Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda
Date: November 24, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Locations: Saranac Lake Campus & Zoom

1. Call to Order

2. Approval | October 27th, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

3. Liaison Reports
   a. Chad LaDue | College Senate Chair
   b. Ang Brice | NCCC Association of Professionals (NCCCAP) President
   c. Dianna Trummer-Dudley | Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA) President

4. College Reports
   a. R. Pete Suttmeier | Board of Trustees Chair
   b. Sarah Maroun | Vice President Academic Affairs
      - Resolution | Nursing Instructor
   c. Kyle Johnston | Vice President for Marketing & Enrollment
   d. Erik Harvey | Chief Financial Officer
      - Resolution | Proposed 2027-2028 Tuition & Fees
      - 2026 – 2027 | September, October, & November Financials
   e. Jackie VanBrunt | Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
   f. Joe Keegan | President

5. Representative Reports
   a. Amanda Tagliarino | NCCC Association
   b. Erin Walkow | NCCC Foundation Director

6. Old Business

7. New Business

8. Public Comment

9. Executive Session

10. Adjourn

An Executive Session of the Board of Trustees may be called pursuant to Article 7 of the Public Officer's Law to discuss 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 and collective bargaining negotiations conducted pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law. (Public Officers Law §105).

Public Comment: Visitors are requested to sign in before the beginning of the meeting. Provision is made at this point in the agenda for citizens of the community to make comments regarding any agenda item to be discussed at that meeting. Citizens will not be recognized at any other time. No person, not a member of the Board, shall speak for more than five (5) minutes. The minutes shall show that privilege of the floor was granted and shall include a brief statement of the subject matter presented.

NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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North Country Community College
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2026

Board Members Present: Pete Suttmeier, Donna Wadsworth, David McNally, Tricia Preston, Seth McGowan, Jordanna Mallach, Todd LaPage, Jessica Kemp, Lauren Chrisman

Others Present: Joe Keegan, Tara Evans, Sarah Maroun, Erik Harvey, Kyle Johnston, Jackie VanBrunt, Chris Knight, Erin Walkow, Amanda Tagliarino, and Ang Brice.

Call to Order
Board Chair, Dr. Pete Suttmeier called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Trustees welcomed newly appointed Student Trustee Lauren Chrisman, who was administered the Oath of Office and formally welcomed to the Board.

Approval of August 25, 2026 Minutes
The minutes of the August 25, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting were presented for review. Trisha Preston made the motion to accept the minutes as presented in the October 27, 2026 Board packet; Jessica Kemp seconded the motion. The August 25, 2026 minutes were approved unanimously (10-0-0).

College Senate Chair; Chad LaDue
In the absence of College Senate Co-President Chad LaDue, who was traveling with the Women's Soccer team, no report was presented.

NCCCAP President; Angela Brice
Ang Brice reported that there were no updates for the Board.

CSEA President; Dianna Dudley
No report was presented.

Board Chair Report; Dr. Pete Suttmeier
Pete Suttmeier reminded trustees of the Board's longstanding practice of attending College Senate meetings and encouraged their participation. Trustees volunteered to serve as the Board liaison at for the following College Senate meetings:

- November 13, 2026 – Linda Beers
- December 11, 2026 – Jessica Kemp
- February 12, 2027 – Todd LaPage
- March 12, 2027 – Seth McGowan
- April 9, 2027 – Jordanna Mallach
- May 14, 2027 – Trisha Preston

Trustees requested that meeting invitations for both College Senate and Board of Trustees meetings be distributed to participants soon so they can reserve time on their respective calendars.

Vice President for Academic Affairs; Sarah Maroun

Sarah Maroun reported on several initiatives and updates, including:

- The *Nursing Program accreditation review* and site visit by NYSED scheduled for November 11-13, 2026, as part of the program's five-year accreditation cycle.
- Progress toward obtaining Middle States approval for the College's *Prison Education Program substantive change request*, after which an application will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Recent *Universal Design for Learning professional development* activities for faculty that support the College's Achieving the Dream (ATD) goals.
- Revisions to the *Institutional Location Policy required under NC-SARA and US Department of Education* regulations regarding notification of out-of-state students enrolled in licensure-related programs.

Institutional Location Policy

Sarah presented a resolution to the Board on an Institutional Location Policy. The motion to accept was made by Linda Beers, seconded by Seth McGowan. The resolution was adopted unanimously (10-0-0).

Academic Affairs Reorganization

Sarah presented a proposed reorganization of Academic Affairs designed to strengthen administrative support, address increasing regulatory and institutional demands, and improve operational effectiveness.

Trustees discussed the proposal, including its financial implications, leadership development, evaluation responsibilities, impact on faculty promotion processes, and organizational structure. Sarah noted that the proposal had been shared with faculty, current chairs and directors, and NCCCAP, all of whom expressed support.

The proposed structure organizes career programs within one division and liberal arts programs within another. Ms. Maroun indicated that the positions would first be posted internally and estimated the annual fiscal impact to range from budget-neutral to approximately $20,000, depending on staffing outcomes.

The motion to accept the proposal was made by Pete Suttmeier and seconded by Linda Beers. The resolution was adopted unanimously (10-0-0).

