



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

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MEMORANDUM

June 2, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. John B. King Jr., Chancellor

SUBJECT: Appointment of Ken Knelly as President of Clinton Community College

Action Requested

The proposed resolution approves the appointment of Ken Knelly as President of Clinton Community College.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Resolved that the appointment of Ken Knelly as President of Clinton Community College, by the Clinton Community College Board of Trustees, at a salary of \$175,000, effective immediately, be, and hereby is, approved.

Background

Ken Knelly currently serves as Acting President of Clinton Community College, where he has successfully led the institution through a period of significant transition and renewal. He was appointed by Chancellor King as Special Advisor to SUNY for the Clinton Community College Transition since February 2024, named Administrator-in-Charge by the Clinton Community College local board of trustees in May 2024, and appointed Acting President by the SUNY Board of Trustees in June 2025.

Acting President Knelly assumed leadership amid serious institutional challenges, including probationary accreditation status with the Middle States

Commission on Higher Education and substantial operational and financial pressures. Under his leadership, the college achieved successful Middle States monitoring reports and site visits, and secured reaccreditation through 2029-2030. Acting President Knelly has overseen two consecutive annual increases in enrollment and has restructured institutional processes, aligned personnel, and advanced a strategic vision for student success. Most notably, the college has successfully transitioned to a new home on SUNY Plattsburgh's campus, which has improved the student experience and is helping Clinton Community College achieve financial sustainability.

Acting President Knelly began his career at SUNY Plattsburgh in 2014, ultimately serving as chief of staff under President Alexander Enyedi. At SUNY Plattsburgh, he led the university's external relations, served as a member of the president's leadership team and co-chaired the university's self-study committee for its reaffirmation of accreditation by Middle States in 2020-2022. Acting President Knelly's experience includes more than a dozen years as a print journalist as a reporter, editor and newsroom leader. Locally, he is the immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Plattsburgh and led a grassroots effort to bring high school girls lacrosse to Clinton County.

Acting President Knelly earned an A.A. in Business from Essex Community College in Rossville, Md., a B.B.A. in Finance from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and a M.A. in Public Policy from West Virginia University. He is a native of Baltimore, Md.

A copy of Ken Knelly's CV is attached.

KEN KNELLY

OVERVIEW

- Depth of leadership experience with clear, consistent results.
- Track record of success in change and operations management.
- Excellent communicator focused on clarity, transparency, and understanding.
- Strong background leading diverse teams and projects.

EXPERIENCE

Clinton Community College; Plattsburgh, NY

Acting President; June 2025-Present

Administrator in Charge; May 2024-June 2025

Special Advisor to SUNY for Clinton Community College Transition; February 2024-May 2024

- Inherited leadership of a community college placed on Middle States accreditation warning (June 2022) and then probation (June 2024). College faced closure.
- Developed plans for relocation of campus to nearby four-year college, worked with local hospital to create space for nursing/EMS program, and carved pathways to keep advanced manufacturing institute under college operations to ensure future program additions, long-term community impact and financial sustainability.
- Led teams creating increases in enrollment in two consecutive years, completion of successful monitoring report, and peer-review site visits that resulted in reaccreditation through 2029-2030.
- Driving continued efficiencies, adjusting processes and engaging with opportunities for continued growth.
- Working through myriad matters following reaccreditation and moving the college toward long term success. These range from new funding pathways and alternative revenue streams to building political relationships and strategic business partnerships. Each is necessary as the community college business model in New York state requires these additions to ensure viability.
- Oversaw the process of moving campus and resulting MOAs.
- Serve as prime internal and external communicator on aspects of college turnaround, successes, and new locations.

State University of New York at Plattsburgh; Plattsburgh, NY

Chief of Staff, Director of Strategic Initiatives; 2021-2024

Executive Director, Communications & Public Affairs; 2017-2020

Executive Director, Marketing & Communications; 2014-2017

- Led as senior advisor to the president, directing and navigating cabinet agendas and priorities, including Middle States self-study co-chair.
- Advanced president and executive team among campus constituents, elected officials and appointed board council members, and others, serving as point person for administration.
- Managed confidential correspondence, coordinating major campus events and responses on complex issues.
- Prior to COS role, handled same responsibilities in lieu of chief of staff, who retired in 2018. Named to position formally in 2021 after a year with the new president.
- Previously led integrated marketing and communications unit focused on institutional marketing, advancement and alumni communications, public relations and recruitment, including aspects of web, social, videos, and print.

Clarks Summit University; Clarks Summit, PA

Executive Director, Communications & Marketing; 2007-2014

- Executive role covering all communications -- from websites and emerging media to news, events, advancement and crisis matters.
- Advisor to president on matters of institutional importance, including public-facing issues and needs.
- Navigated across teams and platforms to create unified brand strategies, directed staff in areas from design and marketing to mailroom and copy services.
- Community outreach and service included teaching communications seminars on writing and interviewing.

The State newspaper; Columbia, SC

Senior Editor, Business & Government; 2005-2007

Staff Writer, Assistant Business Editor; 2000-2003

- Led business and government teams, coaching a staff of 16 editors and writers.
- Developed new publications, such as targeted business journals and innovative coverage of state government.
- Covered S.C. General Assembly, higher education, public schools, and statewide early childhood programs, developing beats and cultivating sources.

The Times-Tribune; Scranton, PA

Metro Editor, Business Editor; 2003-2005

- Top local news position at Northeastern Pennsylvania's largest media operation, with line responsibility for team of 33 editors and writers.
- Won national award for excellence from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers.
- Coached and mentored journalists on projects, planning, and execution, collaborating with photo, design, media partners, and others.

EDUCATION

Ed.D. (in process), Community College Leadership

Iowa State University; Ames, IA

- Enrolled in a terminal degree program focused on community college leadership.
- Anticipated graduation spring 2028.
- Hybrid program combines online learning through a cohort model with two trips each semester for in-person sessions over a Friday-Saturday.
- Anticipated dissertation focus on developing a sustainable fourth-stream of funding beyond state, county and student revenue lines.

M.A., Public Policy

West Virginia University; Morgantown, WV

- Earned advanced degree focused on economics and political science, applying thoroughbred racing regulation and pivoting to early-career jobs in thoroughbred horse racing industry.
- Also completed one year of study at WVU College of Law.

B.B.A., Finance

University of Minnesota; Duluth, MN

- Focused studies on areas of finance, marketing, political science, and psychology, holding jobs at the campus information desk and as a tour guide.

A.A., Business Administration

Essex Community College; Rossville, MD

- Earned associate's degree as commuter student while working full-time.

H.S. diploma

Towson High School; Towson, MD

- Attended public schools and grew up in Baltimore County, MD.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Rotary Club of Plattsburgh; Plattsburgh, NY

- Serve as past president and formerly led board of directors of the region's largest civic organization.
- Active in club with a focus on providing humanitarian service and advancing goodwill locally.
- Assist in fundraising, volunteer needs, outreach and more.

Plattsburgh High School and Plattsburgh Lacrosse Club; Plattsburgh, NY

Founding co-coach and former club-level girls program coordinator

- Helped lead effort to start the first area girls high school lacrosse team. The first season in 2020 was cancelled due to COVID. The first year of play underway in April 2021. Coached through 2022 and assisted in 2023.
- Ran and helped build the Plattsburgh Lacrosse Club's girls program, which last year had teams at the 16U and 12U levels.
- Coordinated matters of scheduling, payments, coaching, practices and more.