



# **Faculty Association Suffolk Community College Executive Council APPROVED MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday, March 13, 2025

**Time:** 3:45 pm

**Location:** via Zoom

## **1. Approval of Minutes from February 13, 2025, EC Meeting**

- **D. Morelli:** Meeting called to order at 3:47 pm. Are there any corrections to the February minutes? None.
- ➔ **Motion to approve March 13 minutes made by E. Lauer and seconded. Motion is approved 15/0/3.**

*Secretary's note: Four EC reps entered meeting after this vote.*

## **2. FA Member and Retiree Recognition Luncheon (Snapper Inn) and New Member Celebration (Miller's Ale House)**

- **D. Morelli:** As you know, we are no longer hosting an annual holiday party or spring fling, given the changing nature of our membership and being mindful of how we spend member dues. So we changed the event, with your approval, to a Member and Retiree Recognition Luncheon to be held on April 11 and need to have you all in attendance! This will be held at the [Snapper Inn in Oakdale](#) to honor our retirees, member excellence award winners, FA leaders and activists like you, and SUNY Chancellor Award winners.

In addition, we are inviting all of you to a separate event on evening of April 17 at [Miller's Ale House](#) in Lake Grove to celebrate our new members. Please join us!

## **3. Member Advocacy**

- **D. Morelli:** On March 4, I sent to the entire membership a day of action email, asking everyone to engage in some academic union advocacy work. This is something you can do next week during spring recess too.

First, on the state level, we need to push for increased funding to deliver the best experience possible for students, both in and out of classroom. Please do this advocacy! It's very important. Call your local state Senator ([lookup your NYS Senator](#)) and Assembly representative ([look up your NYS Assemblymember](#)) and urge them to invest in our community colleges.

I'm deeply concerned about issue at the federal level. My March 4 email includes an ask for our elected reps to support higher ed nationally; [it's a prepared letter with a link, so not a heavy lift](#).

- Hits to Pell funding (remember TAP is state funding) are most disconcerting. If we lose students, we lose sections, which means less work for our members.
- Last year the college received about \$7 million in grants, much in federal funding. This matters not only for our students but a few members whose entire salary is paid by federal grant funding. We don't want anyone to lose their jobs as a result of this political turmoil.
- If Medicaid is gutted, states have to pick up the tab for residents. You know the first thing they'll cut is K-12 and higher ed funding, so you can forget even *hoping* for the state to support anything close to 1/3 of the college operating budget.
- These federal cuts will also negatively impact federal student loan forgiveness, which hurts our members as well.

So, again, please find my March 4 email and use those links to let your voice be heard. They are attacking our profession, our students, and our institutions—and we need to defend all three. Questions?

- We know Columbia University has been targeted, but do you know of other specific institutions or community colleges like SCCC in particular being targeted? — No, not aware of specific institutions. But we do know that college administrators, including director of legislative affairs Ben Zwirn, have been contacting our elected representatives and showing how all of these decisions are, in fact, harming the college.
  - During an interview on NPR, they said an act of Congress is needed to get rid of the Department of Education, but in the meanwhile the concern is about decreasing the efficiency of that department. — Yes, and our national parent unions, NEA and AFT, are busy responding to these actions because they know the dire impact it'll have.
  - You mentioned public student loan forgiveness. Any word on grandfathering in people currently in the program? — No. We're hearing everything is on the table.
  - I don't think we should give in to all of the fear. As long as we have a few good people in there looking at this, it might not be so bad, e.g., might all of this disruption actually end up with free community colleges, which could help our students? — No, we absolutely need to push back against all of this. Consider that "free community college" was part of our governor's budget. Sounds great, but details show eligibility is only for first-time college students, only in specific disciplines, etc. It's so narrowly focused and understood by many as a publicity stunt.
- **D. Morelli:** Let's face it: What's happening at the federal level is absolutely going to impact us. All this disruption is going to mean fewer students going to college. We need more students, not fewer. It's bad for our students, for us as a union, and for our future. Remember that student tuition and fees fuel about 50% of the college's operating budget and that personnel costs are 90% of college budget. There's no positive way to look at this.

These actions are intended to hurt higher ed. [Read my March 4 email, send those letters, and ask your constituents, families, friends, and neighbors to do the same](#). We have to protect our students, institution, and profession. There's only one way to do this—and that's together.

