

**East Stroudsburg University  
Council of Trustees Minutes  
June 6, 2024  
In Person & Via Zoom**

**1. Call to Order:**

The regular meeting of the East Stroudsburg University Council of Trustees was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Vice Chair John Pekarovsky.

**2. Roll Call:**

Completed by Recording Secretary Marcy L. Cetnar, the following members were present:

Mr. Frank Epifano (via zoom)	Ms. Elizabeth O'Brien	Mr. John Pekarovsky, III
Mr. Thomas Grayuski	Ms. Tameko Patterson	Mr. Paul Shemansky
Ms. Damali Jackson		

The following members were not present:

Mr. Edward Abraham	Mr. Marcus Lingenfelter	Ms. Tina Nixon
Mr. Pat Ross		

**3. Public Comment:**

None

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

**Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2024, meeting; Trustee Shemansky seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

**5. President's Report:**

President Long provided the following report. On the morning of May 28, a rooftop unit at the Innovation Center caught fire. Thankfully, no one was injured, and no work was being done on the unit at the time. Investigators are currently working to determine the cause. In the meantime, all university employees have been temporarily relocated to the main campus, and we are in the process of relocating other businesses operating out of the Innovation Center. Given the center's importance to our environmental initiatives and workforce development efforts, we are committed to restoring full operations as soon as possible.

The Spring semester concluded on May 10, and we are already well into the Summer semester. The saying "there is no rest for the weary" certainly applies to ESU, as our administrators, staff, faculty, coaches, and students are hard at work preparing for the Fall semester after a very busy Spring.

At the conclusion of the Spring semester, we held three commencement ceremonies, awarding 941 bachelor's, 237 master's, and 16 doctoral degrees. As mentioned at our previous meeting, Alumni Dr. Kerri Green and Dr. Salome Thomas-EL were our keynote speakers. At the undergraduate ceremonies, Sierra DiCupe and James Shupp were recognized with the University Leadership and Service Awards, respectively. Also, 1,404 students were named to the Dean's List.

Additionally, in May, we hosted the 11th Annual Economic Summit at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions, featuring a keynote address by ESU alumnus Tarun Chopra, who spoke on balancing ethics and innovation in the realm of artificial intelligence.

In Athletics, ESU had an outstanding year, finishing third in the Dixon Trophy standings, which is our highest placement since the Trophy's inception in 1995-96. Our student-athletes excelled across the 20 PSAC-sponsored

sports, and we are proud of their remarkable achievements. We also celebrated several individual honors: Four Warrior alumni were inducted into the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame – Bob Bydlon '78, Chris Gerhard '88 M'07, Mike Falcone '74, and Mike Terwilliger '78. Additionally, three Warriors were inducted into the Lehigh Valley-Pocono Sports Hall of Fame – Gary Kessel '77, Jeff Wilson '86 M'92, and Clyde "Red" Witman.

In terms of broader higher education developments, several significant events have taken place recently:

- Protests related to the war in the Middle East have occurred on many campuses. Fortunately, ESU has not experienced any major disruptions. We've taken a proactive approach, fostering conversations and dialogue with our students, faculty, and staff on this matter.
- Governor Shapiro's Budget Address introduced a new Blueprint for Higher Education in Pennsylvania. Since then, Department of Education officials have engaged with college presidents and stakeholders to gather feedback. In May, Senate Republicans introduced the Grow PA Plan, and just yesterday, the first draft of legislation supporting the Governor's Plan was introduced in the House. Both plans aim to address workforce demands while making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible.
- Nationally, institutions are dealing with challenges stemming from changes to the Federal Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA). Errors in data have caused delays in financial aid processing. Our Admissions, Financial Aid, and Institutional Research teams have developed an internal tool to estimate financial aid eligibility, but the delays have been significant. We expect to have a clearer picture of how this will impact on the incoming class in the coming weeks.

Finally, looking ahead, the Fall 2024 semester begins on August 26. While applications and admissions are up approximately 6.5% over last year, deposits are trailing by about 100 students, largely due to the ongoing financial aid issues. We are expecting around 2,500 students to live on campus in the Fall, with Shawnee and Linden remaining offline for future renovations and upgrades. Residential advisors will begin returning to campus on August 6, followed by some fall athletes. New students will move in on August 23 and 24.

