



# Faculty Association Suffolk Community College Executive Council APPROVED MINUTES

**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2024

**Time:** 3:45 pm

**Location:** via Zoom

## 1. Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2024, EC Meeting

- **D. Morelli:** Meeting called to order at 3:48 pm. First, could we have a motion to amend today's agenda to add a Solidarity Strike Fund discussion to our agenda?
  - ➔ Motion made by R. Lauria and seconded, approved 24/0/0.
- Regarding October minutes, one rep would like to see their constituent concern about environmental issues in the Huntington Library specify that the issue is with wood roaches.
  - ➔ Motion to approve October 10 minutes as amended made by A. Darini and seconded. Motion is approved 21/0/3.

## 2. Election Certification

- **C. Eaton:** The elections committee ran six [vacancy elections beginning in September as announced in \*The WORD\*](#) and via email to those constituencies as follows:

### College-wide adjunct reps

1. Mathematics — *no nominations*
2. Social Sciences — **Renee McClean (adjunct instructor, history)**
3. Foreign Languages, ESL, ASL, Reading — *no nominations*
4. PAs & Specialists in Instructional Labs — *no nominations*

### Full-time reps

5. PAs & Specialists in Technical Areas and Instructional Centers — **Ed Champ (specialist 1, Enterprise Resources)**
6. Social Sciences at the Grant Campus — *no nominations*

We had one nomination for PAs & Specialists in Technical Areas and Instructional Centers and two nominations for adjuncts in social sciences, with one choosing to decline the nomination. This left two uncontested elections, as indicated above. Because our Election Procedures indicate that "In the case that there is only one nominee for an Executive Council position, no ballots or write-in votes are required. The uncontested nominee who has accepted the

position will assume that office upon the election's certification," as chair of the elections committee, I ask for a motion to certify these election results.

- ➔ **Motion to certify election results for two new EC reps above made by A. Darini and seconded. Motion approved 24/0/0.**

*Secretary's note:* One EC rep entered meeting after this vote.

### **3. Solidarity Strike Fund Request**

- **D. Morelli:** When locals go on strike anywhere in the nation, our national parent union, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), will ask if locals can provide funds to support that striking local, for anything they need, from groceries for members to supplies for the strike. Currently, [the Oregon State University Graduate Employees](#) local is on strike; 93% of their membership voted yes for strike and they have a 90% participation rate. We typically send \$250 to national locals, and more to in-state locals.
- ➔ **Motion to approve sending \$250 to Oregon State University Graduate Employees made by N. Pestieau and seconded. Motion is approved 25/0/0.**

### **4. NYSUT Community College Conference**

- **D. Morelli:** The annual NYSUT Community College Conference was held this past weekend at the Sagamore in Bolton Landing. FA officers Dante Morelli, Courtney Brewer, Cynthia Eaton, Kevin McCoy, and Kim Ng Southard all attended with a good group of members. Four officers presented during the conference: Dante, Courtney, Cynthia, and Kevin. EC reps in attendance included John Capurso, Anabel Darini, Mary Griffin, Renee McClean (incoming rep), and Sharadha Sambasivan. Comments from attendees?
  - **A. Darini:** I was a first-time attendee, and since it was right after the election, I was wary of potential negative energy, but it was the complete opposite. I was very happy that everyone's point of view was focused on moving forward, keep fighting the fight, and working together. That had a big impact on me. Also, I think we take for granted how privileged we are compared to faculty at other colleges; we don't have to deal with the issues that other colleges have to deal with. It was eye opening.
  - **S. Sambasivan:** I learned a great deal about academic freedom and how the union helps us in a wide range of issues. I also learned a lot from the artificial intelligence workshop, such as detection programs can only detect about ¼ of AI-generated content and that students are more willing than ever to pay for these services, so we need to adjust our assignments. I loved the speech by AFT President Randi Weingarten; it was so inspiring.
- **D. Morelli:** Thank you both and everyone who attended. The conference also gives us a chance to get to know one another better. Randi and NYSUT President Melinda Person both spoke, and we were the first audience they had addressed post-election.

## 5. Beacon Working Group Updates

- **D. Morelli:** The FA called a labor-management committee together to focus on Beacon, and part of that is a working group focused on faculty mentoring because the contract is clear that we have purview over mentoring. In addition, I'm on another dual-enrollment working group on the state level through NYSUT that is looking to draft a resolution for the NYSUT Representative Assembly about making things fairer and more equitable between community colleges and four-year institutions with regard to dual enrollment programs. If that resolution passes at the RA in the spring, it means NYSUT would push for legislation at the state level.

