

## NEOA Board Meeting - January 10, 2025

*In-Person & via Zoom*

### **Call to Order at 9:05 AM**

- **Roll Call at 9:06 AM**

**Quorum Established at 9:10AM** – see end of minutes or attendance spreadsheet for details

**Approval of Agenda** - President Yara Zoccorato presented the agenda.

**Action:** To approve the agenda

**Motion by:** Sarah

**Second by:** Kevin

**Motion carries, unanimously**

**Secretary Report** - Submitted by Yara on behalf of Julie Coon who was not in attendance

**Action:** To approve November 2024 minutes

**Motion by:** Melissa

**Second by:** Bryan

**Motion carries, unanimously with no abstentions**

**Treasurer's Report - Matt (Beagle) Bourgault** reported out.

- Beagle shared that the payment for general liability insurance has expired. The board needs to purchase Errors and Omissions insurance before they allow us to purchase the liability insurance. This will cost \$2,050. Since it is not in the budget, it needed to be voted on.

**Action:** To add \$2,050 to the budget to pay for insurance.

**Motion:** Yara

**Second:** Stephanie

**Motion carries, unanimously**

- See the Treasurer's Report for more details about the budget.

**Finance Committee Report - Chris Lee** not in attendance (AML I conflict)

- See the Finance Chair board report.

**Past President's Report - Lindsay Carpenter**

- Attended the COE board meeting last month.
- Worked with Sarah on advocacy planning for the year.
- Worked with Linda and Rick on the SWOT analysis plan for this board meeting.
- Continued Fair Share work. Currently at 30% of NEOA's goal.
- In the process of creating an election committee.
- See Lindsay's board report for more information.

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### **President's Report - Yara Zoccarato** reported out.

- Attended the CAEOPP conference
- Did a walk through of the hotel in Mystic, CT for next year's conference.
- Dr. Mitchem confirmed that he will be attending the NEOA conference. Still waiting on Gaby Watts.
- See Yara's board report for more information.

### **President-Elect's Report - Arielle Derival-Joseph** was not in attendance.

- On behalf of Arielle, Yara requested the following action that was discussed yesterday as Arielle continues to plan for the Past Presidents' dinner:

**Action:** To increase the Past President's dinner budget by \$500.

**Motion:** Sarah

**Second:** Stephanie

**Discussion:** Linda and Stephanie gave an overview about the PP dinner, why we honor past presidents, and the advantages of holding them. Linda reminded the board that the rationale for the cost does come up and we should be prepared to answer that. Sarah shared the importance of reconnecting with past presidents and leveraging their fundraising and political opportunities. Marion Belgrave-Howard may be able to be in attendance.

**Motion carries, unanimously with no abstentions**

In other news:

- Hotels for 2025-6 board meetings are confirmed.
- Waiting for a contract from Mystic Marriott to confirm the site for the 2026 conference.
- See Arielle's board report.

### **Vice-President's Report - Heather Bacchiocci** reported out.

- Making progress on all aspects of the conference planning.
- Still need to finalize the schedule.
- Waiting to hear back from Donna Thompson about the pre-conference. Discussed whether to charge for the event. Heather is proposing to only charge non-members and continue to offer grant writing training for free to members.

**Action:** Vote to offer the pre-con for free to members.

**Motion:** Michele F.

**Second:** Bryan

**Motion carries, unanimously**

- Yara asked if we should consider offering an innovative pre-con that we can charge for. Linda asked what problem we are trying to solve by doing that before the conference. Bryan pointed out that timing is an issue and we should continue to plan PD at other times throughout the year. Randy reminded us of the conference several years ago

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when Carol Gillingham was the speaker and we brought in a lot of money due to her reputation. It was suggested that we consider that in the future.

**Action:** To approve charging the following fee structure for non-members for the pre-con: Early Bird: \$100, Regular: \$110, Late: \$ 120

**Motion: Stephanie**

**Second: Rick**

**Motion carries, unanimously**

- See Heather's board report for additional details.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Alumni - Randy Schroeder** reported out.

