Visconti, Chair (Zoom)
Mr. Carlos Lejnieks, Trustee (In-Person)
Mr. Ralph Salerno, Trustee (In-Person)
Ms. Jenny Davis Toth, Trustee (Zoom)
Ms. Nathalie Brathwaite, Trustee (In-Person)
Mr. Andres Acebo, Interim President Acebo (In-Person)
Ms. Monica De Los Rios, Secretary to the Board of Trustees and Interim University Counsel (In-Person)
Mr. Peter Hernandez, *Ex Officio* (In-Person)
Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris (Zoom)
Dr. Meriam Bendaoud (Zoom)
Dr. Edward Whittaker (Zoom)
Mr. David Valica, Student Trustee (Zoom)
Mr. Henry Amoroso, State Appointed Monitor (In-Person)
Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Joseph P. Baumann, Jr., Counsel to the Board

Absent—Helen Dao, *Ex Officio*, Edward P. Fowlkes, Ashley Pottinger, Student Trustee

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:45 pm by Mr. Visconti.

NOTICE OF MEETING

Ms. De Los Rios started the meeting with the statement that this is a public meeting of the New Jersey City University Board of Trustees and pursuant to the notice requirements of the Senator Byron and Open Public Meetings Act the date, time, agenda and location for the meeting was emailed to the Jersey Journal and the Star Ledger and also to the Office of the Secretary of State, Senate Majority Office, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals and the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities and was also posted on the University's website on July 9th and on July 10th and called the meeting to order.

Ms. De Los Rios conducted a roll call of Board Members. Student Trustee Pottinger, Trustee Edward Fowlkes and Trustee Dao were absent.

Mr. Acebo established that there was a quorum. *Ex Officio* Trustees Helen Dao, and Peter Hernandez were not in attendance.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Visconti started with the Chair Report to pass a budget.

INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Acebo thanked Chair Visconti and began that the Board. He announced since the last meeting the State legislature has acted on the budget and the Governor signed that budget into law which includes a \$3.5 million conditional funding allocation to NJCU including some allocations for a deferred maintenance campaign. Mr. Acebo noted a proposed 3.5% tuition and fee increase which will absorb the cost of textbooks and materials for all students.

Mr. Acebo added that the University has been very deliberate in efforts to right size the organization and not doing so at the expense of our student body. He further added that the 3.5% increase is considerably less than the average. The FY25 budget contemplates a significant infusion, focus and interest on really building student success efforts, putting dollars behind the academic master plan, strategic enrollment plan and strategic student community engagement plan.

Mr. Lejniaks thanked Mr. Acebo and commented that the \$2 million for book-related costs campaign will be useful for outreach and philanthropic efforts in the future. He questioned Mr. Acebo regarding a 15% increase in salary and wages between the FY23 budget and the FY25 budget. Mr. Acebo answered that over 95% of the NJCU workforce is unionized and so most of those wages are collectively bargained. Mr. Fitzpatrick added that the majority of the difference between them is due to grant money and the fringe rates that the University is being charged. It also contemplates some of the 17 new FTE lines that have been funded for in the budget.

Mr. Acebo asked if there were any other questions and moved to public comment.

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Ms. Del Rios answered that we just have one registered speaker.

Mr. Acebo greeted Dr. William Calathes. Dr. Calathes addressed a potential partnership with another institution highlighting the financial distress the University is in given recent directives from the office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

Mr. Acebo thanked Dr. Calathes.

State Monitor addressed the University's progress is meeting the requirements and recommendations of the State Monitor's report related to a partnership and to expanding the Board's membership.

Mr. Visconti thanked Mr. Acebo and added a comment to Dr. Calathes nothing that the Board is aware of the personal impact that our decisions make.

Mr. Acebo introduced three items to be adopted: 1) the Fiscal Year 2025 budget that is the accompanying resolution; 2) the Academic Year 24/25 Tuition and Fee increase of 3.5%; and 3) the Annual Bid Waiver and adopting a new Board Meeting Schedule for the new fiscal and academic year.

Mr. Salerno motioned to move it and it was seconded by Mr. Lejniaks, all were in favor, no oppositions, no abstentions.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Acebo carried the consent agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

Interim President Acebo asked if there was any old business, hearing none he moved to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

Mr. Lejnieks asked to publicly recognize that it is one of Dr. Bendaoud's final meetings.

Mr. Acebo admired Dr. Bendaoud's service to the Board.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

The next Board meeting will be held on September 24, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Acebo asserted that as a matter of point of order for an adjournment, is a motion to authorize the convening of the Executive Session at our next regularly scheduled Board meeting of September 24th. Is there a motion to approve that?

Mr. Hernandez motioned to approve the convening of the Executive Session at the next Board meeting of September 24th. Mr. Lejnieks seconded, all in favor, no opposed and no abstentions.

Mr. Acebo adopted the motion and asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Salerno motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Lejnieks seconded the motion; all in favor; no abstentions and none opposed.

Mr. Visconti adjourned the meeting.