

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Garden City, New York

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MINUTES

Meeting of April 9, 2024

The six hundred seventy-fifth meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 on the eleventh floor of the Administrative Tower. The meeting was called to order by Chair Gardyn at 5:32 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Present: Jorge L. Gardyn, Chair  
Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Wanda H. Jackson, Secretary;  
Lynne D'Agostino, John R. Durso, George Siberón,  
Donna M. Tuman, Leslie Vazquez Student Trustee.

Absent: John A. DeGrace

Also in attendance: CAO Conzatti

Chair Gardyn requested a motion that pursuant to Section 105 of the Open Meetings Law of the State of New York, the Board of Trustees shall enter Executive Session for the following purposes: 1) to discuss matters relating to negotiations involving the NCCAA; 2) to discuss matters relating to negotiations involving the Department Chairs; 3) to discuss matters relating to negotiations involving the AFA; and 4) to review 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. Trustee Weiss moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Durso. Motion carried 8-0.

Chair Gardyn resumed the open meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Present: Jorge L. Gardyn, Chair  
Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Wanda H. Jackson, Secretary;  
Lynne D'Agostino, John R. Durso, George Siberón,  
Donna M. Tuman, Leslie Vazquez Student Trustee.

Absent: John A. DeGrace

Also in attendance: CAO Conzatti

1. Approval of Minutes

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2024. Trustee Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Siberón. Motion carried 7-0-1(D'Agostino).

Chair Gardyn made a motion under Article VIII section C(6) of the Rules of Procedure to allow for the consideration of an item that does not appear on the Calendar. Trustee Tuman seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-0.

2. Trustee Durso introduced the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the collective bargaining agreement covering the period October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2022, as extended by the Memorandum of Agreement for the period of October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023 was modified effective as of October 1, 2023 between Nassau Community College (hereinafter “College”) and the Adjunct Faculty Association (hereinafter “Association”) expired on September 30, 2023, and

**WHEREAS**, representatives of the respective parties have engaged in negotiations for a successor agreement to said expiring labor agreement, and

**WHEREAS**, the representatives of the College and the Association memorialized their agreement in a Memorandum of Agreement providing for a new collective bargaining agreement for the term of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2026,

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the College herewith ratifies and approves the Memorandum of Agreement hereinabove referenced, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board’s ratification of the aforesaid Memorandum of Agreement is subject to and contingent upon execution by the County Executive and ratification by the Nassau County Legislature, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board authorizes Maria P. Conzatti, Chief Administrative Officer of the Colleges, to execute the new collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the College, following execution of the Memorandum of Agreement by the County Executive and ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement by the Nassau County Legislature.

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to consider this item. Trustee Weiss moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Tuman. Motion carried 8-0.

Dr. Conzatti reported on the following items:

**Nine (9) team members** participated in the Canstruction Design/Build Competition exhibit in the RXR Plaza upper atrium in Uniondale during the first two months of November 2023. Their structure, titled “Squash Hunger”, earned the “Most Cans” award, using 8,172 cans of food, all of which were donated to The NEST.

Melanie Alvarez	Sint Para Mi	Juliette Rebuth
Naomi Cheung	Shaye Radin	Gregg Trovato
Christopher Fulton	Johnny Reale	Cecilia Vasquez

**Dr. Liz Hynes-Musnisky** was offered and has accepted a SUNY Transfer Faculty Fellow position.

**SUNY Mock Middle States Visit in Progress**

A three-day mock Middle States Visit by the SUNY Council on Assessment (SCoA) was conducted by four evaluators who met with all constituents of the College, including members of the CSEA, NCCFT, and AFA, as well as the Board of Trustees, the Institutional Planning Committee, and the Student Government Association. The mock visit by SUNY accreditation experts will help prepare the College community to author an effective Self-Study Report and to successfully host the Middle States evaluation site team in Spring 2025.

### **New Micro-credential in Direct Support Specialist**

The College was awarded a \$600,000 grant from SUNY and the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities to confer micro-credentials in the field of Direct Support Professional. The grant is aimed at expanding the State's workforce to serve people with developmental and intellectual challenges on Long Island. The grant will cover the tuition and expenses for students enrolled in the program.

### **College Student Artwork on Display**

The Plaza Art Gallery located in the Tower will host the annual Student Art Exhibition from April 9 until May 10. The exhibition is open Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. We extend our congratulations to the students who were honored at an awards ceremony on April 9.

### **Games for the Physically Challenged**

One of Nassau's strategic goals is to foster Community Inclusion and Engagement and to welcome our neighbors and the public to their hometown College to participate in events and programs. To this end, the College is proud to co-sponsor the 2024 Nassau County Games for the Physically Challenged on May 31 and June 1. Competitors and spectators will travel here from throughout the tri-state region to enjoy a weekend of fun athletic activities alongside friends and family.