With that, I conclude my report.

#### 6. **Chair's Report:**

Vice Chair Pekarovsky thanks President Long and his administrative staff for the informative committee meetings and how fortunate we are to have dedicated administration, faculty, and staff working to better ESU for all current and future students and staff.

Trustee Pekarovsky read Resolution 24-01 Recognizing Bruno Klaus' Service as Trustee at East Stroudsburg University. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve Resolution 24-01 Recognizing Bruno Klaus' Service as Trustee at East Stroudsburg University as read, seconded by Trustee Shemansky, no abstentions. The motion carried.**

#### 7. **Secretary's Report:**

Trustee Shemansky indicated there is no report.

#### 8. **Committee Reports**

##### A. **University Affairs Committee:**

Trustee Grayuski stated a lot of good things are being done due to the collective efforts across campus with faculty and staff. Students are graduating and entering their perspective fields, having learned great skills that will make a difference in the world. The committee heard from Dr. Lorna Hunter, Vice President of Enrollment Management who shared an update with the committee and although the current number of

applications received and offered are up from last year, net deposits re down for both PA residents and out of state residents. Transfer student applications are higher from last year whereas offers are lower for PA residents but higher for non-residents. FASFA challenges continue to be a hurdle and will continue to work on the ongoing resolutions to help get our students FASFA applications successfully completed. Student orientation has been very successful but there is still much work to be done to get to where we need to be for the incoming class.

Provost Margaret Ball and Dean Nieves Gruneiro-Roadcap provided an update on what has been done and how the Gardner Institute Retention Performance Management Program is helping ESU with retention and graduation rates. Over 40 faculty and staff are working together with the primary focus on student retention. Quality education at an affordable cost and students are always at the forefront.'

Michael Sachs, Interim Vice President of Administration & Accreditation and Interim Chief Ralph Elick provided a campus safety and security update to the committee regarding the the blue light emergency phones on campus which are outdated and the need for technology updates to replace older phones. Other safety initiatives such as reinstatement of fire drills during class periods, active shooter training, safety posters displayed in every classroom, and an assessment by PSA Chiefs of Police Association which has not been completed approximately 10 years ago. Department staffing was also discussed concerning staff losses, a new parking director, and other sergeant and police vacancies posted.

Michal Sachs also provided an update on the new Strategic Plan sharing information on the committee, the areas of focus, and timeline. It will be a very exciting document that will create opportunities and build a strong campus community. The final document will be presented to the Council of Trustees for approval at the December meeting.

Kizzy Morris and Chris Dudley provided a Middle States Accreditation self-study progress update. We received a positive self-study preparation visit from the Middle States Liaison and the working groups are busy preparing for a successful visit which will take place in spring 2026. Until then there is a lot of work to be done on evidence collection for the criteria in each standard and lines of inquiry.

**B. Campus Environment Committee:**

Trustee Jackson share the committee received an update on residential life, housing, and dining from Interim Director, Mr. Curtis Dugar who share that the anticipated fall occupancy rates for all halls are at 80.9% with 2,266 residential students as of June 4, 2024. Weekly communication with incoming freshman and transfer students who have not yet completed their housing process will continue. Anticipating numbers to rise. The second-year residence requirements were shared which started with the 2023 freshman and will allow for smother transition to campus life on their second year. Residential colleges and learning communities are growing, allowing for students to focus on collaboration and create lifelong networking. Move-in begins August 23rd for early arrivals and continues through August 26th with upper class. Ongoing and upcoming restoration and refreshment projects were also shared with the committee.

John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities, provided an update on the 2024 facilities management summer projects which includes continued construction of the University Center which at about 40% complete, Dansbury Commons, the stage and restrooms in Abeloff are receiving ADA updates, and Zimbar gym is receiving a facelift with ESU branding, and painting.