## 5. EC Rep Issues

- How do nonclassroom adjunct members' winter and summer service count for promotion?  
— **K. Ng Southard:** The office of adjunct services has confirmed that winter and/or summer service count as one semester. **C. Brewer:** This is regardless of the amount of time worked during those terms; it still counts as a single semester of service toward promotion.
- An early childhood constituent is concerned about the appropriateness of their classroom at Ammerman. — **D. Morelli:** I received that email and will look into it. My understanding is the preferred room is not available because it's being used for other purposes.
- The adjunct seniority list still is not available in the Eastern campus dean's office and hasn't been for the past four years. How are people supposed to know if their assignments have been violated if we don't have that list in the dean's office? I've had to contact the college attorney to get the list, and even she says I shouldn't have to go to her. And that takes time. I shouldn't have to wait six months to get this information because then it's too late to know if my assignments were done right. Why does this union not represent adjuncts? Other issues get resolved so quickly but not adjunct issues! — **K. Ng Southard:** The list at the dean's office isn't the list that they use to make assignments; that is the seniority list. We have discussed this many times, and you know that you or any other adjunct member can get the information from me at any time, call or email, and I get back to you within a day. Also, I know Dean Reese is receiving the list from Dean Gherardi's office because I am cc'd on those emails; I'm not sure why it isn't put out. **C. Eaton:** Because you keep bringing this up, I asked Dean Reese's office how many adjuncts come in to ask for the list. I was informed there's only ever been one person and that is you, so we are not seeing the demand for this. **D. Morelli:** First, you should *not* be going to the college counsel for this. I'll reach out to Dean Reese, but I take offense at the suggestion that we are not representing adjunct members. We have worked so hard on behalf of adjuncts—especially Kim. I am so proud of the work that she does. She absolutely works her ass off. We have fought for very good raises and working conditions for our adjunct faculty, and the last contract was overwhelmingly supported by adjunct members.
- I still do not understand how adjunct faculty can be mandated to complete Vector trainings every year but not be paid? All the stuff I look at says if you are mandated to do it by your employer, you should be paid. — **D. Morelli:** I have FOIL'd the college to get a list of all Vector trainings and the schedule, plus additional information. We know it is an additional burden, to adjunct members and full-time members, and this will be in our next round of negotiations.
- In light of Middle States and upcoming student opinion surveys, questions were raised in my department: How will the results be used? How will the college account for known race, ethnicity, and gender bias in surveys like these? How much will these surveys cost the college and how will they be funded? — **D. Morelli:** Recently announcements were made to campus governance bodies indicating that decisions had already been made about these student course opinion surveys, which took us by surprise because we have not been included in those conversations. Please tell that to your constituents because the FA has to be included in the decision making. It's a workplace condition item, and we have previously negotiated language—a full MOA from 2007—on student opinion surveys. I reminded administration of this, shared that MOA, and Courtney and I had a meeting with them during which we made

abundantly clear we need to be part of the conversation precisely because of the questions you've shared. We are told that the college has no instrument yet, they are drafting a "purpose statement," and they will be seeking input on questions from governance, the FA, and the student government association.

- In the large faculty parking lot for Islip and the library, near security booth where we turn right into the lot, there are always 2-3 large vans parked there. They create a blind spot where you cannot see other cars coming toward you, and it's quite dangerous. Given the sheer size of those vans, can't they be parked elsewhere? — **D. Morelli**: Those are the RTV program vans, so I will follow up; this seems like it could be easily fixed.

## 6. Officers Reports

**President Dante Morelli reports the following:**

- I've already covered much of my report, so I will add just a few more notes:
  - Regarding student opinion surveys, we believe admin is trying to be cost efficient and looking at current vendors and technology options that will be less expensive.
  - I've been to Albany two times already for advocacy on increased higher education funding, [including in conjunction with the administration](#). Fighting for improved support from the state benefits all of us.
  - The EMHP transition seems to be going fairly smoothly; let me know if issues arise.
  - We have a Beacon working group that has been meeting to work on the mentoring/liaison program and we are making progress.

**Executive Vice President Courtney Brewer reports the following:**

- Promotion eligibility letters for full-time faculty went out for Ammerman and Grant, and I'm awaiting confirmation from Eastern. If you or constituents aren't sure of eligibility or have questions, contact your dean's office or me. Cover letters are due May 15 and full applications are due June 16 (the 15th falls on a Sunday).
- I held a number of promotion workshops in February that were well attended, especially the Zoom ones.
- After spring recess, we will hold our next set of FA office hours: one in person at Grant on March 24 and on Zoom on March 26. These are for all adjunct and full-time members—not just faculty at Grant—to join us to share their stories, ask questions, or just check in to say hello. We officers feel it's important to make ourselves available to you.

