East Stroudsburg University
Council of Trustees Minutes
December 04, 2025
In-Person and Via Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the East Stroudsburg University Council of Trustees was called to order at 4:02 pm by Chair Pat Ross.

2. **Roll Call:** Completed by the Recording Secretary Marcy L. Cetnar, the following members were present:

   Mr. Edward Abraham
   Mr. Frank Epifano (Zoom)
   Mr. Thomas Grayuski
   Ms. Ainslee Green
   Ms. Tina Nixon (Zoom)
   Ms. Elizabeth O'Brien
   Mr. John Pekarovsky III
   Mr. Pat Ross
   Mr. Paul Shemansky

   The following members were not present:

   Mr. Marcus Lingenfelter
   Ms. Tameko Patterson

3. **Public Comment:**

   None

4. **Approval of Minutes:**

   Trustee Abraham made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2025, meeting; Trustee Shemansky seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

5. **President's Report:**

   President Long reported, as we approach the final week of the Fall 2025 semester, I am pleased to share an update on some of the activities that have taken place since the last meeting. It has been an active and productive period for the University, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide this report.

   He began with a high-level financial outlook. The recently passed State and Federal budgets included minimal changes affecting ESU and the System. The only notable adjustment was a $5 million allocation in the State budget to Cheyney University to support a special community college initiative. As a result, the $139 per semester tuition increase approved by the Board of Governors this summer remains in effect. Unfortunately, ESU did not receive an increase in appropriations, which has created an approximate $2 million shortfall, bringing the total projected deficit for this fiscal year to $5 million. To address this challenge, the university is actively implementing budget cuts, making minor departmental realignments, and considering the use of operating reserves. Additionally, we continue to review our academic program array to determine whether certain programs should be placed in moratorium. This semester also brought important visitors to campus. Chancellor Chris Fiorentino made his first official visit to ESU, and we were honored to host Dr. Harvey Kesselman Bertolino, President of Stockton University and Chair of the Middle States Visiting Team. Both visits provided an opportunity to showcase the strengths of our institution. Dr. Bertolino will return in the spring with the full visiting team as part of the reaccreditation process.

   Academically, ESU continues to shine. On October 30, the Troiani-Sweeney Endowed Fund Lecture Series featured Dr. Nathaniel Chin, M.D., who delivered a compelling presentation titled "Advancing Alzheimer's Care: Science, Therapies, and the Power of the Team." Our nursing program also achieved a 95 percent first-time pass rate on the NCLEX-RN, surpassing both state and national averages. During Homecoming on October 11, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our Athletic Training program, honoring its founding members, John Thatcher, Lois Wagner, and Mert Shane, for their vision and dedication. In addition, Dr. Nancy Weaver, former Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, was recognized as ESU's recipient of the PASSHE Keepers of the Flame Award.

Community engagement remains an important priority. On November 12, ESU welcomed hundreds of high school students for an immersive learning experience designed to inspire future educators, address teacher shortages, and strengthen connections between university faculty, staff, and prospective students. Last night, we held our annual tree lighting ceremony at the front of campus, featuring performances from nearly all of this year's "Warriors Got Talent" participants, along with Bella Smith, a current Musical Theatre major. Preparations are underway for the 29th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Breakfast, scheduled for January 19, 2026, at Terraview at Stroudsmoor Country Inn. Pastor Selena Dionne Brown will serve as keynote speaker, and the theme for this year's event is "Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope."

Athletics had an exceptional fall season. Men's Cross Country repeated as PSAC runners-up, marking the program's sixth second-place finish in history. Women's Cross Country achieved a historic milestone by winning its first PSAC Championship and competing in the NCAA Championships in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Field Hockey finished second in the PSAC and advanced to the NCAA Quarterfinals. Volleyball posted a 23-5 record, captured the PSAC East title, won the PSAC Championship, and is currently competing in the NCAA Tournament as the second seed in the Atlantic Region. Football concluded its season with an impressive 8-3 record. Additionally, ESU's Women's Rugby club team will travel to Houston to compete in the Division III National Championships on December 6–7 after winning the South Regional in Georgetown, Delaware.

