

MINUTES
State Board of Community Colleges
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 2, 2026

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Tom Looney, Chair	Mr. Geoffrey Lang*	Mr. Scott Ottman
Mr. John Kane, Vice Chair*	Mr. Bill McBrayer*	Ms. Sarah West*
Ms. Lisa Estep*	Dr. Dale McInnis*	Mr. Chris Lumsden*

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Monty Sullivan	Ms. Jonnell Carpenter	Mr. Jamal Njai
Dr. Kim Gold	Mr. Alex Fagg	Ms. Mary Rehbein
Ms. Amy Mast	Dr. Phillip Price	Mr. Eric Naisbitt, State Treasurer Designee*

*Attended Via Zoom
No absences.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Looney called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Amy Mast called the roll for the Executive Committee and stated there was a quorum.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ms. Jonnell Carpenter read the Ethics Awareness Statement and reminded all members of their duty to monitor conflicts of interest. No conflicts were noted.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Looney requested a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Ottman motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. West, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes – August 13, 2026

Chair Looney requested a motion to approve the minutes of August 13, 2026. Mr. McBrayer motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Ottman, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Looney – Opening Remarks

Chair Looney welcomed Dr. Monty Sullivan, Interim President, and provided remarks regarding Dr. Sullivan's initial two weeks with the North Carolina Community College System. Chair Looney noted Dr. Sullivan attended the recent Presidents Association Summer Meeting at Guilford Tech Community College and the Trustees Association Leadership Seminar in Greensboro, where he spent time with presidents and trustees from across the state. Chair Looney noted that presidents, trustees, and other attendees were lined up to meet Dr. Sullivan and offer their support and well wishes. Dr. Sullivan's wife, Ms. Kelley Sullivan, was introduced during his remarks at both meetings.

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Chair Looney provided a brief report on the Presidents Association and Trustees Association meetings, noting that he presented an overview of the presidential search process, including how the Board arrived at the selection of Dr. Sullivan. He noted that Dr. Sullivan spoke passionately about the mission of community colleges, recent labor participation data, and his vision for the System. Chair Looney reported that Dr. Sullivan has made a very strong start and that enthusiasm across the System is exceptionally high among both presidents and trustees.

Chair Looney shared that over the next 30 days, Dr. Sullivan will continue meetings with elected officials, business leaders, agency partners, presidents, and trustees. Dr. Sullivan recently met with Commerce Secretary Lee Lilley, and a meeting with the Governor is scheduled.

Chair Looney concluded by reiterating that Dr. Sullivan's first days in office have marked a very strong beginning to his tenure.

CLOSED SESSION

Chair Looney made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(1) and (a)(6) to prevent the disclosure of confidential or privileged information in accordance with N.C.G.S. 115D-27, and to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, and fitness of individual public employees and prospective public employees.

The motion to go into closed session was seconded by Mr. Ottman and the committee went into closed session at 8:30 a.m.

OPEN SESSION

The committee returned to open session at 9:04 a.m.

Chair Looney asked Dr. Sullivan to share an update with the Committee about his first two weeks as Interim President.

Dr. Sullivan described his first two weeks as an incredible beginning in his new role with the North Carolina Community College System. He shared that one of the most exciting aspects has been meeting people from across the state, hearing from college leaders about the work and priorities on their campuses and in their communities, and having the opportunity to meet students.

Dr. Sullivan referenced meeting students, presidents, and trustees at the Trustees Association Leadership Seminar in Greensboro and visiting Wake Tech Community College, where he learned from the leadership team about their transformative work using technology innovations and data as tools to build care teams and support students. He highlighted the opportunity to engage with members of the business community, including a recent event with Labor Commissioner Luke Farley honoring NASA astronaut Christina Koch. The roundtable discussion at the event focused on the role of community

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colleges in supporting the aerospace and defense industries, particularly by preparing the workforce needed to build, operate, and maintain products and systems.

Dr. Sullivan stated he has quickly developed an appreciation for North Carolina's strong understanding of and support for its community colleges. He emphasized the opportunity to leverage that support to drive enrollment growth, increase the number of graduates, expand employment opportunities, and enable more individuals to contribute to their communities.

Dr. Sullivan said his enthusiasm for the System is even greater than it was during the presidential interview process. He described North Carolina as being well positioned for significant transformation and noted that conversations with colleges have demonstrated a willingness among faculty, staff, and leaders to embrace change. He noted that people are looking for clear leadership and a clear sense of direction for the future.

Dr. Sullivan also discussed the organizational transition underway at the system office, including the importance of having the right people in the right positions to accomplish the organization's goals. He noted that the Board and system office will continue evaluating where the System is headed, what skills are needed, and how the organization can best position its people to support that direction. He emphasized that the goal is not change for the sake of change but rather change that results in more people being educated and skilled, ultimately leading to more people entering the workforce. He stated that this principle was central to his vision during the interview process and has become even more evident during his first two weeks in the position.

Dr. Sullivan expressed his appreciation to the Board for its support and noted that he has repeatedly heard from local trustees and college presidents about the Board's relationships with the colleges and the commitment and care Board members demonstrate for the community college mission. He emphasized that the Board plays a critical role in supporting local presidents and colleges and that its leadership is highly valued across the state.

Dr. Sullivan also expressed his excitement about becoming more familiar with North Carolina and its communities. He said he intends to spend time traveling throughout the state, learning more about its people and communities, and building relationships across the System.

In response to a question about what had surprised him most during his first week, Dr. Sullivan said he had not fully anticipated the level of commitment and support demonstrated by local trustees. He described the local trustees as an "army of supporters" for the community college mission. Dr. Sullivan noted that approximately 350 local trustees had given three days of their time to travel to Greensboro and participate in discussions about the mission of the state's community colleges. He said their willingness to participate actively in the discussions demonstrated the strength of the System's network of supporters and represented a significant resource for accomplishing the work ahead.

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Chair Looney noted Dr. Sullivan's national experience and relationships with major businesses and observed that several major North Carolina employers had recently announced a significant financial commitment to community colleges. He emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with major businesses across the state and ensuring that North Carolina's community colleges benefit from such investments.

Dr. Sullivan agreed that the System should seek to build stronger relationships with major employers and expressed confidence that those relationships would continue to develop in partnership with the Board and other state leaders.

Regional Convenings Update

Mr. Alex Fagg provided an update on plans for Dr. Sullivan to participate in regional convenings across the state. He explained that the regional convenings will take a multi-pronged approach, including travel throughout North Carolina to increase visibility and strengthen relationships.

The regional convenings are expected to include community college representatives, college board chairs, business leaders, and other partners from each area. The purpose will be to hear directly from stakeholders, gather feedback, strengthen relationships, and learn more about workforce priorities in communities across the state.

Mr. Fagg reported that planning for the convenings is already underway, with an anticipated timeframe of approximately 30 to 90 days. The meetings will be strategically distributed across the state and hosted at community college campuses.

He noted that colleges across the state have expressed significant interest in participating and hosting Dr. Sullivan and have demonstrated strong enthusiasm for supporting the effort. Mr. Fagg reported that discussions with college leaders at the recent Trustees Association meeting were very positive and that there is broad support for the regional convenings.

New Business

None

Adjournment

Chair Looney asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lang made the motion, seconded by Ottman and approved unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Rehbein
Recording Secretary