

**East Stroudsburg University
Council of Trustees Minutes
June 5, 2025
In Person & Via Zoom**

1. Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the East Stroudsburg University Council of Trustees was called to order at 4:27 p.m. by Chair Pat Ross.

2. Roll Call:

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

Mr. Frank Epifano (via zoom)	Ms. Tina Nixon	Mr. John Pekarovsky, III
Mr. Thomas Grayuski	Ms. Elizabeth O'Brien	Mr. Pat Ross
Ms. Ainslee Green	Ms. Tameko Patterson	Mr. Paul Shemansky

The following members were not present:

Mr. Edward Abraham	Mr. Marcus Lingenfelter
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3. Public Comment:

None

4. Approval of Minutes:

Trustee Nixon made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2025, meeting; Trustee Grayuski seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

5. President's Report:

President Long reported the Spring 2025 semester has recently concluded and was filled with opportunities and milestones in academics, student engagement, athletics, and facilities.

On May 9 and 10, we celebrated the Spring 2025 Commencement with three ceremonies, welcoming 1,086 new graduates to the Warrior Alumni Family. Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Christine Donohue '74 addressed the undergraduate ceremonies, while Dr. Mitchell Cordova '92, incoming Provost of Austin Peay State University, served as the keynote for the graduate ceremony. Our student speakers, including Ashlee Grennan, Joseph Merkel, and Richermy Batista Martinez, showed why they were selected to be the class speakers. This spring, 291 students were honored at the 44th Annual Honors Convocation, and earlier this week the university announced 1741 students making the Spring 2025 Dean's List, just slightly less than the 1771 students that earn this distinction in Fall 2024.

As part of our commitment to responsible resource management, this semester we made the challenging decision to place three programs, the undergraduate program in Economics and graduate programs in History and Political Science, in moratorium due to low enrollment and very few graduates over the past five years. With limited resources and escalating costs, it is essential that we prioritize our financial resources in areas of demand, student success, growth and economic need. Any program placed in moratorium has the opportunity to return through a dedicated and intentional strategy for growth and success. To help in this effort, particularly at the recent integrated universities, earlier in the Spring semester the State System and our faculty union agreed to an enhanced retirement incentive program to help support eligible faculty to retire. Twelve ESU faculty members have opted to retire, allowing us to hire new faculty in programs of growth.

Campus was alive this semester with engagement across all dimensions including Greek Week, Relay for Life (raising nearly \$16,000), and Take Back the Night marches.

Students participated in study abroad programs in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Bahamas and National conference participation in education, cybersecurity, and leadership, including the swearing in of our newest Trustee Ainslee Green. In the arts, Theatre's *The Crucible* played to packed audiences, and our Art + Media + Design students presented work at the Allentown Film Festival and in an alumni-themed gift showcase. Our Concert Choir, Jazz Band, and Concert Band also delivered memorable performances during the Spring Concert Series. Our students continue to gain national recognition. Emma Beaston, a recent graduate, earned the Wild Card Award at the tecBRIDGE Business Plan Competition for her smart eyewear concussion detection startup, NeuroView. And sports broadcasting student Mehki Williams earned a summer internship at SiriusXM Radio's Mad Dog Sports Radio in NYC.

Our athletic programs continued to set the bar high in academics and in competition. Academically, our student athletes earned a record combined GPA of 3.376, with every team above 3.0 last Fall and we expect similar achievements for Spring. Softball and Men's Track & Field both captured PSAC Championships. Lacrosse, Women's Tennis, Baseball, and Softball each made postseason appearances. Earlier in the semester Coach Kochmansky earned his 500th career win. And STUNT concluded its inaugural season ranked #14 nationally.

Construction of the University Center remains on track for completion this Fall, we are tentatively looking to transition into the new facility before the start of the Spring 2026 Semester. We are also near completion of six new tennis courts. Although designs and our fundraising goal for a new soccer/club sport stadium on the former baseball field site are essentially complete, there remains some major challenges with the protection zone for the water well. And renovations to Kemp Library are scheduled to begin next year, focusing on ADA accessibility and enhanced student-centered spaces.

On May 16, ESU hosted the 12th Annual Economic Outlook Summit at Kalahari Resorts. The program featured creativity strategist Dr. Natalie Nixon, a presentation from the policy director at AirBnB on how to leverage this opportunity, and an over of the region economic score card. The event once again highlighted ESU's leadership in regional economic development. The ESU Foundation hosted its second "Thank A Donor Day" in April and the 16th Annual Scholarship Dinner this spring, our largest ever, with more than 300 attendees celebrating the transformational impact of donor support. Our students also continue to benefit from community-facing initiatives like the Warrior Startup Challenge, the College of Education's advocacy day in Harrisburg, and K-8 enrichment through the Saturday Gifted Institute.