- An Advocacy Alumni Forum (webinar), will take place on Jan. 29th at 6:00pm.
- Working with Lindsay on Alumni Fair Share.
- Working with Adam on getting alums to read NEOA Achievers applications.
- See the Alumni Committee's board report.

**Advocacy - Sarah Morrell** reported out.

- Met with Lindsay and Yara to plan and hold the Advocacy Forum that took place in December. Over 35 people attended. Sarah reported that there was great conversation and questions.
- The committee plans to have monthly advocacy meetings with state leaders. All are invited.
- NEOA State Initiative materials have been online since November but no one has applied yet. She encouraged EACH state to apply and gave an overview on the intent, process, and how funds, (\$3,000 total), can be used. Each state usually receives about \$500 each and can be used for developing the state fact book, creating advocacy events and strategies to reach out to elected officials. Proposals are brief and easy to fill out. Mona inquired whether state initiative funding could be used to cover the cost of bringing alums to DC for the Policy seminar. Sara said it was an option depending on the proposal, but it is not a traditional use of the funds. Given how important this year is, more flexibility may be extended.
- Attends the NE Council meetings. Announced that there is a post election outlook Zoom discussion on Jan. 14th and will send out info about it to the board.
- Sarah discussed the Policy Seminar and how to prepare each state's team.
- We were reminded that the outlook in New England is different from most other regions around the country and as a result, our political leverage is different. As a result, we should be sensitive to the challenges that many other states face when talking with our colleagues in DC.
- Yara shared that COE's goal is to ask congressional delegates to prioritize support for TRIO. She warned that this may be the most difficult Policy Seminar to date.

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- “Rapid Tips Exercise”: Sarah led the board through a round-table share where each board member provided tips for a successful Policy Seminar experience. They included:
  - Give your team plenty of time for travel and wear comfortable shoes.
  - Be adaptable to meeting with congressional staff in the hallway instead of the office.
  - Don't be offended if you can't meet with your member. Staffers are important and influential.
  - Focus on the alums and make sure they get equal time.
  - Don't let the stress get in the way. Remember to eat and hydrate.
  - It's a professional event, but have fun.
  - Operate from a team mentality.
  - Take pictures.
  - Share contact info with staff.
  - Build in time to walk around and see DC highlights (museums are free).
  - Several other suggestions were mentioned by board members: ask how we can help them, be aware of the current climate and what issues to stay away from. Planning beforehand is essential. Keep Yara in the loop as she has to report out for the region.
- Rick and others shared strategies for a successful experience.
- Linda reminded the board that we are a region known for consistently bringing a fair amount of alums each year and hopes that will continue. It is part of the strategic plan.. Mona encouraged us to make sure someone on the team is in charge of the alums - from travel to free time to preparing to speak at the meetings.
- Ray reminded us about the Political fundraisers and how to address them.
- COE sends a template out for your state data book. This will be shared with each state.
- The Advocacy committee is happy to convene a Zoom meeting for all who are attending Policy.
- Sarah gave an overview on reimbursement. NEOA provides \$4,000 per state and states determine how funds get reimbursed. The Treasurer will send reimbursements to the state treasurer or the person who submitted. He reminded us to be detailed as to what the expenses are for. NEOA WILL NOT disburse funds to states that are not yet members. Other resources were mentioned as well.
- See the Advocacy Committee's board report.

### **Bylaws - Brian Post** was not present.

- The following are the recommended membership changes for the by-laws that will be voted on at the annual NEOA business meeting:

“(a) ~~Active~~ Professional Membership shall be ~~limited~~ **available** to those persons ~~actively engaged~~ **currently or formerly employed** in the administration or general operation, inclusive of instructional staff, of educational opportunity programs located in the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Maine, Vermont,



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and New Hampshire or those who are active professional members of one of the regional state associations (CT) CAEOP, (MA) MEOA, (ME) MEEOA, (NH) NHEOA, (RI) RIEOA, and (VT) VEOP.

~~Persons qualifying for active Professional Membership should spend a significant and continuing portion of their full-time professional activities involved in the concerns of the students referred to in Article II.~~

- See Bylaws Committee's Report.

----- **Break (10:41 AM - 10:58 AM)** -----

**Corporate Development - Ramon Gonzalez** reported out.

- Two sponsors - Compansol/Bluman and Aspire Inst. have committed \$2,000 each. Student Success is promising \$1,000. Ray reminded the board that these sponsors have been offered to present a workshop at the conference. He met with Invista about a sponsorship and is waiting to hear back. Ray expects more sponsors to sign up soon.
- See Development Committee's board report.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Mona Savastano** reported out.

- Mona reported that Stephanie and Milary have offered to join the DEI committee, and Ariel will remain involved.
- Mona took an Implicit Bias test through Harvard which is free and asked the board if they were willing to participate. It takes 10-15 minutes. Board members are willing. Mona will share with the board soon.
- Mona mentioned that Castro may be coming back to work with us which took some of us by surprise. Yara shared that we need to define our DEI goals before entertaining any future DEI work and asked the committee to come up with goals and plans for moving forward.
  - Linda recommended looking at the results of the survey completed by board members last year which we still have not seen (this was a pre-survey taken before Castro worked with us as a board).
  - Lindsay suggested sharing the survey with the committee first and letting them decide how to address the issue of sharing with the rest of the board.
  - Since there are no identifiers, some on the board do not understand the concern about confidentiality that took place at the last meeting. Unfortunately, some who expressed these concerns were not present at the meeting. In addition, those who were not on the board had concerns about the survey being "stale" since it took place last year and not all current board members were involved. Linda expressed that those who took the time to complete the survey should be given the opportunity to review the results and it may serve as a baseline for the

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new strategic plan and help the DEI committee formulate goals moving forward, since about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the board from last year are still serving.

- After more discussion, most members felt comfortable having board members see the survey.

**Action:** Vote on releasing the results of the pre-survey from Castro Collaborative to the board.

**Motion:** Lindsay

**Second:** Bryan

**Motion carries with Josh, Dylan and Randy abstaining**

- See the DEI Committee's board report.

**Historian - Reggie Jean** was not present. No report in Box.

**Membership - Taryn Tompkins** was not present.

- Added 20 paid members. Last January we were at 100 paid members, and 17 unpaid. As of December 20, 2024 - Unpaid: 32 and current Paid members: **176** (61% of our goal).
- Held a Membership Committee meeting and Stephanie Cruz has joined.
- Reached out to Casey for last year's conference registration list and sent out 133 emails to people who attended the conference but did not sign up for membership.
- Stephanie Cruz is creating a list of all TRIO programs in New England for phase 2 of the membership outreach plan. Taryn is compiling a list of GEAR UP programs in New England to support future outreach efforts.
- Rachelle is looking into ways to work with Casey to explore methods for identifying unpaid members while accounting for duplicates or outdated data.
- See Membership Committee's report.

**NEOA Achievers - Adam Keese & Rachel Casey** reported out.

- The committee reports that they have received 2 applications for each award, which is very low. Board members were encouraged to get their applications in as the deadline is Feb. 1st.
- It was asked if we could renominate a nominee from last year. The chairs felt it was fine if both the nominator and nominee agreed. Adam and Rachel will create a "one year look back" policy.
- The readers include 10 individuals, geographically distributed if possible.
- If board members have suggested readers for this year and the committee has not heard from them, Adam and Rachel will follow up soon.
- See the NEOA Achievers Committee's board report.

**Professional Development - Bryan** reported out on behalf of **Lynn Ploof-Davis** who was not present (state conference conflict).

