

# VANGUARD

Official Newsletter of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College  
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## NCC'S SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE

THE BUCK STOPS ON THE DESKS OF  
THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT AND THE  
MEMBERS OF NCC'S BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

FROM THE  
PRESIDENT'S DESK

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*WE CARE  
About Our Students,  
Our Members,  
Our College!*





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## From the President's Desk



Stefan Krompier

# NCC's Very Survival Is At Stake!

Enrollment Drops Another **18.99%** in Paid Credits and **16.05%** in Heads!

## The Buck Stops on the Desks of the College President and the Members of NCC's Board of Trustees

**What they must do:**

### 1. Reposition and Rebrand Nassau Community College

Over the past ten years, NCC's ability to attract new students has declined precipitously. Back in 2013, 60% of the NCC student body's primary objective was to transfer to a four-year college. That percentage dropped to 30% in 2019. The loss of transfer-minded students has negatively impacted enrollment and can be attributed to the perception that NCC is a college of last resort for low achieving students; that it is merely an extension of high school, a thirteenth grade.

The college of last resort/thirteenth grade perception attached to our brand - Nassau Community College - cannot be mitigated or dispelled because it is deeply ingrained into the minds of prospective students, their parents, Nassau County District Superintendents and high school guidance counselors. The goal is a new brand, possibly "SUNY" Nassau, that repositions NCC as the college of choice for transfer-minded students as well the college of choice for students whose goal is to secure well-paying entry level positions upon leaving the college.

**A formal marketing plan that meets industry standards must be created and implemented**

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## From the President's Desk

**for the Fall 2021 semester that rebrands and repositions NCC.**

Some may think that rebranding and repositioning are the same thing. They are NOT. Rebranding is what NCC does from time to time – we update our logo, come up with a new tag line or create new signage. Those actions do NOT fundamentally change what prospective students, parents, high schools and the community think about us, though.

We need to REPOSITION our College. I read an interesting article recently which described the difference between rebranding and repositioning.

Rebranding is like “changing the wrapping of a gift.”

Repositioning is about “ensuring that the gift and the wrapping are new and that they appeal to the needs of the recipient.”

So, before we spend more money on things like logos, tag lines, the look of our website, and campus signage, we need to:

- Change the thirteenth-grade perception that students, parents, and educators have of NCC
- Add to our course and program offerings to meet the needs of the community

Here are the reasons we need to reposition our brand:

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## From the President's Desk

The Competitive Environment is changing around us... Our target market is declining. There are fewer high school students – and more colleges competing for those students. We have more competition than ever before from the likes of Farmingdale College (now rebranded as SUNY Farmingdale,) SUNY Old Westbury, SUNY Suffolk (formally branded as Suffolk CC,) as well as the private colleges such as Molloy, Adelphi, LIU Post (previously branded as CW Post College,) and Hofstra University.

We Do Not “Stand” for Quality.... Price is our main selling point. For many, our low price is perceived as an indicator of low quality. The unique, valuable way we position our students for personal and professional growth and success needs to resonate in the minds of prospective students, their parents, and the community at large when they see/hear our brand.

New Players, New Programs, and New Positioning... are emerging on the educational landscape. This is especially true when it comes to the creation and promotion of online courses and online programs. Currently, we are very good, and getting better each day at teaching via the remote and online modalities. NCC must capitalize on this strength.

We need to develop a formal marketing plan to rebrand AND reposition the College. It must encompass the following:

- The targeting of transfer-minded students
  - o Make a special effort to reach the Nassau County School Districts where we lost the greatest number of students, particularly transfer-minded students, over the past seven years with messages that will bring them back to NCC.\* SUNY Suffolk has successfully mitigated their enrollment decline with their college sweatshirt advertising campaign that has emphasized the competitive/quality colleges that their students have transferred to and graduated from. NCC must do the same, but better

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## From the President's Desk

- Promotes the many benefits of NCC's transfer programs
  - Feature and dramatize the career and personal successes that NCC transfer students have achieved
  - Emphasize the high-quality competitive colleges that NCC students have transferred to
  - Extoll the many benefits of NCC's Honors that lead to quality transfers to competitive four year colleges
- Targets students who seek interesting well-paying jobs/careers directly after leaving NCC.
    - Features the career, personal and financial successes that NCC terminal degree and certificate seekers have achieved
      - Dramatizations of the financial and personal successes of our graduates
      - Highlights the companies who recruit and prize our students as exemplary employees who are highly promotable
      - Emphasize our award-winning faculty and connect the courses they teach with the careers they have (adjuncts) or have had (full-timers)

NCC remains a hidden gem for degree seekers as well as job seekers. For over ten years, members of Academic Departments would argue that NCC has failed to promote their programs and innovative offerings. Time will not permit for me to share the vast examples; I will simply point out a few....

