

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 | 11:00am

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

Excused: Seth McGowan and Tommy Sloan.

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

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

Minutes

Linda Beers made the motion to accept the January 27, 2026, meeting minutes. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. January 27, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved (6-0-0).

College Senate Chair | Chad LaDue

- Strategic and Long-Range Planning (SLRP) Committee secured a chair, Cammy Sheridan, Professor of Social Science, who will lead the committee for the remainder of the year.
- First SLRP meeting will be held in a few days which will include previous chairs, members of the Administrative Team, and members of the Senate Executive Committee.
- Discussion on encouraging more participation in shared governance. There has been a lot of turnover within the last several years and potentially, a feeling that there is a hesitation among newer employees questioning what they have to offer.
- Linda Beers observed that this pattern is not unique to the College and a tool she has seen used effectively is a nominating committee, which communicates confidence in a newer employee tapped for such service.

NCCCAP President | Angela Brice

Ang shared that all was well in NCCCAP and their next meeting was slated for March 6th, 2026.

CSEA President | Dianna Trummer

No report was presented

Board Chair | Pete Suttmeier

- Attended the last Senate meeting. Pete picked up on the “burn-out issue” that was briefly introduced in the meeting.
- Briefly discussed the SUNY’s University Faculty Senate’s Ethics and Institutional Integrity Committee paper *“Tissues Are for Students Only:” The Ethics of Faculty and Staff Burnout in the State University of New York* and his hope to discuss further.
- Encouraged fellow trustees to engage with the New York Community College Trustees, noting the increased value that he has placed on it. NYCCT’s next meeting is Friday, April 24th, 2026 at Dutchess CC in Poughkeepsie which Pete is planning on attending and encouraged others to do so as well.
- Encouraged fellow trustees to meet in person, where possible.

Vice President for Academic Affairs | Sarah Maroun

- Noted that the AI Task Force was hosting meetings where faculty can share how they are using AI in their instruction in both formal and informal sessions.
- One AI Task Force recommendation was to have discipline-specific guidance with SUNY AI fellows. That is planned for later this year.
- Pete Suttmeier asked whether students were involved in the AI discussions taking place in the AI Task Force. Sarah noted that they had not yet but observed that it was a good idea.
- Shared that the College is a partner in a Mother Cabrini Grant along with Adirondack Health, Iroquois Healthcare and FEH BOCES which will provide opportunities for high school juniors and seniors interested in healthcare pathways to take coursework at NCCC. The meeting this week is to discuss with school superintendents in the southern FEH districts (i.e., Lake Placid, Long Lake, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake).
- Linda Beers noted it seemed like the College was Adirondack Health-centric, as we have a number of initiatives and engagements with them. She wondered whether there was an opportunity for more parity with Elizabethtown and Ticonderoga- based hospitals. Sarah noted that we have good engagement with all three hospitals, but that E-town and Ti hospital clinical rotations have been a challenge by partly due to the size of the Ticonderoga nursing classes. Linda observed that there were clinical rotations available through a local Essex County Home Health Agency if that were of interest.

Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment Management | Kyle Johnston

• **Enrollment & Registration**

- Financial Aid processing will begin this week. This is earlier than previous years.
- On the marketing & publicity front, there was a lot of exposure for the College during the 2026 Saranac Lake Winter Carnival. Kyle shared that it was an opportunity for the College to engage with the community through sponsorship of the event and having our mascot on site to greet visitors.
- Current campaigns are Criminal Justice / Cyber Security and Digital Arts /Design. Will circle back to SUNY Reconnect in the next couple of months and the summer will be similar to previous years.
- Pete questioned the yield percentage being down to 50% of students accepted. Kyle explained that this is not an accurate representation and that it is actually up in several areas. The number of students who apply but do not actually enroll and those students on a waiting list for programs like Rad Tech are reflected in the percentage.

Interim Chief Financial Officer | Erik Harvey:

Let his report stand as it was shared in the packet.

- Financials:
 - November 2025 Financial Report - Linda Beers made the motion to accept the November 2025 Financial Report. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. November 2025 Financial Report was unanimously approved (6-0-0).
 - December 2025 Financial Report - Linda Beers made the motion to accept the December 2025 Financial Report. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. December 2025 Financial Report was unanimously approved (6-0-0).
 - January 2026 Financial Report - Linda Beers made the motion to accept the January 2026 Financial Report. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. January 2026 Financial Report was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs | Jackie VanBrunt:

- Second annual Wellness Fair was held on February 11, 2026. Over 40 community partners signed up, however due to weather, not all attended. Around 150 students, staff, and community members attended. Looking ahead to next year, will work with the Carnival Committee so the Wellness Fair is on the carnival schedule. Shout out to Angela and her staff for a great success.

- Referrals for Betsy Doud, Student Health & Wellness Counselor have increased since December 2025. Betsy is busy with follow-ups and connections based on specific need. There is a wide array of needs, not just academic (mental, health, family, interpersonal). A large number of distance learners are struggling. As distance learners are spread across the county, Betsy is working with their local resources to provide connections.
- One item that came up during the Achieving the Dream Capacity Café, is the need for a more robust mentorship program for faculty and staff. This could assist with involvement shared governance.
- Shout out to Chad LaDue and the Men's Basketball Team. Chad – finished 24-3, placing them at #1 seed for this weekend's regional tournament at Genessee Community College. Should they progress to nationals, it will be held at Herkimer Community College.