Vice President for Enrollment Management; Kyle Johnston

Kyle Johnston reported on the resolution of the College's 2017 Office for Civil Rights (OCR) case and acknowledged the significant work undertaken by College personnel in achieving compliance. He noted that the work positions the College well for upcoming federal accessibility requirements.

Trustee Jordanna Mallach inquired about the College's ability to maintain website accessibility compliance. Kyle explained that the College continues to work closely with its website vendor to ensure compliance requirements are met.

Kyle also discussed Governor Hochul's expansion of the SUNY Reconnect program beginning in Spring 2027, which will allow adults ages 25-55 to participate regardless of prior degree attainment.

Chief Financial Officer; Erik Harvey
Erik Harvey reported that the College concluded fiscal year 2025-26 with an operating deficit of approximately $60,000, an improvement over the budgeted deficit of $130,000. He further reported:

- Fall 2026 enrollment declines resulted in a projected revenue reduction of approximately $450,000.
- Analysis indicates the decline was concentrated among new students.
- The annual audit will begin the following week.
- Development of the 2027-28 tuition and fee schedule is underway, with a tentative proposal for a 2% increase expected at a future meeting.

Trustees discussed enrollment trends, demographic projections, and chargeback impacts.

Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Jackie VanBunt
Jackie VanBrunt welcomed Student Trustee Lauren Chrisman and provided updates on student success initiatives, including:

- Launch of the inaugural ASAP cohort serving 106 students.
- Ongoing Achieving the Dream implementation efforts.
- A Mental Health Symposium scheduled for October 30.
- A First-Generation Student Celebration on November 9 featuring Assemblyman Cashman.

Beau's Law Policy
Jackie reviewed the requirements of Beau's Law and the proposed policy updates needed to ensure compliance. Trustees discussed the balance between student privacy and emergency notification requirements. Jackie noted that existing College procedures (i.e., Student Code of Conduct) already allow for family notification under certain circumstances and that Beau's Law provides additional clarification and direction.

The motion to accept the policy was made by Jordanna Mallach and seconded by Seth McGowan. The resolution was adopted with a majority vote (9-1-0).

President's Report
Joe thanked the Board for its continued support of the College and welcomed Student Trustee Lauren Chrisman. He also:

- Recognized trustee participation in the NYCCT Annual Conference and meetings with Assemblyman Cashman.

- Reviewed Fall 2026 enrollment results.
- Discussed the recent Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant decision and the College's planned appeal following identification of a scoring error.
- Provided updates on capital projects.
- Presented proposed updates to the College's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

During discussion, Seth McGowan encouraged development of an "evergreen" strategic plan that could be regularly updated as goals are achieved.

Strategic Plan Update Resolution
Joe presented the Board with an update to the strategic plan, which had been moved through and approved by the College Senate and its Long Range and Strategic Planning Committee. David McNally made a motion to accept the update and Trisha Preston seconded it. The resolution was adopted unanimously (10-0-0).

Adjunct Faculty Compensation
Joe presented a resolution increasing adjunct faculty compensation by $25 per credit hour retroactive to the beginning of the Fall 2026 semester. Trustees discussed comparative compensation levels across peer community colleges and the College's current position within those comparisons. Seth McGowan motioned to accept the proposal and Jessica Kemp seconded it. The resolution was adopted (9-1-0).

Association Contract
Joe presented a resolution to adopt an updated contract with the Association covering 2026-2030 period. Trustees discussed the proposed agreement between the College and the NCCC Association, including methods for tracking associated costs. Seth McGowan motioned to accept the proposal and Linda Beers seconded it. The resolution was adopted with unanimous support (10-0-0).

Executive Director of the NCCC Foundation, Erin Walkow
Erin Walkow reported the following regarding recent fundraising activities:
- $5,000 donation to support AAS Nursing hybrid student participation.
- A $10,000 grant from Arrow Bank in of the College through their Thankful Campaign.
- A $10,000 contribution to the Grover Moore Scholarship.
- Submission of a $5,000 request to the Saranac Lake Cannabis Fund.

Jordanna Mallach mentioned that there was also a Town of North Elba cannabis fund that may be worth exploring. Erin also discussed preparations for the Foundation's annual appeal and encouraged trustee participation. Trustees discussed alumni engagement, advocacy opportunities, and the need for coordinated alumni outreach efforts.

Executive Director of the NCCC Association; Amanda Tagliarino

Amanda Tagliarino reported that at its October meeting the Association Board approved revised bylaws expanding student participation and representation. Additional updates included:

- Continued residence hall occupancy growth through ongoing student placements.
- Enhanced communication regarding student financial requirements.
- Expanded public health training outreach.
- Consideration of roadway lighting improvements near the residence halls.
- Bookstore pricing practices, including textbook markups of approximately 20 percent.

Old Business
None

New Business
None

Public Comment
None

Executive Session
Seth McGowan made the motion to enter Executive Session at 11:55 am 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. Trisha Preston seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (10-0-0). Joe Keegan was invited to attend the meeting at 11:55 am.

