



Media Contact:

Nathan Hardin

hardinn@nccommunitycolleges.edu

704-787-2649

State Board selects Monty Sullivan to lead NC Community Colleges

Higher education leader, who transformed Louisiana's community college system, would oversee 58 colleges serving 600,000 students. The nomination now goes to the General Assembly.

July 23, 2026

RALEIGH, N.C. — The State Board of Community Colleges selected Dr. Monty Sullivan to lead the North Carolina Community College System, choosing a leader who spent more than a decade as head of Louisiana's statewide system and nearly doubled its annual graduates.

Sullivan led the Louisiana Community and Technical College System for 12 years, serving under both Republican and Democratic governors and working with legislators of both parties prior to his retirement in January 2026. He also served as a community college president and held senior leadership roles in the Virginia Community College System, giving him more than 30 years of higher education and workforce development experience.

Under his leadership, annual graduates nearly doubled between 2014 and 2025. Foundation assets tripled. Sullivan led legislative requests for more than \$500 million into new and modernized training facilities. He equipped Louisiana's colleges with updated technology and data systems, and opened new pathways for students.

"The Board committed to conducting the most disciplined and comprehensive presidential search in our history because North Carolina deserved the very best leader," said Tom



Looney, Chair of the State Board of Community Colleges. “Dr. Monty Sullivan has the passion, experience, vision, character, and proven record to lead our Community College System at the speed of business and innovation. We are confident he is the right leader to strengthen our 58 colleges, serve our students and employers, and build on North Carolina’s extraordinary momentum.”

“North Carolina’s Community College System has built something the rest of the country watches,” Sullivan said. “That work happens across North Carolina — in welding labs, nursing programs, and early college classrooms. I’m committed to reaching every student who wants a better job and every employer who can’t find enough skilled workers. I’m grateful to the State Board for its confidence, and we will deliver.”

Christopher Chung, Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, served on the search advisory council and praised the Board’s selection.

“Corporate executives and business leaders ask us every day whether and how North Carolina can produce the workforce they need. Our community college system — its breadth, its depth, its reach, and its capabilities — is what we lead with every time. As part of the Search Advisory Council, I’m excited that our process has led us to a proven leader with a long track record of excellence. Monty Sullivan is the right choice at the right time for Team North Carolina.”

Wake Tech President Scott Ralls, who served as System president from 2008 to 2015, and Sullivan have previously appeared before congressional hearings on higher education and workforce topics over the years, connecting with each other through their leadership on workforce development initiatives.

“I’ve sat in the System president’s chair and I can tell you what this moment asks for. Dr. Monty Sullivan and I made the case for Workforce Pell to members of Congress, and I watched him do the thing the best system leaders do — turn what employers need into policy that reaches students,” Ralls said. “Wake Tech serves more students than some states’ entire systems, and I want this leader for our state. There is not a better person in the country to lead North Carolina’s community colleges.”



The Board's selection followed a national search guided by a leadership profile built through engagement with business, education, workforce development, and state government leaders across North Carolina. Sullivan was the selection following unanimous recommendations from both the Presidential Search Committee and the Search Advisory Council before the Board's vote on July 17.

Sullivan's nomination now goes to the North Carolina General Assembly for confirmation. He is expected to serve as acting president, pending contract approval, while legislators consider the nomination. A start date has not been set.

Upon confirmation, Sullivan will serve as president and chief executive officer of the North Carolina Community College System.

About the North Carolina Community College System

The North Carolina Community College System is the state's primary engine for workforce development and the only public higher education system dedicated to providing affordable, accessible education and workforce training to all North Carolinians. Governed by the State Board of Community Colleges and supported by 58 community colleges across the state, the System serves more than 600,000 students annually and awards more than 60,000 degrees, diplomas, and certificates each year while partnering with employers to build the best workforce in the world.