## 6. EC Rep Issues

- **D. Morelli:** Before addressing new EC rep issues, here's a follow up from EC rep issues raised during last month's meeting:
  - Please review the October 31 College Brief on the environmental health and safety reporting system and use that EHS ticketing system; it's the best way to report and track concerns. Also, for cleaning issues, those can be reported through School Dude; work with your department administrative assistants if you need help accessing it.
  - Courtney and I have reported ongoing building issues to Ed, Angelica, and Irene.
  - There were issues with members returning to Caumsett Hall after renovations. Pete and I did a walk through. The college seems to have moved too fast in moving people back into building, but it seems fine now. David Schneider was going to do a tour on Tuesday with Dean Ciampa, but that was delayed because she's out this week.
  - Today there's a lot of leaf blowing on campuses because with the drought they are a fire hazard. Please be patient with this and other concerns, since we know that AME is seriously short staffed.
  - There were several counseling concerns, so we have a counseling meeting scheduled for tomorrow afternoon between all six officers and counseling members.
  - A tuition reimbursement issue came up, and we asked administration to add an additional preapproval step from the campus executive dean to better ensure eligibility for reimbursement; they also need to add clear deadlines to the forms to streamline the process.
  - Regarding the infestation concerns mentioned last month, that area was fumigated and things are better now.
- There is a safety concern at Grant Campus regarding an unsupervised student in aerobics room who was behaving inappropriately. An incident report was submitted but concerns are about cameras in the area being functional? College has been doing a camera audit and replacing cameras, bringing them online, as fast as they can.
- A constituent is retiring at end of year and does not want to lose their SCCC email, such as if students still need to contact him for letters of recommendation? Upon retirement, if faculty apply to be an adjunct, they will retain their email account.
- Can something be done about a variety of issues in the Nesconset Building; it's one of those temporary buildings that aren't temporary and has several environmental hazards? FA officers

will do walk through next week.

- Technology outages and issues with Brightspace seem really bad this semester. Since we are all required to use Brightspace, doesn't admin have responsibility to make sure it is working? To the degree possible, yes. VP Azzam-Gomez announced that the Multi-Factor Authentication outage was the vendor's fault, and they have addressed the seriousness of it with the vendor. However, as we take on more technology, we necessarily have more vulnerability. There was an Internet outage today, and the college worked really hard to fix that.
- Constituents in mathematics are concerned that if there are changes to Beacon courses being offered in high schools in a way that makes those high schools simply stop collaborating with SCCC and go to other colleges instead, that would mean less funding to SCCC—and these constituents are worried about whether the FA can and will protect their jobs if there's such a hit to the college budget?

If Beacon were to go away entirely, it would be devastating to the college budget, but if even a significant number of Beacon students are lost, that's still a hit to the college, potentially in the millions of dollars. The financial impact does matter, e.g., we know that EMHP rates are going an enormous 13% right in the middle of the college's fiscal year; nobody could have anticipated such an increase and it's understandably very stressful for administration.

As noted, we have a current labor-management committee and a working group focused on improving the Beacon mentoring program. College administration has purview over the certification of Beacon teachers being comparably credentialed, and they approve a list of courses "in consultation with" chairs. The list of courses that math is proposing stands in conflict with what administration already has, and admin feels they simply cannot remove them. Only about 6-7% of Beacon students actually come to college, and we have a goal of getting 15% of those students to come here. Please understand that administration has the agency when it comes to certifying courses and they are not about to give that up.

- Another Beacon concern in math: There are eight math courses approved for Beacon. We think that should go down to three, but we agreed on six. However, despite saying that faculty voices would be heard, administration is not removing those courses from Beacon. We feel we have been lied to, and their concerns are purely financial. We believe there's a concerted effort to shrink our program in math and outsource our work to the high schools. We're concerned about the impact of Beacon on our department and feel we have to have the ability to credential these teachers in high schools; we can't leave it up to administration because they do not know what is required in each specific math class. What can be done?

The Beacon program is similar to what's offered in other colleges across Long Island and even the nation. Dual enrollment has been a growing trend for over a decade. Again, we are addressing these concerns through our negotiations on the labor-management committee and the working group. We know that some schools and Beacon teachers are doing dual enrollment well but others are not. We will keep working on it.

- Constituents are asking about the ability to evaluate chairs and assistant chairs and don't see elections as the same thing. Why can't we evaluate our chairs? In 2005, the FA agreed to have

evaluations instead of the process of elections, which happened for about 10 years, but then when elections came back, the evaluations went away.

Who can we go to when chairs aren't doing their jobs? Members can contact us, and we can advocate for you, but you could also approach your executive dean and it's better if you can address the matter as a group.

