

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, June 27, 2022

Zoom/Live Streamed via STCC YouTube Channel

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Marikate Murren, Chair
Jynai McDonald, Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Secretary
Monique Selden-Riley, Student Trustee
Maurice Lindsay, Alumni Trustee
William Johnson, Trustee
Norman Roldan, Trustee
Jeff Sattler, Trustee
MacArthur Starks, Jr., Trustee

Unable to attend: Samalid Hogan, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President
Dr. Eduardo Marti, ACCT Consultant
Dr. Shai Butler, VP of Advancement & External Affairs
CampusWorks Team: Javon Brame, Senior Project Lead;
Kevin David, Executive Account Director; Samantha Kessler,
Institutional Research & Reporting Consultant
Nanette Flores, Executive Assistant to the President & Board Clerk

I. Call to Order

Trustee Chair Marikate Murren called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. Roll Call

The following Trustees were present at roll call: Trustee Chair Marikate Murren, Vice Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Secretary Elizabeth Sposito, Student Trustee Monique Selden-Riley, Trustee Maurice Lindsay, Trustee William “Bill Johnson, Trustee Norman Roldan, Trustee Jeff Sattler, and Trustee MacArthur Starks. Nine Trustees present, constituting a quorum.

III. Approval of Minutes – Board of Trustees Meeting – Monday, May 23, 2022

Trustee Norman Roldan moved to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Trustee Jynai McDonald. After no further discussion, unanimously approved through roll call.

IV. STCC Shared Governance/Final Report, by Dr. Eduardo Marti, ACCT Consultant

Dr. Eduardo Marti presented a final report including a proposal for adoption of a new Shared Governance Model. In the report summary, Dr. Marti provided context that led to the hiring by STCC of a Consultant to assist with revising/reviewing shared governance in light of the Notice of Concern issued by the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE; Standard 3/Organization and Governance). NECHE is scheduling a follow-up visit in the spring of 2023.

The report includes a summary of the inclusive and comprehensive method used to engage with different groups of constituents/stakeholders, including a series of six meetings with a Governance Working Group. Issues and recommendations were discussed in these meetings and based on the information gathered, a model was presented, reviewed, and feedback on the model sought from the group, as well as college-wide.

The proposed model recommends that Trustees to formally endorse a Shared Governance Council (SGC), a body that submits recommendations to the STCC President, with membership including representatives from the two collective bargaining units (MCCC and AFSCME), Student Government, the All-Unit Congress (AUC), as well as members of the President's Cabinet. Clarity was provided as well in that the President is the agent of the Board of Trustees, and the Board is the only policy entity for the College. Other recommendations generated by the Consultant include inviting the AUC to clarify membership, inclusion of administrators, roles of standing committees, and voting via General Assembly versus consensus-building via committees.

[MOTION 2022 -14] – Governance

Trustee Jynai McDonald moved: That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees, in accordance with its policy-making and statutory responsibilities, accepts the report and recommendations from the ACCT consultant, and hereby establishes a Shared Governance Council. Whereas, an element of this endorsement and formalization of a governance model is to address an accreditation matter via the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) specific to governance, be it resolved that the following clarifies roles and responsibilities:

A Shared Governance Council (SGC) is hereby formalized, and serves as the structure that ensures advisory input from college stakeholders through

a consensus-model, and does so by providing recommendations to the STCC President; recommendations are high-level regarding institutional policies, planning and operations in support of the STCC mission, and the SGC will serve as a conduit that ensures college-wide feedback;

As outlined in the set of ACCT consultant recommendations, Trustees further establish that the Shared Governance Council will include representatives from the following constituencies: Student Government Association (SGA), AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), MCCC (Massachusetts Community College Council; STCC-Professional Association), All-Unit Congress, Cabinet/Senior Administrators; the STCC President serves Ex-Officio and convener of the SGC.

The STCC President presents SGC consensus-formed recommendations to Trustees utilizing an outlook framed by NECHE (Standard 3).¹

¹ NECHE Standards of Accreditation (Standard 3; 3.12). Available: www.neche.org

Seconded by Trustee Norman Roldan, and after no further discussion, unanimously approved through roll call.

