



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Public Retreat/Meeting

#### Minutes

July 27, 2023

A retreat/meeting of the Ocean County College Board of Trustees was called to order at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 13, 2023, by Mr. Jerry Dasti, Chair, in the Conference Center and via Webex.

Call to Order

The announcement of public meeting was made by Mrs. Connie Bello in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975. Notice of this meeting was publicized through a resolution adopted at the November 2022 reorganization meeting and distributed as required by law. In addition, a notice was publicized on July 6, 2023, indicating this meeting would be held via Webex, as provided for by New Jersey Public Law 2020, Chapter 11, approved on March 20, 2020, for public bodies to conduct meetings by electronic means.

Public Meeting  
Announcement

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Those in attendance were: Mr. Dasti, Mrs. Linda Novak, Mr. Frank Dupignac, Mr. Stephan Leone, Mr. Robert Fall, Mrs. Joanne Pehlivanian, Mr. Joseph Teichman, Mr. Carl V. Thulin, Mr. Jack Sahradnik, Mr. Matthew Thompson, Dr. Pamela Monaco, and Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration Sara Winchester. Mr. Charles Muller joined the meeting at 12:40 p.m. Also attending were Ocean County Commissioner Virginia Haines; Dr. Joseph Konopka, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Gerald Racioppi, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Eileen Garcia, Vice President of e-Learning and Learning Enterprises; Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Executive Director, Institutional Planning, Effectiveness, and Compliance; and Mr. James Marshall, Associate Director of Assessment.

Attendance

#### Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Middle States  
Update

Dr. Monaco spoke of the important work that must be done by the College to address the concerns identified in the Notification of Non-Compliance Letter issued by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. At the same time, she recognized her good fortune as the new President of OCC to be surrounded by so many competent colleagues who will ensure this effort will be successful. She shared that the development of an excellent plan is already underway, which she asked Dr. Beshara-Blauth to review with the trustees.

Dr. Beshara-Blauth summarized the Non-Compliance Action: The Commission placed OCC on warning because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Standard VII, Governance, Leadership, and Administration; the institution remains accredited while on warning; the Middle States' liaison to OCC will visit the campus on

September 14, 2023, to discuss the Commission's expectations; a Monitoring Report is due to the Commission on January 16, 2024; and a follow-up visit will take place after submission of the Monitoring Report.

Dr. Monaco noted there will be many components within the plan to address the identified concerns, as the plan must be a collaborative effort that reaches within all constituencies of the College. Consulting services may be contracted to provide professional development to Dr. Monaco and the Board of Trustees to assist in implementing best practices and to provide guidance to the College as it considers a new governance structure. Progress on these are two crucial steps in the plan that will demonstrate the College's strong commitment to improvement.

Mr. Marshall discussed the visit by Dr. Ann Wahl, OCC's Middle States Liaison, which will take place on September 14, 2024. Dr. Wahl will meet with a variety of people on campus to offer assistance on what will be required by the Commission related to Standard VII, including the submission of additional evidence.

Mr. Marshall and Dr. Beshara-Blauth will lead a Monitoring Report Working Group; those who served on Standard VII for the Self-Study will form an Advisory Committee to assist as necessary.

Action related to the Non-Compliance Letter has already been initiated and will continue into the future. Policy #1270, Evaluation of the President, was adopted by the Board in February 2023, and a procedure was developed for trustee review. Dr. Monaco requested that the procedure include the opportunity for members of the College community to provide input on the president's performance. This input is not only a vital part of the evaluation process, but it also confirms that shared governance at OCC will mean listening to everyone on campus. It was also noted that the 2022-23 evaluations of the vice presidents were completed.

In terms of communication, it is essential to do a better job of keeping students, employees, and OCC stakeholders informed of all campus news. Dr. Monaco urged everyone to visit the Middle States accreditation page on the College website so they have current information on the College's progress/response to the Commission's concerns. Additionally, she will communicate with students and employees on a regular basis.

The Fall 2023 Colloquium will be restructured. Instead of hearing reports from the president and vice presidents, the gathering will provide the opportunity for open dialogue, questions, and answers by all in attendance. Attendees will be divided into small groups to engage in discussions on various topics and issues related to improving the College. A spokesperson from each group will then summarize their thoughts and ideas to share with the larger group. In this way, all participants will be actively involved in all aspects of the institution.

#### Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

Board of Trustees  
Self-Assessment

The Board Self-Assessment survey was distributed to trustees in April and was available for completion until the middle of May. All Board members participated in the survey this year.

As has been done for the past several years, the results of the survey are shared and discussed with the trustees at the July Board Retreat.

Dr. Beshara-Blauth provided a summary of the way strengths and weaknesses are determined by the New Hampshire Center for Non-Profits. She gave a general overview of this year's survey results as well as highlighted areas that had variations in responses from previous years.

A new category was added to this year's survey regarding trustee external relations practices. It was suggested it might be helpful to trustees to define the types of activities and events in the survey questions as well as consider goals for trustee attendance at College events.

Ms. Sara Winchester shared some good news with the trustees. The Governor added \$20 million to the State's FY 2024 community college budget, which translates to an additional \$1 million in operating support for OCC. The receipt of these additional funds will reduce the amount projected to be needed from fund balance. It is hoped this increase will be sustained in future budgets.

FY 2024 OCC  
Operating Budget

Mr. Dasti opened the meeting for public comments. A former OCC adjunct professor addressed the Board regarding her preference for face-to-face classes with students. She finds the HyFlex classes are not as effective as having the students in the classroom.

Public Comments

Dr. David Bordelon, Professor of English, suggested it is important to recognize the distinction between distance learning and HyFlex teaching. Students generally enroll in HyFlex courses to attend classes in person but have the option of joining online if they cannot travel to the campus. Dr. Bordelon is a strong proponent of online courses but not necessarily of HyFlex because the course syllabi are designed differently, which presents a challenge to the instructor when a face-to-face class is taught in an online modality.

Dr. Bordelon encouraged the Board to engage all stakeholders in College discussions and to keep lines of communication open between trustees and faculty.

The Board adopted a resolution, upon unanimous roll call vote, to move into a closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel action, collective bargaining, and pending and anticipated litigation, the results of which will be released to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists. The length of the closed session was estimated to be approximately thirty minutes, after which the public meeting would resume and adjourn.

Resolution Adopted  
for Closed Meeting

The Board moved into a closed session at 1:18 p.m., and resumed the public meeting at 1:47 p.m.

The next meetings of the Board are scheduled for:

Meetings  
Scheduled

**Thursday, July 27, 2023**

9:00 a.m.	International Programs Committee (As Needed)
10:00 a.m.	Finance Committee
10:00 a.m.	Bylaw, Policy, and Curriculum Committee (As Needed)

10:30 a.m.	Buildings and Grounds Committee
11:00 a.m.	Personnel Committee
11:30 a.m.	Closed Session
12:30 p.m.	Regular Public Monthly Meeting

With no further comments from the Board members or the public, the meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Stephan R. Leone  
Secretary

Connie Bello  
Assistant to the President/  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees