



Minutes

NSCC

Board of Trustees

Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 5:00pm - 7:00pm

Lynn Campus, Community Board Room LS 328

In Person Attendees- President Bill Heineman, BOT Chair Maria Vega Arias, Trustee AnhDao Tran-Moseman, Student Trustee Dominic Tolentino, Trustee Rosario Ubiera-Minaya, AVP of Strategic Employer Relations Jenn Price, VP of Administration and Finance Jan Forsstrom, Dean of Enrollment Jason Marsala, AVP of Human Resources Loyce Brown, AVP of Institutional Belonging & Employee Development Nikki Pelonia, AVP of Strategic Finance Eileen Gerenz, Staff Associate to the President/Board Liaison Jill Palermo, Staff Associate to the Provost Steph Riccardi, NSCC Events Manager Deb Santoro, Professor Joe DiMartino, Media Technical Support Josiah Bourgeois, Student Trustee Candidate Stacy Duggan

Zoom Attendees- BOT Vice Chair Francesca Purcell, Trustee Barbara Heinemann, Trustee Michael Pollack, Professor Kara Kaufman, MCCC - NSCC-PA Chapter President Torrey Dukes

- **Call to Order**
Chair Vega Arias called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.
- **Introduction of New Members of the North Shore Community**
President Heineman read the names of new employees
- **Public Comments**
There were no public comments
- **Student Trustee Report**

Student Trustee Dominic Tolentino introduced Stacy Duggan, candidate for the FY27 Student Trustee position. Ms. Duggan shared her enthusiasm for serving the NSCC community, representing student voices, and making a positive impact at the College. She noted that she is a Health Sciences student and enjoys musical theater.

Trustee Tolentino also provided an update on Student Government Association (SGA) spring semester activities, including:

- The NSCC March Mania Basketball Tournament
- Student focus groups addressing campus concerns
- The annual Arts in April event
- An SGA-hosted talent show featuring a \$100 grand prize
- Technology workshops for students needing technical support

Trustee Tolentino recognized Dean Amanda Dooling for her support in addressing student mental health concerns and expanding access to free feminine hygiene products for students. She also thanked VP Jan Forsstrom for her ongoing guidance and support.

- **Education Report**

Blackboard Ultra presentation

President Heineman introduced Professor Joe DiMartino and Professor Kara Kaufman, who presented on the implementation of Blackboard Ultra.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- A pilot group began using Blackboard Ultra over the summer.
- The platform provides a more consistent and intuitive experience for students.
- Reducing cognitive load and improving student learning outcomes are key goals of the transition.
- Enhanced search functionality allows students to quickly locate course content.
- Progress tracking tools enable faculty to better monitor student engagement and performance.
- Blackboard Ultra includes improved communication tools that allow faculty to track student interaction with course messages and notifications.
- Accessibility monitoring tools help faculty evaluate course accessibility standards.

Professor Kaufman discussed the platform from both faculty and student perspectives, highlighting its effectiveness in accelerated six-week courses and its support for time management and student engagement.

Faculty workshops and trainings have been ongoing since summer 2025.

Student Trustee Tolentino shared positive feedback regarding Blackboard Ultra, noting that one of her classes uses the platform for integrated video conferencing without the need for Zoom or another external service.

The College plans to sunset traditional Blackboard at the end of December 2026.

In response to questions from Trustee Ubiera-Minaya, presenters noted that the investment in Blackboard Ultra has been worthwhile and that no significant challenges for ESL students have been identified to date.

- **Chair's Report**

- a. **Review minutes of 3/17/26 meeting**

- *Motion 26:21 to accept the minutes of 3/17/26 meeting

- Motion-Trustee Tran-Moseman

- Second-Trustee Ubiera Minaya

- Motion Passed

- b. **Finance Committee: High Level Considerations for FY27 Budget**

- Discussion included the following preliminary FY27 budget considerations:

- A preliminary FY27 budget will be presented at the June Board meeting.
 - Enrollment projections remain uncertain due to the early status of fall course registrations with a big variable being the continued impact of Free Community College.
 - An overall 5% budget increase is anticipated.
 - Collective bargaining obligations and Strategic Plan expenditures continue to be evaluated.
 - State appropriations and Success and Workforce allocations are expected to remain consistent with FY26 levels.
 - Overall FY27 revenue projections are approximately \$1 million below budget.
 - VP Forsstrom stated that NSCC remains in a strong financial position.
 - AVP Gerenz reviewed the College's implementation of the Anaplan budget software system.
 - FY26 enrollment projections anticipated a 15% increase; current calculations lower than that at approximately 11%.
 - Budget adjustments and possible use of reserves may be necessary for FY27.

Chair Vega Arias noted that any reserves utilized would come from investment earnings. Trustee Tran-Moseman emphasized the importance of strategic discussions related to staffing and programming to support future decision-making and planning.

- c. **Board Self-Evaluation Process**

- The Board Self-Evaluation will be distributed electronically to Trustees during the first week of May.

- d. **Presidential Evaluation Process – FY25 and FY26**

The FY25 evaluation process has concluded with Commissioner Ortega formally accepted the NSCC Board's evaluation of President Heineman.

Chair Vega Arias noted that the FY26 presidential evaluation process will be more comprehensive and encouraged increased Board participation.

President's Report

a. Commencement 2026 Update

Steph Riccardi and Deb Santoro—two of three co-chairs of the commencement committee—provided an update on the College's 60th Annual Commencement exercises. Key updates included:

- Two ceremonies will be held at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- For the first time, Commencement will be held under a tent on the Lynn Campus Green.
- The inaugural graduating class of the Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy (those receiving Associate Degrees) will participate in the 10:00 a.m. ceremony.
- Commencement speakers were announced:
 - 10:00 a.m. – Patrick Tutwiler
 - 2:00 p.m. – Tom Sands
- Approximately 800 degree conferrals are anticipated, representing a 10% increase over the prior year.
- Ten applications were received for the Student Commencement Speaker role.
- Soloist auditions have concluded, with finalists to be announced.
- Each graduate will receive four guest tickets.
- All guests will be seated under the tent, eliminating the need for overflow seating.
- Livestreaming will be available for both ceremonies.
- The Commencement Committee is seeking approximately 80 volunteers per ceremony.
- The former Eastern Bank parking lot will be used for volunteer, faculty, and staff parking.
- The Peer Interpreting Program will again be offered during the ceremonies.
- A visual overview of the seating plan was presented.

b. Impact of Federal Actions on NSCC Update (TRIO)

President Heineman reported that there have been no changes in FY26 funding since the March Board meeting. Additional updates included:

- A new Talent Search grant opportunity has been released; however, the number of awards available has been significantly reduced.
- Grant criteria have shifted focus from educational opportunity programs to workforce-related outcomes.
- Pursuing the grant would require substantial restructuring of NSCC's existing program model.
- Based on these considerations, NSCC has decided not to pursue the grant opportunity.
- The College continues to monitor the possibility of mid-cycle state budget reductions.
- There are currently no plans for a statewide TRIO grant application.

Trustee Heinemann requested additional information regarding services that may be impacted. President Heineman indicated he would follow up with further details.

- **Other Business**

- Motion 26:22 on Alcohol Policy Waiver for Unidos Event
Motion-Trustee Purcell Second-Trustee Heinemann
Motion Passed
- Motion 26:23 on Alcohol Policy Waiver for NSCC Foundation Board Meeting and Social
Motion-Trustee Purcell Second-Trustee Heinemann
Motion Passed

- **Adjournment**

Chair Vega adjourned the meeting at 6:55pm