- Our firefighters play a critical role in Nassau County. Our Fire Science program prepares students for employment in the fire service field and yet is without the robust marketing

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## From the President's Desk

to target this population. Furthermore, The Emergency Management program prepares students for transfer to a four-year degree program or an opportunity for employment in the Emergency Management field.

- o Our Art Department offers a Graphic Design and Digital Media degree. Our Music Department has successfully offered Studio Recording Technology. The Criminal Justice Department provides students with a broad liberal arts education coupled with training and internships in the criminal justice system with those within the profession. The Communications Department teaches media courses in the campus TV Studio and Radio Production Lab. Many of our alumni are currently featured on News 12. However, the campus TV studio remains unknown to the public.
- o Our Hospitality & Business Department prepares students for professional and middle management positions in various areas of the hotel industry. Restaurant Management courses help students find employment as food and beverage managers, food service directors, and banquet and catering managers. This is another missed opportunity to promote our institution!
- o Finally, our Honors program can attract more gifted students to the College- all courses are denoted as Honors courses on the official transcript. Students can earn the official Honors designation when they graduate- all at a low cost.

These are all Missed opportunities!!!

The marketing plan will continue to promote NCC's remarkably low tuition, flexible scheduling, late start opportunities, online and remote learning opportunities, academic support services, etc.

If you have any doubt that we need to change our promotional strategy, you need only to have looked at this past Sunday's *Newsday* College Open House supplement. Toward the front of the

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## From the President's Desk

supplement, under the listing of Open Houses for all colleges, our Virtual Open House was NOT EVEN MENTIONED! Only Virtual Daily Open Info sessions were mentioned.

Our ad, which was toward the BACK of the supplement, did NOT take the opportunity to mention our October Late Start classes. It featured a young man with a picture over his head – an ad that makes many of us cringe every time we see it and recall the critique one of our NCC graphic arts faculty members offered at a recent Academic Senate meeting.

The ad promoted our Virtual Open House events across three days, implying all programs are represented on each day. Not true – only some programs are featured each day, and they were not logically grouped together – if we cannot feature all programs on all days, we should feature one day for Liberal Arts, one for Business/Career programs, and one day for Healthcare. Plus, if you go to the NCC website Open House link, one of the pictures is the Bookstore and another is Leo the Lion.

**A SEARCH FOR A NEW ADVERTISING AGENCY THAT SPECIALIZES IN RE-BRANDING AND REPOSITIONING MUST START IMMEDIATELY. THE ADVERTISING AGENCY WE CURRENTLY USE HAS BROUGHT US TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY. WE MUST CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AND MODERNIZE OUR WEBSITE TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE. WE WERE ON THAT PATH SEVERAL YEARS AGO WITH THE STUDIO 4 AGENCY; WE NEED TO GET BACK ON THAT PATH.**

**THIS PLAN MUST BE FULLY FUNDED BY THE BOT. UNDERSTANDING THAT EVERY STUDENT ATTRACTED TO NCC WHO STAYS FOR ONE YEAR AS A FULL TIME STUDENT INCREASES REVENUE BY ABOUT \$8,500 JUSTIFIES THIS FUNDING.**

MORE IMPORTANTLY, UNDERSTANDING THAT THE LOSS OF REVENUE BECAUSE OF CURRENT AND PAST ENROLLMENT DECLINES COUPLED WITH THE EXPECTED

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## From the President's Desk

LOSS OF STATE PROVIDED FUNDS AND FIXED COUNTY FUNDING WILL REQUIRE A LARGE INCREASE IN STUDENT TUITION AND FEES SPEAKS TO THE NEED FOR A FULLY FUNDED, FORMAL MARKETING PLAN THAT MEETS INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

### 2. Appoint a Liaison with School District Superintendents

**Critical to the success of a REPOSITIONING campaign is the ability to directly reach the highest levels of our feeder institutions, our high schools.**

NCC is seen in a much less than favorable light by Nassau County School District Superintendents. Now more than ever, most if not all high school guidance counselors only recommend NCC to their graduating seniors who cannot afford higher tuition colleges and/or who have faltered academically during their four or five years of high school.

