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## A Mark of More Change at Brookdale

Via letter, Simon Bosco, trustee board vice-chairman, cites decision to retire from 40-year career in education and new opportunities.



**Yet another element of forecasted** change has taken hold at [Brookdale Community College](#) since its former president, Peter F. Burnham, stepped down in March amid a storm of controversy over his spending and the board that approved it.

Most recently, rather than await an uncertain fate, [Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees](#) Acting Vice-Chairman Simon Bosco has stepped down from the panel that oversees the county college.

In a letter he submitted to the board last week, Bosco said he would resign immediately due to his post-retirement plans following a 40-year career in education according to Avis McMillon, a Brookdale spokesperson.

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Bosco, currently the superintendent of the Old Bridge Township Public Schools, wrote that "other opportunities have surfaced for him" that he expects to pursue once he leaves his full-time job, McMillon said.

Bosco's four-seat seat, as well as two other trustee seats, is presently up for grabs at the end of this year. He had been awaiting word of his re-appointment by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Co-trustee Lewis Anderson is still holding out for re-appointment to the ten-member board despite a call from Freeholder John Curley for all of the trustees to follow Bosco's lead and step down.

Curley, the county board's liaison to Brookdale, had first called for the trustees to resign as a whole back in March after the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation into the spending practices of the college president's office.

The county investigation focused upon the budget and perks approved by the trustee board for then-college president, Burnham.

Under fire by county officials, Burnham ultimately resigned March 8 in the wake of the investigation and controversy surrounding it.

During Burnham's tenure as president, the trustees allegedly signed off on bills for his housing allowance, a new car, country club memberships, and tuition to private colleges for his two sons.

Bosco, of Tinton Falls, did not mention or refer in his resignation letter to the county investigation, the controversy surrounding Burnham's compensation or Curley's call for all of the trustees to leave, McMillon said.

In reply to Bosco's letter, Acting Board Chairman Jacob Elkes has released a collective statement from the panel thanking him for his four years of service on the county board and wishing him well.

"It is not often that the board is able to attract someone with the talent and experience of Simon Bosco," Elkes' letter read. "We accept his decision and understand that he will be retiring soon as superintendent of schools."

Bosco could be reached for comment at press time.

About 39 resumes had been received by Brookdale's trustee search committee by the submission deadline of Nov. 9 according to Curley, who still maintains that the full board ought to step down.

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"Mr. Bosco has moved on and that is what we request of all of the trustees," Curley said in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

While not otherwise addressing Bosco's resignation specifically, Curley stated that as other sitting board members come up for re-appointment, they will be shown the door by the freeholders.

"They are not going to be re-appointed. They need to know that," Curley said.

The trustee search committee will be searching for candidates who can exhibit a "moral and fiscal responsibility" to county taxpayers and to those paying tuition to Brookdale, Curley said.

"We're selecting candidates who don't have the country club mentality of friendship with golf and cocktails, cocktails and golf," Curley said. "We want to do a full housecleaning, so that the public can regain confidence in the finest county college in the state."

Trustee candidates must be Monmouth County residents for at least four years and must not currently be serving in any political office.

Both Curley and Freeholder Amy Mallet have criticized the current trustee board for not keeping better tabs on the president's budget and compensation. Mallet, who lost her re-election bid earlier this month, even called for term limits for the college trustees.

"I'm not questioning their integrity. I'm questioning their judgment," Curley said.

As of Nov. 19, the trustees were also to begin searching for a permanent replacement for Burnham. Interim President William Toms, who has served as the board's secretary, remains at the the helm of the college administration based at the campus in the Lincroft section of Middletown. He is a candidate for the president's office.

Elkes, currently the acting chairman of the trustees, stepped up to replace former board chairman Howard Birdsall, who resigned in May as the investigation into the board's budgetary practices continued. John Cantalupo, the board's attorney, followed Birdsall out the door when he too resigned after coming under fire from county officials.