- Does the college have the right to change an internship course class size from 22 to 35? These internship courses are incredibly labor and time intensive in terms of placing students into appropriate positions and shepherding them through the process of doing an internship, especially since Career Services is no longer involved in the process. I asked if the suggestion was made in error, but my chair said they were given a list of CRNs and told to increase the class size for all of them to 35? No, our class size document says the particular class you're addressing is capped at 22 and it cannot be unilaterally changed; we have a class size committee and will intervene to ensure it doesn't happen.
- What can be done about the Huntington library still having issues with cleanliness—a constituent in basement of the building has issues with mold as a result of leaks when it rains—as well as insect issues? Please use the new environmental health and safety ticketing system discussed earlier.

## 7. Officers Reports

- **Adjunct Coordinator Kim Ng Southard reports the following:**
  - It's the season for regular/traditional observations as well as for promotion, new hires, and distance education classes and for student complaints. Remember that your supervisor or chair has the authority to observe as long as they give you 48 hours' notice, and if a student complains the chair does have to investigate. Kevin, Dante, and I have served as peers for several observations and post-observation meetings for adjunct members. Most have been going well, but Kevin and I are working on a few issues that have come up in evaluations.
  - I responded to members' inquiries relating to rank number in Banner, assignments, the NORA process, Vector trainings, NYS Teachers Retirement System credits, and general concerns about declining student enrollment.
  - Members frequently visit me to discuss inquiries. Let your adjunct constituents know they should feel free to schedule an appointment with me to discuss inquiries or concerns: [kimn@fascc.org](mailto:kimn@fascc.org).
  - I attended the NYSUT Community College Conference workshops on adjunct issues with EC reps Mary Griffin and Renee McClean. I enjoyed getting to know them and sharing strategies to serve our colleagues better. Thank you both for attending!

- **Grievance Officer Kevin McCoy reports the following:**
  - Regarding observations, we encourage EC reps (or any full-time faculty member) to serve as peer observers for our adjunct colleagues, but if there's an issue or concern, we do prefer to have officers serve as the peer.
  - By far this has been the worst semester regarding issues relating to discrimination, sexual harassment, interpersonal conflicts, and administrative issues.
  - There has been an issue with someone removed from the seniority list for cause which we'll discuss in the grievance committee; unlikely to become a grievance but want to you be aware.
  
- **Treasurer Pete DiGregorio reports the following:**
  - On the treasurer report, the increase in expenses in the workshops and seminar line reflects costs for the NYSUT Community College Conference, and in the membership services line reflects costs for attending the Education without Limits luncheon. Also, interest rates are coming down, but we locked in our CD until March so it's unaffected.
  - Our membership numbers are as follows: 388 full-time members, 913 adjunct members, and 139 adjunct nonmembers.
  - We have more full-time retirement notifications, which we hope will be counteracted by filling some of those lines.
  - Other updates: VOTE-COPE expenditures are winding down, the audit is completed and we'll bring you results in the spring, and you should know that the 13% increase in EMHP costs also impact us with regard to our FA administrative assistant.
  
- **Secretary Cynthia Eaton reports the following:**
  - As noted above, the fall elections have wrapped up but we continue to have persistent vacancies. I will set up our two new reps with emails and instructions.
  - The EC Restructure Task Force will continue to meet to discuss new approaches and present their report and recommendations at our December EC meeting.
  - The sabbatical committee will meet in early December; we are not yet sure how many applications we have.
  - We are planning to publish *The WORD* on December 9 so watch for that.
  - The college Distance Ed Committee is currently working on an expedited course proposal policy (for course development forms for certified online faculty only) as well as focusing on materials to help FA members to meet federal regular and substantive interaction (RSI) standards.

What is the reason for needing an expedited process? Again, it's only for currently certified DE faculty and only course development forms. Sometimes a chair has an on-campus class on the schedule for spring, but the person who normally teaches it either retires or is out sick, or sometimes it's because they realize with declining student enrollment that the *only* way that class will run is if it's offered as a DE section. Problematic when they know students absolutely need the course to graduate in May or to continue in a tightly proscribed curriculum. So this is a one-semester-only

exception for the department to run the class, and during the spring they will have to do a full DE course proposal process.

- **Executive Vice President Courtney Brewer reports the following:**
  - Promotion cycle for full-time faculty is winding down; faculty have met with CPC reps, had their observation meetings, and the evaluation paperwork is due tomorrow. I'm in process of scheduling meetings with CPC reps, the campus executive deans, and myself.
  - Vice President Rios collected feedback on the credentialing manual and met with chairs and deans on November 4. There hasn't yet been a response to concerns, but she did solicit and listen to the feedback. She indicated that this could be a long process, but I am sharing an update because when it came out it caused a lot of concern. It has been going through governance as well, and the last step is for FA to make sure it doesn't conflict with contract language before signing off.
  
