

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Board of Trustee Regular  
Monday, June 26, 2023 at 5:00 PM  
Ira H. Rubenzahl Learning Commons, B19/Forum**

**Minutes of Meeting**

Present: Marikate Murren, Chair  
Jynai McDonald, Vice-Chair  
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Secretary  
Tonia Butler-Perez, Trustee  
Bill Johnson, Trustee  
Jeff Sattler, Trustee (joined via conference call)  
MacArthur Starks, Jr., Trustee

Unable to Attend: Samalid Hogan, Trustee  
Glerisbed Garcia-Figueroa, Student Trustee  
Norman Roldan, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President  
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, Trustee Vice Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Secretary Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez, Trustee Bill Johnson, Trustee Jeff Sattler (via phone), and Trustee MacArthur Starks. Seven Trustees present, constituting a quorum.

Also present and introduced by Dr. Cook is recently elected Alumni Trustee Laurie Martin, who is pending to be sworn-in.

**III. Approval of Minutes – Board of Trustee Meeting – Monday, May 22, 2023**

Trustee Jynai McDonald moved to approve the minutes from the May 22nd Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Trustee Bill Johnson. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

##### **a) Facilities and Capital Improvement Committee – Held on June 12, 2023**

Committee member Trustee Bill Johnson referred to the June 12<sup>th</sup> Facilities and Capital Improvement report to highlight topics discussed at this Committee’s first meeting. Trustee Johnson noted robust presentations by CFO Andrea Nathanson, CIO Mary Kaselouskas, and Deb Avery, Sr. Director of Facilities, including topics related to Facilities and IT aligned with the approved strategic plan and focused on sustainability. Included also was a presentation on Facilities budgets. Discussions included the importance of differentiating between DCAMM vs College funds. Committee members are planning individual campus tours during the summer.

Trustee Bill moved to approve the minutes from the June 12<sup>th</sup> Facilities and Capital Improvement Committee meeting, seconded by Trustee Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

#### **V. President’s Perspective – Dr. John B. Cook**

##### **a) Strategic Plan**

STCC’s Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Higher Education. A launch implementation is happening on Professional Day, scheduled on August 31.

##### **b) Updates /Outlook: Strategic Priorities (Free Community College, etc.)**

Regarding free community college, we are expecting clarity and additional information soon. Too soon to forecast enrollment; should have a better sense by September.

##### **c) Shared Governance Council (SGC)**

Update on recommendations and decisions are available at the Public Website <https://www.stcc.edu/about-stcc/shared-governance/>

##### **d) Update on Advancement**

Another search for the position of AVP of Advancement will be posted in late summer. Different from the VP of Advancement and External Affairs; the revised title will focus on fundraising in particular. Information about a potential Interim appointment will soon be shared.

#### **VI. Chair’s Report – Trustee Marikate Murren**

##### **a) Presidential Evaluation**

Board Chair Marikate Murren described the Presidential Evaluation process, which mirrored past efforts including an Executive Committee meeting, in addition to one-one-

one Trustee conversations that focus on a set of key strategic areas of performance. All feedback was compiled, drafted, and is represented by the final Presidential evaluation draft distributed in advance of the meeting.

Trustee Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito moved:

[Motion 2023-09] 2022-2023 Presidential Evaluation

That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approves the **2022-2023** 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 Tonia Butler Perez, and unanimously approved.

**VII. Old/New Business**

Dr. Cook thanked Trustees for their support and feedback by way of the performance evaluation process. He also expressed appreciation of Trustees’ participation at Commencement. President Cook also provided an update regarding the SHPS relocation noting that he received a call from DCAMM about an increase of an additional \$3million to the relocation funds. With changes in the relocation plan due to unforeseen costs, and as we move forward with DCAMM, most likely we will call a Committee on Ways and Means meeting via zoom in July to revisit the use of reserves. Per VP/CFO Nathanson, DCAMM would like to certify the project by September.

