

**New Jersey City University  
Board of Trustees  
June 24, 2024**

**Public Session Minutes**

**ATTENDING:**

Mr. Luke Visconti, Chair (In-Person)  
Ms. Ashley Pottinger, Student Trustee (In-Person)  
Mr. Carlos Lejnieks, Trustee (In-Person)  
Mr. Ralph Salerno, Trustee (In-Person)  
Ms. Jenny Davis Toth, Trustee (In-Person)  
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)  
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*, Peter Hernandez, *Ex Officio* and Edward P. Fowlkes

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:40 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 Senator Byron and the 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 June 19<sup>th</sup> and on June 20<sup>th</sup> and called the meeting to order.

Ms. de los Rios conducted a roll call beginning with the Board Members participating via Zoom and ending with the Board Members attending in-person.

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

**MINUTES**

Mr. Visconti requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 2, 2024 meeting which was

seconded by Ms. Pottinger; all Trustees were in favor; Ms. Davis and Ms. Brathwaite abstained as they are new trustees.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Mr. Visconti gave an update regarding the audit review by KPMG last month and found it to be a vast improvement compared to the previous auditor.

Mr. Visconti introduced the Real Estate and Capital Committee Report which is a new committee and advised that separate committees will be formed. Mr. Salerno added that he was able to visit the campus with State Monitor Henry and Mr. Kirkpatrick, a lot of work is ongoing and is approved and in working order in pursuit of the students.

### **ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Academic Year 23-24 Review: Mr. Acebo thanked Chair Visconti. He began discussing the Academic Year 23-24 review by welcoming two new trustees Jenny Davis and Natalie Brathwaite. Mr. Acebo highlighted a few points of significance over the last eighteen months for NJCU. The FY2024 year-end a proposed 2025 budget plan was prepared by the CFO. When the fiscal year ends there will be a balanced operating budget. Mr. Acebo highlighted the Hudson Connect Program that provides the internal pathways with over 40 State degrees and program certificates for students which will be expanded to Essex County. Mr. Acebo agreed it was a beautiful date. NJCU saw about 8.2% more undergraduates crossing that stage this year than the previous year and maybe 4% more graduate this year over the last year.

Mr. Visconti thanked Mr. Acebo for the report and moved to the Budget Plan.

Mr. Kirkpatrick reviewed the FY25 Budget Plan. He stated that the budget will be approved and brought back up on July 11th. NJCU is focused heavily on student retention and success. Efforts are being made to include costs of books in the tuition cost. The goal is to improve graduation rates, retention rates, and the student experience overall. NJCU is looking at a 3.5% tuition increase while spending \$2 million for books which will decrease each students effective tuition. The budget assumes a 2% increase in enrollment. The cost of living increase in the budget is 3.5%. The stabilization aide is in at \$7 million. We have put capital expenses at \$13.8 million. Revenue is going up \$7 million from last year's budget and down only \$2 million from FY2023 's revenue number. Salary and wages are flat for 2023 and up a little from 2024 budget and the other major ones when you look at non-personnel expenses, in 2023 it was \$21 million and then FY2024 budget was \$14 million now we are looking at \$28 million. NJCU has a conservative budget to make \$3 million next year. Portions of the budget are pending release of the State's budget. Capital expenditures by NJCU will be determined by the State's budget.

Mr. Acebo added that the University wishes to expand services to A. Harry Moore. Mr. Fitzpatrick further added that the University is also budgeting to spend \$3.6 million on Volger Hall. Mr. Kirkpatrick further interjected that our proposed budget plan does not include a capital infusion for the legislative appropriation, but NJCU has secured budget resolution from both the Assembly and the Senate for more than two dozen legislative signoff from Sponsors on that for some close to \$50 million approximately for capital projects. Mr. Lejniaks added two notes; possible state funding

worth pursuing related to capital improvements, and that the 2024 graduation was wonderful wherein 1,667 young people crossed the graduation stage.

### **REQUEST TO SPEAK**

Mr. Visconti asked Ms. De Los Rios if there were any public comments.

Ms. de los Rios called up Senator Angela McKnight. Senator Angela McKnight addressed the mission of NJCU and thanked the students and new Board members for their dedication to the school.

Mr. Visconti thanked the Senator.

Ms. De Los Rios introduced Dr. Gloria Boseman. Dr. Gloria Boseman addressed the conclusion of her employment and her various contributions to NJCU over the last 45 years.

Ms. De Los Rios introduced Dr. Barbara Hildner to speak. Dr. Hildner recounted her 52 years at NJCU including her service as president of the union. She wishes the incoming union president will collaborate with the Administration and Board of Trustees to keep the University advancing.

Ms. De Los Rios introduced Dr. Bill Calathes. Dr. Calathes discussed the reorganization of the University and shared his experience as a member of AFT Local 1839. He discussed the state of the University as it relates to individual student experience and employment conditions for employees. He urged that communication needs to be better between the union and the Board of Trustees. He commended Mr. Acebo for his stabilization efforts at the University.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Visconti asserted that the Board is going through items a. through g. in one resolution.

- a. Personnel — New Hires, Reappointments and Tenure
- b. Resolution Establishing Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education
- c. Resolution Ratifying Merger for Department of Multicultural Leadership
- d. Resolution Ratifying Naming of the Children's Learning Center after Joe Anne Juncker
- e. Resolution Ratifying University Academic Standing Policy
- f. Resolution Ratifying University Grading Policy Update
- g. Resolution Ratifying New Board Committee Charters

Ms. de los Rios conducted a roll call for the approval of the Consent Agenda (Yes - Chair Luke Visconti, Irene Trowell-Harris, Ed Whittaker, Ashley Pottinger, Mr. Carlos Lejniaks, Mr. Ralph Salerno, Jenny Davis and Ms. Nathalie Brathwaite, no abstentions). The motion for Consent Agenda passed.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Lejnieks stated that at the last Board Meeting and Committee meeting the Board wanted to honor in public session the passing of Congressman Payne. The Board invoked a moment of silence in his honor.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

**NEXT PUBLIC MEETING**

Mr. Visconti asserted that the next public meeting will not be on July 11, 2024. When we do convene, we will convene in Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Visconti moved to adjourn the meeting which was initiated by Mr. Salerno seconded by Ms. Davis all in favor, no abstentions. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.