



Draft Minutes

NSCC Board of Trustees

Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 5:00pm - 7:00pm

Danvers Campus, Berry Building Room DB 103

In Person Attendees- President Bill Heineman, BOT Chair Maria Vega Arias, Trustee AnhDao Tran-Moseman, Trustee Christine Danjou, VP of Administration and Finance Jan Forsstrom, Senior Executive Officer Kathryn Nielsen, AVP of Strategic Employer Relations Jenn Price, Dean of Enrollment Jason Marsala, AVP of Strategic Finance Eileen Gerenz, Staff Associate to the President/Board Liaison Jill Palermo, Executive Director of Institutional Research Melissa Christensen, Media Technical Support Niko Giokas, Dean of Postsecondary Transition Programs Barbara Hong, Staff Assistant in the President's Office Kristen Arakelian, Director of Networking & User Services Jeff Wardwell, Interim Dean of STEM Programs Andrea Cutone, Professor Matt Koch, Academic Advisor Josh Rizzo

Zoom Attendees- AVP of Institutional Belonging & Employee Development Nikki Pelonia, Trustee Andrea Gayle Bennett, Trustee Rosario Ubiera-Minaya, BOT Vice Chair Francesca Purcell, MCCC Chapter President Torry Dukes, Student Trustee Dominic Tolentino, Professor Mary Steigerwald, Professor Mike Nourai, Professor Jennifer Harris, Dean of Student Success John Duff, CIO Gary Ham

1. Call to Order

Chair Vega Arias called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

2. Introduction of New Members of the North Shore Community

President Heineman introduced new members of the NSCC community.
Those who were in attendance elaborated on their introduction.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Student Trustee Report:

Student Trustee Tolentino reported on her participation in the ACCT Legislative Summit, where she joined BOT Vice Chair Purcell and Trustees Tran-Moseman and Ubiera-Minaya, as well as Director of Student Engagement Frederic MacDonald-Dennis in meetings with Senator Markey

and Congressman Moulton to advocate for issues affecting community college students, including food insecurity, TRiO funding, and student loans.

She also attended the Student Trustee Workshop and connected with student trustees from across the country.

Trustee Tolentino reviewed the SGA Spring Activities

Spring SGA activities include:

- Basketball Tournament
- Meditation sessions
- Valentine's Day crafting event
- Fireside Chats with Provost Bednar and President Heineman

Student Trustee Tolentino also shared student concerns regarding the Lynn cafeteria and bookstore operations.

Vice Chair Purcell commended Trustee Tolentino for her strong advocacy and representation of NSCC students.

5. Education Report:

Northeast Consortia for Advanced Integrated Silicon Technologies (NCAIST)

Interim Dean of STEM Andrea Cutone presented on the NCAIST program, a grant-funded consortium initiative entering its third year.

Key highlights included:

- Partnership with several colleges, including Stonehill College, Springfield Technical Community College, and MassBay Community College
- Collaboration with universities provides access to advanced laboratory environments
- Students may begin in non-credit training, transition to the Engineering Transfer degree, and continue to four-year institutions
- Participants earn \$23 per hour
- Travel and food expenses are reimbursed
- Students complete 20 hours of training, culminating in testing their work
- Professional development opportunities include portfolio development, LinkedIn profiles, and interview preparation
- Cohorts include five students
- 11 students have completed the program to date
- Eight internships and externships have been offered

Trustee Tran-Moseman highlighted the importance of employer engagement and noted the value of hands-on experiences that may lead to employers funding further education.

Professor Mary Steigerwald joined via Zoom to discuss the work students are completing in the program. NCAIST is primarily offered to Engineering Science and Computer Science students, with applications required.

6. Chair's Report

a. Review minutes of 11/18/25 meeting

The motion was tabled to the March 17, 2026 meeting due to quorum requirements (not enough trustees who attended 11/18 meeting were present).

b. Finance Committee Update

1. FY26 Second Quarter Update

VP Forsstrom highlighted key financial updates:

- Revenues increased 11% compared to last year
- Tuition and fee revenue increased 15%
- Enrollment growth attributed largely to MassEducate and MassReconnect programs
- Unduplicated headcount increased 742 students in Fall and 137 in Spring
- Approximately 70% of tuition and fee revenue has been received
- Operating expenses are 6% higher than the prior period, consistent with budget expectations
- About 50% of the annual budget has been expended to date
- Spending remains on track and reserves have not been used

Overall, the budget remains on track with no unusual issues reported.