Seth McGowan made the motion to leave Executive Session at 12:15 pm, and Trisha Preston seconded it. The motion passed unanimously (10-0-0).

Seth McGowan made the motion to enter Open Session at 12:15 pm, and Trisha Preston seconded it. The motion passed unanimously (10-0-0).

> The Board of Trustees made a resolution from the floor to accept the administration's proposal to provide a salary adjustment to Brian Pelkey, the NCCC Comptroller's from $79,057 to $90,000 effective with the next pay period. The rationale was that this salary was not competitive with the market rate for similar positions in the SUNY system. Trisha Preston moved to accept the motion and Seth McGowan seconded it. The motion passed with a majority (9-1-0).

Adjournment
Seth McGowan moved to accept the motion and Trisha Preston seconded it. The motion passed unanimously(10-0-0).

NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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VPAA Report to the Board of Trustees
November 24, 2026

Please find the following report from the Academic Area.

✶ Academic Planning, Programs and Policies:

Fall 2026: We are quickly moving toward the last month of the semester. The last day to withdraw from classes is November 20th. The last day of classes is December 17th.

Spring 2026: Priority registration for continuing students ended on Friday, November 13th. Registration for new students began on Monday, November 16th. The Spring semester begins on January 25th.

SUNY's Academic Momentum Campaign/Achieving the Dream Initiative: The Achieving the Dream coaches spent two days with our faculty and staff on October 29th and 30th. We will follow up with next steps once we receive and review the report from the coaches. Regarding the Academic Momentum Plan, we will be measuring progress in the newly designed gateway Math and English classes as well as tracking FAFSA completion rates.

Faculty Professional Development: After the October 20th professional development session on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Dr. Elizabeth Stein sent out a survey for faculty who would be interested in integrating these concepts into the classroom. We have had a very positive response with many faculty indicating that they would like to work within their departments to adopt some different strategies. This work will continue throughout the academic year and is open to all faculty, full-time and adjunct.

SUNY Seamless Transfer Initiative: NCCC will review grading policies during the 26-27 academic year as described in the guidelines to review Equitable Grading Policy (see attached guidelines from SUNY). The new policy needs to be in place by June 1, 2027.

New York State Education Department (NYSED) Nursing Site Visit: As part of the nursing accreditation process, representatives from the New York State Department of Education, Office of the Professions, visited all three campuses and one of the clinical sites, Adirondack Health, from November 11-13th. Members of the campus community and the Nursing Advisory Board met with NYSED reviewers over three days. The comments from the Exit Interview highlighted the positive program outcomes related to licensure pass rates, retention, and graduation rates as well as the evident engagement and efforts of the faculty, staff and students. The draft report will be available for the College to review in February.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE):

- **Self-Study Schedule:** The MSCHE on-campus liaison visit will take place on January 21, 2027. Dr. Michael Sachs, the MSCHE Vice President Liaison assigned to NCCC, will request to meet with several campus groups that day to review the Self-Study Design and discuss the Self-Study process.

Prison Education Program (PEP):

- On November 13, 2026, Franklin Correctional Facility held a graduation ceremony for twelve NCCC graduates. Congratulations to our students!
- The College heard from Middle States on November 6th, that NCCC is approved the Substantive Change request to add Upstate Correctional Facility to our Statement of Accreditation status. This approval allows us to move forward with the application to the U.S. Department of Education.

Workforce Development and Community Education:

- **Community Health Worker Training:** The next cohort began on October 12th and runs through December 14th.
- **Pottery Classes:** We are in Session III of pottery offerings that includes both a beginner/intermediate and an advanced course that will begin on October 27th- December 8th. The beginner/intermediate course will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays and the advanced course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Both courses will meet from 5:30-8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Maroun
Vice President for Academic Affairs

NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the VP of Academic Affairs recommends the temporary appointment of Alexis Cassell, to the full-time, nine-month (164-day), exempt appointment as Nursing Instructor for the Spring 2027 semester, at an annual salary of $52,044, pro-rated to $26,022,

WHEREAS the President hereby concurs in this recommendation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED that the North Country Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the temporary appointment of Alexis Cassell, to the full-time, nine-month (164-day), exempt appointment as Nursing Instructor for the Spring 2027 semester, at an annual salary of $52,044, pro-rated to $26,022.

This position is currently funded in the 2026/27 operating 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.

2026/27
MOTION:
ACTION:
Yeas:
Nays:
Abstentions:
DATE:

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October 28, 2026

Ms. Alexis Cassell
30 Wawbeek Ave
Tupper Lake, NY 12986

Dear Ms. Cassell:

Pending approval by the North Country Community College Board of Trustees at their November 24, 2026, meeting, I am pleased to offer you a temporary, full-time, nine-month (164-day), exempt appointment as Nursing Instructor for the 2027 Spring Semester. Faculty are expected to report to campus on January 19, 2027.

As a member of the North Country Community College Association of Professionals (NCCCAP) bargaining unit, your compensation and benefits are detailed in your collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the College and NCCCAP. Should you accept this appointment, your pay grade for this appointment is Step 6 on Schedule C of the 2025-2028 CBA, which is an annualized base salary of $52,044. This amount will be pro-rated to $26,022 to reflect the 82 days within the spring semester. Your per-diem rate based on 164 days is $317.34.

Professional staff members shall not be assigned to more than two campus locations without their consent. Your base campus is Saranac Lake. Your immediate / area supervisor is Sarah Maroun, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

To acknowledge the terms of your appointment, please sign and return this Letter of Appointment no later than November 6, 2026.

Sincerely,

Joe Keegan

Joe Keegan
President

cc: Personnel File / Payroll File

Alexis Cassell
Employee Signature

11/7/26
Date

Alexis Cassell, RN BSN

Tupper Lake, NY | 518-524-3387 | lexicassell@ymail.com

LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

- **RN License** — NY State
- **BLS** — American Heart Association
- **ACLS** — American Heart Association
- **PALS** — American Heart Association

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Licensed Practical Nurse

Mercy Living Center — Tupper Lake, NY

August 2016 – 2017

- Provided direct patient care to long-term care and short-term rehabilitation patients.
- Administered medications and treatments safely according to physician orders and facility protocols.
- Collaborated with physicians, nurses, therapists, case managers, and other members of the interdisciplinary team.

Registered Nurse Supervisor

Mercy Living Center — Tupper Lake, NY

June 2017 – 2018

- Supervised and coordinated care and services to residents of Mercy Living Center.
- Functioned as a resource, role model and advisor for staff. Coordinated resources to enhance care and supported comprehensive care delivery to residents.

Registered Nurse – Medical-Surgical Units

Adirondack Health — Saranac Lake, NY

June 2017 – September 2021

- Assess, plan, implement and evaluate nursing care for patients under my supervision.
- Diagnosing and treating human responses to actual or potential problems, and provision of care supportive to or restorative of life and well-being.
- Collaboration, coordination of services, and patient/family education.

Registered Nurse – Intensive Care Unit

Adirondack Health – Saranac Lake, NY

September 2021 – Present

- Managed high-acuity care for a 1–2 patient assignment presenting with complex medical-surgical diagnoses
- Operated specialized critical care equipment and assisted in management of advanced mechanical ventilation
- Coordinated daily multidisciplinary rounds with intensivists, pulmonologists, pharmacists, and respiratory therapists to develop and execute comprehensive care plans for complex medical-surgical patients.
- Served as an active member of the Rapid Response and Code Blue teams

Nursing Instructor

North Country Community College – Saranac Lake, NY

January 2020 – Present

- Supervised groups of 8–10 students in acute-care clinical settings, ensuring strict adherence to patient safety and evidence-based practice protocols.
- Conducted high-fidelity simulation scenarios utilizing advanced mannequins
- Developed and updated comprehensive lecture materials and course syllabi, ensuring full alignment with national accreditation standards.
- Designed a hybrid learning module combining online pre-work with in-person lectures

EDUCATION

Associate Degree in Nursing

North Country Community College — Saranac Lake, NY

May 2017

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Purdue University Global

October 2020

NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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Vice President of Marketing & Enrollment

Report to the Board of Trustees

Created November 16, 2026

Project, Enrollment, Financial Aid, and Marketing Updates:

- **Major project updates:**
  - **SUNY PROJECTS:** Utilizing SUNY Reconnect funding we will be launching another round of our Scholarships-For-Everyone campaign to try to attract more students for the upcoming spring semester.
  - **SLATE CRM (Customer Relationship Management):** No new items to report.
  - **EdSights Retain/Admit/Web Chat & Text Support Implementation:** Recent outreach campaigns that seem to get the most attention/response revolve around financial burdens and also mental health needs. Seeing this trend, we will look at the communications plan to determine where added custom campaigns can help us to be even more proactive in these two areas.
- **Enrollment Team:** The Admissions Office/Enrollment Team travel season is beginning to wind down, and focus is shifting towards small group program-specific campus visit events. Initial feedback for the few events that have happened recently is very positive and we will be offering more of these types of events in the future to academic programs that would like to partner in them.
- **Financial Aid Team:** The Financial Aid Office continues to work through the Financial Value Transparency/Gainful Employment regulation reporting to the Department of Education. Additionally, they have partnered with the Admissions Office to plan upcoming weekend "Financial Aid Days" that will happen on all campuses in December and January. This is a new system-wide initiative that we have opted into which will be promoted through state-wide ad campaigns and promotion.

Marketing and Web Updates:

- Our accessibility work has now moved into the rest of the website as the new standards will take effect 4-26-2027. The recent work with the DOE OCR team was very helpful as it helped to clarify the new standards and train us for the work ahead. In December, we will be bringing a fairly large group of content managers and other contributors to look at the content and overall navigation of our website. We will also train folks in so that they can go through their own sections of the website during the winter months. Finally, we will unveil some of the new features that we will be looking to deploy across the site over the course of the next year that will be a part of our larger website refresh in 2027-28.
- Upcoming Campaigns: Our programmatic advertising will feature all of our Transfer Programs in December/January. Additionally, we will launch our Spring Registration, SUNY Reconnect/Scholsrships-4-Everyone and Short-Term-Offerings campaigns in December/January as we head into the spring semester start.

