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## **MINUTES**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

#### **THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE**

**March 7, 2008**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Marilyn Pearson, Chair; Fred Abbate; Richard Arndt; Nicholas Carnevale; George Fricke; Ida Hammond, E. Harvey Myers; George Pruitt; Ann Pott, Student; and Ritamarie Giosa, Student.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** J. Stanley Justice

**ALSO PRESENT:** William Seaton, Vice President and Provost; Michael Scheiring, Vice President and Treasurer; Penelope Brouwer, Vice President for Planning and Research; John Thurber, Vice President for Public Affairs; Norma Blake, New Jersey State Librarian; Esther H. Paist; Robin Smith; and Linda Vasbinder

Ms. Pearson officially called the public meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

#### **SWEARING IN OF TRUSTEE**

Mr. Fricke read the swearing in document and expressed his pleasure at serving as a member of the Board of Trustees for another term.

#### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the December 7, 2007, meeting were presented by Ms. Pearson for approval and adoption. It was noted that a correction of a typographical error was required in the statement of College assets. The error has now been corrected.

Mr. Abbate made, and Mr. Carnevale seconded, a motion to adopt the minutes as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Pruitt reported on accomplishments during the past quarter. He mentioned the Librarian of the Year award won by Norma Blake; the College's participation in a successful CCME conference with the military, where Louis Martini, Director of Military Education, presided and where Thomas Edison State College is very well recognized; Dean Susan O'Brien's having been recognized as Nurse Educator of the Year by the New Jersey Nurses' Association;

the hope that the Knowledge Initiative funding may yet be continued; the successful resolution of the Student Loan Code of Conduct issue; the good financial status of the College; and the growth of our "traditional" enrollment.

On the other hand, the budget situation in New Jersey remains problematic. Debt service is cutting into the state's ability to meet its operating expenses, and paying down the debt is essential. However, support for Governor Corzine's original monetization initiative to do this is non-existent. The Governor is focused now on simply cutting spending. In his proposed budget, only preschool education will be funded at higher levels than before. Otherwise, the continuous cuts that began in past years will continue. The Governor has proposed another 10% cut across the board for higher education, bringing spending to a level that matches that of 1997. In other moves to balance the budget, the Governor has proposed that three cabinet-level units be eliminated; that workers be laid off; and that many positions not be filled when people quit or retire. The cuts will negatively affect local services and taxes. The proposed budget will probably not pass as presented, and it's likely that further cuts (some to higher education) will be made to restore funding for municipal services. Moreover, there will likely be further cuts next year. And if the economy continues to deteriorate, the tax revenues will also drop. The College's planning has assumed no new resources from state support, though we did think funding would be stable. Higher mandated salary increases, without concomitant state support, and such increased operating expenses as higher postage will cause us pain. However, we are well positioned to deal with the cuts, given our reserves and sound fiscal management.

Dr. Pruitt pointed out that he recently appeared before two different legislative committees to describe our military programs. This was done, in part, as a response to budget cuts predicated on numbers of out-of-state students (including military students) enrolled at Thomas Edison State College, which has the largest out-of-state enrollment in New Jersey. The presentations were made to explain our work with the military to the legislators. This advocacy has been successful, and the College will be honored by the State Senate for its service to the military. In response to a Trustee's question, Dr. Pruitt explained that we charge higher fees to out-of-state students because we do not want New Jersey taxpayers to have to subsidize the education of students from other states.

Dr. Pruitt reported that State Librarian Norma Blake has done an extraordinary job in mobilizing the library community and other stakeholders in support of restoring funding of the final million dollars needed for the Knowledge Initiative (KI). She has also had numerous meetings with legislators and with the Governor's staff, and has approached the Department of Labor for emergency funding to support workforce development through the Knowledge Initiative. Finally, she has had advocates from business and industry speak to various newspaper reporters about the need for continuing the Knowledge Initiative. It may be possible to restart the Knowledge Initiative in late July, using funding from a variety of sources, including other higher education institutions in the state.

Dr. Pruitt told the group that he met with Ernest Wooden (our student speaker at October's Commencement) who is leaving Hilton Hotels to join a private equity firm. Mrs. Wooden is also a Thomas Edison State College alumna, and we anticipate that they will become alumni donors. Stephen King, another potential donor, also met with Dr. Pruitt. In responding to a question as to why they chose Thomas Edison State College, both Mr. Wooden and Mr. King

responded that the College has a credibility and customer-service approach that are superior to those of other institutions.

#### **REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Fricke reported on the activities of the Administration and Finance Committee. The College is doing well financially and he is pleased with its fiscal management. He referred the Board to the minutes of the committee meeting held in February.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF BID WAIVERS**

Mr. Fricke elaborated on each of the bid waivers and opened the floor for discussion and questions. There was a question as to why we need to get bids on any item over \$1,000, since that limit seems unrealistically low. Mr. Scheiring explained that this is required by law; the process of sealed bids is also required for items over \$28,300. Mr. Scheiring also explained the bidding process in general.

