



SCCC continues plans for new building; welcomes new trustee

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NEWTON — A \$5.8 million state grant — which is Sussex County Community College's share of a \$750 million bond question approved by New Jersey voters last year — may soon go toward constructing a new academic building.

The college's Board of Trustees gave the OK on Monday evening for the administration to continue with an application for the state's Go Bond Grant, which is aimed at funding higher education projects. If the grant is approved by the state, a four-floor academic building with 12 classrooms could be coming as early as 2014, according to Vice President of Finance and Operations Frank Nocella.

Chairman Glenn Gavan said that the new academic building will provide more "state-of-the-art classrooms" and is a "creative way to bring new students in." The building will provide space for larger classes of up to 48 students, if needed, and will allow for greater partnerships with four-year schools holding courses on campus.

In August 2012, Gov. Chris Christie signed legislation placing a \$750 million General Obligation (Go) construction bond question on the ballot. New Jersey voters approved the bond authorization in November, freeing up the money for higher education institutions.

SCCC's portion of the money must be additionally funded by a quarter match from Sussex County.

A first round of funding has already begun to finance projects around the state. SCCC has been preparing its application for a second round of funding by having CP Engineers update its master plan to include the new academic building and other long-term projects. The timeframe for the second round has not been announced yet.

The academic building, as well as another planned building, are slated to be built in an L-shape that would construct a grassy courtyard in the middle of several of the existing buildings and next to the main campus building. This would give students a main area for socialization.

Also at Monday's meeting, the Board of Trustees reapproved the members' committees for the upcoming year. Board meetings have been moved to the last Mondays of the month at 5 p.m.

New trustee Rachel Geraci joined the board for her first meeting, while

reappointed Bernard J. Andrews was back. The two were approved in September by the Sussex County freeholders for a term from Nov. 1 to Oct. 31, 2017.

Geraci is replacing Jacob Smith, who completed his second and final four-year term on Oct. 31. The freeholders have set a term limit where trustees can serve only two, four-year terms.

Gavan said that with the new year coming, the board has to set goals, but that the main goal should be to find creative ways to expand declining enrollment numbers. He said that the board also needs to come up with ways to ensure that the students leaving SCCC have a strong foundation to use their two-year degree.