V. STCC Strategic Planning Outlook/Update, introduction by Dr. Shai Butler, Task Force Co-Chair & VP of Advancement & External Affairs

Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Eileen Cusick and Dr. Shai Butler introduced the team of CampusWorks partners: Javon Brame, Kevin David, and Samantha Kessler. Dr. Butler also announced that Dan Surdyka joined the Task Force as the Communications lead.

CampusWorks team members introduced themselves providing their educational and professional backgrounds. The team also provided brief notes about CampusWorks and shared the company's vision. As noted in the presentation led by Javon Brame, CampusWorks' process is inclusive, transparent, and open minded, with equity in mind, data-informed, and focused on incorporating innovation and excellence. Also discussed was the planning framework. The foundational point of the planning framework is the Mission and all deliverables are guided by this mission. This then is followed by Student Experience to be discussed in a "defining the student experience workshop" which will help in identifying what is the ideal student experience and with this, construct a statement that will guide into higher level development of strategic goals and objectives. The top piece is the vision that carries the values of the college, students and stakeholders. The presentation included a sequence of Key Planning Events, next steps and a timeline towards implementation.

The floor was opened for questions and comments. Chair Murren expressed appreciation and reiterated that Trustee Betty Sposito is serving as the Task Force Board Liaison. Dr. Cook noted the importance of this policy endeavored process and reminded Trustees that at the end of the process, the strategic plan will be presented to the Board for endorsement and then presented to the Board of Higher Education for final approval.

VI. Chair’s Report – Trustee Marikate Murren

a) Presidential Evaluation

Chair Marikate Murren provided an overview of the 2021-2022 Presidential evaluation process. The Executive Committee: Chair Murren, Vice Chair Murren, and Secretary Sposito, met in Open Meeting to discuss and determine the process used to develop this year’s evaluation. As part of the process, each Trustee received a document with a list of major topics of impact handled by Dr. Cook. Each Trustee had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with one of the Executive Committee members for a guided conversation in regards to the topics received ahead. Feedback from these conversations were then compiled and used to develop Dr. Cook’s performance evaluation. Included in the packet is the 2021-2022 final performance evaluation and a copy of Dr. Cook’s self-assessment.

The floor was opened for feedback/comments of the process or of documents included in the packet. Based on her opinion, Trustee Sposito noted that the process was positive, it provided an opportunity to listen to different perspectives and to have substantive conversations.

[MOTION 2022-15] 2021-2022 Presidential Evaluation

Trustee Elizabeth Sposito moved: That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approves the 2021-2022 Presidential Evaluation as discussed, consistent with the Commonwealth’s Open Meeting Law (OML) requirements, M.G.L. c.30A, SS 18-25, and the Attorney General’s regulations, educational materials and advisories.

Seconded by Trustee MacArthur Starks, and unanimously approved through roll call.

b) Farewell to Student Trustee, Monique Selden-Riley

On behalf of all Board members, Chair Murren expressed her appreciation and best wishes to Student Trustee Monique Selden-Riley.

c) Introduction of recently elected Student Trustee, Glerisbed García-Figueroa

Chair Murren announced that recently elected Student Trustee Glerisbed Garcia-Figueroa will attend the Trustee Retreat in September. Dr. Cook added that Student Trustee Garcia-Figueroa was not available to attend today for introduction, yet noted that she is ready and looking forward to join the Board.

VII. President’s Perspective, Dr. John B. Cook

Dr. Cook reiterated his thanks to Student Trustee Selden-Riley for her role the past year, and for her contributions at commencement. In addition Dr. Cook expressed his appreciation to STCC’s Leadership team. Grateful to Trustees for their positive comments and support as part of the performance evaluation. Also expressed gratitude for supporting capital projects such as the relocation of Building 20/School of Health. Tonight’s vote on the Shared Governance structure, and the future approval of the new strategic plan are important steps forward. Very optimistic about the future. To end, Dr. Cook spoke about summer operations and projects such as the abatement of the lead and arsenic in the campus green, and enrollment management.

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

X. Date of Next Board Meeting – Board Retreat, on Friday, September 23, 2022; from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

XI. Adjournment (Roll Call)

Meeting was called to adjourn at 6:06 p.m., moved by Trustee Jynai McDonald, seconded by Trustee Norman Roldan, and unanimously approved through roll call.