- a) Farewell to Student Trustee Glerisbed Garcia-Figueroa
- b) Welcome to recently elected Student Trustee Zoya Plunkett-Brown

**VIII. Date of Next Board Meeting – Monday, September 25, 2023 in-person, Location: Ira Rubenzahl Student Learning Commons, B19/Forum**

**IX. Adjournment**

At 5:41 p.m., Trustee Jynai McDonald moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Tonia Butler Perez, and unanimously approved.

  
Marikate Murren  
Chair, STCC Board of Trustees

  
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito  
Secretary, STCC Board of Trustees



# Springfield Technical Community College

June 26, 2023

*[Motion: to submit the below Presidential Evaluation to Commissioner Ortega and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education]*

*{TBD - moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by STCC Board of Trustees on June 26, 2020 at a publicly noticed meeting held in accordance with the Open Meeting Law}*

## **Annual Presidential Evaluation (FY 2023)**

The Chair for the STCC Board of Trustees (BOT) utilized the Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary), in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, to facilitate and generate the annual/FY 2023 Presidential Evaluation for President John B. Cook. The Committee reviewed documents including the Self-Assessment prepared by Dr. Cook; considered relevant materials, including the STCC Strategic Plan (Momentum: 2023-2028), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Notice of Concern and associated institutional report, 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 Management and Oversight, Strategic Planning and Operations, Community Engagement and Advocacy, Capital Projects, and Accreditation-Governance. There was broad sentiment from Trustees that Dr. Cook, in his seventh year, has continued to ensure STCC navigates a complicated time in history of the college, and is providing excellent leadership.

As described at key celebrations that capped the 56<sup>th</sup> year at STCC, shared was how during the tenure of President Cook, STCC has obtained or otherwise completed over \$100

million in capital and infrastructure investments. The college has also launched a signature Health Science program; partnered with Westfield State University on a 3+1 Nursing agreement, collaborated with the High School of Commerce in Springfield on a 20-credit early college pathway; College for Kids, a youth summer program, was reintroduced; and just last month a unique housing agreement with American International College was announced for Fall 2023 semester. With a new strategic plan completed, and equity the lens by which we see our work, our president continues to passionately champion the essential role STCC plays in our region.

As described in the Board assessment last year, with important continuity and steady guidance, Dr. Cook has led STCC through unprecedented times, including the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following summarizes or otherwise highlights accomplishments in five key areas this year:

#### Fiscal Management & Oversight

- Approval by the STCC Board of Trustees in May, the FY24 Budget has again utilized a full, transparent, and proactive process, which is a credit to an approach honed between Trustees (with Ways & Means Committee in particular), the president, and college administration. Appreciated by Trustees is the way significant planning, forecasting and strategy are implemented, with the college not needing to draw from the full “Reserve” allocation this year, and a reduction in the overall use of “Reserves” next year.
- Continuing to find ways to right-size the organization, including the effort to develop an Early Retirement Incentive; Trustees recognize this will continue to be a difficult area, and with personnel delegated to the president, our expectation is that STCC will need to continue making difficult choices in the name of sustainability.
- Excellent engagement with Fiducient Advisors (investment portfolio management firm).
- Continued advocacy with Federal, State, and private funding to meet outsized deferred maintenance and capital needs for the college. To have a major DCAMM infrastructure project underway is a testament to the consistent focus and vision Dr. Cook has provided on a topic that is essential for STCC.

## Community Engagement & Advocacy

- This has been helpfully translated into the new Strategic Plan: “lead the educational ecosystem” captures how Trustees would like to see the president, and STCC, continue to engage in the broader Springfield region.
- Continued work with early college pathways (Veritas Charter Prep; STEM Career Pathways) as well as grant funding with Westfield State to focus on Nursing, in addition to the Cyber Center at Union Station, and the recent housing agreement with American International College (AIC), are all good examples of the strong work being done to partner, engage, and continue meeting community needs.
- We are excited as a Board about the prospects from MassReconnect/Free Community College and appreciate the ways Dr. Cook has kept Trustees informed of legislative efforts and outcomes.
- Dr. Cook was a strong champion of STCC, and an excellent partner with Trustees at the February ACCT summit in Washington DC. Trustees were pleased to see the rapport he has with the recent Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, and look to see our president continue to engage with local, state and federal policymakers.

