

**New River Community College Board (Region 10)
Meeting Number Three Hundred Seventy**

MINUTES

June 2, 2025

Meeting number three hundred seventy of the New River Community College Board was held on Monday, June 2, 2025, at NRCC, Christiansburg.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Christopher (Chris) Calfee (Radford City)
Mr. Craig Chancellor (Floyd County)
Mr. Richard Chidester (Giles County)
Mr. William (Bill) Cunningham (Pulaski County)
Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Dewald-Link (Floyd County)
Dr. Richard (Dick) Harshberger (Radford City)
Ms. Jessica Littlejohn (Montgomery County)
Mr. Cameron Peel (Pulaski County)
Ms. Bobbie Potter (Montgomery County)
Mr. Jonathan Sweet (Pulaski County)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Eric Johnsen (Montgomery County)
Mr. Chris McKlarney (Giles County)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Melissa Anderson, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services
Dr. Peter Anderson, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services
Dr. Robert Brandon, President
Ms. Angie F. Covey, Executive Director NRCC Educational Foundation
Mr. Tim Jones, Director of Information Technology and Facilities Services
Dr. Deborah Kennedy, Interim Executive Director NRCC Educational Foundation
Ms. Lori Mitchell, Dean of Business and Technologies
Ms. Tammy Parks, Faculty Assembly Vice President
Ms. Tammy Smith, Interim Dean of Student Services
Ms. Kathy T. Ridpath, Administrative Assistant, President's Office
Dr. Mark C. Rowh, Vice President for Workforce Development and External Relations
Dr. Fritz M. Streff, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

GUEST PRESENT

Ms. Olivia Burton – NRCC Student

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bill Cunningham, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present and due notice had been mailed and published.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Cunningham welcomed Ms. Olivia Burton, NRCC student, and everyone in attendance. He expressed appreciation to those who attended the recent graduation ceremonies.

3. Agenda for Approval

Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: Dr. Dick Harshberger made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Cameron Peel seconded the motion.

Action: The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Minutes for Approval

The minutes of meeting number three hundred sixty-nine, held on Monday, March 3, 2025, were disseminated in the meeting packet. No questions were posed. Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion: Mr. Craig Chancellor made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion received an appropriate second.

Action: The motion was unanimously approved.

5. President's Report

Dr. Brandon introduced Olivia Burton, NRCC ACCE student. He stated that Ms. Burton will represent the students at the board meetings for the upcoming year. Ms. Burton provided highlights of her first-year experience at New River Community College. Highlights included:

- She enjoyed the different activities that were available at the college.
- She appreciated the opportunity to travel to Richmond with college leadership and other students to meet with legislators in January.
- When asked for suggestions for improvement, she commented that tutors were at times unavailable when she needed one.

Questions were posed by the board and discussed.

Dr. Brandon provided an update on the recent graduation ceremonies. He commented that the ceremonies went well. There were approximately 900 credentials earned by NRCC graduates. The number is slightly less than 2024 but an increase of approximately 20 percent from 2018.

Dr. Brandon provided an update on the “listening and learning tour” phase of his transition plan. These listening tours provided him with the opportunity to talk and listen to college faculty and staff, students, and individuals in the community. The information gathered from the tours will be used to frame the next steps and build upon the strengths of NRCC. He reported the three main themes that were derived from the conversations included: 1) a strong commitment to sharing a legacy of care; 2) a strong focus on student success and the

core mission; and 3) a desire to innovate or to tackle challenges that are faced and to find ways to use them to an advantage. He noted that the next phase will move from listening to implementation (action plan). He referred to the “First 100 Days” booklet that was previously disseminated in the packets that provides further information. On a related note, Dr. Brandon referred to the institutional priorities that were distributed in the packet. These priorities were established by the VCCS. NRCC met ten of the eleven required benchmarks. He noted that he anticipates meeting the eleventh benchmark as well. Questions were posed and discussed.

Dr. Brandon reported on several issues that are affecting higher education. They included:

- Artificial intelligence is having an impact on traditional ways of teaching, learning and assessing.
- Changes have been introduced for federal Pell grants (increasing the number of credit hours to 15 that will be required for eligibility for full Pell funding and lowering the amount of funding).
- A bill under consideration that would put an accountability piece on institutions for defaulted student loans.

He also noted that FastForward programs are experiencing funding challenges for the upcoming year and that changes to dual enrollment have been a major topic of discussion.

6. Instruction and Student Services

Industrial Advisory Committees

Proposed membership lists for all industrial advisory committees for the Career Technical Education programs (exhibit B) were distributed in the meeting packet. The committees consist of educational and industrial members. Dr. Anderson stated that these committees are vital to the work of the college. The committees formally meet with faculty in September of each year to discuss the direction of the programs and informally during the year. Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion and second to approve the Industrial Advisory Committees. Questions were posed and discussed.

Motion: Ms. Bobbie Potter made a motion to approve the advisory committees. Dr. Peggy Dewald-Link seconded the motion. The motion was amended to have reflected in the minutes that the board appreciates the work of these committee members who serve and provide ideas for their respective areas as well as providing help to students.

Action: The motion with amendment was unanimously approved.

7. Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

Dr. Fritz Streff provided a report on enrollment. There was a .07 percent increase in enrollment in FTEs for the spring semester. For the summer semester, enrollment shows an increase of 4.9 percent in FTEs and an increase of 7.4 percent in headcount over last year. At this point, the fall semester shows an enrollment decrease of 3 percent in FTEs and a 1.2 percent decrease in headcount.

8. Workforce Development and External Relations

Dr. Mark Rowh referred to a discussion that was held at the March meeting regarding the possibility of designating emeritus status to previous presidents. The two most recent retired

presidents are eligible under the state policy (10 years in the VCCS including time as president of outstanding, distinguished and honorable service). An ad hoc committee was appointed by the Chair that included Mr. Craig Chancellor and Dr. Harshberger. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Chancellor presented three motions:

Motion 1: that under the provisions of the Virginia Community College System policy, the following recommendation be made to the Chancellor of the VCCS: that Dr. Jack Lewis be honored with the designation of president emeritus. The motion was unanimously approved.

Motion 2: That under the provision of Virginia Community College System policy, the following recommendation be made to the Chancellor of the VCCS: that Dr. Patricia (Pat) Huber be honored with the designation of president emeritus. The motion was unanimously approved.

Motion 3: That the recommendation for president emeritus status to be presented separately to the Chancellor of the VCCS, and if approved by the Chancellor and the State Board for Community Colleges, that appropriate recognition be made by the college during the 2025-26 academic year in order of the individuals' tenures as president of NRCC. This motion was unanimously approved.

9. NRCC Educational Foundation

Dr. Deborah Kennedy informed the Board that she, along with Dr. Brandon and Ms. Angie Covey, attended the Virginia Community College Foundation philanthropy luncheon recently. Mr. Bud Foster and the Lunch Pail Defense program were NRCC's nominee and recipient of the philanthropy award for this past year. She also reported that she and Dr. Brandon recently attended the Christiansburg Town Council meeting and provided an ACCE update. She commented that the Town Council was very supportive of the ACCE program.

Dr. Kennedy provided an update on ACCE enrollment at this point – ACCE acceptances for new students include Floyd County-41 students; Giles County-37 students; Montgomery County-196 students; Pulaski County-125 students; and Radford City-28 students. The number of returning ACCE students include Floyd County-14 students; Giles County-24 students; Montgomery County-124 students; Pulaski County-39 students; and Radford City-9 students. On another note, Dr. Kennedy reported that the Foundation Board adopted and approved awarding of 435 scholarships for the upcoming year.

Dr. Kennedy reported that the NRCC Educational Foundation Board will be recognizing Ms. Angie Covey with a Foundation scholarship. On another note, she reported that the Foundation recently launched a first-time campaign "Sponsor a Graduate" campaign and raised over \$3,000. These funds were used to purchase caps and gowns for those graduating students who needed them. The unused funds will be put into a reserved account to be used for the same purpose next year.

Dr. Kennedy expressed appreciation to Ms. Covey for her leadership, guidance, and mentorship shown as Dr. Kennedy takes over her new role.

10. Information Technology and Facilities Services Report

Mr. Tim Jones provided updates on four projects that are happening at the college. They included:

- Teams Voice project – the groundwork began in January with a full conversion on May 1. The emergency notification system will be tested before the phone project is completed.
- Covered walkways – construction on the walkways is about 85 percent complete.
- Cameras and wireless access in the parking lots – the college is beginning to add cameras and wireless access in the parking lots around all the buildings. The completion date is set for this fall.
- Student Plaza – construction on the Student Plaza began in May. The completion date is set for October to November (depending on weather conditions).

Questions were posed and discussed.

A suggestion by the board has been made again for the potential of expanding parking lot A for additional parking. Dr. Brandon stated the college is at the end of its Master Plan cycle, so this request will be added to the new Master Plan that will be created this upcoming fiscal year.

11. President's Evaluation Information

Mr. Cunningham referred to the evaluation materials that were sent to the Chancellor (exhibit C) for the president's evaluation. No questions were posed about the evaluation materials.

12. Schedule of Meetings 2025-2026

The schedule of meetings for 2025-2026 was presented in the Board packets that were previously disseminated. Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion and second to approve the schedule.

Motion: Dr. Harshberger made a motion to approve the schedule. Mr. Jonathan Sweet seconded the motion.

Action: The motion was unanimously approved.

13. Report of the Nominations Committee

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Dr. Dewald-Link nominated Mr. Cunningham as Chair and Mr. Chris Calfee as Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. Dr. Harshberger made a motion to close the nominations.

Action: The recommendation and motions were unanimously approved.

Mr. Cunningham expressed appreciation to the Board for the reappointment as chair. Mr. Calfee also expressed appreciation to the Board for his reappointment as vice-chair.

14. Open Discussion/Q&A Session

There was no further discussion.

15. Special Recognition

Mr. Cunningham recognized Mr. Chidester as he retires from the Board after serving two terms and presented him with a recognition plaque. Mr. Chidester thanked the Board and expressed his appreciation for the years he served on the Board.

16. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the New River Community College Board is scheduled for Monday, September 8, 2025, at the Christiansburg site. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Bill Cunningham, Chair

Dr. Robert Brandon, Secretary