

Stockton Trustees Authorize Negotiations with Harvey Kesselman Regarding Presidency

For Immediate Release; with photos on [flickr](#) and headshot attached

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**Contact: Maryjane Briant
News and Media Relations Director
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Maryjane.Briant@Stockton.edu
(609) 652-4593**

Galloway, NJ –The Board of Trustees of Stockton University today authorized negotiations on a contractual agreement between the board and Interim President Harvey Kesselman that could lead to his appointment as Stockton's fifth president.

"Stockton is privileged to have such an extraordinary leader, someone who has grown along with the institution, who has dedicated his life to academic excellence and who always puts students first," said Board Chair Madeleine Deininger. "Dr. Kesselman has shown exceptional leadership as well as the willingness to sacrifice his own interests during a challenging time. When the trustees asked him to stay on earlier this year and he agreed, there was a tremendous outpouring of support from the Stockton community, the region and the state. He has more than earned the board's full confidence."

Deininger outlined the many types of experience and skills that any candidate for university president would have to have, as Kesselman already does: having served as a provost, a college vice president and a dean, with knowledge of strategic planning, accreditation, academic affairs, collective bargaining, fiscal affairs, national and state education policies, national and state politics, and a focus on students. The president also would have to be "someone who has demonstrated a commitment to his or her own community and someone who understands the multi-layered difficulties that Stockton uniquely faces," she said.

She added that the board is working more closely together than ever and wants to negotiate with Kesselman because "we'd like his head and his heart to continue to work on behalf of the Stockton community."

That brought the faculty, staff, students and trustees all to their feet to applaud Kesselman at the crowded meeting.

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-continued from page 1-

Trustee Raymond Ciccone added, in reference to Kesselman's reputation for starting work very early: "You used to email me at 5 a.m., then it was 4, then it became 3:30 - please can we go back to 5 a.m.?"

Kesselman is a nationally known educator who has served Stockton in many leadership roles over the past 35 years. He became interim president on Sept. 1. Originally set to become president of the University of Southern Maine in July, he agreed to remain at the University as acting president following the medical leave and resignation of former President Herman Saatkamp.

"I am honored and humbled by the board's support," said Kesselman. "My wife, Lynne, and I are both Stockton graduates and we consider this a very special place. Most of all, I'm inspired by the people of Stockton, and our 40-plus years of shared principles and traditions. Together, we will continue to build on Stockton's legacy and move forward."

"We really do have to focus on the students, and then all good things will happen," he added.

Kesselman previously served as provost and executive vice president, a role in which he implemented Stockton's Essential Learning Outcomes to combine classroom education with real-world, practical skills including teamwork, critical thinking and communication. He extended the institution's community and international partnerships, and supported faculty and student initiatives through the University's 2020 strategic planning process.

Kesselman's other senior leadership roles at Stockton have included: dean of the School of Education, interim vice president for Administration and Finance, CEO of the Southern Regional Institute (SRI) and Educational Technology Training Center (ETTC), and vice president for Student Affairs.

On the national level, Kesselman has been a presenter at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP). He also serves as a reviewer for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

On the state level, Kesselman has been appointed by New Jersey governors and state education leaders to provide expertise on several authorities, committees and task forces. He also helped oversee New Jersey's \$1 billion student financial aid program and provided expertise on the Governor's Task Force to improve the NJ STARS scholarship program.

Stockton held its first classes in 1971 under the leadership of Richard E. Bjork, whose presidency was followed by those of Peter M. Mitchell, Vera King Farris and Herman Saatkamp.

The board resolution authorizes the trustees' executive committee to negotiate a contractual/compensation agreement with Kesselman for consideration at the Dec. 2 meeting.

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