

**MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY
March 13, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kemi Alli, Chair; Merodie A. Hancock; Richard W. Arndt (via telephone); Frank Clyburn (via telephone); J. Stanley Justice, Eric R. Lear; Brian Maloney; Gualberto Medina; Marilyn Pearson (via telephone); Monique Lewis-Hawkins (student trustee – via telephone); Sanket Shah (student trustee – via telephone).

ALSO PRESENT: Cynthia Baum, Vice President and Provost; John Thurber, Vice President for Public Affairs; Dennis Devery, Vice President for Enrollment Management; Chris Stringer, Vice President and CFO; Robin Walton, Vice President for Community and Government Affairs; Barbara Kleva, General Counsel (via telephone); Mary Chute, New Jersey State Librarian; Michael Mancini, Chief of Staff/COO and Secretary to the Board; and Jamie Adams, Executive Assistant to the President.

Dr. Kemi Alli officially called the public meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., followed by a statement of public notice pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 to 10:4-21.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Alli presented the following resolution to enter into Executive Session:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-13 and 10:4-12 that the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University holds a closed session at 9:00 a.m. on March 13, 2020, for the purpose of discussing confidential personnel matters as provided by the Open Public Meetings Act.

It is expected that the discussion undertaken in closed session will not be made public due to the confidentiality of this matter.

Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Lear seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Alli presented a motion to reconvene the public meeting. Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Lear seconded, a motion to reconvene. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Dr. Alli presented the minutes of the December 13, 2019 board meeting for approval and adoption. Mr. Arndt made, and Mr. Medina seconded, a motion to adopt the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hancock reported that TESU continues to make good on its promise of high-quality, career-aligned learning opportunities for adults. She continued to state that during the second quarter, the University launched a first of its kind partnership with edX, opened registration for our second professional doctorate degree, expanded our master's-level programming, reworked the front end of the website, streamlined admission processes, designed new targeted digital marketing capabilities, improved our strategic partnership strategy to add vertical and horizontal growth while we increased margins, and so much more.

Dr. Hancock stated that behind the larger initiatives, there are numerous smaller efforts that enables bigger strategies by creating data intelligence, streamlining business processes and student requirements, and creating competitive technology solutions. She said that while the impact of many of these initiatives will be first felt in the coming year and even years, several are already taking hold and are reflected in the numbers below.

Year to date for FY2020 has been marked by strong growth in our graduate applications and new students (up 24 percent and 38.5 percent, respectively); strong growth in our undergraduate applications (up 6 percent); and weak new undergraduate enrollments (down 9.8 percent). Overall YTD undergraduate enrollments are down 7.9 percent and graduate enrollments are up 6.5 percent.

The growth in graduate enrollment is the result of a strategic prioritization and focus on strengthening the graduate programs, given their tuition structures and enrollment loads. Undergraduate enrollments continue to be negatively impacted by the U.S. Navy's decision to not allow sailors in their first two years of service to participate in the Tuition Assistance program and limit funding for the Tuition Assistance program for all of FY2020. The balance of loss in undergraduate new enrollments was primarily within the nursing programs. As you will see in the sections that follow, TESU is actively pursuing strategies to diversify our student portfolio and build new nursing and health professions channels.

Both graduate and undergraduate programs have naturally declining continuing students following five years of new student declines. As such, impacts of retention strategies can be masked by these naturally decreasing numbers. Therefore, TESU is implementing a quarterly retention report that tracks changes in the percentage of new students that take an additional course(s) within the next three quarters. This report, which will go live in March, will allow the University to have more valuable information about student retention and to track the performance of retention initiatives by target population and assigned area of responsibility.

The University ended the second quarter with a modest increase in total revenue. The growth was primarily due to an increase of \$537,090 in state appropriations. We expect to finish the year with roughly \$2 million more than the prior year. Therefore, the majority of the increase will be received in the second half of the year. The University received \$1 million in additional funding from the Legislature that was subsequently frozen by the Governor in accordance to Executive Order 73. Those funds have now been released by the Governor. Another major contributor to the increase was graduate tuition and fees. Master's programs are \$401,729 or 15 percent above the prior year. Doctorate programs are \$113,805 or 109 percent above the prior year. The new Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program launched in January 2020, with the majority of tuition revenue received in Q2. The increases in graduate revenue were offset by declines in nursing and military undergraduate enrollments. Nursing and military were down \$571,442 or 21 percent and \$434,267 or 12 percent, respectively. Expenses were \$72,301 or less than 1 percent below the prior year. The decrease in expenses was due to lower salary, services and facility costs. This was partially offset by increases in fringe benefit expense and student waivers. Fringe benefit expense was increased due to the decrease in state benefit positions paid by the state. Student waivers increased due to increased enrollments by the New Jersey National Guard. The University is reimbursed from

the state for up to \$1 million in waivers. The University waived less than \$800,000 in the prior year. The waivers should reach the \$1 million limit at the current pace.

