



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 25, 2025 | 11:00am

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

Present online (non-voting): Linda Beers

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

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

Minutes

Seth McGowan made the motion to accept the October 28, 2025, meeting minutes. Tricia Preston seconded the motion.

Discussion: Stacie will incorporate the following revisions into October 28th, 2025, minutes before making them public:

- **Alumni Engagement:** David McNally expressed the need for a more engaged alumni network.
- **NYCCT:** David expressed disappointment with the current tactics and online capabilities of the NYCCT advocacy initiatives.
- **Content:** David additionally requested that the minutes better reflect the concerns and issues voiced during meetings.

October 28, 2025, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (7-0-0).

College Senate Chair | Chad LaDue

No report was presented

NCCCAP President | Angela Brice

NCCCAP will be holding its final meeting of the year in December. Angela noted that NCCCAP is discussing how to improve retirement planning with the College administration.

CSEA President | Dianna Trummer

No report was presented

Board Chair | Pete Suttmeier

- Attended the November 2025 Senate meeting. Members of the Board planned for the December meeting attendance.
- Encouraged members to review the new NYCCT website.
- Shared the annual appeal for the NCCC Foundation will be coming soon. Pete asked members of the Board to please consider donating this year.
- Discussed the need for officers and committees which will be covered in New Business.

Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs | Sarah Maroun

- **Second Chance Pell and Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE):** Two site visits were conducted as part of the transition from Second Chance Pell to the Prison Education Program. The reviewers facilitated highly productive interviews and provided positive feedback, noting "wonderful" performance by NCCC's Second Chance team and providing complimentary preliminary reports. There are currently approximately 120 students enrolled across four correctional facilities.
- **Upcoming Correctional Facility Closure Impact:** New York State correctional facility (Bare Hill) is slated for closure on March 11, 2026. This will directly affect 23 students and we are coordinating with NYS DOCCS to manage student transfers following the closure. We are exploring expanding to Upstate CF.
- **Achieving the Dream (ATD):** The visit by our coaches earlier in the month focused on helping develop our SUNY Academic Momentum, plans, which focuses on changing gateway courses (Math and English), among other metrics. We enjoyed strong participation from faculty, staff, and core teams.
 - A convening with SUNY colleagues is planned for December 8, 2025, to discuss these initiatives.
- **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL):** Continues to be a priority for us. SUNY has partnered with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for a two-year initiative, with workshops continuing into Spring 2026.
- Members of the board discussed how ATD and the SUNY Initiative may complement each other.
- Kim Duffey is retiring at the end of the semester. Sarah and several members in attendance thanked her for her service to the College and the community, wishing her well on her future endeavors.

Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment Management | Kyle Johnston

- **Program Marketing Status:**

- The Healthcare/Nursing cycle is currently running this month.
 - Next Month (December 2025): marketing focus will shift to Healthcare Transfer.
 - Linda shared an idea of a Rural Health Systems Model or building a Center of Excellence.
 - Linda stated that all local hospitals are eager to host NCCC students and nurses.
 - There was discussion on how rigorous our nursing programs are at NCCC; there was a note on exploring the potential of linking nursing with area biotech companies.
- **Student Success:** Members discussed the importance of celebrating the success of first-generation students and highlighting past successes as a recruitment tool due to high retention and graduation rates.
 - **SUNY Reconnect:** Current data shows a strong opportunity to recruit students for Fall 2026. This will be launched along with the Scholarships for Everyone opportunity.
 - **Gateway to Plattsburgh:** Managing grant funding through the end of the year.
 - **“Bernie Virtual Companion” (Chat Bot):** Development continues and the testing phase is going well. The team is continuing to expand the knowledge base with input from end user feedback. Anticipate launching the web version by Spring 2026.

The Board moved to approve the following resolution:

Tricia Preston made a motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Victoria Duffy, to the full-time, twelve-month (221-day), exempt appointment as Enrollment/Financial Aid Counselor, effective November 3, 2025, for the remainder of the 2025/26 academic year, at an annual salary of \$49,673. This position is currently funded in the 2025/26 operating budget. In accordance with the current NCCCAP agreement Article VII-Appointment and Promotions, this appointment will expire at the conclusion of the 2025/26 academic year and will not be renewed. Todd LaPage seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

Interim Chief Financial Officer | Erik Harvey:

- **THESIS / Student Information System (SIS):** Project remains on track for a start for March 2026. Despite vendor resource constraints, our departments are currently working hard to verify and validate integration(s) and reporting to ensure they are ready for the launch. More information will be shared as it becomes available.
- **Fall 2025 Open Budget, Marketing and Enrollment Forum:** December 5, 2025 – all are welcome to join. Stacie will share the link with the board, all voiced interest in attending.
- **Referenced Board Packet Report:**
 - On August 31, 2030, the fund balance is projected to be \$1.98 million or 11% of 29-30 Net

Operating Costs.