**Secretary Cynthia Eaton reports the following:**

- Sabbatical notifications have been delayed this semester, but that is because we have been advocating for admin to move away from this pattern of awarding only one to the FA and only one to the Guild every year. Administration keeps pointing to their difficult financial situation, but still these are contractual. I met with President Bonahue and my sabbatical committee co-chair VPAA Rios last Friday, and I previously had met with Dr. Rios on January 28 to discuss sabbatical concerns. These are difficult conversations—there

seems to be a growing divide between administration and faculty understandings about sabbaticals—and I am told that sabbatical notifications go out in the coming days.

- We're in faculty development and retraining season. I held two workshops in February as well as fielded a handful of inquiries. Applications are due April 15; send interested constituents my way.
- FA member excellence award nominations are due tomorrow! It's not too late to nominate colleagues in the four categories—excellence in FA service, excellence in adjunct service, community outreach & social justice, and mentoring. I'll put the link to [Nic's February WORD article](#) in the Zoom chat because it has the form. **N. Pestieau:** Thank you, Cynthia. Our awards committee will meet on March 21 to review nominations, since two weeks are needed to create the awards and our event is on April 11.
- As FA rep to Distance Ed Committee, we are encouraging members to reach out to Dean Hernandez for her RSI Resources project. She is collecting examples of faculty doing solid work with regular and substantive interaction (RSI) in their courses so she can showcase those and share ideas among faculty, especially adjunct faculty who aren't always able to attend their CTL workshops. Please [email Dean Hernandez](#) to participate or to nominate or suggest a colleague.

**Treasurer Pete DiGregorio reports the following:**

- On February treasurer report, note that we currently have 389 full-time members and 0 nonmembers, 828 adjunct members and 138 adjunct nonmembers, and number of retirees increased a bit since last fall.
- Schedule D came out late this year because payroll is dealing with personnel changes. This list from administration shows every adjunct and overload assignment; chairs review it, make changes, and send back. We get a copy so we know who is working, for what assignments, and how much they're paid so we can calculate dues and send membership information to NYSUT.
- First adjunct dues will come out in next Thursday's paycheck and continue for next four pay periods (slightly different for people doing late start or early end assignments).
- Comparing this spring's numbers to last spring, we see student enrollment is up around 5-6%. We have 42 more adjunct members, working an average of 5.8 versus 5.5 credits, and the overall total of credits worked by adjuncts has increased by 467 credits compared with spring '24. We have more adjunct members earning over \$8,000/semester than ever.
- We continue to invest our reserve funds into high-rate CDs, the last of which is coming due next Friday so will re-invest in another CD; this brings the FA interest-free money.

**D. Morelli reports the following on behalf of Grievance Officer Kevin McCoy:**

- An adjunct had an observation but did not receive the evaluation form for four months, which is clearly not timely and in violation of the contract; thus that B form will not be added to their file.
- A full-time member teaching a COL class is not being paid properly so working to ensure they receive correct payment.
- A member was left off schedule D and did not receive payment for an overload class; we ensured they received payment.

- Regarding Trump's executive orders, many have a direct, negative impact on higher education. Multiple lawsuits have been filed and are working through the courts. FA will communicate as we get information but, again, please look for Dante's March 4 email about actions you can take now.
- Three members were not receiving tuition reimbursement: we successfully got two members paid and are working on behalf of a third member.

**Adjunct Coordinator Kim Ng Southard reports the following:**

- Promotion eligibility letters for adjunct faculty went out to 57 people but only 19 applied. This concerns me because the process is quite manageable, I think, for adjunct faculty (short application and observation), and we want to see them apply and achieve their promotion, so I will encourage them to apply as soon as they are eligible.
- Because promotion observations are being scheduled, I've been fielding some questions.
- Also hearing concerns about the mandatory Vector trainings; a few did the training yet still received a "reminder to complete" email so we'll look into that.
- A member last fall received a poor evaluation; I was their peer observer and have been working with them and happy to say issue has been resolved.
- I worked with Kevin regarding the member who received their evaluation four months later; I've advised them to read and consider their chair's recommendations carefully to prepare for their next observation.
- I participated in program review for the Office of Faculty and Professional Advancement (OFPA), which includes adjunct services, and was interviewed by outside reviewers. I enjoy working with OFPA and am happy to help them.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- None at this time.

## **8. New Business**

- None at this time.

## **9. Adjournment**

- ➔ Motion to adjourn made by N. Edwards and seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 4:51 pm.

## Attendance: Members present on March 13, 2025

### 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
- ☐ [vacant](#): Instructional Labs
- ☐ [Ed Champ](#): 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 Karahalas](#): 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
- ☐ [Renee McClean](#): Social Sciences