On a personal note, Evelyn, my family, and I extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Council of Trustees and the campus community for the cards, flowers, fruit baskets, and kind thoughts over the past few weeks. Your support has meant a great deal to us.

Thank you for your continued commitment to East Stroudsburg University. This concludes my report.

6. **Chair's Report:**

Trustee Ross reported the Trustees had the opportunity to tour the new student center this morning, which will be a tremendous attraction for prospective students while also providing significant benefits for our current students. The new center offers welcoming spaces where students can meet, study, collaborate, and build a sense of community outside of the classroom. ESU will continue to remain sustainable thanks to the leadership of the President and his staff for all they have done, and continue to do, to keep East Stroudsburg University one of the best, if not the best, among the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities. On behalf of my wife and I, we wish you a happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year.

7. **Secretary's Report:**

No Report

8. **Committee Reports**

A. University Affairs Committee:

Trustee Ross reported Michael Sachs, Interim Vice President of Administration & Accreditation, reported on the Middle States Self Study progress to date. The committee received a copy of the draft self-study report which will be finalized in mid-December. The site team chair Dr. Joseph Bertoino, President of Stockton University, was on campus for the preliminary visit on October 28, 2025, which was a day full of meeting with many constituents on campus. The draft report was shared with the campus community and open forums were scheduled for the week of November 17th for feedback which will be shared with the Steering Committee tomorrow. The next step once the document is finalized is to upload the evidence to support the report and wait for the site visit scheduled for March 15-18, 2026.

The committee was introduced to the new Chief of Police, Edward Iandoli. Chief Iandoli proceeded to present the committee an update of the Clery Report, a federal law requiring universities to disclose campus crime and fire statistics and requires publication of an Annual Security Report by October 1st each year.

Some key takeaways, there was a continued decline in violent crimes, an increase in reporting of dating violence and drug violations which reflects better awareness with reporting efforts, no hate crimes or fire incidents recorded in 2024, and ESU police remain proactive in prevention, education, and community engagement.

All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed. This concludes my report

B. Finance Committee:

Trustee Pekarovsky presented the following action items:

(1) CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP (CLA), the University's external auditors, presented June 30, 2025, audit results. CLA explained the audit process and scope of the audit. They explained the risk-based approach used in conducting the audit and their internal control communication letter. The financial statement audit opinion is unmodified with no material weaknesses and no significant deficiencies. There were no changes in audit scope or the audit plan since the initial planning meeting. There were no significant difficulties, no disagreements, and no other findings to report. There were no corrected or uncorrected audit adjustments. With regard to the Single Audit, follow-up on FY24 prior year findings and testing are in progress. They are unable to issue a report due to a delay in the Compliance Supplement. There was a discussion regarding insights and emerging issues in higher education. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Audited Financial Statement; Trustee Ross seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

(2) The Committee reviewed the Cash Disbursement Reports for September 1 through October 31, 2025, and found that all were handled appropriately and were in order. All questions and concerns were answered satisfactorily. **Trustee O'Brien made a motion for the approval of the Cash Disbursement Reports for September 1 through October 31, 2025; Trustee Shemansky seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

(3) Donna Bulzoni, CFO presented fiscal year 2024-25 Summary of Support to and Contributions made by Affiliated Organizations as required by Board of Governor's Policy 1985-04-A. The University was found to be in compliance with the policy. All questions and concerns were answered satisfactorily. The Committee offers Resolution #25-02, which certifies the University's compliance with the requirements of this policy. **Trustee Ross made a motion to approve Resolution #25-02 Certifying Compliance of all University Affiliated Organizations with BOG Policy 1985-04-A; Trustee Abraham seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

The procurement activity report for the period September 1, 2025, through October 31, 2025, was presented and reviewed as an informational item by Ms. Bulzoni.

John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities provide a report on the "Active Projects Status Report" list since the last COT meeting. Currently, there are 49 active projects, 7 projects completed, 21 projects on hold, and 4 cancelled. Mr. Bloshinski also reviewed the "Notice to Proceed Report" which contains 7 contracts over $25,000.