Marikate Murren
Chair, STCC Board of Trustees


Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito
Secretary, STCC Board of Trustees



June 27, 2022

[Motion to submit the below Presidential Evaluation to Commissioner Santiago and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education was ... {TBD - moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by STCC Board of Trustees on June 27, 2022} at a publicly noticed meeting held online via Zoom that was publicly streamed per the Open Meeting Law]

Annual Presidential Evaluation (FY 2022)

The Chair for the STCC Board of Trustees (BOT) utilized the Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary), to facilitate and generate the FY 2022 Presidential Evaluation for President John B. Cook. The Committee reviewed documents including the Self-Assessment prepared by Dr. Cook; considered relevant materials, including the 2021 institutional Self Study for the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) which was Trustee-endorsed; and also considered Trustee and Committee meeting minutes and materials from the past year. Also part of the process, Executive Committee Members met individually with each of the other Trustees to seek their views on five key areas of presidential performance including Fiscal Oversight, COVID-19 Management/Leadership, Community and College Engagement, Strategic Planning, as well as an open-ended question, "Other," that generated conversation and responses about accreditation, equity, governance, and facilities/capital infrastructure.

The Executive Committee developed a draft evaluation report that summarized successes, accomplishments, and a consensus outlook regarding the performance of President Cook from the past year. A draft report was provided in advance of the final June Trustee meeting to each Trustee for review. The following summary report was [TBD/ approved by the BOT on June 27, 2022], and strong support for the work by Dr. Cook leading STCC was evident. The meeting was conducted in compliance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, and the [TBD/ STCC Board of Trustees unanimously accepted the FY 2022 Performance Evaluation].

Over the past two years, and through the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, STCC has contended with several major considerations, many of them brought forth during Dr. Cook's 2021-2022 evaluation. The following is a summary:

A. COVID-19 Management/Leadership

As has previously been expressed in evaluations of President Cook, STCC found itself, like so many other colleges, faced with a situation it had never prepared for – COVID-19. In these unprecedented times many changes and adaptations were required, and in the second year of the pandemic, Dr. Cook led the College through another year of important and challenging decisions. As one Trustee noted in their interview with the Executive Committee member "I am impressed the college had the foresight to prepare and offer online classes prior to the pandemic...Dr. Cook provided exceptional COVID-19 leadership with the college community." Other details to note in this category include:

- With all 15 community colleges, STCC implemented a student (on campus) and employee vaccination policy, and navigated a campus mask policy in accordance with local, state and federal regulations and guidance;
- Continued navigation of an instruction model that needed flexibility and adaptation (hundreds of courses continued to be offered, and selected by students, for delivery as online or hybrid);
- Regular use by the president of All-College Town Halls, in addition to a robust communication strategy to ensure all stakeholders, including Trustees, were well-informed;
- Use of flexible operations, including employee telework, online/virtual student services (the "ChatNow" function in particular), and seeking alternatives to celebrations, including virtual employee awards;
- Use of CARES and HEERF funds to ensure students had resources and direct access to funding supports (STCC made clear to Trustees how millions of dollars were invested directly in students).

B. Fiscal Oversight

As a community college, STCC is heavily reliant on State funding to help satisfy its day-to-day operating expenses as well as to help fund infrastructure maintenance and enhancements. Annually, there is a great deal of work to package State funding together with revenue from students fees, that when mapped against enrollment and expenses, leads to a balanced budget. Operating in a difficult-to-plan environment, financial management is extremely difficult, and it is no secret STCC like many community colleges, has lost a good deal of student enrollment. But Dr. Cook has repeatedly demonstrated a deep understanding of STCC financials,

and is proactive with planning to achieve continued sound financial results. The Trustees are well-aware of the structural deficit STCC contends with, even as federal funds have helped plug those holes. With Trustees, the president has conversations that are more than just surface discussions, and as one Trustee shared “Good performance - landed on a balanced FY 2023 budget and the Finance team seemed organized, focused and engaged.” Drawing from the president’s own assessment, the following captures the skill Trustees have seen demonstrated by Dr. Cook to navigate a college evolving and adapting to fiscal pressures, and difficult-to-project outcomes:

