



# Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Northeast Ohio Medical University  
June 20, 2024 at 1:15 PM EST

## Attendance

**Trustees:** *E. Douglas Beach, Ph.D., Chair, Darrell L. McNair, M.B.A., Vice Chair, Omer Ashruf, Sharlene Ramos Chesnes, William H. Considine, M.H.S.A., Karen Soehnlén McQueen, J.D., Olivia Safady, M.D., Ward J. “Tim” Timken Jr., M.B.A., Phillip L. Trueblood, Susan Tave Zelman, Ph.D., John T. Langell, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., FACS, Ex Officio*

**NEOMED Personnel:** *Tricia Babkoff, Marc Basson, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., Janet Coon, Sebastian Diaz, Ph.D., J.D., Rebecca Z. German, Ph.D., Jeanne Hoban, Lacey A. Madison, M.B.A., M.Ed., LSSBB, Heather McColloch, Eugene Mowad, M.D., Maria R. Schimer, J.D., M.P.H., Tonya Strong-Charles, Mary Taylor, M. Tax., CPA, Katherine Tromp, Pharm.D., David Vitatoe*

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

*E. Douglas Beach, Chair*

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

### Request for Recusal

Request for Recusal

Chair Beach called the meeting to order at 1:09 PM. Secretary Coon called the roll and noted that a quorum was present. Chair Beach asked if any Trustee would need recusal from any of the agenda items presented; there being none, he proceeded with the meeting.

#### 1.1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 7, 2024, Meeting

APPROVAL

Chair Beach noted that all Trustees had received copies of the minutes from the full Board meeting on March 7, 2024. He asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections. There being none, Chair Beach called for a motion to approve the March 7, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion moved by Trustee Timken and seconded by Trustee Zelman.

### 2. Oath of Office

*Maria R. Schimer, M.P.H., J.D.*

### 3. Executive Session

DISCUSS

Chair Beach called for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a public employee. Motion moved by Trustee Timken and seconded by Trustee Zelman.

Chair Beach moved to reconvene the Board meeting and confirmed that during the Executive Session, no action was taken. Chair Beach made a motion for General Counsel to draft an amendment to the contract discussed in the Executive Session. Motion moved by Trustee Timken, seconded by Trustee Trueblood, and approved unanimously.

Chair Beach stated that all committees met previously, approved their respective resolutions, and moved to include them in a Consent Agenda. This includes Resolutions 2024-20 through 2024-27.

Chair Beach asked Committee Chair McNair to provide a summary of the Institutional Advancement Committee meeting.

**4. Report of the Institutional Advancement Committee**

*Darrell L. McNair, M.B.A., Committee Chair*

INFORM

Committee Chair McNair confirmed the March 7, 2024 meeting minutes were approved and no resolutions were brought forward for review. He shared the Advancement's organizational chart for Board transparency and noted there are currently six positions to fill. Doreen Riley, Vice President for Advancement, has been on leave since the beginning of this year. David Vitatoe is filling in as the Interim Vice President for Advancement to ensure the department's success. Mr. Vitatoe reported the University had a strong 2023 fiscal year and set a goal of \$7M, a stairstep to the overarching \$10M goal. Although NEOMED will fall short of achieving that goal, cash in the door is above target and the department has many events planned. Committee Chair McNair would like to see engagement from Trustees.

Chair Beach thanked Committee Chair McNair for his report and asked Committee Chair Zelman to provide an update on the Academic and Scientific Affairs Committee.

**5. Report of the Academic and Scientific Affairs Committee**

*Susan Tave Zelman, Ph.D., Committee Chair*

INFORM

The committee met on May 30, 2024, via Zoom and approved the minutes from the March 7, 2024, meeting. Dr. Faison brought forward several resolutions for Board approval including personnel actions, non-tenure track faculty appointments, promotions, and reappointments, as well as the 2024 NEOMED Campus Completion Plan. Reports were shared on the University's two new institutes: the Institute for Teaching Excellence and the Clinical and Translational Research Institute. Dr. Beck provided an update regarding the University's action steps related to the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) application and timeline for approval. Finally, Dr. German highlighted updates for Research and Sponsored Programs.

Trustee Chesnes also provided an overview of the 2024 Trustees Conference she attended on June 5 at Columbus State Community College; an event to connect as trustees and collaborate on how to be effective and successful in supporting educational institutions.