### **Solar Eclipse Viewing Party**

The Student Government Association (SGA) sponsored a solar eclipse party on the Quad on April 8. More than 150 students, faculty, and staff gathered on picnic tables, benches, and the lawn to witness this historic event in the sky. The SGA and Student Activities Office provided free protective glasses to students.

### **Speakers**

Stef Krompiew, AFA President, thanked the Board for approving the AFA contract quickly, especially since the voting ratification poll on the contract ended at 4:00 p.m. earlier in the day. The vote was 542 to 39 in favor of the contract. The College negotiators explained the huge structural deficit we are facing and they understand our value. The contract is one that both sides can live with.

Suzanne Kaebnick, NCCFT Secretary, commented on the financial presentation at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> General Faculty meeting, which does not include an increase in operational funding from the County. She claims that the College has not asked for an increase for 17 years by her approximation. She encouraged the College and Trustees to actively fundraise for revenue from private sources since our main community college competitor has a multi-million-dollar endowment. She believes that more full-time faculty need to be hired and 14 full-time temporary faculty received a letter that they will not be hired next year. She remarked that faculty raises have yet to be instated since the signing of the contract in January.

Ariel Lann, President of the Achilles Club, voiced her concerns on class cancellations, stating that two classes for which she had intended to register were canceled a month before the term officially started which could have prevented her from graduating.

Stu Kaplan, Chair, Math/Comp Sci/Info Tech Department, wished to offer perspective to clarify some information from the minutes of the March 13, 2024 Academic, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee meeting, which misstate that the department's report did not have any data or current research prior to the resolution going to the department, the Senate Developmental Education Committee, and finally the Academic Senate for a vote. At each level, the department provided information on NYS Regents Algebra I and II and Geometry, grading conversion rates, NYS high school graduation diploma requirements, and documentation from Betty Rose, the Commissioner of Education, related to guidance particularly on Regents

scores and on satisfying the diploma requirements for 2021 – 2023 academic years, the College placement criteria, and all inputs on student performance post-COVID in K- 12. After Dr. Conzatti rejected the Senate-approved resolution on math placement testing exemptions, the department was asked for and provided additional data and research to support its decisions. The department still believes that the unweighted math high school GPA is a better placement tool for math courses than the overall high school GPA, which is inclusive with more credits from subjects other than math. Even though the administration has moved forward with its guidelines of what was approved by the department and the Senate, they look forward to further conversations.

Faren Siminoff, NCCFT President, voiced her concern that faculty promotions and/or tenure appointments have not been put forward for approval and she hopes they will be on the agenda in May. She stated that students totally opposed the proposed dropping of classes that had not reached 70% and believes that students register late because they have other commitments, and so canceling classes only 30% filled makes absolutely no sense.

Jason Gorman, Chair, Academic Senate, first thanked Trustee Weiss for attending the Art Gallery event. He offered his individual observations on Middle States (MS) Standard IV: Leadership, Governance and Administration, of which he is a Co-chair. Based on his understanding that only the Board sets policy, he questioned the Board on what the faculty considers a policy change – on whether they approved both the developmental education pilot study revisions to use the overall high school GPA and the cancellation of classes. He also has presumed that the Board has not forwarded Dr. Conzatti’s name to SUNY appointing her as the permanent president of NCC.

Chair Gardyn read the following statement:

“I wanted to take a moment to comment on the Vote of No Confidence by the NCCFT a few weeks ago.

By the vote, it is obvious this was an action the union membership as a whole did not support.

Based on the Vote of No Confidence document created by the union leadership, it is understandable how union members who did vote in favor were misled with inaccurate and manipulative statements purposefully drafted to create the impression of a Board, President, and administration that do not have the best interest of the College at heart.

This could not be further from the truth.

I do not place blame on the membership, but rather on the union leadership.

It saddens me to see a union leader put her self-interests before what's best for the students of Nassau Community College, as well as her own union members. Unfortunately, this is where we are as an institution, as is clearly evident by adversarial actions taken by the NCCFT leadership over the last two years.

As a Board, we understand that change is not easy. However, stagnation and repeating the same mistakes over and over again will lead to the ultimate ruination of the College. Many of the actions taken by this administration over the last few months are not an effort to marginalize any one group on campus. Quite the opposite: leadership is the ability to make the unpopular decisions, knowing that it is the right thing to do for the College Community. That is the type of leaders we have here at NCC, in the President, Board of Trustees, and senior administration.

Despite the most recent concerted attacks on the College leadership, Board of Trustees, President, and senior administration, we continue to remain dedicated to NCC and to doing right for our students, faculty,

employees, and our community. We will not allow this Vote of No Confidence to distract us from doing the job at hand.

The future success of NCC is our ultimate mission.”

Chair Gardyn announced the next Board of Trustees’ Committee meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. It is anticipated the Board will open the public session between 6:15 and 6:30 p.m.

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Siberón. Motion carried 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda H. Jackson  
Secretary

DRAFT