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- A virtual mini-retreat titled “Recharging Yourself: Reset, Reconnect, Recenter” will be held on Feb. 6th from 1-4 pm. Included will be 3 wellness workshops. There are 25 registrations so far. Since the description includes the language “post inauguration”, Lindsay suggested that it may not be the terminology to use since some of our members or colleagues may feel good about the election results.
- In other news: Two (2) Zoom tables were held this fall with great attendance. A 3rd is planned for Feb. 6th.
- See the PD Committee’s board report.

#### **Public Relations - Bryan and Linda** reported out.

- Bryan created a monthly, goal-oriented theme calendar for posting on social media and is looking at branding guidelines.
- He shared that we have had the most viewed posts since Oct.
- Linda shared that in the future, the committee plans to have more thematic and shorter newsletters coming out more frequently. The next edition will focus on Advocacy.
  - Deadline for submitting is Jan. 27th. Goal is to get it out by Feb. 1st.
  - Linda asked for input from the board regarding content on newsletters in general and for submissions for the upcoming newsletter.
- Brian followed up from the presentation/discussion yesterday regarding the proposal to purchase Constant Contact (CC). He also shared info and data comparing CC to Mail Champ.  
**Action:** To approve spending \$200 for a 6 month trial using Constant Contact.  
**Motion:** Sarah  
**Second:** Stephanie  
**Motion carries, with no abstentions**
- See the PR committee’s board report.

#### **Retirees - Gaelyn Hastings** reported out.

- Following the discussion on the retiree definition yesterday, Gaelyn requested that we vote on the definition of a retiree.  
**Action:** To approve the following definition of a retiree: “An individual who is no longer employed full-time and has previously worked in an educational opportunity program.”  
**Motion:** Rick  
**Second:** Michele F.  
**Motion carries, with no abstentions**
- The committee recommends a 40% discount on conferences and events starting next year. Also recommended is an inclusion in NEOA’s fiscal policies in order to ensure consistency in future years. Yara recommended that we revisit and vote in June so we have time to look at the data to determine how many retirees attend NEOA’s offerings and how it would impact our budget..

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- In other news, the committee sent out a 2nd survey and held a committee meeting in Dec.
- Linda reminded the board, especially state leaders to find out who is retiring this year.
- See the Retiree Committee's board report.

#### **Strategic Planning - Rick Williams** reported out.

- Rick thanked the board for the great work accomplished yesterday during the SWOT analysis.
- Rick will transcribe the work from the SWOT analysis and share with the committee first and then the board.
- He briefly went over the timeline for the new SP process.
- We are at about 60% in meeting goals on the current NEOA strategic plan.
- Rick acknowledged the board and Yara for our commitment to the process.
- See the Strategic Planning Committee's board report.

#### **Technology - Casey Henderson** was not present. Josh served as "Tech Guru" in his absence.

- Yara reported that the committee is working on the website and looking for a Co-Chair to step into that position.
- See the Technology Committee's board report.

#### **TRIO Day - Heidi and Becky** reported out.

- Since we are meeting at the TRIO Day site, another walk through was able to take place.
- The hotel is filling up and the search for an overflow hotel is underway. Over 400 students and 70 staff have registered so far.
- Ten (10) college visits have been confirmed.
- The budget for transportation is \$6K and the quote is over 7K. The Committee chairs will work with the Finance Committee to agree on a budget since the increase is under the limit needed to have it approved by the entire board.
- Lindsay asked that the board recognize Kim Kossi who has helped significantly with the planning.
- See the TRIO Day Committee's board report.

#### **State Reports:**

##### **Connecticut: Nina Vazquez-Rosa** reported out.

- Our 37th conference was held this fall and 50 participants attended. The conference brought in over \$3,000.
- Holding monthly General Assembly meetings.



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**Maine:** No Report.

**Massachusetts: Kevin Linton** reported out.

- MEOA held its 1st board meeting in Dec. which included a board orientation and COE Policy Seminar planning.
- In the process of planning an advocacy day: “MA Access to Education Day” for early spring.
- Is working with board members to formulate plans for the 41st annual conference.