Fall 2025 begins on August 25th and we are preparing for a strong incoming class, barring any major changes in student aid from the State and Federal. Over 2,500 students are expected to live on campus this fall.

That concludes my report.

6. Chair's Report:

Chair Ross reported there is an upcoming in-person PACT meeting on July 16, 2025, from 12 – 3 pm and hopes that fellow Trustees throughout PASSHE will attend. Trustee Ross would like to see the PACT meeting changed to a conference with the ability to meet fellow Trustees as done in the past.

7. Secretary's Report:

Trustee Shemansky believed faculty, students and administration are heading in the right direction. Trustee Shemansky also shared AI's advancements are moving in speeds and is reshaping the economy, reshaping white collar jobs, ESU and PASSHE should form a committee on how AI will impact the future of our faculty and students. If we are not in the AI scene, other universities will move ahead, and it is here now and rapidly growing, and we need to get ahead of the game. It is important to encourage faculty and staff to share how they are using AI in classrooms.

8. Committee Reports

A. University Affairs Committee:

Trustee Ross reported Dr. Margaret Ball, Vice President of Academic Affairs introduced the CPP presentation highlighting the major goals (Enrollment Stabilization, Academic Program Array, Workforce, and Financial Sustainability) and the connection to ESU's new strategic plan. Dr. Rob Smith (CITO) discussed enrollment projections (anticipating maintaining enrollment of first time-full time-first year and transfer students, as well as in increase in retention), and ESU's Chief Financial Officer-Donna Bulzoni presented on the budget and financial information that is included in the CPP. The data presented highlights that ESU remains a sustainable institution on all metrics.

President Long reinforced how we are focusing on a strong sense of belonging through the new strategic plan. Not only for students but also faculty, staff, and the community. ESU wants everyone to feel welcome and to feel they belong here, and they are making an impact to the campus.

Michael C. Sachs, Interim Vice President for Administration and Accreditation, Dr. Kizzy Morris, Associate Provost of Student Success, and Dr. Chris Dudley, Associate Professor History & Geography presented an update of Middle States Institutional Accreditation Self-Study Progress to date. The MSCHE Self-Study is less than a year from the site visit. Standard teams have or will shortly submit their fat bullets to editor Leigh Smith, who will turn the bullets into a first draft narrative over the summer. Once the first draft is complete, it will be returned to the standard teams for review. The various drafts will be reviewed by stakeholders throughout the University. The General Education assessment committee is assessing the GE program, and non-teaching departments are primarily utilizing the CAS Standards for non-academic assessment. The tentative date for the final MSCHE report will be November 2025, with a site visit anticipated for March 2026.

Dr. Lorna Hunter, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Timothy Hahn, Director of Admissions, provided Admission updates. To aid in recruitment, yield and retention, Enrollment Management partnered with Advantage Design Group to produce an online orientation module. This digital tool is designed to streamline and enhance student onboarding experience. It complements our in-person Orientation by allowing students personal access to all new student information with the ability to revisit instructions as necessary. Portions of the presentation can be used for recruitment as well. There are seven New Student Orientation programs being held between June 10th and July 22. Typically, 85-90% of new students attend. Other summer events will focus on melt prevention and recruitment for the Fall 2026 incoming class.

John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities Management, provided an update on the construction of the University Center indicating 60% of the physical work is completed as of April 30th with a hopeful completion date of December 29, 2025. Demolition of the old University Center and Computing Center is scheduled to start April 17, 2026, with a estimated completion date of August 25, 2026. That concludes my report.

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

B. Campus Environment Committee:

Trustee O'Brien reported Dr. Santiago Solis, Vice President of Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence introduced the new Director of Residential Life & Housing, Gerard "Jerry" Roeder.

Dr. Kizzy Morris, Associate Provost of Student Success, and Joe Akob, Executive Director of the Student Activity Association, presented an overview of the new ESU mobile ap which went live in March. This new ap

will provide student success technology tools that align with the new strategic plan in efforts to provide forefront services to the student experience that enhance the quality of student life, provide support initiatives that focus on student success, and establish a comprehensive, university-wide communication plan to ensure the sharing of information is efficient and effective, creating a sense of belonging for the entire campus community.

Dr. Allen Snook, Director of Athletics, provided an academic overview of our student-athletes academic success with a department GPA of 3.394. 77% of student athletes had a 3.0 or higher GPA with 14% having a perfect 4.0. Total women's GPA is 3.536 with Women's Cross Country having the highest women's team GPA of 3.810 and men's GPA is 3.243 with Men's Soccer having the highest men's team GPA of 3.442. The committee also received updates on athletics athlete honors, team accomplishments, and other departmental accomplishments which are very impressive in all areas. Special congratulations to the men's baseball team for making their first ever appearance at the NCAA Division II baseball championships.

