

**NJCU University Senate Meeting
November 25, 2024**

Attachments are in the link below:

[2024 November 25 SM Docs](#)

Meeting called to order by President Fran Moran at 2:02 pm

Test Zoom Voting—Successful

Motion to Approve the University Senate Meeting Agenda -- Approved

Motion to Approve the University Senate Meeting Minutes of the October 28th Meeting -- Approved

**University Senate President's Report
Dr. Fran Moran**

In the SharePoint link for this meeting, you'll notice a report from the Committee on Engaged Learning and that committee is not on the agenda. That is not an error. The report updates us on the activities of the committee (they have met and selected a chair, so thank you Prof. Nava Cohen for stepping up into that role). They also discussed the current state of the CEL curriculum and outlined plans to create a committee manual. They'll be meeting again to review candidate materials for the CEL Director position. They still need a representative from College of Professional Studies and a student representative. Please read the report and share it with colleagues.

Some of you may recall that we had Melissa Faulkner from Career Planning and Placement speak at our October Senate meeting updating us on changes underway in that Office. On the heels of that presentation, SEC received an inquiry about how to change the curriculum for what was formerly called Co Operative Education. Chris Shamburg, working with Melissa, prepared a modest report on the current status of the curriculum and on SEC we discussed how best to proceed revising it. While revision is pretty straightforward, we were stymied here by our own course proposal process. At this point that process is not really configured to allow for course proposals from non-faculty members. We were initially thinking of asking to create another Ad Hoc committee to review, but before asking for that I met with Provost Breault and Associate Provost and CIM guru Scott O'Connor to discuss the difficulties and we worked out the broad strokes of a process. After that meeting I reached out to Corey Frost and Michelle Rosen, the co-chairs of C&I, and that committee is working with the Provost's office to flesh out the ideas developed at the aforementioned meeting. I mention this last part here more for a chuckle, but in

trying to locate examples of how the CoOp curriculum was revised before all we could find was a Senate presentation in 2002 from the then VP of Academic Affairs Larry Carter bullet pointing

that we would upgrade the academic chops of the CoOp program. We found nothing in the intervening 20+ years to indicate that that ever occurred.

On Wednesday, 20 November, President Acebo introduced the Senate Executive Committee to Dr. Ricardo Azziz, who is with the consulting firm contracted by the University as part of our obligations under the Financial Monitor's report. We met with Dr. Azziz for about an hour for a collegial discussion about the University's near and long-term future. Without delving into the details of specific questions/answers, the takeaway from the meeting, per Dr. Azziz, is that his firm was hired to conduct due diligence in identifying a viable partner to assure the long-term viability of the institution; that no negotiations are ongoing, and no proposals have been received. That said, the political realities in Trenton are such that the governor needs to submit a budget to the Assembly in February, so working back from that general timeline we should expect to hear something more concrete before then.

Senate Committee Vacancies:

Planning, Development & Budget need COE reps.

The Faculty & Professional Staff Affairs Committee needs a rep from SoB and a student rep.

NJCU President Acebo's Update

The Secretary of Higher Education had a benchmark in the institutional transition plan for the University. One of those requirements is that the Board of Trustees issues an update by the before the end of the first quarter of 2025 to conclude its study exploring partnerships, mergers, or affiliations with another four-year university. There is no active proposal to merge, partner, or affiliate this institution. The University is in the midst, with its consultant, of a study. Concerns are premature and misplaced. Whatever we do pursue will be a multi-year process. For the first time in over a decade, both Moody's and Fitch have moved our rating from negative to stable. Enrollment of new students, for the first time in over seven cycles, is up. There should be confidence in the future of this institution. The corrective action plan is being exceeded. The University is in a stronger position to define our future than it was two years ago.

Questions and Answers

Question: Why would another institution be interested in NJCU?

Answer: We have a value proposition and a mission that is attractive to others, and there is a pressure of consolidation. When you look at other institutions, collaborations with a diverse urban community like NJCU is attractive.

Question: Considering where NJCU was two years ago and our improvements, can the state plan be re-assessed?

Answer: NJCU has facilitated a broader conversation about how regional institutions are funded. This demonstrates that if we were adequately funded, we could have addressed these problems

earlier. This will likely be revisited in two years. Currently there is legislation in the statehouse to re-examine the higher education ecosystem.

Question: How likely is it to keep us independent until the statewide higher education restructuring?

Answer: Though there have been conversations about that possibility, we still have an obligation to honor the transition plan and explore partnerships, affiliations, and mergers.

Question: Has the executive team discussed the political crisis when 2025 hits? What happens to the institution and diversity initiatives when the federal government promises to cut funding based on DEI initiatives.

Answer: This is a frequent topic. We are ready to fight. We have made this about social and economic mobility. Our mission is about fundamental fairness that is harder to attack.

TRIO Learning Community Program Update

Ms. Stephanie Burbano, Counselor (Presentation Attached)

Senate Committee Reports

The Honors Program Committee

Dr. Esther Nir, Chairperson

[02bHonors Program Report 11-25-2024.pdf](#)

Planning, Development & Budget Committee

Dr. Hanae Haouari, Chairperson

[02cPD&B Comm report 11.25.2024.pdf](#)

[02dPD&B Comm Manual 11.2024.pdf](#)

Meeting Adjourned: 3:08 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Shamburg, Ed.D.

December 9, 2024