President Long discussed the location of the construction for the new soccer field needs to be moved and is considering the upper Smith Street Fields due to certain borough regulations that cannot be met for the turf field at the proposed site. President Long asked for a motion from the Trustees to approve the site location change. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed. **Trustee O'Brien made the motion to move the soccer field location to Mary Street Fields; seconded by Trustee Shemansky; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Mr. Richard Santor, Executive Director of the ESU Foundation, reported that while activity is high, fundraising remains challenging, and the Foundation is counting on a strong year-end push. Scholarships continue to be a priority; six new scholarships have been secured so far, with several more in progress. The track and field renovation campaign is off to a strong start, with about 75% of the goal raised. Naming opportunities were reviewed earlier today, and a motion is needed to approve the naming opportunities. Several track alumni have also shown interest in naming specific event areas. **Trustee Shemansky made a motion to approve naming opportunities for the Track & Field campaign; Trustee O'Brien seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Rich noted several fall events that supported donor recognition and community engagement. He concluded by announcing the hiring of a new Associate Director of Development, a much-needed addition to the team.

All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed. That concludes my report.

C. **Strategic Initiatives Committee:**

Dr. Rob Smith, our Chief Information and Technology Officer, reported on efforts to strengthen transfer student success at East Stroudsburg University. He noted current transfer enrollment trends, the work of statewide and campus committees, and emphasized the need for modern tools that remove barriers for incoming students. A key focus was the growing role of AI in transfer credit evaluation. ESU is implementing AI-enabled systems like ATAIN, CourseWise, and AcademyOne resources to speed up credit reviews, improve accuracy, and build a national, AI-informed equivalency database. These tools also give students clear, personalized maps showing how their completed coursework applies to ESU's degree programs. The expected impact for students includes faster credit evaluations, fewer repeated courses, clearer pathways, and stronger progress toward graduation. Overall, Dr. Smith emphasized that modernizing credit mobility with AI will create a more accurate, equitable, and student-centered transfer experience.

Dr. Gina Scala, Professor and Department Chair of Special Education & Rehabilitation, presented an overview of the Accelerated Grant for Special Education alongside her team. The initiative centers on three primary objectives:

- Attracting skilled, compassionate, and diverse individuals to careers in special education.
- Preparing special education personnel through targeted professional development, technical assistance, and comprehensive support.
- Retaining personnel long-term through coordinated federal, state, and local efforts.

The program aims to prepare candidates for PK–12 Special Education Teacher Certification within 18 months through an accelerated pathway. This pathway serves individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree and includes required university coursework, summer field experiences, mentoring, coaching, and student teaching aligned with the PA Public School Code. Additional program features include paid coursework, condensed course options, and a focus on long-term sustainability. Current program staffing includes 7 coaches (veteran teachers, administrators, and specialists) and 13 mentors, each matched to mentees by content area. The program currently supports 17 mentees.

All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed. That concludes my report.

9. **Old Business:**

None

10. **New Business:**

A. Ex**ecutive Session:** Trustee Ross called for an executive session at 12:05 pm for personnel reasons. Trustee Ross entered back into regular session at 12:15 pm.

B. Trustee Ross indicated that during the executive session, the Trustees discussed the Presidential Evaluation of President Kenneth Long. Trustee Ross thanked the annual review committee for their time and attention in providing an in-depth review of President Long. Trustee Ross asked for a motion to approve the Presidential Evaluation for President Kenneth Long and move forward sending a letter of approval to the Chancellor. **Trustee Nixon made a motion to approve the Presidential Evaluation of President Kenneth**

Long and move forward in sending a letter of approval to the Chancellor; Trustee Grayuski seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

C. President Long shared the final version of the Annual Report. The Marketing and Communications team and Vice President Miguel Barbosa did an excellent job producing the report. Copies will be distributed to various groups and audiences later this month.

D. The next meeting of the East Stroudsburg University Council of Trustees is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2026.

12. **Adjournment:** Trustee Ross adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Shemansky
Council Secretary

Recording Secretary: Marcy L. Cetnar