



## **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

Friday, February 28th, 2025 | 11:00am

**Board Members Present:** Pete Suttmeier, Donna Wadsworth, Seth McGowan, Linda Beers, Tricia Preston, Todd LaPage

**Excused:** Dan Kelleher and Shia Bright

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

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Board Chair, Pete Suttmeier called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. after quorum was met.

### Oath of Office

Tricia Preston was sworn in as an NCCC Board of Trustee member:

- This is a Governor's appointment, relieving Trustee Mary Irene Lee of her long-term position with the College.
- Tricia introduced herself to the Board, and members of the college. She was warmly welcomed by all.

### College Senate Chair | Chad LaDue

- An Ad Hoc committee has been formed to identify ways to prepare students for college by designing summer programs focused on strengthening English and math skills, aiming to improve their chances of success.
- The Board briefly discussed this new initiative.

### NCCCAP President | Lee Susice

No report.

### CSEA President | Dianna Trummer

No report.

### Minutes

Linda Beers made the motion to accept November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes were unanimously (6-0-0).

### Board Chair Report | Pete Suttmeier

Today, February 28th, is the final day for the NCCC Board to join NYCCT and other Community College Boards in accepting representation from Ingerman Smith LLP.

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

- Malone will host an event today at noon for the business and human services community, focusing on apprenticeship opportunities.
- Two program advisory boards will be held this month.
  - March 7<sup>th</sup> – Human Services
  - March 21<sup>st</sup> – Combined meeting for Arts, Graphics, and Business programs.
- The recent NYS Corrections Officers' strike has halted operations at four nearby facilities, forcing a shift to distance learning until it's safe to resume in-person activities. SUNY and State Education are involved.
- Sarah and the Board discussed AI-related professional development opportunities for faculty and explored ways to incentivize participation.

*The Board moved to approve the following resolutions:*

Seth McGowan made a motion to the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Courtney Roy, to the full-time, nine month (164-day), exempt appointment as Nursing Instructor for the remainder of 2024/25 academic year, at an annual salary of \$49,554 (prorated to reflect 1/21/2024 start date). This position is currently funded in the 2024/25 operating budget. In accordance with the current NCCCAP agreement Article VII-Appointment and Promotions, this appointment will expire at the conclusion of the 2024/2025 academic year and will not be renewed. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Linda Beers made a motion to the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby NCCC's Academic Credit by Evaluation Policy. Donna Wadsworth seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

- Members discussed the benefits of this policy and how students would be evaluated.

Seth McGowan made a motion to the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves NCCC to submit a request to SUNY and NYSED to discontinue the *AA Liberal Arts: Humanities and Social Science* at the Elizabethtown Campus. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

- Members of the board discussed the history of the Elizabethtown campus.

Seth McGowan made a motion to the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves NCCC to submit a request to SUNY and NYSED to change title of the *AAS Chemical Dependency Counseling* degree to *AAS Addictions Counseling*. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Seth McGowan made a motion to the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approved the discontinuance of the *AAS Business: Office Technology* degree program and the *Certificate: Office Technology* program. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment Management | Kyle Johnston

- Ongoing campaign efforts for various college programs continue.
- Planning is underway for a new transfer initiative with Plattsburgh, supported by a grant. A cooperative marketing campaign will run from April through mid-summer.
- After a quick turnaround time, SUNY awarded NCCC a \$50,000 grant to advertise programs

for adult learners on Monday. This aligns with Governor Hochul's initiative to offer free college to prospective students over the age of 25. Kyle noted this grant is exclusive to community colleges.

Interim CFO | Erik Harvey:

- The annual audit is complete. We anticipate the final financial report from Boulrice & Wood CPAs, P.C. to be shared in the coming months.
- Shared updates to the 5-year financial projection, including the 2024-2025 forecast tied to Spring 2025 enrollment. Moving forward, these forecasts will be shared quarterly to allow more focus between Scott and his team.
- The timeline for reviewing and approving the proposed 2025-2026 budget was presented to the Board.
- Shared that there are potential risks related to the 2nd Chance Pell program, particularly if part of the semester is lost due to the ongoing NY State Prison strike from their Corrections Officers.