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NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

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- Review all of our flexible course offerings at NCCC.EDU/SPRING
- Set up your on-campus or virtual visit at NCCC.EDU/VISIT
- Research the SUNY Reconnect, Opportunity, NCCC Foundation, and Human Services scholarship programs at NCCC.EDU/SCHOLARSHIPS

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2027 Spring Application Volume

Generated on 11/16/2026 at 10:02:01 AM ET

Application Categories - YTD

Metric	Spring 2027 Applications	Spring 2026 Applications	Spring 2025 Applications	Spring 2024 Applications	Spring 2023 Applications	Spring 2022 Applications
Spring Applications	324	380	263	296	158	112
Spring SUNY Applications	39	62	6	17		
Incomplete Applications	114					
Decided	192	206	164	183	66	58
Withdrawn Applications	16					

Admissions Decisions - YTD

Metric	Spring 2027 Applications	Spring 2026 Applications	Spring 2025 Applications	Spring 2024 Applications	Spring 2023 Applications	Spring 2022 Applications
Decided Applications	192	206	164	183	66	58
Decided SUNY Applications	10	14		2		
Accepted Applicants	192	205	164	183	66	57
Denial		1				1

Yield (Intent to Enroll)

Metric	Spring 2027 Applications	Spring 2026 Applications	Spring 2025 Applications	Spring 2024 Applications	Spring 2023 Applications	Spring 2022 Applications
Admitted: Confirmed Intent to ...	110	130	106	110	36	32
FirstTime/Transfer/ReAdmit: C...	98	115	97	102	36	31
Current/Continuing: Confirmed...	12	15	9	8		
Admitted: Confirmed SUNY Apps	2	3				
Admitted: Declined Enrollment	4	7	5	3		3
Admitted: Declined Enrollment ...	1					
MELT- Withdrawn AFTER Confir...	1	21	25	17	5	9

Student Affairs

November 2026 BOT Report

Athletics

- Women's soccer completed their season with an 8-6-1 record, earning a national ranking of No. 9 and advancing to the NJCAA Region III semifinals, where they fell to Mohawk Valley Community College. Our men's team completed their season at 5-9 overall with a loss to Cayuga CC in the Region III Championship.
- Our men's basketball team captured the NC Invitational Championship earning two wins at home on October 31st and November 1st and then suffered a loss on the road in their regular season opener at Herkimer Country Community College. Current record is 3-3 overall, and 0-2 in conference play.
- Our Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair is scheduled for Sunday, November 22nd from 10am - 3:30pm in Sparks.

EdSights/Bernie Update

EdSights' AI-powered student success bot, Bernie, engages North Country students 24/7/365. Bernie gathers real-time feedback and connects students to campus resources. Since launching in October 2025, Bernie has received over 3,700 student texts, with a 93% opt-in rate. Spring persistence check-in (370 responses):

- Returning: 291 students (79%)
- Unsure: 43 students (12%)
- Not returning: 36 students (10%)

Student Affairs staff are following up with each group, starting with students who answered "unsure" or "not returning."

Student Programming/Events

This fall, Student Life/Student Affairs has offered programs on all three campuses and virtually, with a focus on persistence, retention, and health and wellness. Some highlights include:

- **Mental Health Symposium:** Nearly 100 people attended, well above our expectations. It opened important conversations about how mental health affects college success and the challenges associated with accessing resources in rural communities. Thank you to faculty who brought their classes, and to Facilities for preparing the campus to welcome both our college and the wider community.
- **Student Success Fairs:** Co-hosted with Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, and the Business/Billing Office to help students stay on track.
- **College/Transfer Fair:** Connected students with four-year institutions and transfer pathways.
- **Community building:** First-Generation student events, ASAP workshops, and a Veterans celebration.
- **Community Connections Festival (Saranac Lake):** Connected students with local organizations and resources.
- **Wellness collaborations:** Yoga and cold brew events with Academic Affairs and Library Services.
- **Orange Shirt Day:** Honored survivors of Indigenous residential and boarding schools and the children who never returned home.

Looking ahead: We plan to streamline support for current clubs and organizations and to launch new ones, including Spanish, Pride, and Outing/Environmental clubs.

Achieving The Dream (ATD):

The ATD Core Team has finalized our first-year Action Plan. The team continues to meet regularly to review action items, share progress updates, and extend our student journey mapping into the second semester. Core Team meetings are open to anyone in the college community.

Coaching visit (October 29–30):

- Our ATD coaches joined us in person on the Saranac Lake campus, and we had virtual opportunities available for faculty and staff.
- Both days brought productive conversations and creative ideas that will help move the Action Plan forward.

Thank you to the faculty and staff who took part, in person and online. This work brings us closer to the goals in both our AcMo and ATD plans, supports student success, and strengthens the vitality of our communities.

Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP):

Our SUNY ASAP program removes financial barriers to full-time study and gives students structured pathways to build and keep academic momentum.

- **Fall 2026:** 114 students accepted into our inaugural cohort
- **Spring 2027:** Recruitment is underway. We need 36 more students to reach SUNY's goal of 150 in our first ASAP cohort.

Health & Wellness Updates:

Our Health & Wellness Counselor, Betsy Doud, has made the following connections so far this fall semester:

- **Individual student support:** Worked regularly with 46 students across our three campuses and online, through drop-ins, referrals, and connections at events. Support has included safety plans, health and wellness plans, referrals for therapy and prescription renewals, and other mental health needs.
- **Campus outreach:** Delivered 23 class presentations and check-ins with faculty, residence life, and other staff.
- **"What's Brewing" series:** Launched an end-of-semester stress relief series that helps students care for body and mind so they can succeed academically. The series is part of our broader effort to build a campus culture of health and wellness and a holistic approach to student success.
- **Thriving Campus:** Launched Thriving Campus, an online directory that helps students and employees find licensed mental health providers in their area who are experienced in supporting college students.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie VanBrunt

Interim Associate Vice President of Student Affairs

Chief Diversity Officer

Title IX Coordinator

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North Country Community College
President's Report to the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, November 24th, 2026

Greetings to you all,

…as we enter the 13th week of the semester. After today, there are 14 instructional days remaining in the Fall 2026 semester. Priority registration for continuing students ended last week and new student registrations for the Spring 2027 semester are underway.

As happens at this time of the year, students and faculty alike are tired and ready for a break. Fortunately, the Thanksgiving holiday and break starts tomorrow, and a well-deserved pause will begin to rest up and recharge, with the hopes for a strong finish. When we return from break, our self-study steering committee will have its inaugural meeting.

Thanksgiving is a time when we take a few moments to count the blessings in our lives and give thanks where they are due. For the College generally and me personally, your commitment to the College and our students, is one of the many things I am thankful for. We recognize your gift of time and energy to help guide and govern the College and are grateful for it. Thank you and best wishes for an enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday.

Joe

- **Board Matters**
  - *Board Appointments:*
    - *Governor's:* The Governor's appointments have been filled. No updates.
    - *County:* Essex County reappointed Donna Wadsworth to a new 7-year term on November 2nd, 2026. The appointment runs until June 30th, 2033.
  - *New York Community College Trustees (NYCCT):*
    - The trustees have been laying the groundwork for their budget advocacy on behalf of community colleges this year.
  - *Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)*
    - The board is considering joining a national organization that supports community college boards, by helping strengthen board engagement and board education.
    - The NYCCT Chair, Wendy Waters who is a board member at Mohawk Valley CC visited our campus on Thursday, November 19th. It was a treat to meet with her and hear how NYCCT desires to strengthen its efforts in board education, efforts which many of you have participated in.

- **Budgeting and Planning**
  - **26-27 Budget**: Due to higher number of full withdrawals prior to the start of the semester, and higher rates of e-grades at verification, we are at ~5% off our

enrollment target for Fall 2026. Erik Harvey will have more on the status of our operating deficit for this year. Opportunities to help reduce the deficit in Spring 2027 include expansion of SUNY Reconnect allowing students pursuing a SUNY Reconnect program to have a prior degree and the recent approval from Middle States to add Upstate CF to our Prison Education Program.

- **27-28 Budget:** The process for developing next year's budget is underway, starting with the establishment of tuition and fees. Erik Harvey will be presenting to the Board today a proposed 2% increase in tuition for the 2027-2028 academic year. Such an increase will add $62/semester ($124/year) to a full-time in-state student's tuition. The proposal to increase tuition was supported by the administration team, President's Council, the College Senate's Long Range and Strategic Planning Committee and the College Senate.

- **County Governing Boards:**
  - Essex County: There were several races for town supervisor and incumbents were successful in being re-elected with the exception of Town of Wilmington.
  - Franklin County: There were no legislator races this year.

- **NYS State Government:**
  - Our two Assemblymen representing parts of the College's service area, Matt Simpson and Michael Cashman, and our NYS Senator, Dan Stec, were all reelected earlier this month.
  - Assemblyman Cashman joined us at our 1st Generation celebration in Saranac Lake on November 9th, as did our Board Chair, Pete Suttmeier, and our trustee, David McNally. Many thanks to Pete and David for doing so.

Federal Items:

- **Federal Advocacy:** The New York Community College Association of Presidents (NYCCAP) engaged The Quider Group to provide federal advocacy on Capitol Hill for the 2026-2027 year. Services will include a Washington DC Fly-in to include meetings with federal agencies, administrative representatives, and members of Congress, monthly updates on items pertinent to community colleges, and participation in NYCCAP's annual retreat. Our first update was on Friday, November 13th and Presidents were provided with initial thoughts on what the election outcomes could mean for community colleges and our students. There is much more to be learned over the next several weeks.
- **Title III Strengthening Institutions Program:** Last month, we learned that our application was *not* selected for an award, missing the cut off by two points. When reviewing the comments, we discovered what we believe was an error in scoring that, if corrected, would have made our application eligible. We are awaiting follow-up from the USDOE.

Enrollment

- **Spring 2027 Enrollment:** The two-week priority registration time period for our continuing students to register for Spring 2027 concluded on Friday, November 13th. Continuing students will be able to register right up to the start of classes. Meanwhile, New Student Registration commenced on Monday, November 16th, 2026 and

will run through the start of the Spring 2027 semester as well. The table below shows the number of students registered thus far and only reflected continuing students.

