

SUNY NIAGARA
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APRIL 8, 2025

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**A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held
on April 8, 2025, at 4:30 PM
in person, and live streaming**

Board Members Present

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

Board Members Excused

Mr. E. Bryan DalPorto

Administration Present

Lloyd A. Holmes, Ph.D., President
Maher Ghalayini, Ed.D., Vice President of Academic Affairs
Barbara DeSimone, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Advancement
Catherine Brown, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources
John Eichner, Director of Business Services
Fabio Escobar, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness
Brian Michel, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President, Economic Development
Robert McKeown, Assistant Vice President of Student Services & Student Engagement
Harold Legg, Director of Public Relations
Courtney Helinski, Interim Director, NCCC Foundation
Kelsey, Kraft, Interim Controller
Kristin Leszkowicz, Assistant to the President

Chairperson Alexander called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM. and stated the meeting was being recorded and live streamed.

A roll call of board members present was taken: Trustee Alexander, Trustee Clark, Trustee Virtuoso, Trustee Smith, Trustee Ross, Trustee Haylett, Jr., Trustee Wallace, and Student Trustee Fleming, Jr.

A roll call of board members present via ZOOM: Trustee Tylec

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATIONS

Chairperson Alexander introduced Robert McKeown, Assistant Vice President of Student Services & Student Engagement, to present an overview of the SUNY Niagara sports teams' rankings in the 2024-25 season. He introduced the SUNY Niagara's Wrestling head coach, Keith Maute, and Wrestling Captain, Mike Catanzaro who were present at the meeting. The SUNY Niagara Wrestling team finished as runner-up in the NJCAA Division Championships held in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Next, Chairperson Alexander introduced Cathleen Barron, an Associate Professor in the Hospitality, Baking & Culinary Arts division. She provided a presentation on her IRC grant entitled *Baking Foundation Video Series*. The presentation showcased short videos created for student use, to highlight the basics students need to know when they begin the program. The videos stemmed from COVID when the need to demonstrate basic skills to students was not possible in person. At the time, videos were 30-40 mins but now have been shortened to 3–4-minute tutorials. Students in the baking basics course are assigned to watch the videos at home and then a demo is conducted in class. The videos also help advanced baking students who are further along in the program to review basic skills. The video shown to the board demonstrated how to make a crème anglaise.

The next presentation was given by Dr. Fabio Escobar, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, regarding the Middle States Preliminary Results focusing on assessment and planning. This was the primary finding from the Middle States site team. All standards were met. The team put together 23 distinct findings and scholarly suggestions which were reviewed. Dr. Fabio Escobar gave an overview of how assessment will be addressed in the strategic plan planning process with a focus on rebuilding the way units work within the strategic plan. There is a need to professionalize each unit's standards and align with the CAS standards. Once the strategic plan is constructed, each unit will create their standards to align with the larger plan.

Chairperson Alexander introduced Dr. Maher Ghalayini, Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Ghalayini, presented to the board the planning process and development of the new strategic plan. The current strategic plan ends December 2025. The new plan will be for 2026-2030. The planning process needs to take into consideration and embrace the changing environment of the world, education, learners and the workforce. A review of the old strategic plan also needs to take place to determine what is still relevant, as we move forward with the new plan. Dr. Ghalayini and Dr. John Delate, the new Vice President of Student Services, will be co-chairs of the steering committee for the new plan. Smaller working groups will be formed to focus on specific areas of the strategic plan. The kickoff for the strategic planning process will begin the week of April 14. An aggressive timeline for completion has been put together with a presentation to the board for approval planned for November 2025.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Alexander asked if Board members had any questions regarding the Consent Agenda items. There were no questions. Chairperson Alexander made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2025 board meeting, the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, Grant Activities and Conferring of Degrees memo. The motion was moved by Trustee Wallace and seconded by Trustee Clark. The motion carried.

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, Facilities Update, and Prospective Requests for Proposals (RFP#R202425-01, RFP#R202425-02). There were no questions.

A motion was made by Chairperson Alexander and seconded by Student Trustee Fleming to go into executive session at 5:15 PM.

A motion was made by Chairperson Alexander and seconded by Trustee Wallace to come out of executive session at 5:50 PM.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Alexander discussed the following:

- The next board meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 4:30 PM.
- Save the Dates:
 - Pre-Inauguration Dinner - April 9, 2025, at Savor
 - President's Inauguration - April 10, 2025, at 11:00 AM with reception to follow in the Learning Commons
 - Commencement Ceremony - May 17, 2025, at 10:00 AM on the Sanborn campus
 - SUNY Niagara Golf Scramble- June 16, 2025 at the Niagara Frontier Country Club

President's Report

The following was discussed:

- President Holmes thanked the board members for their attendance at the Distinguished Alumni reception which took place in the Learning Commons on Monday, April 7.
- President Holmes also thanked everyone who has worked to plan the entire inauguration week of events and ceremony to be held on Thursday.
- A meeting took place with County Manager Richard Updegrave, President Holmes, Dr. Maher Ghalayini, and Dr. Brian Michel to discuss the upcoming budget.
- President Holmes discussed a meeting with Scott Propeack, Executive Director of the Burchfield Penney Art Center. An agreement between SUNY Niagara and the Burchfield Penney Art Center is in the works to display artwork at the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute from the Burchfield Penney's collection.
- President Holmes highlighted a visit to the Liberty Partnership site at North Tonawanda High School in order to grow SUNY Niagara's EOP program.
- President Holmes thanked Trustee Tylec for participating as a judge in the Student Showcase on Thursday, April 3, 2025.