## Strategic Planning & Operations

- After over a year, and untold hours of hard work and dedication, the next STCC Strategic Plan has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees (and at the time of this drafting, had also been approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Executive Committee). This is a significant accomplishment, and by bringing a focus to strategic priorities including “elevating the technical mission” and ensuring “sustainability,” the college has a blueprint that will be important for all stakeholders.
- Trustees continue to appreciate the ongoing and always changing nature of leadership teams, and STCC is no different. With a solid core of administrators, we were pleased, after a thorough and comprehensive process, to know that a new Vice President of Academic Affairs will start this July. We encourage President Cook to continue establishing and mentoring the leadership team needed for STCC to be the best technical community college in the northeast, and to ensure we continue to deliver value for our communities.
- While difficult to discuss in Open Meeting, it is reassuring the way STCC, with continued facilitation that starts with the president, is investing in cybersecurity. Trustees support continued investment in the needed personnel, leadership, and hardware/software necessary to protect the college and our operations.

## Accreditation & Governance

- STCC has had consequential Shared Governance considerations, and Dr. Cook has provided a significant level of clarity and patience with a subject that can be difficult. Knowing the value of a consultant, and taking in stride the Trustee policy on establishment of a Shared Governance Council, we appreciate seeing recommendations begin to flow, and clarity of roles be firmly established, even if disagreement on decision making from stakeholders continues. As noted at a recent meeting, Trustees recognize the role our president must play as college stakeholders are engaged, and when and how policy/protocol changes are moved forward. Meeting minutes note how Trustees have been clear on the topic of governance and Trustee engagement, and that ultimately Trustees are looking for recommendations specific to work and student engagement, and the delegation of responsibilities to administration. As shared broadly with the Board, given collective bargaining agreements, it is important for our Trustees to understand that administration manages those considerations, and we continue to see the professional and skillful manner that Dr. Cook manages such obligations.
- With uncertainty whether and when NECHE will reconsider the Notice of Concern (Governance) for STCC, Trustees will continue to look to President Cook to educate the Board, and keep us informed of changes, outcomes, etc.

## Capital Projects (Key Successes)

- Continued oversight/leadership for the \$41.5 million relocation of the School of Health & Patient Simulation project. With the pending move out of Building 20, we appreciated the thorough communication of the change to Building 2, and the rationale offered not only Trustees, but also STCC employees, the Secretary of Education, DCAMM Commissioner, as well as STCC Assistance Corporation Board.
- New CNA Lab in Building 27 (~ \$1.5 million).
- Work to establish Cyber Center of Excellence at Union Station (Springfield; ~ \$5 million).
- Encouragement during Trustee Bylaw review, for Committee on Facilities and Capital/Infrastructure

With an approved Strategic Plan, next year the STCC Board of Trustees will work with Dr. Cook to review institutional goals and associated metrics-measures, as part of the FY 2024 evaluation. These include the following:

1. Lead the Educational Ecosystem – accelerate the system of partnerships; support the economic mobility of STCC students.

2. Elevate our Technical Mission – ensure programs align with labor trends and the evolving workforce.
3. Clear the Path to Student Success – implement and streamline student pathways to enable equity and excellence.
4. Connect and Support – create a connected campus climate and culture; deliver on a host of high-quality student opportunities.
5. Reimagine STCC for a Sustainable Future – align fiscal, physical and human resources.

Given the number of metrics included in the new STCC Strategic Plan, we expect Dr. Cook to continue bringing a consistent level of investment across the college in our transformation. Some of these metrics, including increasing the rates of retention/graduation for students of color, increasing the number of healthcare graduates, including those students of color, and bringing forward by FY 2026 a budget that is no longer dependent on Reserves, are key indicators the Board will review. The Equity Lens described in the plan remains important for STCC, and Trustees understand the value placed on this integrated work by the Board and Department of Higher Education. We invite our president to not only himself be a facilitator (connect student initiatives like SUCCESS with academic initiatives), but to also ask his leadership team, and in turn, faculty and staff, to continue moving forward systems and structural changes that support those students who have historically been disenfranchised.