In response to a question about the Vantage Point Consulting Company associated with the bid waiver on services for military programs, Mr. Scheiring explained that Louis Martini, Director of Military Education, has vetted this group and found that it has good experience and a solid track record with the military. Mr. Fricke expressed confidence in this selection. In response to a question about the allocation of money for targeted marketing, it was explained that each dean made a specific request for a certain amount, and that is why these amounts differ from school to school. Mr. Thurber said that this does not represent the entire marketing budget for academic programs. Instead, it is geared only to very specific, targeted marketing activities and is directly related to the College's strategic plan. In response to another question about pegging marketing approaches to the unique attitudes and worldview of specific generations, it was reported that we do this.

Mr. Fricke presented the following resolution:

- WHEREAS:** The "State College Contracts Law," Chapter 64 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes requires that any purchase exceeding \$28,300 must be publicly advertised for sealed bids in the local newspapers; and
- WHEREAS:** Section 5a of the additional article to Chapter 64 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes states that the College may waive the bidding procedures by resolution of the Board of Trustees of the College; and
- WHEREAS:** The purchasing policies of Thomas Edison State College approved by the Board of Trustees on October 10, 1986, provide for the granting of categorical prior approval and post reporting to the Board of such purchases; and
- WHEREAS:** Background information on each bid waiver will always be provided in one attached document entitled "Bid Waiver Request"; and
- WHEREAS:** The College is requesting bid waivers to do the following:

- Use the services of mentors and course-construction consultants for the College's Directed Independent Adult Learning and Graduate Studies programs at a cost that may exceed the bid threshold of \$28,300;
- enter into an agreement with Touchnet to provide a fully hosted, secure solution for our payment gateway server at an approximate cost of \$85,000;
- enter into a contract with Presidium to provide extended hours of technical support for our Learning Management System (Blackboard) at an approximate cost of \$50,000;
- use the services of Vantage Point Consulting, Inc., to look at ways to increase student success and participation in the GoArmyEd and eArmyU programs at an approximate cost of \$83,200;
- to engage a consulting firm to implement the database designed through the Enrollment Data Analysis Development project at an approximate cost of \$80,000;
- use the services of Lipman Hearne to continue the College's Web site redesign project at an approximate cost of \$118,000;
- use the services of Simpson Scarborough to survey prospective and current students regarding their usage of our Web site at an approximate cost of \$40,000;
- use the services of the College's advertising agency, Princeton Partners, Inc., to develop targeted advertising at an approximate cost of \$315,000;
- publish a Registration Bulletin for 2008-2009 at a cost of approximately \$39,415 for 25,000 pieces; and
- replace one-third of the Library Development Bureau's furniture at an approximate cost of \$30,000

in accordance with the explanation and description of each project as set out in the attached "Bid Waiver Request"; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Trustees does hereby authorize bid waivers for the College and its affiliate, the New Jersey State Library, to do the following: use the services of mentors and course-construction consultants for the College's Directed Independent Adult Learning and Graduate Studies programs at a cost

that may exceed the bid threshold of \$28,300; enter into an agreement with Touchnet to provide a fully hosted, secure solution for our payment gateway server at an approximate cost of \$85,000; enter into a contract with Presidium to provide extended hours of technical support for our Learning Management System (Blackboard) at an approximate cost of \$50,000; use the services of Vantage Point Consulting, Inc., to look at ways to increase student success and participation in the GoArmyEd and eArmyU programs at an approximate cost of \$83,200; engage a consulting firm to implement the database designed through the Enrollment Data Analysis Development project at an approximate cost of \$80,000; use the services of Lipman Hearne to continue the College's Web site redesign project at an approximate cost of \$118,000; use the services of Simpson Scarborough to survey prospective and current students regarding their usage of our Web site at an approximate cost of \$40,000; use the services of the College's advertising agency, Princeton Partners, Inc., to develop targeted advertising at an approximate cost of \$315,000; publish a Registration Bulletin for 2008-2009 at a cost of approximately \$39,415 for 25,000 pieces; and replace one-third of the Library Development Bureau's furniture at an approximate cost of \$30,000.

Mr. Arndt moved, and Ms. Hammond seconded, the motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED RULE N.J.A.C. 15:23 LIBRARY CERTIFICATION**

Norma Blake explained the need for the proposed rule regarding librarian certification. Thomas Edison State College does this certification now, and does so much more efficiently than the Department of Education did in the past. The proposed rule codifies Thomas Edison State College's role and the criteria for certification, and was very well received during the comment period.

Mr. Fricke presented the following resolution:

- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees holds the College and its affiliate, the New Jersey State Library pursuant to P.L. 2001, c.137, in trust for the public, representing the public interest in governance, policies and development of the College and Library; and
- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees has authority over all matters concerning the supervision and operations of the College and the New Jersey State Library; and
- WHEREAS:** A new Library Rule, N.J.A.C. 15:23, has been proposed and public comment has been received and assessed in accord with N.J.A.C. 1:30-1 et seq.; and
- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees concurs with the proposed rule as it will be presented to the Office of Administrative Law now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED:** That the proposed Library Rule be adopted and amended as incorporated herein by reference.

