

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Garden City, New York

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MINUTES

Meeting of October 13, 2020

The six hundred thirty-ninth meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 was held via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Chair Gardyn at 6:45 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Present: Jorge L. Gardyn, Chair  
Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Edward Powers, Secretary;  
John R. Durso, Wanda H. Jackson,  
George Siberón, Donna M. Tuman, Emily Rivas, Student Trustee.

Absent: John A. DeGrace, Linda H. Green

Also in attendance: President Williams, VP's Kerrigan, Lausch, Muscarella, AVP Wright

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 Nassau Community College Administrators Association; 2) to discuss matters relating to negotiations involving the NCCFT; 3) to discuss matters involving proposed, pending or current litigation; and 4) of reviewing 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 8:23 p.m.

Present: Jorge L. Gardyn, Chair  
Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Edward Powers, Secretary;  
John R. Durso, Wanda H. Jackson, George Siberón, Donna M. Tuman.

Absent: John A. DeGrace, Linda H. Green, Emily Rivas, Student Trustee.

Also in attendance: President Williams, VP's Izquierdo, Kerrigan, Lausch, Muscarella, AVP Wright

1. Approval of Minutes

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to approve the minutes of September 8, 2020. Trustee Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Weiss. Motion carried 7-0.

2. Trustee Durso introduced the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees Finance and Capital Committee, the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the pending college

procurement agreement with XCALIBUR in the amount of \$53,400 as requested by VP Academic Student Services Conzatti. (Funding Source: GRANT)

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to consider this item. Trustee Siberón moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Weiss. Motion carried 7-0.

2. Trustee Weiss introduced the following resolution as amended:

**RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees Finance and Capital Committee, the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees hereby approves the pending college procurement agreement with Marshall & Sterling Upstate for insurance and brokerage services in the amount of \$250,000 as requested by VP Finance Izquierdo. (Funding Source: Operating)

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to consider this item. Trustee Tuman moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Weiss. Motion carried 7-0.

3. Trustee Jackson introduced the following resolution:

**RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees Finance and Capital Committee the Nassau Community College Board of Trustees accepts the donation of a Baldwin Grand Piano from Professor Susan Sobolewski and expresses their appreciation for this gift.

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to consider this item. Trustee Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Siberón. Motion carried 7-0.

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 Weiss seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.

4. Trustee Weiss introduced the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, between January 2014 and April 2019, Dover Gourmet Group operated vending machines on the College's Campus;

**WHEREAS**, in consideration for operating vending machines on the Campus, Dover was contractually obligated to make revenue payments to the College, and was delinquent in its payments;

**WHEREAS**, as of April, 2019, when the College terminated its relationship with Dover, Dover had an outstanding balance of \$213,925.92 in unpaid revenues.

**RESOLVED**, that Nassau County Attorney is herewith authorized to institute litigation against Dover Gourmet Group in order to recover an outstanding balance of \$213,925.92 due and owing by Dover Gourmet Group to Nassau Community College.

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to consider this item. Trustee Weiss moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Jackson. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Powers).

## **President's Report**

He welcomed new Student Trustee Emily Rivas, who was recently elected to the role by her peers. They had a nice conversation last week, during which Emily shared that she is a Liberal Arts major who plans to graduate from NCC in May 2021 and then to transfer to Adelphi. She ultimately wants to pursue a career in International Relations. He looks forward to meeting with her regularly to learn about the student perspective and to her bringing that viewpoint to the Board.

## **Student Highlights**

- The Student Government Association (SGA) recently held elections for its full slate of officers, as indicated by the aforementioned citation of the Student Trustee. He had a great meeting with the new SGA President, Natalie Asitimbay, with whom he likewise looks forward to meeting throughout the year, as she is also a highly engaged student.
- Engaging with students is a bit different this semester. Thankfully, the Office of Student Activities, classroom faculty, and others at the College have been helping students remain engaged virtually through interaction from a distance.
  - Last week, the Office of Student Activities held the Annual Activities Fair that introduces clubs and organizations to students.
  - In September, students were engaged with a *National Voter Registration Day* event.
  - There have been and will continue to be multiple events, and the latter are two that he attended in an effort to stay connected with our students. It is important to share that, even during these challenging times, classroom and non-classroom faculty and administrators are all attempting to stay engaged to provide interaction.
- The College recently administered a Pulse survey to all Fall students to identify how they are navigating the semester, which will be followed up by other surveys and phone calls. More than 10% of students replied, and the data is currently being analyzed for review and action.

He thanked all at the College who continue to keep our students engaged during these trying circumstances.

## **Health and Safety Update**

- The College community remains vigilant in adhering to identified health and safety expectations. We are in the process of identifying a testing protocol for students, which has recently become an expectation for all SUNY campuses. Health and safety will continue to be at the forefront of our planning.
- All Winterim courses will be online or remote.
- An official announcement regarding Spring 2021 will be made as soon as possible. At this time, planning for Spring 2021 is being approached with the same guiding principles utilized to create the Fall 2020 academic experience.

## **Enrollment**

- **Fall 2020**
  - As of the census date, credit enrollment was down a little less than 17%.
  - The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning (OIESP) is in the process of analyzing Fall enrollment data. Based on preliminary analyses:
    - 19% decrease in full time students and a 12% decrease in part-time students;
    - 18% decrease in students aged 18-24, which is particularly relevant because this age group represents approximately 70% of our student population;
    - Within that traditional age category of 18-24, the decrease is more significant amongst males, at 20%, while females decreased at 15%;
    - If we dig deeper and look at new first-time students, the largest decrease was with students who identify as Black or African-American, at an alarming 45%.

- We desperately need to critically review disaggregated data if we are going to address equity issues in a data-informed manner. We face a challenge and an opportunity. Conversations are taking place in Cabinet and across the College, as we need to address these concerns immediately.
- This Fall we also have classes starting in late October, which will be the first time the College is pursuing this effort in such a robust manner. These courses provide students with a flexible start date and an opportunity to stay on track through a different learning time frame, as well as complement full semester courses.
- **Winter 2021**
  - We received the first report regarding Winterim:
    - 365 students registered on day one.
      - To put this in perspective, we registered a total of 1,053 students for the entire Winterim 2020; so, this year more than a third of last year's total registered on the first available day.

### **Budget**

These remain unprecedented and dire fiscal times. While we are pivoting to navigate decreases in State funding and potential delayed payments regarding aid such as TAP and Excelsior, we are also identifying what the next several years will hold. Everyone should be aware that this type of multi-year analysis is occurring, and we will need to make decisions in the present that promote fiscal solvency for the future.

### **Updates on Major Initiatives**

- **Guided Pathways**
  - The College continues moving forward with Guided Pathways work in year two.
  - later this month several of us will attend a multi-day Guided Pathways virtual conference focused on Career and Transfer Pathways, which will bring together the 19 or so involved SUNY community colleges.
- **Strategic Planning**
  - He accepted the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC)'s recommendation, introduced to the Board earlier in the evening, which outlines our process for the College's next Strategic Plan and identifies how to ensure how other plans [Master Academic Plan (MAP), Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP), Facilities, Assessment, and Technology) in succession will be guided and led by the Strategic Plan. The College community will be further engaged as we proceed.
- **Enhanced Partnerships**
  - The College recently received two Community Block Grants: \$102K for a Community Health Worker (CHW) Program; and \$100K for Workforce Development Training Scholarships. The College will partner with the Nassau County Department of Social Services and the Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay Workforce Development Boards. He thanked Dawn Nolan, Janet Caruso, and a host of others.
  - With VP Kerrigan taking the lead on a coordinated and College-wide effort, we have been engaging Northwell Health regarding opportunities such as:
    - aligning Northwell Health standards of care to our programs, so graduates will be ready to work immediately and to become highly recruitable;
    - linking up our Guided Pathways to their Career Pathways initiative, in what could be a signature program;
    - promoting the 1,700 Northwell career and job opportunities to our NCC community (students, alumni, parents, friends, etc.);
    - starting discussion of recognition opportunities with Northwell to highlight our partnership.