President | Joe Keegan:

- Joe began by thanking the Board for their ongoing support of our students, faculty, staff and the College overall. Their involvement and support help make a difference in our continued success.
 - Congratulated the Men's Basketball Team.
 - Acknowledged that Essex County had several tables at the Wellness Fair. Shout out to Angela and her team for a success.
 - Thanked Pete for attending the NYCCT advocacy day on February 4th, 2026 with him. Remarked that there was advocacy among various assembly members with widespread (verbal) support for community colleges. In addition to the Governor's proposed budget for community colleges, we are asking for increased funding primarily for operational costs.
 - Spring 26 enrollment – with a collective effort, there has been a ~ 10% enrollment gain this year and the 7th consecutive semester of increased enrollment. Spring 26 was positively impacted by SUNY Reconnect. The Governor is recommending a nursing carve-out for 26-27, where if students have a prior degree, they are able to qualify for SUNY Reconnect if they are pursuing nursing.
 - Joe and Sarah are currently working with FEH BOCES, Paul Smith's College, and Franklin County Economic Development on the county's comprehensive economic development strategy. Both Essex and Franklin Counties are looking for the same outcomes in this area.
 - Greg Hart, Workforce Development Coordinator, completed his report, which will be shared with the Board. The administration will be engaging the campus community on his workforce development report prior to going public. This report focused on the workforce needs of area

businesses/constituents, specifically within the tech fields.

- Capital Projects
 - The pool study is still in progress.
 - Ideas from JMZ' feasibility study on a Learning Commons in the Saranac Lake Library has been shared with a small team.
 - The engineering firm that updated the structural assessment of College Hall has been contacted by the College for cost estimates of the recommended work.
- Resolutions:
 - *Camping and Use of Tents on Campus Policy*. - Linda Beers made the motion to accept the policy. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. Discussion on the roles of the College and local law enforcement – First step will be appropriate Administrative Team member, then contact with local law enforcement. *Camping and Use of Tents on Campus Policy* was unanimously approved (6-0-0).
 - *Freedom of Expression and Assembly Policy* - Linda Beers made the motion to accept the policy. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. Discussion as there was a thought the BoT had decided not to put this in writing. Joe explained that the previous discussion being referenced was for a “Campus Posting Policy” and that this is different. This policy sets guidelines for the “time, place, manner” of the demonstrations/gatherings. Pete questioned how this affects faculty expression. Joe and Sarah responded that freedom of expression is already listed in the Faculty Handbook under Academic Freedom. If there is a concern, it is addressed on a case-by-case basis. The *Freedom of Expression and Assembly Policy* was unanimously approved (6-0-0).

NCCC Association Director | Robert Rathbun

No report was presented.

NCCC Foundation Director | Erin Walkow

- The Foundation was able to secure a \$1,500 grant from the ADK Community Food Pantry for software used to track supplies for the College food pantry. There are several “asks” pending for scholarships related to ATD.
- Applications for scholarships will begin mid-April.

- The College is hosting the Adirondack Health Foundation's *Rural Health Symposium* on March 20, 2026, in S-19. Joe Keegan will be a speaker.
- Next Foundation meeting is March 20, 2026.

Old Business

None

New Business

- Pete returned to issue of burnout raised earlier in the meeting. Sarah noted that the report was conducted by the state-operated campuses governance body, and community colleges were not included. However, there are similarities that she has heard from our faculty with disengagement and under-preparedness of students. On-line and hybrid on-line courses are the major culprits as there is an increased reliance on tech and having to learn that tech. She noted that during the time covered by the report, SUNY changed the Learning Management System and general education framework, and since then a bevy of SUNY initiatives are contributing to the feeling of burnout. Linda commented that employee appreciation goes a long way. Pete asked if we should survey the faculty about time commitments to meetings and committees. Joe suggested that we should reassess shared governance as this has not been done in a long time and fold a survey in, if warranted.
- David asked Kyle what accounted for the 300% increase in enrollment in Addictions Counseling. Kyle responded that it is SUNY Reconnect which offered free tuition and fees to students. It is also an on-line program which brought in a lot of students from outside the area. David also asked about international students, referencing our Carnival Princess. Chad responded that we have approximately 15 international student and that 90% of that are athletes.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

Linda Beers made the motion to enter Executive Session at 12:25 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. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (6-0-0). Joe Keegan was invited to attend the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

Adjourn

Linda Beers made the motion to adjourn the Executive Session at 1:32 p.m. and enter back into the public session. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (6-0-0).

Adjourn

Linda Beers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tricia Preston seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (6-0-0). The Board meeting was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stacie G. Hurwitch".

Stacie G. Hurwitch

Assistant Secretary, NCCC Board of Trustees

Date: April 28th, 2026

Resolution: 2025-2026

Motion: Tricia Preston

Second: Seth McGowan

Action: Approved (6-0-0)

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