**Conclusion:**

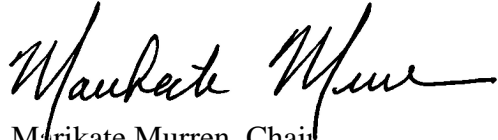
Completing his seventh year as president of STCC, Dr. Cook continues to have the full faith of the Board of Trustees, and we were excited to celebrate a Commencement with him in 2023. His time as CEO, and overseeing the day-to-day operations and management of STCC remains important for our systems, priorities, projects and personnel. There have been significant accomplishments in the past year as described above, and the STCC Board of Trustees are excited to have a president with longevity, energy, accessibility, and the ability to look forward and be a partner to advance the college mission.

Regarding presidential compensation, Trustees once again strongly encourage, like past years, that the Board of Higher Education, via the Commissioner of Higher Education, provide the maximum salary adjustment permissible, and particularly in light of the work by President



Cook in FY 2023. We are confident in the continuing leadership of Dr. Cook, and look forward to working with our President in the years 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mrikate Murren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mrikate Murren, Chair

Board of Trustees, Springfield Technical Community College

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

**Date:** May 2, 2023  
**To:** STCC Board of Trustees  
**Re:** Presidential Self-Assessment/2022-2023 Performance Evaluation  
**From:** Dr. John B. Cook, President



Dear Members of the STCC Board of Trustees:

As of August 2023, I will have completed seven 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 particularly constructive and productive, with a number of key institutional initiatives gaining clarity and achieving completion. Even with significant challenges given enrollment pressures, and the dynamics of changing student preferences for instructional modality (i.e. online), we have moved forward important strategic goals. STCC continues vital work in Western Massachusetts where our higher education access and affordability remains a hallmark, and career-focused programming that supports student transformation remains signature. The college is an essential 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.

For a number of years, goal-setting for the STCC President by the Board of Trustees 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 distinctive 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 college shared governance bodies;
- Continue to implement the Student Success Plan (Strategic Plan: 2015-2020) especially as it relates to closing equity and achievement gaps for students of color.

Aligned to 2023 expectations outlined by the Trustee Executive Committee, I am pleased to offer perspective in the performance areas of Fiscal Management, Engagement, Strategic Planning & Operations, Accreditation & Governance, as well as Capital Projects. There have been a host of important accomplishments this year, which involve the collective work by so many across STCC. Highlights from each of these five areas are described below.

### **Fiscal Management**

With the anticipated vote in May by the Board of Trustees to formalize approval of the FY 2024 budget, a well-established process has again been utilized. The college brings a significant element of planning, forecasting and strategy to the work of fiscal management, and collaboration by administrators with the Trustee Ways & Means Committee remains a notable feature. At approximately \$53 million, excluding grant funds or DCAMM deferred maintenance funding, it is noteworthy how STCC proactively navigates a host of budgetary considerations. These include:

- ❖ Deferred maintenance (\$300+ million for facilities & \$10+ million for IT);
- ❖ Enrollment management (forecast to be - 4.5%), with program-level consideration;
- ❖ Student fees (contingency planning if Fee Stabilization via state legislation does not occur);
- ❖ Rightsizing (full-time employees represent 50% of the STCC operating budget) – given the number of low-enrolled programs/navigating small class-sizes;
- ❖ Planning for investment in capital projects (\$6 million committed by Trustees for the School of Health/Building 20 relocation);
- ❖ Pursuing new initiatives that are mission-central (the Cyber Center at Union Station is one example and totals ~\$5 million in funding).

Once again, the STCC administration and finance team has worked to forecast with Trustees a multi-year approach for navigating a structural deficit, including a clear methodology to leverage Reserves/Investment funds (approximately \$3 million to be earmarked in FY 2024), to arrive at a sustainable fiscal position by FY 2027. The FY 2024 budget will not only be balanced, it will continue priority investments where we can. We leverage the unique STCC value proposition given our technical mission, and budget efforts continue to serve as a template for ongoing communication within and across the college.