Chair Beach thanked Committee Chair Zelman and asked Committee Chair Timken to provide a summary of the Finance, Fiscal Policy, and Investment Committee.

## **6. Report of the Finance, Fiscal Policy and Investment Committee**

*Ward J. "Tim" Timken, Jr., M.B.A., Committee Chair*

INFORM

Committee Chair Timken confirmed the minutes from the March 7, 2024, meeting were approved during the May 30, 2024 Committee meeting. Several resolutions were discussed including hourly and administrative personnel and the 2025 General Fund Budget. Ms. Taylor provided an update on the Moody's Bond rating report. The University's outlook was upgraded from stable to positive with a Bond Rating of BAA1 positive. Ms. Taylor noted that NEOMED has had one upgrade and a second outlook upgrade within four years. Items to note are an excellent brand and strategic positioning as a public health sciences university, a strong unrestricted liquidity profile, and prudent financial management leading to a recent trend of strengthened financial operations. This is a testament to the fiscal discipline instilled at the institution.

Mr. Grant Guyuron from Clearstead reported on the University's portfolio which showed a slight downturn earlier in the year but remains positive overall. Finally, Ms. Taylor noted that there were changes within the Key Performance Indicators report in the Board book, but no updates related to finance, fiscal policy, and investments.

Chair Beach noted that all reports and action items were reviewed and approved in their respective committees and a second is not required. The Consent Agenda includes Resolutions R2024-20 through R2024-27. Chair Beach asked if any items required further discussion. There being none, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Chair Beach asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion moved by Trustee Considine and seconded by Trustee McNair. The Consent Agenda was approved.

## **7. Report of the President**

*John T. Langell, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FACS*

INFORM

### **Northeast Ohio Medical University Strategic Plan**

*Lacey A. Madison, M.B.A., M.Ed., LSSBB, Vice President for Strategy and Transformation*

### **Exceptional Student Experience**

*Sebastian Diaz, Ph.D., J.D., Associate Dean of Quality Initiatives, COM Academic Affairs*

The University celebrated Commencement on May 4 with nearly 300 graduates. The College of Graduate Studies had its largest graduating class in history, including 12 graduates of the inaugural class of the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant program. Milestone celebrations in July and August feature White Coat ceremonies for the College of Medicine with its largest enrollment between 180-190 students; the College of Pharmacy is back on track with 50-60 new students and the College of Graduate Studies continues to grow. Dr. Langell invited and encouraged Trustees to attend.

Dr. Langell welcomed Tonya Strong-Charles, NEOMED's new Chief Marketing Officer. Tonya brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her position with an impressive resume including higher education communications for both Syracuse University and John Carroll University and work as a journalist for WEWS (News 5 Cleveland) and News Anchor at WKYC.

Recognition was given to Jennifer Baccon, M.D., Ph.D., a clinical faculty member at Akron Children's Hospital who was named President-elect for the Association of Academic Pathology, Omer Ashruf, NEOMED student Trustee who was selected to chair the Council of Student Members within the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP), and congratulations to Dr. Olivia Safady who ends her term as student Trustee and will move on to start her residency at Summa Health in Akron.

Dr. Langell thanked the board for approving the budget allowing NEOMED to continue growing resources and programs and praised Mary Taylor and her accounting team for the work they accomplished. He also provided a recap of NEOMED's annual NEOvations Bench to Bedside competition in May. A record number of student teams from NEOMED and other universities presented their medical technologies to a panel of judges. The program offers students the opportunity to identify a patient's need at the bedside and aid in their search for an innovative medical solution for better healthcare outcomes.

The UH-NEOMED Affiliation Agreement is fully executed; the team is exploring a College of Nursing program and is in initial discussions to move it forward. The launch of Executive Education, providing professional development in healthcare, offers six new programs filled by clinical professionals. The program enrolled 622 seats within a five-month timeframe.

Dr. Langell shared the Bitonte College of Dentistry (COD) received approval from the state and the Higher Learning Commission; the University is waiting for final approval by the Commission on Dental Accreditation in August to begin recruitment in September for the first dental class in August 2025. A big thank you to the COD leadership team and Provost Office for the tremendous work throughout the process.

Finally, Dr. Langell shared that NEOMED's Grand Casino night is November 1, 2024, and is the University's ultimate fundraiser and celebration of 50 years of existence. This will be an exciting event, a time to get together, engage, and enjoy some entertainment.

Dr. Langell asked Lacey Madison to provide the University Strategic Plan update.

