Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 25, | 11:00am

Board Members Present: Pete Suttmeier, Donna Wadsworth, David McNally, Tricia Preston, Seth McGowan, Jordanna Mallach, and Jessica Kemp

Excused: Todd LaPage, Linda Beers

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.

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

Oath of Office

Newly governor appointed Board members, Jessica Kemp and Jordanna Mallach read the Oath of Office. Members of the Board welcomed them.

Minutes

Tricia Preston made the motion to accept May 26, 2026, meeting minutes as it was presented in the Board packet. Seth McGowan seconded the motion. May 26, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (7-0-0). May 26, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (7-0-0).

The following talking points occurred prior to the final vote.

- Clarification on the temp appointments, and the direction of the Nursing program.
- Revisited May's report regarding SUNY Reconnect launch. At the point of the meeting, NCCC was still waiting for legislative approval. It was ready to go and launched the same day the approval came through.

- Kyle updated comments from the May meeting regarding shared marketing campaigns and what they entail. Kyle shared all programmatic campaigns, which include radio, social, and web advertising.
- David asked about the meetings of Essex/Franklin for the budget review. Erik shared they were successful. David noted he asked to be included in those meetings but was not notified. Erik apologized for the oversight.
- The board asked about the Spring Showcase, Jackie updated the board and shared planning will be held soon for the next one.
- Error in minutes: Stacie will update the wording on page 3 of the May minutes prior to posting.
- David asked for an update on the pool. Joe and Erik shared that the College received the pool study but there is no movement in terms of funding. Though the College applied to DASNY, no colleges were approved this time.

By vote, the May 26, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (8-0-0).

College Senate Chair | Chad LaDue

- Senate meetings will start soon.
- Majority of committee chairs have been selected.

NCCCAP President | Angela Brice

Shared the first meeting will occur later this week.

CSEA President | Dianna Trummer

No report

Board Chair | Pete Suttmeier

- Welcomed new members to the Board.
- Pete urged members of the Board to attend the annual NYCCT meeting in September. He shared that these conferences are informative and helpful. Pete, Jessica, Jordanna, David and Joe are slated to attend some or all the sessions.

Vice President for Academic Affairs | Sarah Maroun

- Welcomed Jess and Jordanna to the Board and voiced she is looking forward to working with them.
- Shared that gateway English and Math courses were changed this past year by the departments as

part of our student success efforts with ATD and AcMo. Specifically, remedial English and Math courses were removed, and a weekly hour-long lab was added to ENG 101 English Composition and the newly created MAT 104 Foundations of Algebra to support students with developmental needs. These changes will affect almost every student for Fall 2026 taking introductory courses. The humanities and math departments will monitor the changes to verify if students complete and plan to make changes if needed.

- Middle States Accreditation Update:
  - The self-study is underway. This puts in motion the start of a 3-year process.
  - There will be a visit from the Middle States liaison in November. Working groups and committees are being identified.
  - Joe shared the Board will be expected to be involved in each stage of the process. He will elaborate at a later time.
  - Changes to Upstate Correctional: Middle States must review a substantive change request for the college to offer degree programs in Spring 2027.
- Community Health Workers are in demand throughout the region. A training session occurred over the summer with plans for more to be offered in the future.
- David asked about the Sewage Treatment training. Sarah shared the next offer will launch on September 18th. David encouraged members to spread the word for members of the community to enroll.
- Sarah shared an update on the Prison Education Program per Pete's request. Middle States has approved our programs at Adirondack, Franklin and FCI Ray Brook. Members discussed how Bare Hill closure affected enrollments; there are currently 120 students between the 3 facilities and approximately 25 students voiced interest in the program at Upstate Correctional.
- Seth shared there has been a nationwide need for the student success in Math & English for the past decade. Members discussed with Sarah on information from NYSED on how to bridge the gap between high school and college completion.
  - Sarah has not heard of requirements changing within high schools and higher ed.
  - Additionally, Sarah shared that colleges and high schools seem to be starting their own initiatives to help their students.
  - NYS is attempting to make more direct changes, encouraging a funding stream with BOCES to work in conjunction with the course delivery, design, and assessments.
- David asked about the Rail trail Discovery Series. Sarah shared they were put together by Mindy Fredenburg, an Assistant Professor in our Science Department, to include the community. They were

successful and we anticipate offering more opportunities.

