

**East Stroudsburg University
Council of Trustees Minutes
September 25, 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 4:14 p.m. by Chair Pat Ross.

2. **Roll Call:** Completed by Jessica Diaz, the following members were present:

Trustee Frank Epifano (Zoom)	Trustee Tina Nixon (Zoom)	Trustee John Pekarovsky
Trustee Thomas Grayuski	Trustee Elizabeth O'Brian (Zoom)	Trustee Pat Ross
Trustee Ainslee Green	Trustee Tameko Patterson (Zoom)	Trustee Paul Shemansky

The following members were not present:

Trustee Edward Abraham	Trustee Marcus Lingenfelter
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3. **Public Comment:**
None

4. **Approval of Minutes:**
Trustee Shemansky made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 5, 2025, meeting; Trustee Nixon seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

5. **President's Report:**

President Long reported, as we near the completion of the fifth week of the Fall 2025 semester, I'm pleased to report that the energy and momentum across campus are stronger than ever. The start of this academic year has been marked by celebrations, optimism, and a renewed commitment to student success.

Last week, State System Universities reported their enrollment numbers for the Fall 2026 Semester. I am pleased to announce that the Office of Institutional Research reported total enrollment of 5,884, which represents a 4.4% increase over last year. This also represents the fourth consecutive year of enrollment year over year increase; representing a net increase every year after coming out of the COVID pandemic. The enrollment numbers are mixed new and transfers undergraduate and continuing graduate students. Institutional Research and Enrollment Management are still analyzing this information, so that we can make the necessary adjustments in recruitment and retention strategies during the current year. Despite welcoming nearly 1,600 new and transfer students, this is more than nearly 150 fewer than last year's entering class. While our overall enrollment growth offsets this in the short term, if this decrease is not made up with Spring recruitment and improved retention, it will suppress revenue in future years. Eighty percent of ESU undergraduate students are PA residents.

In Residential Life, we are excited, yet courteous to share our efforts over the past few years to keep more students living on-campus, to help alleviate some of the pressure in the off-campus housing market, appears to be working. At 99.2 percent occupancy, nearly all of 2706 available beds are taken. While this is very good news, it leaves us with very little room for flexibility to address accommodation issues, roommate situations or medical circumstances.

To address these challenges, we are expanding our focus on non-traditional learners—including transfer students, adult learners, and readmitted students. Last year, we launched a new department dedicated to transfer admissions, complete with its own director, budget, and strategic goals. We are also advancing evidence-based practices to improve student success, such as early monitoring programs, interdisciplinary learning, and work-based learning.

This semester, we eagerly anticipate the opening of the New University Center, a transformative space that will redefine the heart of our campus. We've also begun planning on one of the signature capital projects of my presidency: the Center for Hospitality Management, with a formal announcement planned for the next few weeks. Other recent improvements include a makeover of the Rec Center, reopening of the Innovation Center after last year's fire, redesigned and branded tennis courts on Smith Street, and continued rollout of the ESU Mobile App and IT infrastructure upgrades. These projects reflect our commitment to creating a vibrant, student-centered campus environment.

Earlier this month, we hosted the 1893 Society Reception, honoring more than 200 individuals whose planned gifts and endowments ensure ESU's legacy for generations to come. We welcomed 11 new members to the Society this year, a direct result of the generosity of our alumni, families, and friends. We also celebrated several key events such as the Inaugural Red & Black Breakfast, Academic Convocation, and the Legislative Fellows Breakfast, where we honored State Representative Eddie Day Pashinski as the 2025 Legislative Fellow. Representative Pashinski serves the 121st House District, representing constituents in Luzerne County and parts of Carbon County. With more than 17 years of distinguished service in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, he has been an advocate for the accessibility and affordability of higher education. He currently serves as Chair of the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee, where his leadership reflects a deep commitment to Pennsylvania's rural communities. Representative Pashinski also shares a personal connection with East Stroudsburg University—he is the proud father of three ESU alumni.