“With an anticipated vote in May by the STCC Board of Trustees to formalize approval of the FY 2023 budget, this is noteworthy given the significant amount of planning, strategy, and fiscal complexity that are part-and-parcel of fiscal management at STCC. At approximately \$52 million (excluding grant funds or DCAMM deferred maintenance funds), notably, the college will not raise student fees for a second consecutive year, bucking higher education trends. STCC has now lost approximately 50% of enrollment since 2012, and has experienced substantial enrollment declines during COVID (multiple years with declines that exceed 10% each year). In partnership with the STCC administration and finance team, the degree of forecasting shared with Trustees has been exceptional, including demonstrating a methodology to leverage current reserve/investment funds to plug near-term budget deficits as the college seeks a sustainable fiscal position by FY 2027. The FY 2023 budget as prepared is balanced; continues investing in key value areas that include healthcare education; sustains investments in campus deferred maintenance and IT capital projects; utilizes attrition and retirement to lower personnel expenses; and again, offers a model by which administration collaborated with Trustees to establish a plan that uses college reserves over multiple years to help STCC weather near-term fiscal difficulty.”

Trustees agree with Dr. Cook that with the uncertainty of enrollment, preparation of the FY 2023 budget was particularly important, and will serve as a template for future budget development, as well as communication across the college, and is a signature accomplishment this year.

C. Engagement (College & Community)

Trustees find that Dr. Cook has continued his diligence with engaging internally with the college, as well as externally, and in particular with area schools, employers, and non-profit organizations. The two federal Department of Education grants will provide supports internally for hiring and faculty development, while also extending the reach of STCC to communities of color, and inviting more STEM and healthcare efforts, both of which STCC Trustees wish to continue seeing highlighted. We would also point to examples like the recent award by Baystate Health for an STCC/Westfield State/Baystate Academy Charter School partnership as exactly the type of engagement Trustees want to see the college, and president, championing.

It also goes without saying that the recent \$30 million award from DCAMM is incredibly important to STCC, and points to the long-standing effort by President Cook and the college to make the case for state support

and resources. As one Trustee noted “getting the state legislature to invest in the college for facilities issues [via a separate \$5 million earmark in an Economic Development Bill] is a big deal. Congratulations to John on his work to get that work done.” Dr. Cook worked closely with Trustees to include \$6 million in college funds as part of the DCAMM proposal (which is part of a \$41.5 million capital project), and his clear and consistent effort over the past five years on this project ensured STCC finally got over the finish line. This is a significant accomplishment, and represented the highest institutional priority in the current Campus Master Plan.

D. Strategic Planning

It is good to see that the STCC Strategic Planning process has been launched, and the Task Force, which includes a Trustee liaison is an important part of that process. This is an important document, and given accreditation, COVID, and the changing nature of work/employment, STCC needs a reference to priorities given the old plan dates to 2015. As one Trustee noted however, there is a lot of talk about strategic planning, but the execution feels slow. We do see tangible elements aside from the Task Force that includes the contracting with CampusWorks as the strategic planning consultant, creation of a public-facing website, and we also recognize that summer does not lend itself to planning given the traditional academic calendar. But we encourage Dr. Cook to continue pushing strategic planning forward, and being a champion, so that Trustees are prepared to endorse a plan in the Spring of 2023; a Strategic Plan will be important for STCC in terms of priorities, and also being clear about the role Trustees can play. Trustees and the president have discussed the value proposition STCC provides, including giving students access, keeping programs affordable, supporting student retention, and the technical mission. We look forward to seeing the fruits of labor from strategic planning serve as a reference for future operations.

E. Other: Accreditation & Equity

Accreditation was formally achieved by STCC from NECHE in January 2022. Trustees understand this is a huge undertaking, and required the president to plan, prepare and have the entire college ready for NECHE. Much work to evolve the college has been previously discussed, and it was noted as part of the NECHE evaluation. It was also good to see that fiscal concerns were not prominent in the NECHE assessment, and this points again to the work by Dr. Cook to navigate financial minefields.