- Annual Financial Audit update– new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 101 rule
 - GASB 101 Compensated Absences – provisioning for sick time in the same manner as other types of compensated absence. Previous sick time was only accrued based on termination payout. This change required a reduction of the college’s fund balance by \$282K to recognize the additional liability.
 - Seth and Todd added to the conversation sharing their experiences with this rule and its impact on their school districts.
- College Bridge:
 - Members of the board discussed with Erik and Sarah the breakdown of costs and potential liabilities with the program. Sarah shared COOP agreements and teaching/plans take care of a lot of potential liabilities. Currently each class is \$75 and NCCC scholarships 2/3rds of it.
- 5-Year Projections:
 - The Second Chance Pell experiment is now moving to the formal Prison Education Program (PEP). NYS Governor has also approved TAP for incarcerated students. Risk: In 2025, the NYS Governor has approval to close to 3 prisons.
 - Sponsoring Counties operating aid increased by \$200K in 2023-24; an additional 3% or \$77.4K in 2024-25; One-time additional \$100K in 2025-26. No future increases are considered in the projections. The College is grateful for their continued support.
- **2027-2028 Tuition & Fees:**
 - Highlighted the majority voted in recommending a 2% increase to tuition and fees: *Administrative Team, Presidents Council, College Senate, College President.*
 - * Joe highlighted the importance of shared governance in the process of recommending tuition and fees for the College. It’s not selling the plan; it’s having the numbers speaking for themselves. These dollars are going back to the students for support services.
 - Highlighted the NYS TAP tuition assistance of \$5,665 has not changed since 2025.
 - The comparison of community college tuition rates trend remains the same as prior years.
 - NCCC has frozen the technology fee since its inception, as well as the tuition rate for years.
 - Highlighted each 1% tuition increase will yield approximately an additional \$20K.
 - Proposing the elimination of the Alumni Fee.
 - Proposing new fee for Credit for Prior Learning.

The Board moved to approve the following resolutions:

Seth McGowan made a motion from the floor that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves of the financials of August 2025, September 2025, and October 2025, as they were presented in the CFO report. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

Tricia Preston made a motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the Tuition and Fee Schedule for the academic year beginning September 1, 2026, and ending August 31, 2027, as it was shared in the November 2025 packet and publicly presented this day. David McNally seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs | Jackie VanBrunt:

- **Food Security Support Servies:** New food lockers have been installed on Malone and Ti campuses. Kudos and recognition were given to Angela Brice, and her staff, for her hard work on this initiative. We recently received \$15,000 in supplemental funding to bolster current budget for this project.
- **Counseling:** On October 6th, 2025 we welcomed Betsy Dowd, the new Student Health and Wellness Counselor. She is doing a fantastic job and is busy helping students on every campus, giving them access to support(s) they need to ensure they are successful in their coursework and in life. Betsy was warmly welcomed by all.
- Pete shared an article about Colleges and its impact on Student Mental Health. He encouraged others to read it.

The Board moved to approve the following resolutions:

David McNally made a motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Betsy Doud, to the full-time, twelve month (221-day), exempt appointment as Student Health & Wellness Counselor, effective October 6, 2025, for the remainder of the 2025/26 academic year, at an annual salary of \$55,417. This position is currently funded in the 2025/26 operating budget. In accordance with the current NCCCAP agreement Article VII-Appointment and Promotions, this appointment will expire at the conclusion of the 2025/26 academic year and will not be renewed. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

President | Joe Keegan:

- Joe extended thanks to the Board for their ongoing support and specifically thanked Pete, Donna, Tricia, and David for attending the Achieving the Dream (ATD) presentation held the previous week.
- Joe recognized Kim Duffey for her dedicated service and "above and beyond" contributions to students

and colleagues during her tenure. She will be missed and wished her well on her adventures in retirement.