- **President Dante Morelli reports the following:**
  - NYSUT legislative priorities are changing now post-election, and one initiative is a bill to have a faculty member sit on the board of trustees at community colleges, with Nassau Community College leading that charge.
  - Working on primary and secondary discipline questions and there's lots of nuance, so we are working things out. We need to adhere to the contract but not hurt any FA members when it comes to making load.
  - We will be attend the college's Education without Limits luncheon tomorrow to celebrate our students and help raise scholarship donations.
  - The college Board of Trustees had a special meeting today to vote to approve an architect for a new automotive building at Grant.
  - We have three extra computer monitors and three computer towers to donate if you are interested. If interested, please email Anita and cc: Dante.
  - NYSUT will rally in solidarity at 4 pm on Monday with Brookhaven Memorial Federation of Nurses and Health Care Professionals at the North Patchogue Fire Department. Labor issues have surfaced as the Long Island Community Hospital is being taken over by NYU Langone. Contact Dante if you would like to attend.

## **8. Unfinished Business**

- None at this time.

## **8. New Business**

- EC rep expresses thanks to officers for being supportive, and Dante indicated that we know there are a lot of concerns at the college right now. Things are tough, but we are here to listen and advocate; we may not get the answer you want, but we will always try.

## 9. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made by D. Provenzano and seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 5:16 pm.



## Attendance: Members present on November 14, 2024

### Officers

- [Dante Morelli](#), President
- [Courtney Brewer](#), Exec VP
- [Cynthia Eaton](#), Secretary
- [Pete DiGregorio](#), Treasurer
- [Kevin McCoy](#), Grievance Officer
- [Kim Ng Southard](#), Adjunct Coordinator

### EC Reps: Ammerman Full Time

- [John Capurso](#): Accounting, Business Administration, Business Information Systems, Legal Studies
- [Sharadha Sambasivan](#): Biology, Physical Sciences
- [Rich Lauria](#): Communication, Languages, Reading, TV/Radio/Film
- [Ben Laudicina](#): Counseling, Cooperative Ed
- [Stephanie Taboada](#): Engineering, Computer Science/Industrial Technology
- [Emily Lauer](#): English
- [Deb Provenzano](#): Library, Central
- [Alexander Atwood](#): Math
- [Alex Nohai-Seaman](#): Music, Visual Arts, Theatre, Philosophy, Women's Studies
- [Marlene Kellner](#): Nursing, Health and Human Services, Physical Education
- [Christina Bosco](#): Social Sciences, Behavioral Sciences

### EC Reps: Eastern Full Time

- [Mary Sierra](#): Library, Humanities, Counseling
- [Nic Pestieau](#): Science, Math, Social Science, Business, Nursing, Culinary, Physical Education

### EC Reps: Grant Full Time

- [Eric Weinstein](#) — Business, HVAC, CIS, Technology, ETU Coordinator
- [Naomi Edwards](#) — Humanities
- [Tara Fagan](#) — Library, Counseling, Media
- [Anabel Darini](#) — Natural Sciences, Math
- [Josh Wolfson](#) — Nursing, Health Science, Physical Education, Vet Sci
- vacant* — Social Sciences

### EC Reps: PAs & Specialists Full Time

- [Lisa Behnke](#): Programmatic
- [Madeeha Rahat](#): Instructional Labs
- vacant*: Technical Areas/Instructional Centers

## EC Reps: Collegewide Adjuncts

- [Brian DeMasi](#): Business, Accounting, Communications, Telecom
- [Debra Handel](#): Counseling, Education, Freshman/College Seminar
- [Pat Bergel](#): Culinary, Fire Protection Technology, Library, Electrical Tech, Drafting, Interior Design
- [Robert Schmidt](#): English
- vacant*: Foreign Languages, ESL, ASL, Reading
- [Steve Clark](#): Guild, Retiree, PAs/Specialists in Programmatic Areas
- [Dean Karahalıs](#): Humanities, Arts, Music, Philosophy
- vacant*: Math
- [Jennifer Champagne](#): Nursing, Physical Education, Health Sciences
- [Kailyn Giaccone](#): PAs/ Specialists in Academic Skills Centers
- vacant*: PAs/Specialists in Instructional Labs
- [Mary Griffin](#): Science, Engineering, Auto
- vacant*: Social Sciences

## Guests

- [Renee McClean](#), Adjunct instructor social sciences