- **Policy 7350 – Demonstrations on College Property**

This policy was introduced earlier this evening during the Policy and Planning Committee meeting. As a reminder, the policy process begins with the administration, in consultation with appropriate campus committees or offices, developing a draft that is reviewed and approved for further development by the Policy and Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees. We will hold three open forums prior to the next Board meeting, so the campus community has an opportunity to discuss the policy with the administration. After solicitation of feedback, the policy will be presented to the full Board for consideration in a first reading at its next meeting. Upon development of a final version, a second reading by the Board for adoption of the policy will take place.

He thanked the Trustees for their continued support and all the individuals at the College who work day in and day out to advance the College. We have started the year with a community spirit and approach that is driving us forward, and will continue to progress in a manner that is communicative, collaborative, and compassionate in order to advance student access, completion, and post-completion success. He remains extremely happy and utterly humbled to serve as President of Nassau Community College.

### **Speakers**

Caroline Falconetti, NCCFT Treasurer, stated that the faculty look forward to working with the administration to address health and safety issues as a top priority for the campus now and for the future and to resolve the stressful difficulties with the bookstore's NCC Access program. She also thanked Debbie Spiro and her team in Distance Education for their time and effort to get everyone up and running with Blackboard and Zoom, with which most of us are growing more comfortable.

Rich Newman, NCCFT Secretary and Acting Classroom VP, remarked that the COVID-19 pandemic, while presenting unique challenges operationally, strategically, and pedagogically, is but the latest in an unfortunately long list of crises confronting NCC over the past ten years; as it hit when we were finally returning to solid footing following the Middle States threat to accreditation and Dr. Williams was just hitting his stride. There is no overstating that faculty, staff, students, and administration have gone to Herculean efforts and lengths to ensure that we will: continue to function as the high-quality public institution to which we have become accustomed; and be better prepared for Spring 2021 than we had been for the second half of Spring 2020. He shared that he was gratified to hear Dr. Lausch at the last Academic Affairs meeting outline not a vision, per se, but a set of concerns that implied a vision as respectful of faculty as higher education professionals as it was cognizant of more bottom-line concerns, such as increasing enrollment and needing to adapt to the changing world. It has been some time since the faculty had academic leadership at the Cabinet level as focused on the future as on stabilizing the present, and this sign from Dr. Lausch gives him hope.

Stefan Krompiewski, AFA President, doubled down on Rich Newman's impressions of last week's Academic Affairs meeting, noting that he emerged with the same hopeful feelings. He nonetheless felt compelled to deliver a message not as positive as has been customary seeking to accentuate or create the "bright side". Regrettably, he has been receiving the message not just from adjuncts, but from all campus, that confidence is waning fast in the ability of the President and the Board of Trustees to take decisive action to rebuild enrollment. He will submit the proposal to all Trustees, but summarized the high points which he believes will address how to rebuild enrollment to expected levels.

- a. It is not unknown that NCC has a reputation as "13<sup>th</sup> grade" of Nassau County high schools. This reputation has worsened over the last 4 – 5 years. NCC needs a complete rebranding and repositioning.
- b. Dr. Williams mentioned a Pulse survey. Prof. Krompiewski stated that he read some interesting figures available from the College which address the primary reason students come to NCC. Statistics indicate

that back in 2013, the primary goal of 60% of students was to transfer to 4-yr college. In 2019, that figure is down to 34%. This statistic is important because in terms of our marketing, we need to identify: where these losses are taking place; which are the districts that are sending fewer students to NCC than in the past; and why are they sending fewer students?

- c. Our reputation with school districts, and in particular with their Superintendents, filters down and extends to guidance directors and counselors who advise students where to apply to college.
- d. The most recent issue of the AFA newsletter, *Vanguard*, addresses some of the same concerns contained within the proposal.