STCC did receive a Notice of Concern from NECHE regarding governance. It is good to know that the president knew how to lead the college in the way it addressed this issue, which included the hiring of a consultant through ACCT, creation of a Governance Working Group that included college leadership and Trustee representatives, as well as shared governance and student leaders. All resulting in a report and set of recommendations developed over the course of Spring Semester with stakeholders that gives STCC an important degree of clarification. Multiple Trustees noted how exciting it was to have student voices included

in that work. In addition to a formal endorsement by Trustees of a Shared Governance Council, which will help address the NECHE concern about clarity with roles and responsibilities, STCC did come back to the subject of program discontinuation. Utilizing the BOT Internal/External Committee, the president, his leadership team, and with faculty voice, brought forward two programs for discontinuation. With endorsement by this Committee, the full Board of Trustees voted to discontinue Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering Technology, and STCC can point to this model for future decisions when necessary. Again, it is important to have seen Dr. Cook help STCC showcase for NECHE how STCC is working to clarify internal governance, and it was good to see the president remind Trustees of the rationale used for decision-making/program discontinuation.

Knowing the Equity Agenda is a signature focus area for the Board and Department of Higher Education, it has been important to see the STCC President also champion this work. There are key examples to point to, including how the college has sought to invest SUCCESS funding for student-of-color initiatives, how AIA@STCC (Antiracism and Inclusion Alliance) remains an important forum sponsored by President Cook, and has included a Trustee Co-Lead. There is certainly work ahead for STCC in the area equity, and the college has been clear about the goal of recruiting more employees of color in particular. But it is also the Innovation Fellowship over the past year, that was established by Dr. Cook, which finally addressed developmental math at the college, and is an important accomplishment this year. Some of the Trustees have been particularly invested in the subject of developmental education, and how STCC students have remained in development courses for what appears to be an eternity. The work by the president to find and incentivize a champion (Dr. Vanessa Hill) for leading a systemic change to how STCC manages development math is important, and Trustees, particularly in the Internal/External Committee, were pleased to see this come through.

The Board of Trustees will work with Dr. Cook to establish goals for FY 2023, and they will likely include a combination of the following:

1. Continue to advocate for state, federal and private funding,
2. Continue to expand professional and personal engagement with the greater Springfield community,
3. Continue to strengthen the College's connection to traditional sources of new students such as area high schools... to aid recruitment and enrollment, establish comprehensive and scaled Early College,
4. Ensure STCC has a Strategic Plan in place by the conclusion of FY 2023,
5. Implement the Trustee-endorsed Shared Governance Council,

6. Continue to invest in employees through professional development, and by providing resources to support the training and preparation of faculty and staff for a new, unique, and important time in higher education, and
7. Look ahead, post-Strategic Plan, to the need for STCC to engage in planning for the next Campus Master Plan.

Conclusion:

Completing his sixth year as president of STCC, Dr. Cook continues to have the full faith of the Board to serve as CEO and oversee the day-to-day operation and management of STCC, its systems, projects and personnel. There have been significant accomplishments in the past year through his leadership, and the funding for the School of Health relocation out of Building 20 (\$30 million as part of a \$42 million capital project), is a key example of John's patience, diligence, and diplomacy. Dr. Cook should continue to focus on building a STCC culture that is innovative, and is focused on student success. STCC Board of Trustees looks forward to continue partnering with Dr. Cook to advance the college mission.

Regarding compensation, Trustees once again strongly encourage, like past years, that the Board of Higher Education, via the Commissioner of Higher Education, provide an equity adjustment, and make the salary of President Cook the average of the 15 Massachusetts community college presidents. We are confident in the continuing leadership of Dr. Cook, and look forward to working with President Cook in the year ahead, knowing his steady presence, and deep commitment to the college and region, will continue to be highly valued in these complex times.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marikate Murren, Chair
Springfield Technical Community College
Board of Trustees

Enc. Presidential Self-Assessment from Dr. John B. Cook

Date: May 16, 2022

To: STCC Board of Trustees

Re: Presidential Self-Assessment/2021-2022 Performance Evaluation

From: Dr. John B. Cook, President

Dear Members of the STCC Board of Trustees:

As of August 2022, I will have completed six years as President of Springfield Technical Community College. It continues to be an honor and privilege to lead one of the most unique higher education institutions in both Massachusetts and New England.

This year has been remarkable not only given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but because of the demonstrated resolve the college has shown during this time of change and adaptation. Notwithstanding the significant challenges with operations, enrollment, and higher education complexities, over the past year STCC has accomplished a great deal, and advanced a number of strategic goals in support of our mission. The college remains a signature institution in the City of Springfield, as well as the region, and our faculty and staff continue to demonstrate the value inherent in our two middle names.