Three plus years ago, a proposal was brought to NCC's Board of Trustees to put in place an individual who would serve as a liaison with the Nassau County District Superintendents for the purpose of determining what the college needed to do to bring more of their graduating seniors to our college. This proposal was rejected. Recently that proposal has been revived. To succeed, the right person must be put in place to serve in this liaison position.

This person must be an individual who has successfully worked with the Nassau County District Superintendents in the past, an individual who has their trust, a person who understands what NCC does to make and enhance the professional and personal lives of the students who come here to learn and discover themselves, an individual who knows college policies and our governance structure. This person must know and understand the value that the talented caring classroom and non-classroom faculty, our support staff, CSEA workers and administrators bring to NCC each day. Most importantly the individual chosen as liaison to the School District Superintendents must own this effort and have nothing else on his or her plate other than this job.

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## From the President's Desk

### 3. Eliminate the current opt-out textbook plan or replace it with a workable opt-in plan.

The current opt-out textbook plan marked with massive student and faculty dissatisfaction and disdain for this program that has eroded NCC's already fragile reputation has:

- Cheaped the NCC Brand and has caused students to:
  - Purchase textbooks from outside sources that they were entitled to under the program so they could be prepared for class on day one. Some students made purchases from outside sources weeks into the semester.
  - Go without textbooks for a period of five weeks and counting into the semester
  - Be unable to opt out of the program because the opt-out process was poorly communicated or they did not understand it
  - Be charged for books they have not received. These students expect a refund
  - Increase their student debt
  - Force some students to pay more for textbooks than they would have if they purchased them on their own
  - Believe that this program is simply a cash grab for the college
  - Disparage NCC on social media and through word-of-mouth communication
- Resulted in faculty and staff to:
  - Question the college's decision making process

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## From the President's Desk

- o Lose confidence in college administrators ability to do their jobs
- o Ask why textbook supplier Follett, whose poor track record for supplying textbooks in a timely manner prior to the opt-out textbook program, were trusted to put textbooks in students hands on or before the first day of school.
- o Believe that the opt-out text book program is a cash grab for the college and Follett

### The opt-in Alternative

There is a growing sentiment on campus that **an opt-in alternative** will not work for the following reasons: the book publishers' inability to deliver the needed quantity of books to students by the first day of school, late orders for textbooks for adjunct taught courses because adjuncts receive their assignments a week, sometimes the day before classes start, the all in or all out requirement of the plan that confuses students as to what is more cost effective to them, the inability of students to communicate with NCC bookstore personnel; currently, phone calls to the NCC are redirected to a corporate phone bank, the increased cost of an opt-in program to students, and the stocking/availability problems that existed with the Follett operated prior to the opt-out textbook program.

Here's my RECOMMENDATION...

1. IMMEDIATELY discontinue the Opt-Out program. Do NOT even consider changing it to Opt-In.
2. Put the Bookstore in the CCB Multipurpose Room for the distribution of textbooks for the Winterim and Spring semesters, so that students can wait "inside" during inclement weather and socially distance.
3. Require Follett to staff the Bookstore, the phones, and email to provide instant responses.

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## From the President's Desk

4. Require Follett to develop an APP so students can remain in their cars and have their books brought to a designated parking slot. Fast food establishments and retailers do this – Follett just needs to follow their lead.
5. Order books in the format that FACULTY requested. Do not insist on digital for all students. It does not work for all students and all courses.
6. Rebid the bookstore contract, with FACULTY involvement.

We know this semester's opt-out textbook program was an EPIC failure. We know there have been problems every semester with Follett since they came to campus in the Summer of 2017. Each semester they tell us they are going to "fix" things and promise us "great new features."

It is time to MOVE ON. It is time to make decisions. Right here, right now, cancel the OPT-OUT program, insist on a higher level of performance from Follett and be ready to bring in a company who can deliver on their promises if Follett continues to underperform. We owe it to our students, parents, and faculty.

**This "buck" stops on the desks of the College President and NCC's Board of Trustees. Plans that set reasonable relevant goals, workable strategies and performance benchmarks that feature timelines and deadlines that rebrands and repositions NCC, reconnects NCC with Nassau County School District Superintendents, and puts an end to the Opt-Out Textbook Program Debacle must be created and implemented now. NCC's very survival depends on it.**

Stefan Krompier  
 President  
 Adjunct Faculty Association