He concluded that “the buck stops on the desk of the President and the Board of Trustees”. We need plans with reasonable relevant goals, workable strategies, and performance benchmarks that feature timelines and deadlines to achieve at least three goals:

1. Rebrand and reposition NCC
2. Reconnect NCC with school district Superintendents
3. End the opt-out textbook program, which was a debacle

He emphasized that the College must act soon, as our survival depends on it. He looks forward to feedback once all Trustees have had an opportunity to review the proposal.

Stuart Kaplan, Math/Computer Science/Information Technology Department Chair, advocated on behalf of his students to restore two TA lines. Two temporary Technical Assistant (TA) lines in his department have not been continued into this academic year and several Full-Time teaching faculty were also lost to the Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP). The TAs had worked directly with our students to improve their mathematical skills and concepts necessary for student success and retention.

- One TA position is for our Quantitative Reasoning Lab. In January 2018, at the request of the Office of Academic Affairs, the Math Department revamped its developmental education offerings. In Math, we distinguish students needing credit course work in STEM versus non-STEM areas. Two new courses were created for those students needing support in non-STEM Math Quantitative Reasoning topics. In December 2018, with assistance from SUNY, including a grant, the department provided training for almost 100 faculty to be trained and certified in this new non-STEM approach. Implementation began in Spring 2019. The President’s Cabinet supported the hiring of a Full-Time TA to run the lab. Given all the directives, efforts, and support by the entire NCC academic community, his department is surprised that a line was not continued into this academic year.
- The second TA position critical to student support, and which has existed in the department for decades, is our Math Anxiety Specialist, who works one-on-one in group settings with students in both credit and non-credit math courses to help them overcome their struggles with math. This Specialist is dedicated to providing proven successful techniques to ease students’ anxieties while assisting them on a personal level to understand and to learn math.

Amidst the current pandemic crisis, affecting millions of students, these TAs would contribute to helping students, as their stress and anxiety levels are at an all-time high. Dr. Williams’ vision of equity and equality motivates us to continue to provide student support, and the removal of these lines runs directly counter to this vision. Having the two TA lines would have been helpful to all those students who did not receive their course materials on time, as they would have had access to additional TA help hours to keep pace with their math courses, which is critical for new Fall semester students.

He also expressed new appreciation for the amount of time and effort required of a Trustee, and thanked the Board members for their service.

Mary Lannon, English Professor for 14 years at NCC, has heard that an opt-in policy for bookstore purchases may be under consideration as an alternative to opt-out, and explained why she believes it would also be an

equally poor solution. With opt-in, the bookstore presumably would be saving money by offering e-books rather than physical books, so some students would be reading their books on their cell phones whether in the classroom or at home. Reading on an electronic device provides temptation not conducive to an effective learning experience. In the past, she would require that all cell phones be turned off to avoid the distractions of social media, internet surfing, and texting. This semester the bookstore refused to allow her to require physical books. She appealed to reject opt-in as an alternative to opt-out, as faculty should have control over whether their students have physical or e-books.

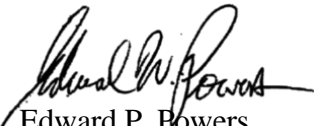
Chair Gardyn warned that the healthcare field has seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases. Our only protection remains wearing a face mask, handwashing – essentially cloth and alcohol – and social distancing; these are basic but effective methods. Good luck and perseverance will get us through this crisis until we have a vaccine. In the meantime, do not underestimate the coronavirus: it is dangerous. The statistics, whether cases or 220K deaths, are vastly underreported. Remain vigilant and, most importantly, get tested, often, if you any symptoms, from a cough, sore throat, fever, and chills to loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fatigue. We must work together as a community and not let our guard down.

Chair Gardyn announced the next Capital and Finance BOT Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. followed by the Full Board meeting. The Board will open the public session between 6:15 and 6:30 p.m. and resume the public session approximately 7:30 p.m.

Chair Gardyn requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Jackson moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Durso. Motion carried 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Edward P. Powers  
Secretary