In recent years, goal-setting by Trustees for the president has consistently included versions of the following:

- Continue to advocate for state, federal and private funding to meet the College's significant deferred maintenance needs, especially as it relates to Building 20 which houses the School of Health and SIMs Medical Center.
- Continue to expand engagement with the greater-Springfield community, especially the business community that can be a new source of job and workforce training opportunities for the College.
- Continue to strengthen the College's connection to traditional sources of new students such as area high schools... to aid recruitment and enrollment, establish comprehensive and scaled Early College.
- Continue to develop and strengthen communication with the college shared governance bodies, including continuing efforts to formalize communication opportunities with the President, the President's Cabinet, and Board of Trustees.
- Continue to implement the Student Success Plan especially as it relates to closing the equity and achievement gaps for students of color and women.

In service to these goals, I am pleased to share an excerpted summary of work, effort and accomplishments over the past year. Again, with significant facilitation done in service to institutional goals, I am pleased to describe the following, demonstrating an exceedingly successful year at STCC:

July 2021

Launch of the first Innovation Fellowship (\$100,000 investment), which through a faculty fellowship, ensures formal and comprehensive reform of developmental math education at STCC. A compliment to “directed self-placement” for developmental reading/writing that was established by faculty and administration from the School of Liberal and Professional Studies, STCC can now point to significant equity movement regarding the engagement, retention, and graduation of students of color specifically by substantially lessening the likelihood of individuals languishing in pre-college coursework.

August 2021

Preparation and launch of Fall Semester with a substantial portion of course sections selected by students to be either fully online or hybrid. When provided a choice, STCC students continue to seek non-campus, or limited-in person learning opportunities (approximately 50%) as they push the college to understand a different future for academic operations. This outlook has invited substantial conversations, and even soul-searching, within the division of Academic Affairs with faculty and their School Deans discussing delivery options, and how we continue to embrace our access mission.

September 2021

Early College efforts continue in earnest. In addition to the 20-credit Early College Commerce pathway that previously achieved state designation, STCC has pursued formal Early College innovation pathways with the Conservatory of the Arts (Springfield) and Veritas Prep Charter School (Springfield).

October 2021

STCC was awarded two large US Department of Education grants (\$7.35 million/ over five years), that bring together our status and work as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), with efforts to support STEM student success, and low-income students and students of color in particular. This significant set of grant awards allows for STCC to hire staff, support our capacity to align student engagement, and also provides funding for faculty professional development.

January 2022

A multi-year, and all-encompassing endeavor, STCC was awarded continued accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). The 2021 site visit, and 2022 accreditation decision, was predicated on comprehensive preparation that included a

Self Study. Notable was how STCC was able to describe establishment of an STCC Campus/Master Plan; creation of an IT/5-year Plan; formal establishment of comprehensive academic program review, and the first STCC Academic Plan; as well as academic initiatives including the first integrated Health Science degree. Investment by the college in accreditation will have long-lasting value, including the generation of projections that aid current strategic planning (referenced below). Also noteworthy was the issuing by NECHE of a Notice of Concern specific to the standard on governance. More on this matter is described below.

January 2022

In support of equity and antiracism efforts, with over \$1 million in state “SUCCESS” (Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services) funding, STCC began ramping-up staff hiring for initiatives that include MILE (Male Initiative for Leadership in Education) focused on men of color, and LEAD (Leadership and Education), which focuses on underrepresented female students.

March 2022

With a well-received keynote at the January Professional Day, STCC formally launches its next strategic planning effort beginning with establishment of a 30-member Task Force representative of stakeholders from across the college. STCC has contracted with CampusWorks to consult and facilitate, and will utilize the next year to formalize the next college Strategic Plan, which will ultimately come before the STCC Board of Trustees for endorsement, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for approval.

April 2022

Through a Baystate Health Community Health Initiative Grant, Westfield State University in partnership with STCC was awarded a Better Together grant (\$250,000) that invests in initiatives that support health outcomes. The grant funds elements of Early College, including an Associate-to-Bachelors pathway focused on Nursing with Baystate Academy Charter School.