One additional note from the current fiscal year is that our Early Retirement Incentive (ERIP), while dutifully attempted, yielded a modest response. Therefore, a good deal of work remains in the upcoming fiscal year for how STCC manages the carrying cost of our human capital in FY 2025 and FY 2026. A difficult conversation given obligations to collective bargaining agreements and the confidentiality of personnel actions. When

enrollment remains so much lower than years past, the college must continue reviewing personnel and programs.

## Engagement

Efforts to invest in sustaining connections throughout the greater-Springfield community continue in earnest, and this includes relationships formed and nurtured with businesses, non-profit organizations, high schools, as well as other college and university partners. Selected examples include continued partnership with New North Citizens' Council and their YouthBuild initiative; exploration of collaboration opportunities with the Hope for Youth and Families Foundation; attendance at a recent Holyoke Manufacturers Roundtable; and a novel housing partnership announced between STCC and American International College (AIC) that provides dorm access for community college students.

After terming-off in late 2022 as a member of the Board of Directors for the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, I continue to serve on five additional Boards. These include the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, Economic Development Council (EDC) of Western Mass, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, STCC Foundation, and the STCC Assistance Corporation.

My efforts also include regular attendance at the weekly Mason Square "C3" forum (Counter Criminal Continuum) which brings resources to bear on community conversations for neighborhoods that include the STCC campus. This forum has proven to be a helpful point of access for discussions that link neighborhood residents and community resources.

Other examples of broad engagement and partnership activities over the past year include:

- ❖ A coding boot camp partnership with Upright Education to provide a tailored pathway to UX/UI (user interface/user design) career opportunities in hi-tech;
- ❖ Hosting with the STCC Foundation, a 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in October of 2022, with over 200 attendees that raised over \$100,000. With lead sponsorship from Baystate Health/Health New England, the college continues celebrating our presence and purpose in the region;
- ❖ Celebrations, such as the amplification of STCC as a Hispanic-Serving Institution including a large contingency marching in the annual Springfield Puerto Rican Parade, and hosting an element of the 2022 Puerto Rican Studies Conference/Gala. In May of 2023, STCC will also once again serve as the starting point for the Springfield PRIDE parade and day of celebration, and the Joint House/Senate Committee on Ways & Means held a budget meeting on campus;
- ❖ Joining in February 2023 with two Trustees as part of the Massachusetts delegation attending the national community college legislative summit in Washington DC.

In December of 2022 an infographic was shared with Trustees that captured the results of engagement initiatives that translated to nearly \$6 million in institutional support. These awards included \$3 million by way of Congressman Richard E. Neal and a federal earmark for a Cyber Center of Excellence at Union Station; \$1 million from Massachusetts for a STEM Tech Career Academy that builds pathways with West Springfield high school and Veritas Prep Charter School; \$600,000 to continue Nursing collaboration with Westfield State; and \$180,000 as part of the Hunger-Free campus initiative that will bring food lockers to the STCC campus. The college has also received significant funding in support of Workforce Development/adult education (in excess of \$1 million).

### Strategic Planning & Operations

A significant accomplishment resulting from over a year of process and effort, on April 24<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Trustees voted to endorse our next Strategic Plan entitled **Momentum: 2023 – 2028**. After fourteen months of hard work by so many stakeholders, the mission, values, and purpose of STCC were clearly affirmed. With helpful facilitation from our consulting partner CampusWorks, we have generated a plan through the vestiges of a global pandemic, and onward with the fundamental outcome of *supporting students as they transform their lives*. The plan encompasses the dynamic views and voices of students, faculty, staff, administrators, community leaders, and Trustees.

