

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Garden City, New York

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MINUTES

Meeting of December 13, 2022

The six hundred sixtieth meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 on the eleventh floor of the Administrative Tower. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Weiss at 5:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Present: Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Wanda H. Jackson, Secretary;  
John R. Durso, George Siberón,  
Donna M. Tuman, Aniruddh Patel, Student Trustee.

Absent: Jorge L. Gardyn, Lynne D'Agostino, Ronald J. Rosenberg

Also in attendance: Acting President Conzatti

Vice Chair Weiss 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; and 3) 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 Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Tuman. Motion carried 6-0.

Vice Chair Weiss resumed the open meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Present: Kathy Weiss, Vice Chair  
Wanda H. Jackson, Secretary;  
Lynne D'Agostino, John R. Durso,  
George Siberón, Donna M. Tuman, Aniruddh Patel, Student Trustee.

Absent: Jorge L. Gardyn, Ronald J. Rosenberg

Also in attendance: Acting President Conzatti

1. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Weiss requested a motion to approve the minutes of November 8, 2022. Trustee Siberón moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Durso. Motion carried 7-0.

2. Second Reading & Discussion: Policy 5300: Student Health Office

Trustee Weiss introduced Policy 5300: Student Health Office for discussion. She asked the Board if they had any further comments before the policy is adopted at the next scheduled Board meeting. Being there were no comments, Dr. Conzatti certified that she reviewed the policy and that it has been submitted for consultation to the appropriate constituencies within the College prior to submission to the Board.

Dr. Conzatti reported on the following items:

The 2022 edition of the student-produced *Luna* literary journal has won several awards from the National Community College Humanities Association, including Third Place for Best Overall Magazine. Congratulations to the following NCC students who received recognition and honors:

- Christian Bullock was awarded First Place in the short story division;
- Alexandra Scheck was awarded Second Place in the artwork/photography division;
- Tyler Lynch was awarded Second Place in the screenplay division;
- Paula Munoz was awarded Third Place in the screenplay division.

The Editorial Team includes NCC students Santino Curatolo, Michael Mazzola, Erin St. Angelo, Kit Morris, Robert Garcia, Joseph Formicelli, and Saleena Ali, as well as 20 other student members under the advisement of Professors Joe Pilaro, Mary Lannon, and Gina Siple of the English Department. Congratulations to all.

Adrienne Motel, Legal Studies Department, obtained a \$10,000.00 Perkins Grant to purchase 62 memberships aimed at increasing students' access to the National Society for Legal Technology software package.

#### Institutional planning and Middle States Updates

- The higher education landscape has undergone tremendous changes over the last three years.
- The initial focus is to create and to execute a highly effective roadmap for NCC that will ensure growth, success, and sustainability for years to come.
- In September 2022, the process started with the reconstruction and reconstitution of the Institutional Planning Committee, composed of a cross-section of 19 administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and students.
- With a mandate to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan and Institutional Priorities, the IPC has met steadily since September and will continue to meet a minimum of six more times before May 12, 2023, when its framework and outcomes will be presented to the College community.
- In tandem with the IPC, the Middle States Steering Committee (14 members) meets almost weekly to lay the groundwork for the self-study and our first meeting in Spring 2023 with NCC's Middle States designee, Dr. Robert Bonfiglio.
- Several members of the College's Institutional Planning Committee and the Middle States Steering Committee attended the annual Middle States Conference from December 6-9, 2022 in Philadelphia. By attending workshops and meeting with peer institutions and Middle States Commission leadership, attendees had the opportunity to stay laser-focused on the best practices for completing a self-study and for addressing constant and emerging challenges and opportunities.
- The group has organized planning around a set of themes: student-centeredness, fiscal health, and community partnership.
- She expressed her appreciation to all the faculty, staff, and students who serve on our various committees and working groups, contributing vast amounts of time to this important initiative.

Congratulations to the following recipients upon receiving a SUNY Chancellor's Award:

- John Despagna, Accounting & Business, Excellence in Faculty Service
- Ernest Defalco, Math, Excellence in Faculty Service
- Elisa Salvi, Legal Studies, Excellence in Faculty Service
- Joel Vessels, History, Excellence in Teaching

## Speakers

Faren Siminoff, NCCFT President, addressed her frustration with the administration's praise of the faculty and the failure to recognize it with a fair contract. She has been speaking with the negotiating team for eight months and there has been no offer – specifically citing a zero-wage increase, no sabbaticals, and no reassigned time for Academic Senate officers.

Ariel Lann, NCC student, spoke as a student with a disability for whom the faculty's devoted support inspired her to be a better. She appealed for funding for academic departments such as Theatre and for negotiating a fair contract.

Patricia Clark, NCC student over 50, shared her concern about having heard that remote learning may not be an option for the Spring 2023 semester. She asked the Board to reconsider this decision, because the remote modality ensures the opportunity for a better life through education that otherwise will not be possible for her and other students.