April 2022

An incredibly important and long-sought outcome, STCC was awarded \$30 million by DCAMM and the Executive Office of Education, for relocation of the STCC School of Health & Patient Simulation out of Building 20. A significant accomplishment with implications that will last for years, this defining major infrastructure award, part of a \$41.5 million project, included a \$6 million commitment from STCC Trustees, \$500,000 from the STCC Foundation, as well as engagement with our regional legislative delegation that previously secured \$5 million in the 2021 Economic Development Bill. As the highest priority in the STCC Campus/Master Plan, having clarity on this project, including the set of health programs that will relocate to the Technology Park (STCC Assistance Corporation), cannot be overstated.

May 2022

With an anticipated vote in May by the STCC Board of Trustees to formalize approval of the FY 2023 budget, this is noteworthy given the significant amount of planning, strategy, and fiscal complexity that are part-and-parcel of fiscal management at STCC. At approximately \$52 million (excluding grant funds or DCAMM deferred maintenance funds), notably, the college will not raise student fees for a second consecutive year, bucking higher education trends. STCC has now lost approximately 50% of enrollment since 2012, and has experienced substantial enrollment declines during COVID (multiple years with declines that exceed 10% each year). In partnership with the STCC administration and finance team, the degree of forecasting shared with Trustees has been exceptional, including demonstrating a methodology to leverage current reserve/investment funds to plug near-term budget deficits as the college seeks a sustainable fiscal position by FY 2027. The FY 2023 budget as prepared is balanced; continues investing in key value areas that include healthcare education; sustains investments in campus deferred maintenance and IT capital projects; utilizes attrition and retirement to lower personnel expenses; and again, offers a model by which administration collaborated with Trustees to establish a plan that uses college reserves over multiple years to help STCC weather near-term fiscal difficulty. With the continued uncertainty of enrollment, preparation of the FY 2023 budget is particularly consequential as a template for future budget development, as well as communication across the college, and represents a signature accomplishment this year.

June 2022

Regarding the NECHE Notice of Concern: a consultant via ACCT, Dr. Eduardo Marti, is anticipated to provide Trustees with a final report and set of recommendations regarding college governance. A particular challenge that dates back to the 2011 NECHE accreditation visit, governance has indeed been a difficult conversation with NECHE noting that roles and responsibilities are not clear at the college. In service to this need, after work with the consultant that included substantial engagement with all stakeholders including employee groups/leaders, as well as six meetings during Spring Semester with a Governing Work Group comprised of 24 members, the ACCT consultancy will provide Trustees with a helpful pathway to address the NECHE Notice of Concern.

Summer 2022

It is anticipated that STCC, as the employer of record, will be awarded funds for operation of a Cyber Range/Security Operations Center to be located in the City of Springfield at Union Station. Part of a broad and comprehensive investment by the college in the cybersecurity ecosystem of Western Massachusetts, this will be a signature initiative going forward, and a unique position for a community college. STCC itself has navigated a number of cyber challenges over the past year, but has done so given important investing in staff resources, including the hiring of a Director of Infrastructure and Security, a compliment to the IT team lead by our CIO/Vice President.

Finally, I have personally worked to facilitate efforts that ensure engagement with the greater-Springfield community, especially the business community, that can be a new source of job and workforce training opportunities for the College. I am a regular attendee of the Mason Square “C3” forum (Counter Criminal Continuum) which brings resources to bear on engagement with police, including inviting conversations that link neighborhood residents to opportunities including job-training and education. I have also facilitated a number of organization-to-organization/company meetings specific to job placement/pathways that include meetings with BHN (Behavioral Health Network) with over 2,000 employees, Gandara, a large mental-health provider with nearly 1,000 employees, and a visit to Warren Pumps, a CIRCOR company with a unique manufacturing footprint and about 150 employees. STCC has also met with the Springfield Public Schools Superintendent and leadership team to talk about implementation of a comprehensive acceptance initiative for all 1,500 (annual) high school graduates. Finally, we have a number of initiatives and pilot grant awards through the division of Workforce development, including working with New North Citizens Council, a local non-profit, and developing an educator’s academy that focuses on paraprofessionals.

As part of the performance evaluation process, I look forward to working closely with STCC Trustees on developing goals for the upcoming fiscal year; thank you.