As part of our submission to the Department and Board of Higher Education, the following tenets were highlighted as part-and-parcel of the STCC strategic plan:

- ❖ A full consideration of strategic opportunities, challenges, and choices, which contribute to a comprehensive regional and statewide outlook;
- ❖ Clear measures for evaluating progress, particularly with Student Success, including the incorporation of metrics from the Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS);
- ❖ Centering of the Equity Agenda, and fidelity to Board of Higher Education goals and strategic priorities;
- ❖ An otherwise dynamic plan that captures the unique focus and mission of the only technical community college in the Commonwealth.

With work commencing soon after institutional accreditation in 2021, Trustees can be proud of STCC for successful development of our next strategic plan, which greatly benefits an institution operating under a plan that was established in 2015 and had sunset in 2020.

Other strategic operations shared with Trustees over the year included support of equity and antiracism efforts with over \$1 million in state “SUCCESS” (Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services) funding. The college has been 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, with nearly 20 full-time employees, and 40 part-time employees, supported by SUCCESS funding.

The college has also announced the hiring of our next Vice President of Academic Affairs after a process best described as broadly representative and inclusive. Again utilizing a consultant (Academic Search) and with 43 applicants, the search committee recommended five candidates be invited for campus visits; the next STCC Chief Academic Officer is currently serving as Assistant Provost at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse NY and he begins in mid-July.

Lastly, in March of 2023, the 15 Massachusetts community college presidents jointly announced that after the conclusion of final exams for Spring Semester, the COVID-19 vaccine requirement will be lifted. Students and employees will no longer need to provide proof of vaccination as a condition of entry, participation, or enrollment. Vestiges of pandemic/COVID-19 operations remain, including how STCC students, when given choices, are still opting for online courses, which this past year represented about 50% of all STCC offerings.

### **Accreditation & Governance**

Given the healthcare array at STCC, it first bears mentioning that each year a number of programs successfully navigate individual accreditation. This year that has included Clinical Lab Science (Medical Lab Technician), as well as the Nursing program. To faculty in these programs, and with our administrators in the School of Health and Patient Simulation (SHPS), there is always a remarkable amount of effort required to ensure continued program accreditation. With Nursing, the next accreditation visit will not occur for a full eight-year, an unusual and remarkable accomplishment.

Specific to institutional accreditation, STCC was awarded continued accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) in early 2022. Notwithstanding that important outcome, NECHE issued the college a Notice of Concern specific to Standard 3/Governance. STCC then prepared for, and hosted, a focused visit evaluation team in March of 2023, with a progress report generated in advance. The college took this work seriously, and as described in the progress report, numerous steps illustrate our collective effort to ensure a “clear, functioning internal governance model” is in place. We were delighted the team noted many strengths during the visit.

Related, Trustees have been an essential contributor to the clarification of governance at STCC. In June of 2022 the Board utilized their exclusive policy authority to clarify roles by voting to establish a Shared Governance Council (SGC) after considering recommendations from a consultant, who had sought significant feedback and input from stakeholders. The specific authorization from Trustees now serves as a foundational reference not just for entities that include the All-Unit Congress (AUC), but by definition, for all STCC employees and students. This action by Trustees comports with the NECHE Standard (Governance/3) which describes “utilizing the institutional governance structure, the board establishes and maintains appropriate and productive channels of communication among its members.”

Since the launch of the SGC in September 2022, a total of four meetings (two each Semester) have been held, with recommendations considered, and changes to operational policies, including course overload and withdrawal, shared with Trustees. Importantly, given the desire for ongoing transparency, a public-facing page hosted on the STCC website includes governance reference documents, SGC meeting agendas/minutes, as well as recommendations under consideration, and decisions issued by way of memorandum.

Across the year, the fundamental consideration of governance for STCC has been the clarification of roles for and between the Board of Trustees, President, and stakeholders, including employees and students. As a public institution, the authority and structure of college governance is largely determined by Massachusetts General Laws (MGL). In MGL Part I, Title II, Chapter 15A, Section 22. As also shared with NECHE, collective bargaining agreement considerations at STCC provide important context for Standard 3/Governance, and the consultant utilized by STCC in the Spring of 2022 described how “institutions that operate under a collective bargaining agreement must clearly differentiate between the roles of the unions and shared governance. The jurisdictions can sometimes blur and create confusion.”