At the first All University Meeting early this month, Darlene Farris-Labar, professor and chair of Art, Media and Design, was recognized as this year's Distinguished Professor. Professor Farris-Labar has been with ESU for nearly 20 years and is Internationally recognized for 3D printed botanically inspired sculptures. Early this week, we hosted a dinner for our student orientation leaders and residential advisors.

In athletics, we continue to shine in competition and in the classroom. Last year, our student-athletes achieved a collective GPA of 3.39. ESU finished 3rd national in Division 2 for academic success and had the highest number of student-athletes in the PSAC to receive academic honors.

We are actively preparing for our Middle States Reaccreditation, with the visiting team scheduled for Spring 2026. The Chair for the visiting team will be on-campus October 28th, to meet with campus members and discuss the draft self-study report.

Campus committees are actively working on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the new Strategic Plan.

Affordability remains our top priority. After seven consecutive years of frozen tuition, PASSHE universities are still the most affordable four-year option in our Commonwealth. For the 2025–26 academic year, in-state undergraduate tuition will increase by \$139 per semester, bringing the cost to \$3,997 per semester. As many of you are aware, the State System requested a 6.5% increase in state funding to keep tuition flat. If this funding were approved in this year's budget, the Board of Governors has committed to rolling back the \$139 tuition increase. This kind of flexible approach has never been done before in PASSHE. We are still awaiting the state budget decision

We are three months into the fiscal year, and we still don't have a State Budget. The University, along with our PASSHE colleagues, are in regular communication with our state representative about the impact this delay is having on public education and the students we serve.

As we look ahead, we must continue to make wise choices that support our students and safeguard ESU's future. We cannot afford to do business as usual. Instead, we must embrace innovation, collaboration, and a shared commitment to student success. Together, we will make this academic year one of progress, pride, and purpose.

That concludes my report.

6. Chair's Report:

No report

7. Secretary's Report:

There is no correspondence to report, but Trustee Shemansky noted the assistance received by ESU students with the Borough clean-up was very helpful. Our students do many things to help the community. The new ESU flags in the Borough look great and thanked ESU's Marketing and Communications. Trustee Ross also commended the instrumental success of our student athletes who assist with the Salvation Army bell ringing.

8. Committee Reports

A. University Affairs Committee:

Trustee Ross provided an overview of the committee meeting discussions and presentations.

Current enrollment freeze data shows the continued trajectory of student enrollment at ESU with a 4.4% increase this year from last academic year. The retention of students has helped tremendously with that increase as well as an increase in graduate studies enrollment.

We are waiting for an update on several state and federal guidelines.

An update of the May submission of the CPP, which was prepared in September, was presented to the committee. E&G closed 24-25 with a \$1.8 million budget deficit and use of reserves was due to several factors including the larger being bad debt expense, utilities, healthcare settlement, and institutional aid all coming in higher than originally projected.

The Middle States Self Study first draft is currently under review to provide feedback where clarification and questions were noted. The second draft is to be completed by October 7th for final review before forwarding to the evaluation team chair by October 14th. The Preliminary visit is scheduled for October 28th after which we will receive feedback and then after revisions, the document will be sent out to campus for feedback in November and December before submitting the final report.

John Blosinski reported that construction of the University Center is 68% completed as of July 31st with a hopeful completion date of December 29, 2025. The Center for Hospitality plan was presented. The Wolbers Tennis Courts are completed and are being used for university practices only until all occupancy permits are received from the borough. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

B. Campus Environment Committee:

Trustee O'Brien provided an overview of the committee meeting discussions and presentations.

Jerry Roeder, Director of Residential Life & Housing, provided an overview of the current resident occupancy. 12 Lenape study areas were converted into bedrooms making our current full capacity at 2706 and we are at 99.22% capacity to date.

Dr. Allen Snook, Director of Athletics, provided an academic overview of our student-athletes academic success with a department GPA of 3.394. The committee also received updates on athletics athlete honors from both PSAC which ESU had the most student-athletes on the list in the league, ESU finished 3rd in the NCAA Division 2 for academic success and seven student-athletes honored as all-American. ESU finished 3rd in the Dixon Trophy standings which tied the best in school history. ESU welcomed 240 new student athletes this fall making ESU the largest athletic population in PASSHE. Student athletes were also very helpful with move-in, Be the Match Donor Event, and working with the Foundation and facilities on multiple projects. The fall sports season is off to a great start. Encourage everyone to get out to the athletic events to show your Warrior pride and support out student-athletes.