Spring 2027 Registrations *Date: 111626*	**Spring 2027**	**Spring 2026**	**# Change**	**% Change**
First Time	NA	NA	NA	
Transfer	NA	NA	NA	
Re-Admit	NA	NA	NA	
Continuing	379	413	-34	-8%
Total Core	**379**	**413**	**-34**	**-8%**

Outreach to continuing students to help them register, which can include resolving outstanding financial/billing items, is underway.

As of Monday, November 16th our applications for the Spring 2027 semester (core operations only) are down compared to 2027 as are those who have decided and confirmed their intent to enroll (see table below). The expansion of SUNY Reconnect allowing any student with a prior degree to be eligible to participate is hoped to be attractive to more adult students seeking to re-career or upskill.

11/16/26	**Change**	**Spring 27**	**Spring 26**	**Spring 25**
Applications	-15%	324	380	263
Decided	-7%	192	206	164
Confirmed Intent to Enroll	-15	110	130	106

✶ Other Items of Interest

☐ Achieving the Dream (ATD) Plan

- Our Student Success Action Plan, which incorporates the work done by the College community with ATD and SUNY Academic Momentum, is in full swing. I have attached the eight action items that we are working on this year to this report.
- On Thursday, October 29th and Friday, October 30th, Dr. Paula Pitcher and Dr. Kara Monroe joined us for an on-campus coaching visit to provide some support to help strengthen our student success work.

☐ Strategic Plan Update

Currently, we are working with LRSPC examining our vision for the College, in light of the region's needs, our students' interests, and our credit and non-credit offerings, with the goal of updating the shared vision for the College.

- **Pathways:** (Provide a meaningful and engaging education that prepares students for transfer or career opportunities)

Goal	**Progress/Update Highlights**
Develop a Liberal Arts Advisory Board to advise departments on how to align liberal arts curriculum to strengthen students' transfer and career success.	1. No update, though discussion about exploring ways to add meaningful applied learning experiences into the major is underway.

Establish a comprehensive program to address academic use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).	1. We drafted an AI Policy which provides some guidelines and guardrails to AI use, academically and institutionally. It was presented to President's Council and shared with the Senate's Academic Policy and Standards Committee.
Successfully implement Academic Momentum strategies leading to improved persistence, retention and completion rates.	1. The AcMo strategies are underway, most notably the establishment of new "gateway" courses in English and Math, which do away with development/remedial courses.

- **Student Experience:** *Create and nurture a supportive environment that welcomes diversity and difference and focuses on student success and growth.*

Goal	Progress/Update Highlights
Ensure that the College is fully accessible in our facilities, technology, instruction, and programming.	1. Facilities have been addressing findings in the OCR report, including establishing accessible parking spaces, creating accessible counters, and the like. 2. Tara Evans, HR Director, developed a set of OCR Grievance Procedures as part of our improvement plan and presented to the Admin Team and President's Council. These are expected to be adopted soon.
Develop and execute a student success action plan leading to improved student outcomes	1. The action plan is in full swing (see attachment below)
Successfully implement Thesis Elements, an updated Student Information System	1. The transition to Thesis Elements took place in mid-June.Even though it was an upgrade, the shift has taken time to adapt to.

- **Partnerships:** *Act as a strong and valued partner in the communities we serve.*

Goal	Progress/Update Highlights
Develop a comprehensive Continuing Education Department that can respond to evolving community needs with non-credit programming and accessible facilities.	1. The College launched a Community Health Worker program this summer. The second round began on October 12th and a employer roundtable was held on November 19th. 2. Basic EMT courses are running this fall in Malone and SL, and Basic Wastewater Operator course began on September 18, 2026. 3. Non-credit Pottery classes are running in SL in Fall 2026.
Expand and, where needed, establish our relationships with DOCCS, BOP	1. An agreement to expand offerings at Upstate CF was finalized this

and County Jails by August 2027.	summer and the first courses are underway with support from SUNY for non-tuition-related costs. 2. Middle States approved our adding Upstate CF to our list of approved institutions to offer the full Prison Education Program on Nov 3, 2026.
Explore and implement microcredential opportunities to better serve students and employers.	1. The *Direct Support Professional (DSP)* microcredentials continue to be offered, though the enrollment in them has slowed since inception. 2. *HUS 113 Crisis Intervention* launched Fall 2025 and is being offered again in Fall 2026.

- **Sustainability:** *Ensure the financial sustainability of the institution through strengthening enrollment and maximizing use of resources.*

Goal	Progress/Update Highlights
Implement a new department level review process using clearly defined guidelines and self-assessment evaluations so employees and department heads can more competently evaluate institutional effectiveness and alignment with strategic plan.	1. Athletics, HR, and the Business Office completed their IE in the 25-26 year. Facilities and Grounds, Enrollment and Student Affairs/Student Life, carried it over to the 26-27 year.
Increase non-student revenue streams by 5% annually by August 2026 to support the College mission.	1. The Foundation received several notable gifts over the fall including $4,000 from Community Bank NA to support the Student Emergency Needs Fund, and a $10,000 gift from Arrow Bank in support of that fund as well as student scholarships.