The board moved to approve the following resolutions:

Seth McGowan made the motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Lisa Keegan, to the full-time, nine-month (164-day), exempt appointment as Nursing Instructor for the 2026/27 academic year, at an annual salary of $57,860. This position is currently funded in the 2026/27operating budget. In accordance with the current NCCCAP agreement Article VII-Appointment and Promotions, this appointment will expire at the conclusion of the 2026/27 academic year and will not be renewed. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

<u>Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment Management | Kyle Johnston</u>

- Kyle reported Summer 26 has been busy and is considered the busiest season for marketing. However, most of the work starts in winter for the start of the following academic year.
- Kyle shared this year's marketing plan calendar is in development.
- Considering a relaunch of the "6-On-Us" scholarship. Data shows students who have participated tend to stay enrolled afterwards. He explained that the Foundation assists with fundraising.
- Kyle and the Board discussed micro-campaigns targeted for individual programs, particularly those that are underenrolled and could use a boost.
- Shared the newest View Book is in the printing process. They will be ready in time for travel season.
- Soon new videos will be created for the website. Such programs as Human Services and Business will be created, in addition to new animation videos.
- David inquired about marketing presence in the lower region of Essex County (Minerva, Newcomb, etc.), which he is not seeing.
    - Kyle explained that promotion and outreach is tough when there are no channels, radio and papers, to use. Kyle shared the college will do another round of direct mailing soon, which will go to 7-9K households. He went on to explain that digital campaigns do reach a lot of folks, but they need to be in that demographic to see it.
    - Joe said he will be visiting the Town Supervisor of Newcomb this week. Visits like this help to share information about the College that Town Supervisors can share with their constituents.
    - Pete added to the discussion with focus on programmatic campaign for Environmental Programs. Kyle explained that the college monitors web traffic for clicks, but applications are not as heavy as other programs.

- Joe added that while the percentage of enrollment has increased for Fall 2026, the numbers are still low on enrollment for environmental programs.
- When asked, Kyle confirmed with Jordanna that the College is represented at the Wild Center's annual Climate Summit. The student demographic at this event is younger and they tend to go directly to 4-year colleges for specific programs.
- Joe confirmed with David that the College does have pathways in place for students in the environmental sciences. He pointed out that a lot of interest in SUNY ESF Forest Ranger programs do not align well with Environmental Science programs.
- Sarah shared that the college has a good relationship with the DEC and SUNY ESF.
- Work is being done on an environmental science vocational track for Wastewater and more technical programs.
- Chris explained the benefits of the Rail Trail Discovery Program that was held over the summer. It's brand awareness of our faculty and brings community members in to share a great experience.

The board moved to approve the following resolutions:
Seth McGowan made the motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Lisa Symonds, to the full-time, twelve-month (221-day), exempt appointment as Assistant Director of Financial Aid, effective June 23, 2026, for the remainder of the 2025/26 academic year, at an annual salary of $52,545. 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).

Jessica asked about Lisa's former role in Facilities. Joe shared that Brittany Cowen has moved in the position as the Admin Aide.

<u>Chief Financial Officer | Erik Harvey</u>:

- Shared that the 26-27 budget is with SUNY undergoing their approval process. He highlighted the budget margin and fund balance impact has not changed and he is working with SUNY on creating a better approval process.
- Members of the board discussed Erik's report as it was shared in the packet.

- Forecast stands from the May meeting.
- Provided an update on the Thesis Student Information System (SIS) project. Pointed out that while the new SIS has launched, there are some outstanding issues. They are in the process of being fixed. Scott has been an incredible support for our employees, and the success of the launch was predominately led by Scott.
- David asked for calendar updates for key events. Stacie will share with the Board through meeting invites.
- David inquired with Erik about his monthly reports regarding what appears to be operating deficit conflicts. Erik explained since forecasts are monthly each month will show movement. Erik clarified how to read the financial reports. Erik also shared the key points in understanding the life of the fund balance.

The board moved to approve the following resolutions:

Seth McGowan made the motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the initial term appointment of Kevin Symonds to the full-time, 221-day, exempt appointment as Programmer/Analyst for the 2026/2027 academic year, at an annual rate of $54,952. This position is currently funded in the 2026/27 operating budget. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

- David asked about Kevin Symond's certifications and how he obtained them.
- Jessica pointed out a salary number typo in Kevin's appointment letter to Kevin. Tara voiced the resolution is correct and she will correct the appointment letter.