Motion 26:16 to accept FY26 2nd Quarter Update

Motion: Trustee Danjou

Second: Trustee Ubiera-Minaya

Motion-Passed

2. Proposal for FY27 Student Fee Increase (2.76%)

VP Forsstrom presented a proposed 2.76% fee increase.

Key points included:

- Fee increases are limited to predetermined state guidelines
- Enrollment growth driven by MassEducate and MassReconnect has increased service demands
- State appropriations primarily cover collective bargaining agreements
- Additional student services are supported through fees
- NSCC tuition and fees remain the lowest among the 15 Massachusetts community colleges
- The proposed increase would equal \$54 per average student per semester
- FY25 marked the first fee increase in five years

Motion 26:17 to accept FY27 Fee Increase Proposal

Motion: Chair Vega Arias
Second: Trustee Danjou
Motion Passed

c. Policy Committee Update
Artificial Intelligence Guiding Principles and Use Policy

Director of Networking & User Services Jeff Wardwell presented the proposed AI Guiding Principles.

Highlights included:

- Formation of an AI Steering Committee in January
- Inventory of AI tools currently used by faculty and staff
- Development of guiding principles rather than a formal policy to address evolving ethical considerations
- Separate working groups for classroom and operational uses of AI
- Creation of professional development training on AI tools and ethics
- Over 35 sessions delivered, reaching more than 250 employees
- Policy review scheduled twice annually
- Reviewed by the Office of General Counsel
- Approval from the Board of Trustees would allow inclusion in the student handbook

Chair Vega Arias noted that the guidelines apply to trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff.

Motion 26:18 to accept AI Documents pending NSCC College Forum approval

Motion: Trustee Ubiera-Minaya
Second: Trustee Danjou
Motion Passed

7. President's Report
a. Equitable Student Outcomes Task Force Update

AVP Nikki Pelonia and Executive Director Melissa Christensen presented on the Equitable Student Outcomes Task Force (ESOTF) and its role in supporting the College's Strategic Plan.

The initiative aims to:

- Advance equitable student outcomes
- Close gaps in access, persistence, completion, and post-college opportunities
- Strengthen data-driven decision making

The Task Force addresses challenges including:

- Disconnected initiatives
- Inconsistent or siloed data
- Limited shared metrics for evaluating progress

Implementation is structured in three phases:

Foundation – Phase 1 (Fall–Winter 2025–26)

- Form task force and orientation
- Select 1–3 initiatives as case studies
- Identify early findings and “quick wins”

Analysis – Phase 2 (Winter–Spring 2026)

- Conduct data review and gap analysis through subcommittees
- Apply equity-minded inquiry processes
- Develop Draft Recommendations
- Launch a baseline Equity Dashboard

Action – Phase 3 (by July 2026)

- Finalize recommendations
- Present findings to leadership
- Prepare for year 2 integration

Early findings highlighted the impact of the RISE Program, which is available to all students and demonstrates higher persistence rates among students with multiple engagements, particularly among Black, Latine, first-generation, and LGBTQ+ students.

Additional areas of focus include dual language education and classroom pedagogy, which show connections between belonging and academic success.

The ESOTF aims to build:

- Shared language
- Comparable metrics
- Clear accountability
- A sustainable infrastructure for equity work

b. Impact of Federal Actions on NSCC

President Heineman provided an update on potential federal policy changes and their impact on the College.

Updates included:

- TRiO and Nutrition Grants moved from “Potential Losses” to “Safe for Now”
- Continued scenario planning related to immigration policy
- Accreditation expected to be a major federal focus in the coming year

Trustee Tran-Moseman asked how the College is preparing for Workforce Pell implementation on July 1.

AVP Jenn Price offered to prepare a Workforce Pell overview for Trustees.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

Chair Vega Arias adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.