The new Chief of Police will start in a few weeks. Parking issues are being addressed. Additional 50 -75 cameras are being implemented. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

C. Finance Committee:

Trustee Pekarovsky provided an overview of the committee meeting discussions and presentations.

Mr. Richard Santoro, Executive Director of the ESU Foundation, reported that 2025 is a positive year. Gifts and pledges exceeded the budgets, and 777 awards were distributed. Goals for 2026: keep initiatives on track, renovations, and alumni engagement

The Committee reviewed the Cash Disbursement Reports for May 1, 2025, through August 31, 2025, and found that all were handled appropriately and were in order. All questions and concerns were answered satisfactorily. Trustee Pekarovsky asked for a motion to approve the Cash Disbursement Reports for May 1, 2025, through August 31, 2025. **Trustee Shemansky made a motion for the approval of the Cash Disbursement Reports for May 1, 2025, through August 31, 2025; Trustee Grayuski seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Mr. Gregory Bleakley, Director of Budget & Special Accounting, provided an update on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget providing information on the E&G funds and total university budget in all funds. The Committee's questions and concerns were satisfactorily answered. Trustee Pekarovsky asked for a motion to accept the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget as presented. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget; Trustee Ross seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Audit Results and the University's Financial Sustainability Indicators for that same year were presented. Preliminary audit results anticipate a clean audit. A high-level review of the 2025 audit results will be presented at the December meeting for approval. The Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Risk Assessments show the four indicators used to measure financial sustainability continue to exceed System requirements. East Stroudsburg University's Sustainability Plan Assignment continues to be "Stable". However, a review of the financial indicators' annual results shows an unfavorable trend. The CFO also presented the Procurement Activity Report > \$23,800 Report for the period May 1, 2025 – August 31, 2025, for review. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities Management report on the "Active Projects Status Report" list since the last COT meeting. Currently, there are 48 active projects, 22 projects completed, and 24 projects on hold. Mr. Bloshinski also reviewed the "Notice to Proceed Report". All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

C. **Strategic Initiatives Committee:**

Trustee Grayuski provided an overview of the committee meeting discussions and presentations.

Dr. Margaret Ball, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs discussed the candidate for emeritus recommendation, Dr. Gregory Dwyer who served in the department of exercise science for 26 years. President Long forwarded Dr. Dwyer for consideration and approval. Trustee Grayuski asked for a motion to approve the recommended faculty member. **Trustee Pekarovsky made a motion to approve Dr. Gregory Dwyer for Faculty Emeritus; Trustee Ross seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Dr. Susan Dillmuth-Miller and student Erin Griffin presented Concussion and Its Effects on Complex Listening and shared information on the testing performed and results. 40 athletes were part of the neuro testing study, and all athletes will have a baseline track improvement. We are doing amazing things at ESU.

9. **Old Business:**

A. None

10. **New Business:**

- A. **Appointing Interim and Acting Chief Executive Officers: Trustee Ross** asked for a motion to accept the Appointing of Campus Interim and Acting Chief Executive Officers for the 2025-2026 Academic Year as required by the PASSHE BOG Policy 1983-14-A. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to approve the Appointing Interim and Acting Chief Executive Officers for the 2025-2026 Academic Year according to BOG Policy 1983-14-A; Trustee O'Brien seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**
- B. Chair Ross presented the Presidential Review Committee which includes Trustees Grayuski, Shemansky, and Ross and asked for a motion to approve the President Review Committee as presented. **Trustee Pekarovsky made a motion to approve the Presidential Review Committee as presented; Trustee Grayuski seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

11. The next meeting of the Council of Trustees is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2025.

12. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by Trustee Ross at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Shemansky
Council Secretary

Recording Secretary: Marcy L. Cetnar