Tricia Preston brought to the floor a motion that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the May 2026, June 2026, and July 2026 financials as they were presented. There were no objections to approving all three at once. seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0-0).

<u>Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs | Jackie VanBrunt:</u>

- Jackie welcomed the Board and noted it is nice to see new trustees.
- Highlighted another round of New Student Orientations (NSO) will be held later this week. There were 2 sessions in July; low numbers enrolled but the attendance rates were high (about 82%). Overall,

throughout August just under 200 students have registered. Expect to get more as we continue to grow the 1st Generation Student Initiative.

- SUNY developed program within the NSO which will extend support for 1st generation students.
- Information Technology and support events to prepare new students were held weekly throughout summer. The attendance was lower than anticipated. Looking into ways to increase attendance to get support prior to the start of semesters.
- Both Men's and Women's soccer teams are full.
- Testing of the portable EKG devices all went well. Three are in the Sparks Facility and readily accessible.
- Update on Bernie, the college's chat-bot through EdSights. Overall student satisfaction scored 69%, which is 30% higher than the national average of community colleges.
- Jackie explained the SUNY Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) program. She will share more information soon. She is working with Chris to create a press release to highlight the program.

<u>President | Joe Keegan:</u>

- Extended a warm welcome back and welcomed our new Board members Jessica and Jordanna. He is delighted we have full Board of Trustees and that they are joining us. It's the first time in nearly a decade since we've had a full Board. Ang is currently working to find us a student willing to join the Board as well.
    - Both Pete and Donna's appointments have expired, and they have agreed to be reappointed. Both sponsoring counties of Essex and Franklin have been notified, and we are waiting for their approval.
- Added to Sarah's comments regarding Middle States Self-Study. He stressed the importance of engagement by members of the board.
- Invited the Board to join us at the Employee Celebration family event being held on Friday at Mount Pisgah.
- Asked the board to consider an annual review and individual signing of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. Copies will be shared at the end of the meeting.
- Members of the Board discussed the 2026-2027 Meeting Schedule. They would like to see the option of potentially starting the Tuesday meetings earlier, at 9:00am. Stacie will put together a proposed schedule and share it for the Board to review. The next meeting will be sometime in October.
- Joe confirmed he will be joining members of the Board at the annual NYCCT Conference in Saratoga next month.

- Expanded on the previous update regarding fall Enrollment numbers. We are trending down slightly going into the start of the academic year. As of Monday, August 24th we were down approximately 4% when compared to this time last year. Last year, the SUNY Reconnect initiative created a big push that reflected the increase in enrollment for Fall 2025.
    - The Liberal Arts programs continue to lose traction at NCCC and throughout the country.
    - Over two-thirds of our current students are enrolled in career track programs.
    - Increasing enrollment remains a consistent focus, reviewing multiple ways to bring in students and how to support them.
    - The college will continue to enroll students in the next two weeks. Joe clarified for Jordanna how the college tracks enrollment numbers and applications.
    - Seth inquired about whether the college knew why the numbers are lower. Joe shared we canvass the students and review their responses. Often, it's because they withdraw due to financial concerns, beyond what we can offer through scholarships.
- Started the process of updating the strategic plan. The current one is slated to expire in 2027. The focus is to lay out new goals for the next 3 years. Joe will share more information as it becomes available.
- Joe updated the progress of grants and capital projects.
    - The new vestibule for Sparks Athletics is now complete.
    - JMZ completed the Learning Commons Feasibility Study. We're awaiting a report for the potential grant.
    - JMZ is working on the Rail Trail Feasibility study that would a new building.
    - Planning is almost complete and the college anticipates tearing down the old radio station on the Saranac Lake campus.
        - David asked about the station. Joe shared the history of the locally owned WNBZ station. In 2017, one of our county sponsors, Essex County, added the building and property to the college in 2017. We are currently awaiting a quote to demolish the site due to asbestos and other areas of safety concerns.
- David revisited the topic of the college's pool. Erik explained the financials needed to update and repair the pool. Currently $200k is what is set aside for funding, but the assessment is $500K is needed for mechanicals alone.
        - Jordanna shared her perspective as the Town Supervisor, the need for swimming lessons is massive. When asked about cost, Chad shared the college provides free swim lessons through a grant, approximately 215 kids in our community receive free lessons each semester.