**CONSIDERATION OF STUDENT LOAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

Dr. Pruitt described the background for the need for the College to establish its own Student Loan Code of Conduct. Out of concern for consumer protection in the area of student loans, there have been federal and state investigations into possible ethics violations regarding student loan practices around the country, and New Jersey's colleges and universities have been under scrutiny as well. Thomas Edison State College has never had any problem with this, but in the past, the New Jersey HESA agency gave preferential treatment to Sallie Mae. As a result, the Attorney General of New Jersey promulgated a Student Loan Code of Conduct and insisted that all institutions adopt it. Although a number of other institutions did so, Thomas Edison State College responded that while we do have an obligation to adopt such a policy, we would do this only upon Board review and approval. In its original form, the Attorney General's version of this code was flawed in that it had proscriptions against people working for lending institutions serving as trustees, and, later, proscriptions against such individuals receiving compensation from a financial institution if they did serve. The Attorney General's code also was framed in a way that had college presidents signing it as an agreement with the Attorney General's Office. Therefore, Thomas Edison State College has prepared its own Code of Conduct, which was then vetted by legal counsel. Formulating and adopting our own code preserves the processes that affirm the College's autonomy. We have now presented our code to the Attorney General's office, and it has been accepted.

Mr. Fricke presented the following resolution:

- WHEREAS:** The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College has the authority and the responsibility to determine policy for the College; and
- WHEREAS:** Thomas Edison State College is committed to the spirit and letter of policies and protocols establishing appropriate protections against conflicts of interest regarding student loans; and
- WHEREAS:** The proposed policy entitled "Student Loan Code of Conduct" has been drafted in accord with New Jersey's existing Conflicts of Interest Law, the College's own Code of Ethics, and recommended language promulgated by the State's Attorney General's Office; and
- WHEREAS:** the President of the College recommends that the proposed Student Loan Code of Conduct be adopted as presented; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED:** That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby accept the recommendation to approve the Thomas Edison State College Student Loan Code of Conduct as presented and incorporated herein by reference.

Mr. Fricke moved, and Mr. Abbate seconded, the motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEGREE**

Mr. Seaton announced that we have 512 graduates. He stated we are on a record pace for numbers of graduates this year; all groups except human services graduates are up.

Mr. Seaton presented the following resolution:

**The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby approve the awarding of the appropriate degrees to those March 7, 2008, candidates indicated 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.**

Mr. Abbate made, and Ms. Hammond seconded, the motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

Dr. Pruitt presented the following resolution:

**The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby appoint Julian Wade Farrior, Associate Professor of Biology, Gwynedd Mercy College; Joseph Linskey, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology, Centenary College; John Mellon, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Misericordia University; Diane Trainor, Chair, Chemistry/Physics Department, Middlesex County College; and Karen Wisniewski, Associate Professor of Business, County College of Morris to three-year terms on the Academic Council and does hereby appoint MacKington Joseph, Apprentice Engineering Technician, Public Service Electric & Gas, to a two-year term as the Thomas Edison State College student representative on the Academic Council.**

**CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT RENEWALS**

Dr. Pruitt presented a resolution for contract renewals as follows:

**The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby approve the contract recommendations as indicated on the lists provided and incorporated herein by reference.**

**The action taken herein is pursuant to an evaluation of each employee's work performance and the recommendation of the President.**

Ms. Hammond made, and Mr. Fricke seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS**

Dr. Pruitt presented the following resolution:

**The Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby approve all appointments as indicated on the lists provided and incorporated herein by reference.**

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

Ms. Hammond made, and Mr. Arndt seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF RECOGNITION OF LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR**

The Board of Trustees expressed its admiration of Norma Blake and its pleasure that she has been honored as Librarian of the Year. Dr. Pruitt presented the following resolution:

**WHEREAS:** Norma E. Blake, State Librarian of New Jersey, leads the New Jersey State Library, which is an affiliate of Thomas Edison State College; and

**WHEREAS:** Her distinguished professional work has caused the public libraries of New Jersey to emerge as the cultural and educational centers of their communities; and

**WHEREAS:** Librarians, library trustees, and residents of New Jersey have long recognized Norma E. Blake as an outstanding professional, appreciated her commitment to excellence, and admired her enthusiasm and energy; and

**WHEREAS:** The national publication *Library Journal* has recognized her accomplishments by naming her "2008 National Librarian of the Year"; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison State College does hereby congratulate Norma E. Blake for her having been so recognized by her community, her peers, and the national library community.

Mr. Carnevale made, and Mr. Abbate seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There being no further business, Mr. Carnevale made, and Mr. Fricke seconded, a motion to adopt a resolution to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dr. Pruitt presented the following resolution:

**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 College hold a closed session at 12:00 noon or immediately following the public meeting of December 7, 2007.**



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

Ms. Pearson made, and Mr. Abbate seconded, a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,



George A. Pruitt  
Secretary of the Board ..

Approved by,



Marilyn R. Pearson  
Chairperson