Dr. Hancock explained how the University continues to prioritize strategic initiatives that enhance student success via learning innovation, improving student retention via dedicated and tracked outreach, expanding new student growth through targeted marketing and outreach, and solidifying our financial position through new and diverse revenue streams and expense control.

Financial Strength

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dr. Alli introduced Mr. Lear to present the Administration, Audit and Finance Committee Report. Mr. Lear briefed the Board on the committee meeting held on February 24, 2020.

SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL RESULTS

Mr. Lear introduced Mr. Stringer to brief the Board on the second quarter financial results. Mr. Stringer reported that the University ended the second quarter with a deficit of \$650,463, which was better than prior year of \$758,063. Revenue was higher than the prior year by \$35,299 or less than 1%. Expenses were lower by \$72,301 or less than 1%. While revenue was below the prior year, the percentage of revenue earned against the YTD budget was significantly higher in FY2020.

CONSIDERATION OF BID WAIVERS

Mr. Stringer provided a summary of the proposed bid waivers noting all were standard.

Mr. Lear presented the following resolution:

- WHEREAS:** The State College Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:64-52 et seq. requires that contracts be made and awarded by the University, after public advertising, for bids for contracts in excess of \$34,400; and
- WHEREAS:** The State College Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56, permits, in certain specified instances, that contracts may be made, negotiated, or awarded by the University by resolution of its Board of Trustees without public advertising for bids; and
- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees has approved the “Thomas Edison State University Purchasing and Contracting Policy,” which governs purchases and contracts for the University and Library; and
- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees finds that the following purchases and contracts have met the criteria for award without public bidding, under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56; now therefore, be it
- RESOLVED:** That the Thomas Edison State University Board of Trustees hereby approves waivers of advertisement for the following purchases and contracts for the purposes designated:

BID WAIVER REQUESTS

The State College Contracts Law requires that contracts be made and awarded by the University only after they are publicly advertised for bids. N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56, a provision of that law, allows the Board of Trustees to waive advertising for bids in certain instances. The Board authorized the Thomas Edison State University Purchasing and Contracting Policy, by resolution dated June 10, 2016. The Policy requires that items exceeding \$3,000 be obtained through some price competition. The following proposed contracts will be processed in accordance with that Policy.

1. Mentor and Course-Construction Consultants:

N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a) (25) permits the University to make, negotiate, or award a contract by Board resolution for consulting services involving curricula. The mentor and course-construction consultants listed below are currently providing services to Thomas Edison State University. They are rendering services to the University's Undergraduate and Graduate School programs. The cost of these services may exceed the bid threshold of \$34,400, but will not exceed \$100,000, for fiscal year 2020. Due to the necessity of these services to the University, the University proposes to allow the below named mentors and course-construction consultants to exceed the purchasing threshold:

Cole, Susan
Coye, Dale
David J Medved CPA
DeCaro, Frank P
Dew, Robert
Lansford, Tom
Puchalski, Marilyn J
Wikey, Dan Michael
Young, James Douglas

2. State Librarian Search - \$60,000

The State Library seeks approval to contract with an executive search firm for the search for a new State Librarian. A search committee will conduct a national search and will be responsible for aiding the search committee in developing the advertisement materials, placing the advertisements, assisting with the initial vetting of qualified applicants and performing other services as needed. The total cost for the search consulting services will not exceed \$60,000. N.J.S.A. 18A:64-56(a) (20) permits the University to make, negotiate or award a contract, by Board resolution, for personnel recruitment services.

Mr. Lear made, and Mr. Maloney seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF UPDATE TO TRAVEL POLICY

Mr. Stringer presented the updated Travel Policy. It was noted that the primary reason for the update was due to a new travel software being implemented. The new process is more efficient and results in a net savings to the University. The policy eliminates the use of the travel agency, eliminates overnight stays when the location is less than 75 miles from the home, and limits certain expenses.

Mr. Lear presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University has the authority and responsibility to determine policies for the administration of the University; and;

WHEREAS: The University maintains the Thomas Edison State University Travel Policy that outlines the approvals and allowability of employee travel; and

WHEREAS: The President recommends an update of the Travel Policy, which will increase productivity and reduce paperwork requirements; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby adopt the updated and revised Travel Policy set forth in the attached document.