Ms. Madison provided a top 10 list with a focus on quality that drives the mission in NEOMED's Strategic Plan. Progress to date is at 79 percent heading into the final year. A focus on People has been demonstrated by initiatives such as Lean Six Sigma with over 51 percent of NEOMED's workforce trained and certified, professional development workshops, faculty development, standardized workload distribution, and adjusted faculty and staff compensation.

Campus enhancements, finances, and research and innovation were shared. Strategic Initiative Funds to date total \$1.5M awarded for initiatives including communication, marketing, enrollment strategies, student support services, CQI curricular improvements, inter-professional education and student leadership opportunities, legislative and advocacy efforts, and the Exceptional Student Experience on campus.

A focus on growth features the Bitonte College of Dentistry, innovative enrollment strategies, five new masters and rebranded programs, and the redefinition and expansion of diversity, as well as strategic partnerships including clinical partners Summa Health and Akron Children's Hospital and the UH partnership expansion with 100 percent of deliverables on time, on budget and high-quality.

Community, academic excellence, and exceptional experience all contribute to the Strategic Plan's progress. The integration of Voice of Customer engagement and analysis to inform the Exceptional Student Experience (ESE) and adoption of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a university metric are useful tools. The work of Drs. Sandra MacPherson and Sebastian Diaz and members of the Strategy team have been groundbreaking.

Ms. Madison introduced Dr. Sebastian Diaz, Associate Dean of Quality Initiatives, COM Academic Affairs, to present this process and progress of utilizing the Net Promoter Score as a means to understand the constructs of the ESE.

Dr. Diaz said in 2021, the ESE was identified by Dr. Langell as a high-priority initiative and Dr. Sandra MacPherson began working on a LSS Green Belt project with this focus. A timeline of events was shared to show the work being done. Dr. Diaz shared results of the second full ESE

Survey implementation and the third Net Promoter Score collection, both quantitative and qualitative to compare results over time and track improvement. NPS ratings show promoters increased by 6.3 points since 2021 and 7.9 points since 2022. Detractors decreased by one point since 2021 and 8.36 points since 2022. Themes that matter most to students are curriculum and academic focus, faculty and quality teaching, support and resources, community and culture, post-grad preparedness, clinical experiences, and communication/administrative issues.

NEOMED is strong in faculty and teaching quality, support and resources and post-grad preparedness. Areas for opportunity include curriculum and academic focus. Recommendations to continue ESE initiatives include sustainability and leadership of the ESE initiatives; centralizing the ESE goals and initiatives under the leadership of the Office of the Provost, curricular innovation and collaboration; continuing the work of the University Curricular Quality Collaborative (UCQC); institutional assessment and expand the work of IR to create an institutional assessment.

**8. Old Business**

DISCUSS

**9. New Business**

DISCUSS

**9.1. Recommendation to Approve a Resolution of Appreciation to Olivia L. Safady M.D. (R2024-28)**

APPROVAL

Chair Beach acknowledged Dr. Olivia Safady's term ending as student Trustee and recommended the approval of the Resolution of Appreciation for Olivia L. Safady, M.D. for her efforts on behalf of the University and as a student Trustee since June 2022.

Dr. Olivia L. Safady graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and health sciences with a chemistry minor in May 2021 from Cleveland State University and earned her Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree from the Northeast Ohio Medical University on May 4, 2024. Dr. Olivia L. Safady was involved in many leadership positions at NEOMED, including course representative for the Patient, Physician, and Community 2 course to enhance student feedback and communication within the class, Co-President of the American Medical Woman's Association, Community Service Chair of the Family Medicine Interest Group, President of the Palliative Care Interest Group, and Vice President of the Preventative Health Interest Group.

She served as a member of the events committee for NEOMED's American Medical Association and served as the M1 representative in the Internal Medicine Interest Group, where she engaged

with members of the class to gather information about their interests in internal medicine. Dr. Olivia L. Safady was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society and was a recipient of the Ross R. Black II, M.D., Endowed Family Medicine Scholarship Award, and the Outstanding Student in Palliative Care Award.

Motion moved by Trustee Considine and seconded by Trustee Timken. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **10. Adjournment**

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Beach reminded trustees that the next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 12, 2024. Chair Beach called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Timken moved the approval. Trustee Considine seconded the motion. No one opposed. The motion was carried unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.

**For a fully executed version of the minutes,  
please contact the Board office at 330.325.6864**