Notably, on December 19, 2022, a Superior Court judge granted a motion to dismiss a lawsuit (C.A. NO. 2184 CV 02814) against the college (Trustees and President), as well as the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, that was filed by one of our collective bargaining units. The Court characterized the litigation as a request by the unit for a “novel” declaration to better position itself to participate in a political process. Related, on September 21, 2022, a Step One grievance was filed by the STCC Chapter of MCCC, in response to the June vote by the BOT creating a Shared Governance Council (SGC), and a subsequent campus-wide email on August 29, 2022 announcing the launch of the SGC in Fall Semester. The grievance claims this action was taken without Association consultation. The STCC Chapter of MCCC appealed the Step One decision to Step Two of the grievance process, mediation, and that mediation remains outstanding.

Over the past year, in my role as president I have worked to facilitate discussion of context for the connection between accreditation (NECHE) and governance. For example, in addition to Shared Governance Council meetings, monthly “MACER” meetings (Management/Association Committee on Employee Relations) with the MCCC bargaining unit were held, and I have made it an important point of practice to attend and participate.

Therefore, when describing accreditation and governance work over the past year, it is important to note the variety of effort, but also that consideration by NECHE is ongoing. It is anticipated that the Commission will review status of the STCC Notice of Concern this coming Fall. The college will continue to invest in the recommendation process that is facilitated through the Shared Governance Council, and administrators will continue to support our obligations to labor agreements.

## Capital Projects

As discussed last year, an incredibly important and long-sought outcome was achieved with the awarding of \$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 sustainability for a set of health programs, is essential.

In a recent letter shared with Trustees that was sent to the DCAMM Commissioner and Secretary of Education, an alternative approach to the project was described. Given the unexpected and significant revelation related to existing facilities deficiencies, but within the confines of the project, STCC is working with DCAMM to pursue an alternative way forward. After consultation with DCAMM project management partners, and after ensuring the project remains in-scope with the DSB architect, Lavalley | Brensigner, we have determined that Building 2 is a viable project option, and will support the relocation of the entire School of Health and Patient Simulation to a single on-campus location. Building 2, at approximately 178,000 gross square feet, and with a much lower existing conditions deficiencies (\$8.87 million in contrast to \$33.4 million), provides a number of additional benefits from the repurpose of Building 2, including elevators large enough for program needs, as well as multiple floors that can readily be converted from general purpose instructional space. Additionally, locating all SHPS programs in one building eliminates the need to duplicate certain common areas in two sites, thereby managing the total square footage of the project.

Again with this viable pathway, we have worked diligently to be sure there was broad understanding by key stakeholders, and initial communication has occurred not only with Trustees, but also partners at the Technology Park, as well as with faculty and staff (the memo was shared prior to the April All-College Town Hall). A meeting with all personnel from the School of Health/Building 20 is scheduled for early May.

Specific to other capital projects, this year the college opened a new CNA Lab in Building 27 which significantly ramps-up our ability to offer entry-level training in this area of healthcare. At a cost of approximately \$1.5 million, this sets a threshold for reimagining of a building (Building 27) that will be an important resource for workforce training. Further, the combination of local (\$500,000), state (\$1.46 million) and federal (\$3 million) funding is moving forward the establishment of a Cyber Range/Security Operations Center to be located at Union Station in the City of Springfield. Part of a broad and comprehensive investment by the college in the cybersecurity ecosystem of Western Massachusetts, this is a signature initiative, and a unique position for a community college. STCC itself has navigated a number of cyber challenges over the past year, and with important leadership from our CIO/Vice President, we have substantially hardened our security and protections by investing in staff resources, including the hiring approximately one year ago of a Director of Infrastructure and Security.



As always, I look forward to working closely with STCC Trustees on developing goals for the upcoming fiscal year, and with referencing of a dynamic Strategic Plan, we have a number of key performance indicators, particularly related to student retention and completion, that will help all of us continue with the momentum building across the college.

Thank you for your support this year.