Mr. Lear made, and Mr. Medina seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

INTERNAL AUDIT – STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Mr. Stringer presented the internal audit report of the financial aid process. It was noted that the review was primarily focused on improving processes and reducing administrative burden. The most significant change that was recommended by the auditors was the calculation of Pell awards. The University provided full Pell funding to students that took at least six credits per term for four terms during the academic year. The recommendation was to provide full Pell funding to students that took at least eight credits per term for three terms. This would also allow students to receive 133% of the maximum Pell when they are enrolled in the fourth term. This resulted in a net increase in Pell awards for nearly all eligible students. The University has already made this change.

REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Dr. Alli introduced Mr. Maloney to present the Academic Affairs Committee Report. Mr. Maloney briefed the Board on the committee meeting held on February 19, 2020.

CONSIDERATION OF NEW UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEMBER

The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby appoint David Magill, Heavin School of Arts and Sciences mentor, to a three-year term on the University Academic Council for Thomas Edison State University.

The action herein taken is pursuant to a recommendation by the President of the University.

Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Arndt seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF CHANGES TO BSN ADMISSIONS PATHWAY

Dr. Baum presented changes to the BSN admissions pathway. This change would be from an Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN to Accelerated Upper Division BSN.

Effectively this would change current criteria, which required previous baccalaureate degree for admission into the program, to completion of least sixty (60) credits to fulfill TESU general education requirements as well as BSN program prerequisites.

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University has the authority and the responsibility for oversight of academic governance; and

WHEREAS: The University Academic Council has reviewed and approved curricular changes to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing necessary to support NCLEX-RN licensure exam preparation; and

WHEREAS: These curricular changes support a broader admission base; and

WHEREAS: The University Academic Council has reviewed and recommended the admissions change to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing as presented; and

WHEREAS: The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees has reviewed and concurred with the recommendation as presented; and

WHEREAS: The President of the University recommends the proposal as presented; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby approve the admissions change to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing as presented and incorporated herein by reference.

Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Lear seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Dr. Baum presented the following Undergraduate Certificates:

- Undergraduate Certificate in Communications
- Undergraduate Certificate Criminal Justice
- Undergraduate Certificate Psychology
- Undergraduate Certificate Fitness & Wellness (with nomenclature change to Health and Wellness)

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University has the authority and the responsibility for oversight of academic governance; and

WHEREAS: The Undergraduate Council has reviewed and recommended the attached Undergraduate Concentrations/Certificates as demonstrated in the Undergraduate Council minutes; and

WHEREAS: The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees has reviewed and concurred with the recommendation as presented; and

WHEREAS: The President of the University recommends the proposal as presented; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby authorize the following four Undergraduate Concentrations/Certificates, effective January 22, 2016, the date of Undergraduate Council approval, as presented and incorporated herein by reference:

- Undergraduate Certificate in Communications
- Undergraduate Certificate Criminal Justice
- Undergraduate Certificate Psychology
- Undergraduate Certificate Fitness & Wellness (with nomenclature change to Health and Wellness)

Mr. Maloney made, and Reverend Justice seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEGREE

Dr. Alli presented the following resolution:

The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby approve the awarding of the appropriate degrees to those March 13, 2020, candidates cited on the lists provided and incorporated herein by reference.

The action herein taken is pursuant to a certification by the President that the aforementioned candidates have satisfied all relevant degree requirements as recommended by the Academic Council and as established by the Board of Trustees.

Reverend Justice made, and Mr. Lear seconded, a motion to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT RENEWALS

Dr. Alli presented the following resolution to approve contract renewals:

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University is authorized to approve and act on contract renewal recommendations for employees of the University, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 64-6(h) and (i), as well as for State Library employees, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 73-34; and

WHEREAS: The President has made the contract recommendations as indicated on the lists provided and incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS: The action taken herein is pursuant to an evaluation of each employee's work performance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby approve the contract recommendations as indicated on the lists provided and incorporated herein by reference.

Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Lear seconded, a motion to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Mr. Maloney presented the following resolution to approve the personnel actions:

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University is authorized to approve and act on employee-appointment recommendations for employees of the University, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 64-6(h) and (i), as well as for the State Library, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 73-34; and

WHEREAS: The President has made the employee-appointment recommendations as indicated on the lists attached and incorporated herein by reference; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby accept the President's recommendations and approves the appointment of employees as indicated on the lists attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Dr. Alli made, and Mr. Maloney seconded, the motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Dr. Alli presented the following resolution to approve the time change for the June meeting.

The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State University does hereby approve the time change for the meeting on June 5, 2020 from 2:00 pm to 10:00 am.

The action herein taken is pursuant to a recommendation by the President.

Mr. Medina made, and Mr. Lear seconded, the motion to adopt the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Maloney made, and Mr. Lear seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:41 a.m.

Submitted by,



**Merodie A. Hancock, PhD
Secretary of the Board**

Approved by,



**Dr. Kemi Alli
Chair**