- Board members were encouraged to attend upcoming hybrid AAS Nursing pinning ceremony in December; Linda expressed interest. Details will be shared soon.
- Kudos to Angela Brice and the good work she and her team doing in making sure students, faculty, and staff, don't go hungry.
- **Achieving the Dream (ATD):**
 - Echoed previous reports on the focus remaining on "leading indicators": Gateway English/Math, completing 30 credits in the first year, and FAFSA completion.
 - Cultural shift is underway; reviewers were impressed by the college's solid organizational structure.
 - Proactive Retention: Kudos to MaryEllen Chamberlain, Financial Aid Director, who has been personally contacting struggling students for years to explain the financial implications of low grades and connect them with support services.
- **Middle States:** The reviewers were highly complimentary of Sarah Maroun. One reviewer was so impressed with the direction of the College they inquired about making a matched contribution in support of the Second Chance Pell program.
- **Fall 2025 Enrollment Highlights:**
 - The college saw the 5th highest year-over-year growth among the 30 SUNY community colleges and the 4th largest enrollment gain since COVID in 2020. Thanks were extended to Kyle, Sarah, and their teams for their hard work in marketing the College; noting how great it is to be on a positive trajectory.
 - SUNY Reconnect was a major driver of success, bringing in 157 students who were not enrolled in the previous spring.
 - College Bridge enrollment is up 20%, aided by a grant with Saranac Lake High School (SLHS) and a focus on General Education and BOCES-aligned courses (Chemistry, Spanish, English, and Math).
- **Grant Opportunities:**
 - Received \$20,000 from the Gates Foundation for Student Emergency Needs.
 - SUNY: Applications submitted for FIPSE, AIU (Advising/Tutoring), and Workforce Pell.
- **Facilities & Capital Projects:**
 - Vestibule Project for Sparks Athletics Complex contract has been signed. Plans are being submitted to JMZ for review, with a projected start date of April 2026. Planning for additional upgrades also include the pool and locker rooms.
 - JMZ is conducting a feasibility and design study of the Saranac Campus library to establish a Learning Commons with plans to co-locate the LAC and other student support services in the library. When completed, work is expected to begin immediately.

- **Update by Student Trustee, Tommy Sloan:**

- Shared the recent SGA Open Forums on each campus was a success.
- Nearly all SGA members wrote letters of support of NYCCT to advocate against Bill S.4685-B. That will be presented to the Governor; a bill that “provides for the inclusion of a faculty or staff member on the board of trustees of community colleges.”
- Members of the board discussed the negative impact on community colleges if this bill is passed. Members of the Board have reached out to NYCCT and government officials.

NCCC Association Director | Robert Rathbun

No report was presented.

NCCC Foundation Director | Erin Walkow

Joe shared a few items on behalf of Erin:

- The annual appeal letter will be sent out in early December. Currently there are 25K contracts and the letter includes student testimonials.
- **Board Meeting:** The next meeting is slated for December 17th, where the budget will be presented. David voiced interest in attending the meeting. Joe will share information with David as it becomes available.

Old Business

None

New Business

2025-2026 Board Election of Officers: Members of the Board discussed and decided they will make their final decisions after executive session ends.

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 (7-0-0). Joe Keegan was invited to attend the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

Adjourn Executive Session

Tricia Preston made a motion to adjourn the executive session and go into Public Session at 1:20 p.m. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7-0-0).

- **2025-2026 Board Election of Officers finalized:** Members of the Board discussed and accepted the following roles until July 1st, 2026, when it is due to vote again as the By-laws allow.

Position	Names
Chairperson	Pete Suttmeier
Vice Chairperson	Seth McGowan
Secretary	Tricia Preston
Executive Committee	Pete Suttmeier
	Seth McGowan
	Tricia Preston
Finance/Audit Committee	Pete Suttmeier
	Seth McGowan
	Linda Beers
Association Liaison	David McNally
Foundation Liaison	Pete Suttmeier
Senate Liaison	Rotating Role

- **Board Meeting Structure:** Pete asked about the structure of Board meetings and wondered if there might be a need for change. Members of the Board noted that they believed the current structure is fine. There was a recommendation to add liaison reports to the Board agenda.
- **Foundation Board:** Pete inquired about adding another Board member to the Foundation Board. Linda suggested that the most equitable approach would be to add one from each sponsoring county, Essex and Franklin. Joe will consult with the Executive Director of the Foundation and look at the Foundation bylaws.
- **Athletics:** David voiced interest in the NCCC’s hockey team and inquired about the history and why it was disbanded. Tricia noted that changes in pathways for community college graduates to D1 and semi-professional teams coupled with increased costs to purchase ice time contributed to the decision to move

away from hockey around 2009. There was some discussion about club hockey and whether there is an opportunity for the College to bring that on. Joe will revisit with Chad LaDue, Athletic Director.

Adjourn

Tricia Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7-0-0). The Board meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stacie G. Hurwitch

Assistant Secretary, NCCC Board of Trustees

Date: January 27, 2025

Resolution: 2025-2026 | Pending

Motion: Linda Beers

Second: Tricia Preston

Action: Approved (6-0-0)

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