**New Hampshire: Josh Gagnon** reported out.

- Proposed bylaw changes for NHEOA are being sent out shortly to vote on at the annual meeting in Feb. This includes creating the position of President-Elect. Fiscal policies are also being updated and will be presented at the meeting next month.
- Two NH alums have been identified to attend the Policy Seminar and initial contact has been made with members.
- NHEOA was represented at the NEC Capitol Hill Report with Sen. Shaheen last month.

**Rhode Island: Military Tavarez** reported out.

- Working on planning a state conference.
- Putting together historical and membership info about NEOA and RIEOA to encourage membership and conference attendance.

**Vermont: Michele Feiner** reported out.

- Met with Carolyn Weir of the McClure Foundation, who seemed interested in establishing a formal connection with VEOP. Update since their meeting: VEOP has in fact been awarded the grant and will receive \$2,500 per year for three years for organization expenses (Policy Seminar and conferences, not scholarships).
- Updated our listserv.
- Working on finalizing our Policy Seminar delegation. Rick W. will be our team leader.
- Applying for the State Initiative Grant for VT TRIO Day.

**Motion to adjourn: Ray**

**Seconded by: Naomi**

**Motion carries, unanimously, at 12:32 PM**

**Next Meeting: April 8, 2025 in Warwick, RI**

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OFFICER/CHAIRPERSON	NAME	Voting	Unpaid	Absent/Late
<b>Executive Board:</b>				
President:	Yara Zoccarato	X		
Past President:	Lindsay Carpenter	X		
President-Elect:	Arielle Derival-Joseph	A		A
Vice-President, Conference Co-Chair:	Heather Bacchiocchi	X		
Secretary:	Julie Coon	A		A
Treasurer:	Matt Bourgault	X		
<b>State Presidents:</b>				
CT	Nina Vazquez-Rosa	X		
ME	Michelle Richards	X		
MA	Kevin Linton		X	
NH	Josh Gagnon	X		
RI	Milary Tavarez		X	
VT	Dylan Bertolini	X		
<b>State Liaisons:</b>				
CT	Fiorela Hidalgo	X		
ME	Ginny Ward	A		A
MA	Naomi Brown-Jones	X		
NH	Melissa Goyait-Heikkinen	X		
RI	Stephanie Cruz	X		



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VT	Michele Feiner	X		
<b>Standing Committees Chairs:</b>				
Advocacy Chair	Sarah Morrell	X		
Alumni Chair	Randy Schroeder	X		
Corporate Development Chair	Ramon Gonzalez	X		
Diversity Chair	Mona Savastano	X		
Finance Chair	Chris Lee	A		A
Membership & Credentials Co-Chair	Taryn Tomkins	A		A
Membership & Credentials Co-Chair	Rachelle Lappinen	A		A
NEOA Achievers Co-Chair	Adam Keese	X		
NEOA Achievers Co-Chair	Rachel Casey	X		
Professional Development	Lynn Ploof-Davis	A		A
Public Relations Co-Chair	Linda Shiller Cormany	X		
Public Relations Co-Chair	Bryan Landgren	X		
Technology	Casey Henderson	A		A
TRIO Day Co-Chair	Becky Carasquillo	X		
TRIO Day Co-Chair	Heidi Dyer	X		
<b>COUNT OF VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>			25	8 (absent)
<i>*Only 1 co-chair per committee votes &amp; is counted here, if paid</i>				
<b>NON-VOTING MEMBERS</b>				
<b>Ad-Hoc Committees</b>				
By-Laws Chair	Brian Post	A		A
Conference Co-Chair	TBD			



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Historian	Reggie Jean	A		A
Retirees Chair	Gaelyn Hastings	X		
Strategic Planning Chair	Rick Williams	X		
Guest (friend of Becky C.)	Courtney Leonard (UNH ETS Program)		X	
Guest				
<b>COUNT OF NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>2 (absent)</b>