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Student Trustee Fleming, Jr. provided his report with an overview of campus activities which have occurred recently and dates for activities that are scheduled to happen in the forthcoming days. A summary of the report was provided in the board materials.

FACULTY OBSERVER REPORT

The Faculty Observer Report was provided by Dr. Elizabeth Sachs. A summary of the report was provided in board materials. Faculty have been busy with advisement, the Student Showcase, Open House, and other events taking place the week of inauguration. The Theatre Student Showcase took place on April 7 to begin Inauguration week. The welding sculpture, under the direction of Professor Joe Schmidt, will take place during the week. A review of the Middle States outcomes and recommendations is taking place with relation to assessment. Assessment efforts are ongoing for SUNY general education learning requirements. The College Council has been working to gather and disseminate information on issues and concerns that have been brought forward. The promotion and tenure process is being revised with the aim of having a new policy by summer.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
ACADEMIC/STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Committee Chairperson Sheila Smith stated there was no Academic-Student Life meeting in the month of April.

The next Academic/Student Life Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 8:00 AM.

FISCAL COMMITTEE

Committee Chairperson Tylec stated the Fiscal Committee met on April 2, 2025, and the minutes were included in the materials. There were no questions regarding the minutes.

Committee Chairperson Tylec asked if there were any questions on the Business and Finance Report. There were no questions.

Resolution- A copy of the ESPA Collective Bargaining Agreement Ratification was provided in the materials to the board. The ESPA union ratified a new 3-year contract on March 31, 2025. Committee Chairperson Tylec read the resolution.

BOARD RESOLUTION
ESPA Collective Bargaining Agreement

Background: At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Niagara County Community College held on April 8, 2025, the following resolution was proposed and approved by the Board:

WHEREAS, the administration of Niagara County Community College has successfully reached a tentative agreement with the Educational Support Personnel Association (ESPA) for a successor collective bargaining agreement covering the period of September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the ESPA membership ratified the agreement on March 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the total financial impact of the agreement is \$621,846 over the three-year term; and

WHEREAS, the agreement includes, among other changes, annual wage increases, updates to vacation accrual and promotion language, the establishment of a sick leave donation program, and additional benefits options as outlined in the attached summary and settlement memorandum;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Niagara County Community College hereby approves the 2024–2027 collective bargaining agreement between SUNY Niagara and the Educational Support Personnel Association (ESPA) as presented.

A motion was made by Committee Chairperson Tylec to approve the policy and it was seconded by Trustee Wallace. Motion carried unanimously.

The next fiscal committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 2:00 PM.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Ross asked that Committee Vice Chair Tylec run through the agenda of the Awards Committee.

Committee Vice Chair Tylec stated the Awards Committee met on April 2, 2025, and the minutes were included in the materials. There were no questions regarding the minutes.

Resolution- A resolution to nominate Dr. Virginia Taylor for the NYCCT Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Contribution was read by Committee Vice Chair Tylec. This is a resubmission of a previous nomination submitted in 2024 to NYCCT. An updated copy of the nomination form was included for board review.

BOARD RESOLUTION

NYCCT Board of Trustees Award Nomination

WHEREAS, the SUNY Niagara Board of Trustees wishes to recognize the achievements of alumna Virginia Taylor, Ph.D. at the 71st Annual NYCCT Awards Reception on Friday, September 12, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the SUNY Niagara Board of Trustees approves the nomination of Virginia Taylor, Ph.D. for the New York Community College Trustees "Distinguished Alumni Award" in the Professional Contribution category; and

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of SUNY Niagara approves this nomination effective April 8, 2025.

A motion was made by Committee Vice Chair Tylec to approve the changes. The motion was moved by Trustee Ross and seconded by Trustee Virtuoso. The motion carried.

Committee Vice Chair Tylec thanked Committee Chairperson Ross for his work putting together a list of the Trustee Emeritus candidates. The committee will do research to ensure candidates' eligibility.

Committee Chairperson Ross reminded the trustees that the deadline to submit nominations for any of the individual or organizational awards is June 10, 2025. Nominations will be brought to the Awards committee for review.

The Awards Committee will meet Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at 3:00 PM.

OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

GOOD & WELFARE

None at this time.

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 4:30 PM.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairperson Alexander. It was moved by Trustee Clark and seconded by Trustee Haylett. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:06 PM.

Kristin Leszkowicz
Assistant to the President