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

C. **Finance Committee:**

Trustee Pekarovsky reported Richard Santoro, Director of the ESU Foundation, provided an update on their progress, and I'm pleased to report that everything appears to be on track. The team has set ambitious goals for Fiscal Year 2025 and is making strong progress toward achieving them.

Donna Bulzoni, CFO, presented a high-level CPP budget update, including major assumptions used in preparing the E&G budget, for FY 2026 and the next two fiscal years were presented. E&G deficits of \$2.7 M for FY 2026 and \$4.9 M for both FY 2027 and FY 2028, assuming budget reductions of \$1.6 M, \$1.35 M, and \$1.52 M for FYs 2026, 2027, and 2028, respectively, are projected and will be funded from reserves. Projections for auxiliary operations were also presented, with surpluses of approximately \$5 M anticipated in each year. Finally, summaries showing the impact of the E&G deficits on the E&G reserves and the Total Unrestricted Net Assets if we are unable to close the gap between now and the time, we finalize the budget.

Donna Bulzoni, CFO presented to the Committee and reviewed the Cash Disbursement Reports for February 01, 2025, through April 30, 2025. 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, 2025, to April 30, 2025; Trustee Ross seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

Donna Bulzoni, CFO presented the Procurement Activity Report for the period March 1 through April 30, 2025, was reviewed. All questions and concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

President Long discussed four special initiatives taking place to advance the mission of the university and address academic and athletic needs. All projects except the tennis courts are intended to be funded through philanthropy campaigns. Potential naming rights will be available for all projects and financial breakdowns will be presented at a future meeting.

COT approval is needed to move forward with the Center of Hospitality as a philanthropic activity. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to move forward the philanthropic activity for the Centre of Hospitality; Trustee Nixon seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

COT approval is needed to move forward with the Performance Center as a philanthropic activity. **Trustee Grayuski made a motion to move forward the philanthropic activity for the Performance Center; Trustee O'Brien seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.**

John Bloshinski, Director of Facilities provide a report noting facilities has added 8 contracts to the "Notice to Proceed" list since the last COT meeting. 12 new projects have been added to the Facilities Management Project List. These projects are either in the planning stages, have just started the design process, or are in construction since the last meeting. Currently, there are 48 active projects, 22 on hold, and 3 canceled. Eight projects have been completed since the last COT meeting.

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

C. Strategic Initiatives Committee:

Trustee Grayuski reported Dr. Margaret Ball, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs introduced the program array and explained the variety of programs (undergraduate, graduate and certificates) that make up ESU's academic offerings. She explained the metrics used when examining the array and what makes a sustainable academic program array.

Dr. Brook Langan, Dean of the College of Education and Dr. Sylvester Williams, Dean of the College of Business & Management, presented the strategies they have used in establishing a residential college for the College of Education and the College of Business management. They discussed the best practices utilized and assessments used to support the continuation of this initiative. Creating a sense of belonging for these first-year students.

Brian Street, Dean of the College of Health Sciences, Dr. Shala Davis (Exercise Science), and Dr. Jason Narvy (Theatre) presented on a unique applied theory to practice collaboration between Nursing (Sim lab), Exercise Science students and Theatre students. This successful collaboration provided an excellent example of how cross disciplinary work can provide ESU students with additional preparation for real world job preparation. Students leave with the educational background and the confidence needed to enter the workforce.

Mary Frances Postupack, Vice President of Economic Development & Entrepreneurship, shared a brief video of the Warrior Startup Challenge held April 18, 2025, here on campus. The winner of the challenge, Kevin Gardner, shared information on his winning start-up business Ceiba Café which is a holistic cannabis café. Kevin received \$10,000 for first place. 2nd place winner Favor Toby, Agape Beauty, received \$5,000, and 3rd place winner, Aziyah Norman, Mazuri Diviney received \$2,500. It's truly inspiring to see the brilliant minds of our students developing business ideas with the goal of helping others. Their creativity, compassion, and drive to make a positive impact are nothing short of amazing

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

8. Old Business:

None

9. 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 Nixon 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 O'Brien seconded; no abstentions. The motion carried.

C. Trustee Ross presented the tentative 2024-2025 Council of Trustees Meeting scheduled as follows.
Thursday, September 25, 2025 Thursday, December 4, 2025
Thursday, March 19, 2026 Thursday, June 4, 2026

11. Adjournment: Trustee Ross adjourned the meeting at 5:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Shemansky
Council Secretary

Recording Secretary: Marcy L. Cetnar