Dr. Allen Snook, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics updated the committee on academic achievements of our student-athletes ending the spring semester. Overall department GPA was 3.267 with 72.5% of student-

athletes having a 3.0 or higher and 11% having a perfect 4.0. Team GPA's women's 3.43 and men's 3.089. The highest women's team is basketball with 3.7 and highest men's team is cross country with 3.433. Baseball and softball both set single season win records. Baseball placed 1st and softball placed 2nd in the PSAC East Championships and both coaches were named PSAC coach of the year and Coach Kochmansky named regional coach of the year. Lacrosse won the regional championship for the 3rd year in a row, and outdoor male track athlete garnished top 8 award in the country at nationals. Women's wrestling finished 12th in the country and indoor track athlete garnished 1 all-American finish. It is evident that our student-athletes' performances both on and off the field are extraordinary. Some notable department updates, ESU Finished 3rd in the Dixon Cup Standings which is the highest finish in school history. ESU had 13 All-Americans this past season and over the course of the year had 20 of 22 teams participate in PSAC tournament play, and 12 of the 22 participated in NCAA tournament play. Athletics will welcome new staff members including women's wrestling assistant, head women's basketball coach, equipment manager, and a compliance officer. The tennis courts are in the final stages of planning and construction will begin soon with completion by Fall, early Spring.

C. **Finance Committee:**

Trustee Pekarovsky reported Mr. Richard Santoro provided an update on the ESU Foundation including past and upcoming events, fundraising and campaign updates, FY 2023-2024 goals, progress to date, and staffing updates.

Donna Bulzoni, CFO and Gregory Bleakly provided information on the final budget projection for 2023-2024 and what the forecast is looking like for 2024-2025 budget according to the CPP. There are always financial challenges, but the team continues to do a great job on the financial end for the University.

The CFO also presented the Procurement Activity Report for review.

Donna Bulzoni, CFO presented to the Committee and reviewed the Cash Disbursement Reports for February 01, 2024, through April 30, 2024. The Committee found that all were handled appropriately and were in order. All questions and concerns were answered satisfactorily. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion for the approval of the Cash Disbursement Reports for February 01, 2024, to April 30, 2024; Trustee Shemansky seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Mr. John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities Management provided a University Center updated along with the facilities project status report and the report of notice to proceed on construction contracts. The Committee's questions and concerns were satisfactorily answered.

C. **Strategic Initiatives Committee:**

Trustee Shemansky reported Dr. Olivia Carducci, Professor and Chair of the Mathematics Department, presented this year's Math Modeling Project completed by her students which focused on the ESU Foundation and giving. This presentation presented many high-level statistics on giving capacity of alumni, Legacy Data, Student Athlete Data, and a breakdown of graduation year data. The report even focused on married alumni who met at ESU. It was a very eye-opening project and very useful for ESU Foundation.

The Committee watched the presentation of the State System Start-Up Challenge winner, Daa Meqdadi, a senior computer science and computer security student at East Stroudsburg University who won the \$10,000 first place prize in the annual challenge. Daa's business plan for Mercial LLC simplifies data management and digital marketing solutions using an innovative approach to develop drag-and-drop customizable database API software.

9. **Old Business:**

None

10. **New Business:**

- A. **Nominating Committee:** Nominating committee Chair, Trustee Shemansky presented the nominated slate of officers for the upcoming academic year. The slate is as follows:

Chair: Trustee L. Patrick Ross '67

Vice-Chair: John Pekarovsky '07

Secretary: Paul Shemansky '96 M '01 & 04

- B. **Election of Officers:** Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve the slate of officers and appoint, Chair-Trustee Ross, Vice-Chair-Trustee Pekarovsky, and Secretary-Trustee Shemansky for the upcoming academic year; Trustee Jackson seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

- C. Trustee Pekarovsky presented the 2024-2025 Council of Trustees Meeting scheduled as follows;

Thursday, October 6, 2024

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Trustee Patterson noted October 6, 2024, is Rosh Hashanah, another date will be shared with the Trustees.

11. **Adjournment:** Trustee Pekarovsky adjourned the meeting at 4:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Shemansky  
Council Secretary

Recording Secretary: Marcy L. Cetnar