- The board discussed the financial impact of pool use. Currently, there is no cost to us for lifeguards and instructors, but the college is not yielding any financial return. The College did receive the state's SWIMS (NY Statewide Investment in More Swimming) Grant. Prior to the grant, the College had ½ as many attendees when people were charged.
- Tricia inquired about the Ironman Grant. Chad shared the College applied for this grant but were denied this round.
- It was noted that the College previously received 10k for LEAF Grant. Courses are being offered by the college for students (WSI, Lifeguarding – wilderness rec programs – 12-15 students take the lifeguarding class).
- Members of the board asked about Deb Fox and if she offers lifeguarding course. Chad shared the College has someone else to provide it; spoke of shortage of lifeguards throughout both counties. Spring 4-5 lifeguard training for certification.
- Seth clarified swimming lessons for local community are reaching 215 kids per semester. When paying customers came it was about 100 enrolled per semester. Chad explained that Jerrad works with the school districts to help with scheduling so we can accommodate so many students.
- Erin shared Saranac Lake Fire Department's diving team uses the pool for training.
- Tricia asked if the college can we do a pool-specific appeal letter to community organizations.
- Jordanna shared there is a group interested in forming a competitive swim team.
- Members discussed the overall use of the pool. Tricia said she is available to help seek funding opportunities.

<u>NCCC Association Director | Amanda Tagliano</u>

- Pete welcomed Amanda and introduced her to the Board.
- Amanda shared 98 students have been placed in the dorms (6 beds remaining)
- Current revenue numbers:
  - Dorms = $340,750
  - Meal Plan = $220K
  - College store = $55K
- Amanda shared she is excited about the opportunities ahead. Only 3 weeks into the position and she is looking for ways to better support our students and college community.
- David asked about full-time student population numbers, 25% of what is on Saranac campus.
- David asked about the meal plan availability to the college community. She shared it is available to

anyone, with a variety of options.

- Jordanna asked if the association does meal bucks for students to use in town businesses? Amanda is working to establish relationships with local businesses to offer a similar plan to Bobcat Bucks'.

NCCC Foundation Director | Erin Walkow:

- Erin shared her excitement in working with Amanda to identify ways to support the Foundation, the Association, and whole college community.
- Erin welcomed Jordanna and Jessica to the Board.
- Tricia asked if Erin had worked with the Uhlein Foundation. Erin said it is something she's looking into
- When asked by David, Erin shared that the 2025 end of year appeal brought in up to $15K.
- Jordanna asked about big gifts the Foundation is receiving and how many people are contributing. Erin shared there are up to 100 donors, a significant increase over the past 5 years. There has been significant growth in donations and consistent donors but room for more.
- Jordanna recommended we explore ways to obtain donations from community members who access opportunities with the college.
- David asked about an alumni list and his interest in using it more for advocacy than fundraising. Erin explained that obtaining an accurate list is hard and not a lucrative endeavor. Seth shared based on his experience in education, alumni lists are difficult to get and maintain. Erin works with organizations to get updated information, but the efforts are not sustainable and wholly accurate.
- David asked if the Foundation was able to provide funds for pool repairs. Erik shared that $200K is already allocated for pool repairs. We will invest those dollars in the necessary repairs once we receive a full-scope study. Most of the recent study focused on the pool's mechanicals.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

Trisha Preston made the motion to enter Executive Session at 12:30 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 12:30 p.m.

David McNally made the motion to leave Executive Session at 1:05 pm, and Seth McGowan seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

David McNally made the motion to enter Public Session at 1:06 pm, and Seth McGowan seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Joe presented the following candidates for promotion in rank:

Faculty/Staff Applicant	Position	Recommend Promotion From and To
Angela Brice	Assistant Director of Student Life	A5 to A4 (1st level of promotion)
Rachel Zurschmit	Assistant Director of Admissions	A5 to A4 (1st level of promotion)
Terry Kemp	Academic Technology Coordinator	A5 to A4 (1st level of promotion)
Sean LaPlante	Instructor of Mathematics	Instructor to Assistant Professor (1st level of promotion)
Becky LaDue	Associate Professor and Program Director of Radiologic Technology	Associate Professor to Professor (3rd level of promotion)

Seth McGowan made the motion to accept the candidates for promotion and Trisha Preston seconded it. The motion passed 6 (supporting) – 0 (not supporting) – 1 (abstaining).

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 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stacie G. Hurwitch

Assistant Secretary, NCCC Board of Trustees

Date: October, 2026

Resolution: 2026-2027

Motion: Tricia Preston

Seconded: Jessica Kemp

Action: Approved (10-0-0)

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