☐ Grants and Opportunities

- *Perkins:* We are awaiting final review of our Perkins Grant. This year's grant, if approved, will support the purchase of a new clinical software system for nursing, improve accessibility for instruction-related videos, and help support our Student Success Coaches.
- Betsy Penrose submitted a *Title III Strengthening Institutions Program* grant application on behalf of the College earlier this summer. As noted above, when reviewing the comments, we discovered what we believe was an error in scoring that, if corrected, would have made our application eligible. We have notified the USDOE and are awaiting follow-up.
- *Northern Border Regional Commission:* JMZ Architects and Planners launched the *feasibility study* to construct a new building in Saranac Lake near the rail trail to support wilderness recreation, environmental science and art courses/needs on Thursday, October 22, 2026. A site visit was conducted on November 16th, 2026 as part of JMZ' work.

☐ Facilities, Capital and Other Projects

Many thanks to our Facilities staff in keeping our campuses operating, including readying them for winter, and carrying out the updates to be in compliance with OCR. We had a plumbing issue that resulted in McCormick Hall being shuttered for three days. It has been repaired and operations resumed on Monday, November 9th. Below is the status of other capital projects underway and/or planned:

Project	Scope of Work	Anticipated Timeline	Next Steps
Sparks Front Vestibule	Complete except for two (2) exterior lights.	Nov 30, 2026	Install lights once they arrive on site.
SL Library Learning Commons	JMZ conducted a feasibility and design study to co-locate LAC in Library.	Nov 30, 2026	Title III application review had a calculation error. We have notified USDOE and are awaiting a response.
Sparks Pool	Scoping study on pool repairs, plumbing, electrical, HVAC infrastructure, upgrades to locker rooms, rest rooms, and showers.	TBD	We are reviewing the pool study results to determine funding needs/resources. Estimates for upgrading the mechanical room are $560,000 and over $4M for a full upgrade of the pool and locker rooms.
College Hall	Structural Assessment	Completed in December 2025	A scoping proposal based on the structural assessment identified needs. Once the full scope and budget are determined we will be requesting the engineering firm to provide us with plans/cost estimates to go out to bid.
SL Rail Trail Building Feasibility Study	Feasibility study for a building along the rail trail to house science, art and wilderness rec leadership courses/ programs, and community space.	Underway	The project kicked off on Thursday, October 22nd.
Boiler Project (SL Campus – McCormick, Mulholland; ML Campus – Ballard and Reshetkina)	Boilers being proposed to be replaced with more energy efficient and less costly propane boilers. Work will begin with the SL campus.	Ready to start as the contract has been signed	AES Northeast proposal was accepted to conduct a heating assessment of Clermont, Mulholland, and McCormick Halls to determine energy needs and the appropriate sizing of new boilers and estimates for replacement.
Radio Station	Demolition	Nov 30, 2026	The Radio Station and associated buildings were demolished earlier this month.

- **Middle States Commission on Higher Education (aka MSCHE aka Middle States):**
  - Middle States, our regional accreditor, requires periodic self-study, whereby the College reflects upon its performance vis-à-vis seven (7) standards, followed up by a peer review and review team visit to campus. The self-study process occurs every eight years and we are scheduled to complete self-study and have a review team on campus in Spring 2029.
  - We have a new VP Liaison at Middle States, Michael Sachs, JD, who joins the Middle States team bringing wealth of accreditation experience.
  - The Steering Committee will hold its first meeting on Thursday, December 3rd at 12:00 pm

- **NCCCAP:**
  - A Labor Management Relations (LMR) meeting took place earlier this month and we will be meeting over the next few months on a few items.

- **CSEA:**
  - No updates.

- **SUNY:**
  - No updates.

- **NYSED:**
  - Recertification of our Practical Nursing Certificate (PN) and Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) program occurred on November 11-13, 2026. By and large, it was a successful site visit and a testimony to the good work of our nursing department and their faculty and support staff allies, as well as Sarah Maroun's leadership. A note of thanks to them all!

That's all for now. Gratefully yours,



Joe Keegan
President

North County Community College
Student Success Action Plan
Fall 2026

ATD Action Items 26-27
Complete Student Journey Map (SJM) leakage chart from inquiry to end of 1st semester, identify priority leaks to address, and update annually.
Identify students at-risk of no-showing in week 1 who have not signed into D2L, email, portal, and other digital tools.
Ensure all programs: 1) have core courses available in 1st semester, and 2) program worksheets/advising sequences are current and reflect that.
Gateway English and Math Redesign and assess redesign impact after fall and spring semesters
Complete Student Journey Map (SJM) through completion/ graduation to identify additional leaks.
Inventory communications sent to students (including non-matric) & create communications plan that reduces coms and prioritizes action by students.
Increase referral to and use of Learning Assistance Center resources by students and faculty.
Establish a cross-functional design group to propose "minimum viable" data infrastructure: shared glossary, short list of institutionally endorsed student success metrics, and shared data foundation.

Key: Pink = in progress; Green = new for Fall 2026