



## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 | 11:00am

Board Members Present: Pete Suttmeier, Donna Wadsworth, Todd LaPage, David McNally, Tricia Preston, Tommy Sloan, Linda Beers, and Seth McGowan.

Others Present: Joe Keegan, Stacie Hurwitch, Tara Evans, Sarah Maroun, Erik Harvey, Kyle Johnston, Jackie VanBrunt, Scott Harwood, Chris Knight, Erin Walkow, Chad LaDue, and Ang Brice. Members of the College community joined as well.

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Board Chair, Pete Suttmeier called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. after quorum was met.

### Minutes

Linda Beers made the motion to accept the August 29, 2025, meeting minutes. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. The August 29, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (8-0-0).

### College Senate Chair | Chad LaDue

- Members of the Senate are working to secure chairs for committees and begin their important work.
- The Senate's goal for 2025-2026 is to remember, we're practicing shared governance in action. This includes honoring our by-laws and modeling the collaborative spirit in which it represents.
- Members of the Board discussed their attendance at future meetings. Stacie will work with Chad to set this up with the Board later.

### NCCCAP President | Angela Brice

Members are scheduled to meet on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

### CSEA President | Dianna Trummer

No report presented.

### Board Chair | Pete Suttmeier

- Pete noted that the Foundation is aiming to have all members of the Foundation Board and the Board of Trustees as contributors to the NCCC Foundation and encouraged fellow trustees to contribute if possible. He indicated that the fundraising position of the Foundation was strengthened when it could note such commitment when asking those outside of the College for support. Members of the Foundation Board are requesting 100% contribution from our Board for their annual appeal.
- The upcoming election will have significant consequences for the representation on town and county Boards. Increased networking with the new supervisors/legislators will be essential to maintaining county support and outreach to the assembly on our behalf.

### Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs | Sarah Maroun

- We're just past mid-term in the semester. We've begun outreach to students in need of support (any student with grades C- or lower). Student Support Coaches and the Learning Assistant Centers are helping.
- Priority registration has recently started for the Spring 2026 term.
- We attended two graduations since the Board's last meeting: Franklin Correctional on October 17<sup>th</sup> and the Federal Correctional Institute on September 24<sup>th</sup>. We also recently celebrated a couple of students who completed their bachelor's degrees after beginning their journey with us through the 2nd Chance Pell program.
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) site visit for the prison education program transition from Second Chance Pell is taking place this Friday for Franklin Correctional and Bare Hill Correctional and again on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> for FCI and Adirondack Correctional.

### Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment Management | Kyle Johnston

- Bernie Virtual Companion has launched:

#### **Overview**

- Purpose is short-term interactions with students- referring them to departments or people who may be able to assist them with their inquiry.
- Designed around institutional knowledge; input has been given by several departments to answer commonly asked questions, and ones that were pre-populated by EdSights. Unanswered questions are logged and updated into the system to expand Bernie's knowledge base.
- Bernie is continuously monitored to ensure quality and responsiveness.
- Data can be sorted by demographics

- Active Alert System- four major alerts (e.g. – mental health/suicide) will trigger an immediate notification to a select group of NCCC staff based on the type of alert.
- Opt-in rate: to date 97% of students have opted in; most notably our distance learners.

### **Funding**

- Cost: \$39,300 annually
- Source: Fully-grant funded program through SUNY Reconnect

### **Phased Deployment**

- Phase I: Initial roll-out went to current students.
- Phase II: Expand to incoming students.
- Phase III: Available to the public through the College website.
- Full Launch: Anticipated for mid-late November.
- Members of the board discussed the monitored chat-bot and how it will help our current and future students.

### Interim Chief Financial Officer | Erik Harvey:

- Provided an update on the Thesis Student Information System (SIS) project.
  - Base system is 75% complete and on time.
  - Data integration and reporting will not be completed by the planned start date of January 2026 and we expect that we will have a full launch in March 2026. This will not increase the cost of the project. More news as it becomes available.
- Spoke of recent student services investments highlighting the substantial efforts shown to better support our students, including EdSights.
- 2024-2025 Annual Audit started and is going well – all involved within the college has been responsive to the needs of the audit when Brian reaches out.
- Annual report for SUNY is being drafted and will be ready mid-November.
- November meeting CFO Agenda:
  - Approval of the proposed 2026-2027 Tuition & Fees schedule
  - Summary of year end
  - Fall enrollment
  - 5-year projection
- Members of the board discussed Erik’s report as it was presented.

### Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs | Jackie VanBrunt:

- Shared that the *Athletic Hall of Fame Weekend* was a huge success, extending thanks to Chad LaDue and his team for their excellent work and dedication to a weekend long of events. Over 400 people attended the ceremony on Friday evening.
- Our Women's Soccer team is in the semi-finals, if they win tomorrow, then the Championship game will be on Sunday.
- Student Success Coaches, previously known as Academic Career Advisors, are now under Student Affairs. Their focus is on outreach, retention, and developing programming to help students. Noting they are seeing a large increase in tutoring, self-referrals, and requests for mental health support.
- Welcomed Betsy Doud on October 6<sup>th</sup> – the College's Student Health and Wellness Counselor. She is already quite busy, and we're thrilled to have her on board with us.
- Next week we will host our first ever First-Generation Student Celebration event:
  - To recognize and celebrate those who are the first in their families to attend college.
  - One-third of our students are in this category.
  - Celebrations will be happening on each of our campuses.
- Members of the board discussed with Jackie the highlights of her report.

President | Joe Keegan:

- Joe extended thanks to the Board for their ongoing support of the College and its mission to the community.
- Joe echoed the other members of the administrative team in their reports of a strong start this semester. He extended thanks to employees of the college for their continued dedication to our students and their success. He noted they consistently lead with kindness and academic integrity.
- Joe extended thanks to members of the Board for their involvement in many events over the past several weeks:
  - Community Leaders Day: Pete, Linda, Tricia, and David
  - New York Community College Trustees Annual Conference: Pete, Tricia, & David
  - NCCC Hall of Fame Ceremony: Tricia, and David
- Special thanks were extended to Chris Knight for his role as Emcee at the Hall of Fame ceremony. He made the event truly special.
- Early September, Joe attended the SUNY Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. Their goal was to advocate financial support and ask for restored funding for Pell grants for students.
- Government Shutdown Concerns:
  - Financial - Joe shared there is has not been a financial impact to the College due to this current

shutdown.

- SNAP Benefits – Potential impact to College Community if there is a delay in benefits being issued in November.
  - Ang shared information regarding the College Food Pantry:
    - ❖ recent development of online ordering with a QR code.
    - ❖ the ordering and pick-up process are confidential.
    - ❖ there are walk-in hours on SLK campus and open tables to grab whatever is available.
    - ❖ the Food Pantry budget is funded by SGA (\$10K). Ang also noted that grant applications are in work.
  - Erin Walkow added how the Emergency Needs Fund (currently at \$10K) is at the discretion of a committee and aimed towards emergencies, food, and books.
- Looking forward to a busy end of week working with Achieving the Dream (ATD). The Core Team will be working with the coaches on reviewing and planning around current data and SUNY's Academic Momentum benchmarks. ATD will be visiting in November as planned and will hold a capacity café in Spring 2026.
- We received proposal for bid to repair the vestibule at Sparks. Capital funded. JMZ supported bid. Expected to wrap up prior to graduation in May 2026.
- Our sponsoring counties of Essex and Franklin have recently passed resolutions supporting our proposed NCCCAP and CSEA Union contracts.
- Members of the board discussed Joe's report as it was presented.

NCCC Association Director | Robert Rathbun

None

NCCC Foundation Director | Erin Walkow:

- To date, the Foundation has raised just over \$376,000 during this year.
- Some notable gifts since we last met:
  - \$5,000 gift for the Barbara Rexillius Memorial Scholarship for students in the Spring start ADN program.
  - \$25,000 gift to add funds to the Crossman Book Scholarship for student athletes. This gift is because of the great Hall of Fame ceremony and Alumni weekend that Chad LaDue and his team hosted in mid-September.
  - \$3,000 for Student Emergency Needs fund.

- Thanks to Betsy Penrose, and a grant from the Stewarts Foundation/Holiday Giving Program, we were able to help 8 high school students with their College Bridge class costs this fall.
- Per custom, a year end appeal letter to past donors and targeted prospective donors will be sent soon. Erin welcomed suggestions from the Board for individuals she could include in the Foundation's outreach.
- Erin is working on grant applications to the Birdsong Family Foundation, Stewarts Foundation and Cloudsplitter Foundation for the 2026-2027 scholarship campaign. The goal is \$50,000 for next year.
- Community Bank is paying their final pledge payment for a five-year pledge. In the new year, Erin will be working with their representatives to try and secure another multi-year commitment.

#### Old Business

None

#### New Business

- Tommy Sloan shared how the Student Government Association (SGA) is working on obtaining student feedback from events.
- Members of the board discussed NYCCT advocacy.
- Members of the board discussed outreach to Alumni. Erin shared experience and Foundation efforts of collecting contacts and their continuous outreach. Chad echoed the challenges the faces as well.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Executive Session

Tricia Preston made the motion to enter Executive Session at 12:29 p.m. in relation to collective bargaining negotiations conducted pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law; and the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (8-0-0). Joe Keegan was invited to attend the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

#### Adjourn

Tricia Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting and go into Public Session. Seth McGowan

seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (8-0-0). The Board meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stacie G. Hurwitch

Assistant Secretary, NCCC Board of Trustees

Date: November 25, 2025

Resolution: 2025-2026

Motion: Seth McGowan

Seconded: Tricia Preston

Action: Approved (7-0-0)

Pending Witness: *Stacie G. Hurwitch, Asst. Secretary to the NCCC Board of Trustees*