

SUNY NIAGARA
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 19, 2024

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**A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held
on November 19, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.
in person, and live streaming**

Board Members Present

Ms. Katherine Alexander, Chairperson
Ms. Gail Tylec, Financial Secretary (ZOOM)
Ms. Sheila Smith, Secretary
Mr. David Haylett, Jr.
Mr. William Ross
Ms. Gina Virtuoso
Mr. Lee Wallace
Mr. Jacob Joseph Fleming, Jr.

Board Members Excused

Mr. Kevin Clark, Vice Chairperson

Administration Present

Lloyd A. Holmes, Ph.D., President
Julie Berrigan, Director of Development
Catherine Brown, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources
John Eichner, Director of Business Services
Fabio Escobar, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness
Harold Legg, Director of Public Relations
Wayne Lynch, Vice President of Administration
Brian Michel, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President, Economic Development
Lydia Ulatowski, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Chairperson Alexander called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. and stated the meeting was being recorded and live streamed.

A roll call of board members present was taken: Trustee Alexander, Trustee Haylett, Jr., Trustee Ross, Trustee Smith, Trustee Tylec (via ZOOM), Trustee Virtuoso, Trustee Wallace and Student Trustee Fleming, Jr.

Trustee Virtuoso lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence to thank and honor our first responders, and women and men in the military; those that serve domestically and abroad.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

PRESENTATIONS

Middle States Accreditation – Self Study Update: A presentation was provided by Andrew Yeager and Fabio Escobar. Brief review of the Accreditation hierarchy: Department of Education at Federal level with 6 regional accreditors recognized by the Council Higher Ed Accreditors (CHEA). The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is the CHEA-sanctioned accrediting party for SUNY Niagara.

- The Self-Study and subsequent campus visit to SUNY Niagara as the means to evaluate our compliance with the “Standards for Accreditation” and “Requirements of Affiliation” established by MSCHE.
- Update on the Self-Study draft and feedback received thus far.

- September 25, 2024 – Preliminary visit with Dr Brenden Rickards, the Chair of our Site Visit Team. Dr. Rickards provided detailed feedback on every Standard with suggestions for improvement and clarification where needed. Dr. Rickards communicated that the draft was generally well-organized with content that clearly addressed the Standards,
- November 19, 2024 – The SUNY Niagara team initiated this virtual “mock” site-visit by the SUNY Council on Assessment (SCOA). SCOA reviewed our document and conducted mock interviews with representatives from Standards V, VI, and VII. We had Board participation for the discussion on VII. Detailed feedback was provided during a debriefing session to Self-Study co-chairs.
- Next steps outlined:
 - Emphasis on release of the Self-Study draft to the full campus in December and the need for feedback.
 - Emphasis on continued training on the Middle States self-study process for all campus constituencies.
 - Emphasis on actions taken during this Self-Study process that will continue through to aid in the next accreditation cycle.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Alexander asked if Board members had any questions regarding the Consent Agenda items. It was moved by Trustee Wallace and seconded by Trustee Virtuoso that the Board approve the minutes from the October 15, 2024 board meeting, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Grant Activities. Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Chairperson Alexander asked Board members if there were any questions regarding the Information Items. The following items were received and filed: Grant Tracking Chart, Personnel Status Chart, Foundation Report and Facilities Update. There were no further questions.

Chairperson Alexander stated the agenda items needed to be moved around. Next is the Fiscal Committee Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FISCAL COMMITTEE

Committee Chairperson Tylec stated the Fiscal Committee met on November 14, 2024, and the minutes were distributed at the start of this meeting. There were no questions regarding the minutes.

Draft – Student Charge Reversal Request Policy – Vice President Lynch discussed the change in the request policy. It was moved by Trustee Tylec and seconded by Student Trustee Fleming, Jr., to approve the Draft Student Charge Reversal Request Policy as presented. All in favor. Motion carried unanimously. There were no further questions.

Strategic Plan Update – Vice President Lynch discussed that President Holmes has formed a robust strategic planning committee of approximately 14 members. Invitations will be extended seeking a community member and a board member to serve on the committee.

Business and Finance Update – Vice President Lynch provided some updates on the business and finance report. The fall tuition has already exceeded budget. Out of County Chargebacks is trending ahead of budget. In the expense line, we should be at 8%, but we are at 10%. This is due to the fact that encumbrances are booked at the beginning of the year, but cover a full year of expenses.