Liz Hynes-Musnisky, Academic Senate Chair, informed the Board that the Senate committees have worked hard to accomplish all the goals they had set this semester and wished all a happy holiday season.

Natalia de Cuba, Coordinator at LINCC, expressed her sadness that the Language Immersion program will be ending in the Spring, highlighting its work that has helped students polish their English in order to move on to credit-bearing classes. With the program being merged into the English department, she encourages the College to continue providing the exceptional services the program has offered to students who will now be registered into credit-bearing classes.

Pramila Venkateswaran, Professor, English Department, discussed her work in the Women and Gender Studies program and about the impact the faculty has on students. Recently, she met a local writer in the Long Island Author Group who introduced herself as an NCC alumna and who recalled how committed her professors were and how she would never forget her journey at the College. As the President of the Suffolk chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the oldest and largest feminist organization in this country, Prof. Venkateswaran has student interns from NCC who have raised awareness of the College amongst NOW members, including at the national conference. She praised faculty members for inspiring critical and creative thinking and stressed their need to be included in decision-making.

Izolda Maksym, Chair, Art Department, shared highlights from events held on December 2 and 9, 2022 for students from the Barry Career and Technical Education Center majoring in Gaming and Animation and Graphic Design. In total, more than 100 potential NCC students plus their instructors were divided into three groups for a tour of our facilities, visited in-session classes, and met with artist Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez, creator of the *Arte de la Borinqueña* exhibit displayed at the NCC Plaza Art Gallery. She thanked the Art Department's faculty, Asst. VP Follick, Deans Gaudino-Goering and Wood, Lindsey Angioletti, and administrators for their support. With the approval of seventeen new courses in Computer Graphics and four new degree programs in progress encompassing Animation and Web Graphics and Design, areas in which the industry projects 5%-25% growth, she implored the Board to endorse the hiring of more full-time faculty.

Christine Tuailleon, Chair, Biology Department, addressed the importance of faculty sabbaticals, citing the benefit of the paid sabbatical that enabled her to work with a researcher in France and led to her contributing two chapters to the published work *L'avenir des Mille Étangs (The Future of a Thousand Ponds)*. Bringing this experience back to her students to whom she teaches ecology provides an invaluable lesson. Although appreciative of the approval of two faculty lines, additional faculty is desperately required in order for the department to meet student needs.

Suzanne Kaebnick, Professor, English Department, and NCCFT Secretary, referring to the many stories shared about the excellence of our faculty members and their impact on students, cautioned that praise is empty without ensuring financial security through a fair wage. Since 2010, the faculty's average annual increase in pay has been just over 1%, and the College's proposed 3% salary increase, while an improvement, does not even keep up with the current 9% rate of inflation. According to MIT, an adult with one child would need nearly \$97,000 before taxes to earn a living wage on Long Island: the average salary of P scale faculty with steps 1-5 is about \$59,000 and for instructors is about \$65,000.

David Stern, NCCFT VP Classroom Faculty, also addressed the importance of the full-faculty members and criticized how the Board's lack of support has resulted in a loss of 40% of them. Where once NCC was first in the nation in community college student retention, it has decreased by 10% and now is in the middle of the pack. NCC had the largest drop in enrollment of any New York State community college during the pandemic. The Board has an opportunity to turn this trend around by supporting a fair contract for the faculty.

Jessica Ciavolino, NCC student, conveyed how remote learning enabled her as a single full-time working mother to return to school in January 2022. She is troubled that the remote option has largely been eliminated for 2023, leaving evening classes as her primary recourse since she works during the day; but she does not feel comfortable walking the open campus alone in the dark. Stating that full-time faculty are able to provide more individualized attention in and out of the classroom, she believes, in the absence of hiring more faculty to teach remotely, many students will feel compelled to look elsewhere and will lose the opportunity to "stay close to go far".

Rich Newman, Professor, English Department, provided for display in the Board of Trustees' conference room six of the seven books he has written/co-written, and thanked Dr. Gardyn for acknowledging publicly the value of scholarly and creative faculty contributions. He reminded the Trustees that if they truly appreciate the work of the faculty then they need to reinforce their commitment by encouraging the negotiating team to support a fair workload and just compensation.

Rick Santos, Professor, English Department, advocated for a fair faculty contract, recounting his personal journey as a student struggling to afford college in 1990 who joined the army to serve the public and to pay for his tuition. After his tour for Desert Storm in 1991, he completed his studies at SUNY Binghamton and returned to NCC, where, as one of only five Latino faculty, he has always felt uplifted by his colleagues, receiving a SUNY Chancellor's award and utilizing sabbaticals to reach back to the community, including teaching at a women's prison. He urged the Board to support the faculty.

Vice Chair Weiss announced the next Capital and Finance BOT Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10, 2022 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.

On behalf of the entire Board, Dr. Weiss wished all a joyous holiday season and good health in 2023. Vice Chair Weiss requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Durso moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Siberón. Motion carried 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda H. Jackson  
Secretary