*The Board moved to approve the following resolution:*

- Seth McGowan made a motion from the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves of the financials of November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, as they were presented in the packet. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs | Jackie VanBrunt:

- Our Men's Basketball team is performing well and has advanced to the championships.
- Three additional students have been recruited for the Student Government Association (SGA).
- Jackie shared a portion of the grant for adult learners that has been integrated into retention initiatives, as noted in Kyle's report.

President | Joe Keegan:

- Expressed gratitude to board members for their ongoing support of the College, students, and staff.
- Welcomed Tricia Preston as a new board member (her position is the first governors' appointment since 2015)
- Recognized Mary Irene Lee's departure after 13 years of service.
  - Mary Irene offered words of thanks and appreciation for the honor of serving on the Board.
  - Board members thanked her for her time serving the College and its mission.
- Joe voiced concerns about the difficulty in our Board meeting quorum. Having vacant Governor appointed positions for several years has been a constant challenge.
  - Governor Hochul's office has potential candidates for appointments.
- Joe shared advocacy continues requesting additional operating dollars.
- Joe requested the Board support in championing operating aid from elected officials.
- Discussed the potential impacts of recent administrative changes on DEI initiatives in colleges nationwide.
  - Currently the College is examining the federal funding implications related to the demand.
  - Currently the College's approach will remain focus on general inclusion. The College

does not have any initiatives based on race.

- The College continues its mission to enhance safety on the campuses. Joe invited board members to a tabletop exercise that is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.
- Perkins funding update was shared.
- Collaboration with colleges of the North Country (Jefferson, Canton, and Paul Smiths) are working together to explore ways to create career pathways for transitioning military personnel and their spouses from Fort Drum.
- Shared the work the College is making in repurposing \$500,000 SUNY Transformational funds. Using the dollars to implement a new Student Information System. Work is underway and this new system is expected to roll out this year.

#### NCCC Association | Chad LaDue Presented in Robert Rathbun's Absence

- There is an upcoming planning session with Erik (CFO) and Brian (Comptroller) to discuss ways to review finances and streamline meetings.
- Currently the Association is housing 75 students. He shared that they housed 111 during the Fall 2024 semester.

#### NCCC Foundation Director | Erin Walkow:

- Total fundraising in 2024 reached \$316,000, up from \$260,000 in 2023
- The Foundation saw increased giving across all donation categories.
- Two new \$50,000 endowed scholarships were established:
  1. In memory of Matthew Schrader (faculty member).
  2. From Jonathan and Margaret Lowell (Margaret was a nursing instructor and former Board Trustee).
- \$10,000 committed to emergency needs and textbook funding.

Members of the board discussed the future of scholarships and the impact of Governor Hochul's new initiative. Erin and Kyle are exploring potential ways to pivot the use of scholarship assignments. The need for these scholarships will be there either way.

#### Old Business

None

#### New Business

Pete expanded on his earlier comment regarding obtaining legal counsel with New York Community College Trustees (NYCCT):

- The SUNY Chancellor shared he will now oversee the hiring and review of community college presidents. This change in decision making directly threatens the NCCC Board of Trustees' autonomy and local control.
- The process undermines the decision-making power of the NCCC Board and its sponsoring counties (Essex and Franklin).
- The NYCCT has retained legal counsel to challenge:
  - The SUNY Memorandum dated November 12, 2024, regarding "Strengthening the Community College Presidential Search Process"
  - Actions taken by the SUNY Chancellor in implementation of this memorandum
  - Today, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is the deadline for signing an agreement with the law office of Ingerman Smith, LLP. No legal fees will be incurred by the participating colleges.
  - To date, 17 out of 30 SUNY community colleges have signed the resolution.

Seth McGowan made a motion from the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the collaboration with NYCCT and retaining legal counsel as it was presented. Todd LaPage seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Members of the board discussed the benefits of signing this resolution.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

Seth McGowan made the motion to enter Executive Session at 12:45 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. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (6-0-0). Joe Keegan was invited to attend the meeting at 12:46 p.m.

Adjourn

Seth McGowan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Linda Beers seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (6-0-0). The Board meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stacie G. Hurwitch  
Assistant Secretary, NCCC Board of Trustees

Date: April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Resolution #17: 2024-25

Motion: Shia Bright

Seconded: Seth McGowan

Action: Approved (6-0-0)

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