The next fiscal committee meeting is Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Alexander discussed the following:

- Trustee Jason Cafarella provided his letter of resignation from this board. He has been a governor's holdover since 2020. Trustee Cafarella served as the chair, and has done a wonderful job for the many years he has served. We wish him well on his new transition.
- NYCCT Update; creating a committee to work on funding opportunities and getting more funding from SUNY. This was a request as well from the chancellor. Committees have been formed for different funding and priorities; and already starting to get requests in from those committees. This is important to focus on this year, which is to provide community colleges more funding from SUNY.
- Board Retreat – We are focusing on a board retreat in early January. It would be in person with as many people as possible. Possibly an evening, or afternoon, but not on a board day. Trustees to let Chair Alexander know what days trustees are available to get this scheduled. Three main topics would be Middle States, Strategic Planning, and Self-Board assessment. Middle States will be here from March 9 – 12, and trustees need to be prepared for these meetings.
- Vice President Lynch mentioned the strategic planning committee that is being formed. If any trustee would like to serve on that committee, please let Chair Alexander know.
- The annual holiday boards' meeting/dinner will be held on Monday, December 9, 2024 at Savor Restaurant. Looking forward to seeing everyone there.
- Last month we briefly spoke about changes to our bylaws to review the quorum requirement for sub committees; this will address the number of trustees you have in person. This draft change will be presented at the December board meeting.
- Thank you to trustees who attended the grand opening of the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy today. The building is beautiful and if you were not able to attend, please arrange for a tour.
- Trustee Clark received a request from R.H. Perry for us to do a letter of recommendation for them as our consultants for the presidential search process. If any trustee objects to this letter, please let him know.
- Chair Alexander had the opportunity to attend a culinary cooking education class last week at NFCl. She highly recommends this experience to anyone who wants to learn to cook or already loves to cook. Chef Emily Lonigan does an excellent job with the class and interacting with the patrons.

President's Report

The following was discussed:

- Thank you to the members of the board who were here for the Small Business Development Center ribbon cutting last week. This was a fabulous event; please stop by and visit their new space.
- Thank you to the members of the board who attended the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy grand opening. This is a great facility, and highlights the partnership between the college, Niagara County and the sheriff's department.
- Enrollment continues to grow, and Vice President Cummings informed him that we have 246 new admits for spring 2025. We have 177 students registered for the winter session. Our applications for fall 2025 are much higher compared to fall of 2024 at this same time. We are expecting to see an increase in enrollment for fall 2025.
- President Holmes received information from a phone call with SUNY presidents, that enrollment is up for SUNY, especially for community colleges. The enrollment for SUNY Niagara has increase due to hard work from Vice President Cummings, individuals in the enrollment center, marketing, faculty, and foundation scholarships. More detailed information will follow.
- All trustees and employees are invited to a holiday gathering at NFCl on Friday, December 13, from 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

- President Holmes discussed shared governance and the direction we are heading in. We are developing a college council committee that consists of administrators, staff, students, and union reps. This council will be making recommendations to President Holmes. Shared governance is critical as we look at components of Middle States.
- President Holmes provided updates on advocacy. The four areas of focus are healthcare, green sustainability and sustainability jobs, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. We need to work with faculty and staff to look at how we are going to address those areas.
- President Holmes wanted board members to know that the reason Barbara Walck is not here today is that her brother passed away. We will keep her and her family in our thoughts.

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Student Trustee Fleming, Jr., provided his report.

FACULTY OBSERVER REPORT

The Faculty Observer Report was provided by Dr. Elizabeth Sachs.

ACADEMIC/STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Committee Chairperson Smith stated the committee met on November 6, 2024 at 8:00 a.m., and the minutes are included in the board materials. There were no questions on the minutes.

New Program Proposal – Culinary Cannabis Skills Certificate.

It was moved by Committee Chair Smith and seconded by Trustee Haylett, Jr., to approve the New Program Proposal – Culinary Cannabis Skills Certificate as presented. All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Enrollment Update – Vice President Cummings provided an enrollment update. Applications are not up for spring 2025, but enrollment for spring is increased from last year which means we are doing a better job at getting students admitted and then converting those admitted students to registered students. We expect another increase in enrollment for fall 2025. Rad Tech program applications are up and we have more than doubled the applications we had for fall 2024. We are seeing increased applications for a number of programs; i.e., business management, criminal justice, accounting, early childhood studies, nursing, and liberal arts.

Student Housing Update – We have a new housing director, who is becoming comfortable in his new role. As we see enrollment trend upwards, we would expect an increase for housing. We currently are at full capacity for housing except for a few students who have left.

The next Academic Student Life committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 8:00 a.m.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

Trustee Ross provided an update pertaining to Article 28 of the current bylaws. The Trustee Emeritus is for retired trustees that have completed at least two full terms. Of the 46 trustees we have had over the years, only 14 are really eligible. Trustee Ross thanked Trustee Tylec for compiling the criteria rubric to follow. More information will follow in 2025. Trustee Ross also thanked Trustee Wallace for his assistance.

OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

A motion was made by Trustee Ross and seconded by Trustee Wallace to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters at 5:50 p.m.

A motion was made by Trustee Wallace and seconded by Student Trustee Fleming, Jr., to come out of executive session at 6:36 p.m.

GOOD & WELFARE

None at this time.

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, starting at 4:30 p.m.

It was moved by Trustee Ross and seconded by Student Trustee Fleming, Jr., to adjourn at 6:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Sheila Smith
Secretary to the Board