

STCC Board of Trustees
COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Monday, April 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
B19/Forum

Present:

Committee Chair Dr. William Dávila;
Trustee & Chair Mike Knapik;
Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez (virtual)

Not able to attend: Trustee Anthony Moore, and Trustee Zoya Plunkett-Brown

Also attending: Dr. John B. Cook, President; Dr. Chris Thuot, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Gary Mullett, Professor & Chair of EEOMT

- I. **Call to Order:** At 5:00 p.m., Committee Chair William Dávila called the meeting of the Committee on Internal and External Relations to order.
- II. **Roll Call:** The following Committee Members were present at Roll Call: Committee Chair William Dávila, Trustee Chair Mike Knapik, and Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez joined via zoom.
- III. **New Degree Concentration: STEM Studies – Professor Gary Mullett and Dr. Chris Thuot**

While still before the STCC Curriculum Committee, wanted to offer the Committee a preview given this was the last such meeting of the semester. Dr. Thuot shared a comprehensive executive summary for a proposed “meta major” in STEM Studies. Discussed the linkage to the STCC strategic plan, and similar to the meta major in Health Science, this degree concentration is intended to provide guided and structured pathways that lead students to exploring innovated technological skills. President Cook later clarified: there are five existing STCC degrees that can be quite foreign to students and this helps provide a point of access for internal transfer; this is also non-Calculus; and this pathway provides STEM skill-building opportunities that make a difference with careers.

Trustee Butler Perez shared that the information was a bit overwhelming. Prof. Mullett offered that this degree is needed and valuable, and covers a whole lot of interdisciplinary skills. A number of students, who may otherwise choose General Studies, now have the opportunity to explore, including his outlook on Manufacturing 4.0 (also known as the fourth Industrial Revolution). This early exploratory avenue is expected to support Computer Systems Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology, HVAC, Photonics, and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

Per questions from Trustee: there are no added cost and specific to Faculty, we have room for additional classes.

IV. Tenure Recommendations

Dr. Cook referred to the Tenure recommendations and described the shared governance process; offered support for three faculty and two staff members. This Committee then provides a recommendation to the full Board.

Board Chair, Trustee Michael Knapik moved Motion 2025-07, that the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees Committee on Internal and External Relations, pursuant to the provision of Section 22(c), Chapter 15A, moves to recommend to the Board of Trustees the approval of granting Tenure as listed in Appendix A.

The motion was seconded by Committee Chair, Trustee William Dávila and unanimously approved via roll call.

V. President's Perspective

a) NECHE 5th year Report Working Group

Included in the packet is a copy of the memo formalizing a working group to prepare the 2026 NECHE "5th Year" report. Trustee Butler Pérez: is there representation of shared governance in this group; Dr. Cook confirmed that this group, broadly representative, includes individuals who participate in, and can liaison to, shared governance bodies.

b) Blackboard (Learning Management System) Upgrade

STCC in 2026 will upgrade to Blackboard Ultra; discuss internal communication.

c) Allied Health Completion Metrics (enclosed)

Shared allied health completion metrics across credit/non-credit programs given how often this topic of workforce development continues; approximate 500 completions (CNA, Phlebotomy, Nurses, Dental, etc.) each year.

d) Federal Funding Considerations

Uncertainly remains; paying close attention to Pell grants.

e) Mass Department of Higher Education: Innovation Fund

Recent authorization for an Innovation Fund by the Board of Higher Education (BHE) for the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Discussed recent STCC involvement specific to embedded credentials for Cybersecurity.

f) Community conversations: Regional Employment Board (MassHire) & Springfield Rotary

Reviewed a number of recent examples; also shared that an upcoming 22 News/ In focus segment would focus on the impact of community colleges.

Included: joint HCC/STCC letter to members of the House/Senate Joint Committee on Ways and Means, in regards to the collaborative initiative and Gaming Commission mitigation funds.

g) Personnel Report

Not a lot of movement at this time.

VI. New Business/Old Business

Trustee Will Dávila acknowledged receipt of information submitted by the All-Unit Congress; that material included in the packet for reference.

VII. Next meeting date and time: TBD

VIII. Adjournment (Roll Call) – Committee Chair Dr. Dávila called to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m., seconded by Trustee Knapik and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by
Nanette Flores