

GREATER LAWRENCE TECHNICAL SCHOOL
57 River Road, Andover, Massachusetts 01810

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2026

A meeting of the Greater Lawrence Technical School Program Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at Greater Lawrence Technical School.

The following members were in attendance:

Facilitator: Scott Cummings	CTE Program: Biotechnology
Recorder: Cherilee Lewis	
Materials Manager:	
Dialogue Monitor: Scott Cummings	
Timekeeper: Rylan Kandefer	
Faculty Present	
Cherilee Lewis	Instructor
Scott Cummings	Instructor
Rylan Kandefer	Instructor
Advisors Present	Name of Business
Norline Walker	NA
Tristin Deolivaria	Middlesex Community College
Andrew Ciarla	Pfizer
Melanie Lamoy	Lila AI
Mark Wholley	BioX
Guest Present	
Adriana Nieves Matos	Broad Institute

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

- a. Welcome/Introductions
- b. Scott Cummings called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm

Status report:

Agenda Item #2 Verification of committee members' contact information, phone numbers and emails.

- a. Please verify the e-mail address for each member.
- b. Per DESE PAC Guidelines, it is important that every effort has been made to ensure the membership of our Advisory Boards are inclusive and diverse. Review the **composition populations** listed on the Program Advisory membership forms. Ask members to sign-in using the [Google Form](#) (Share link with all members) and ask that they select any of the sub-groups they are able to represent.
 - i. Persons of racial or linguistic minorities.
 - ii. Persons are nontraditional by gender for the program.
 - iii. Persons are well-equipped to represent the perspectives of persons with disabilities.

Status Report:

- a. Email Addresses have been verified for each member.
- b. The facilitator asked for members to review representative populations. Union representation will be updated when the members fill out the Google form.

REPORT OF OLD BUSINESS**Agenda Item #3: Minutes**

- a. Review minutes from the Program Fall Advisory meeting, and voice comments, questions, or concerns (Minutes are posted on the GLTS website).
- b. Provide an update on action items from the previous meeting. The facilitator should recap the conversation ([Link to recommendations updates](#))
- c. Solicit a motion to approve minutes, 2ND the motion.

Status Report:

- a. Reviewed the minutes and discussed the equipment that has already been purchased: Autoclave, Computer cart and lab tech have all been approved and ordered.
- b. The facilitator recapped the conversation
- c. A motion was carried to approve the minutes

Recommendation:

Motion: Norline Walker moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2025.

2ND: Andrew Ciarla

Vote: Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS**Agenda Item #4: CTE Program Facilities Review****a. CAPITAL EQUIPMENT PLANNING & INVESTMENT**

1. **Capital Equipment Replacement (5-Year Outlook)** Are there any major pieces of equipment (approximately \$25,000+) that we should plan to replace or upgrade within the next five years?
2. **Emerging Tools & Industry Upgrades** What new tools, equipment, or facility upgrades are becoming standard in your industry that we should consider incorporating into our program?

b. FACILITY DESIGN, FUNCTIONALITY & SAFETY

1. **Shop Design & Industry Alignment** Does our current shop layout and design reflect industry standards and real-world work environments?
2. **Safety, Repairs & Functionality** Are there any safety concerns, needed repairs, or workflow inefficiencies in the space (e.g., layout, storage, equipment placement) that we should address?
3. **Facility Conditions & Improvements** Are there any updates, cosmetic or structural, that would improve the learning environment or better reflect industry expectations?

c. COMPLIANCE & PROGRAM REVIEW (NIOSH + PROGRAM CHECKLISTS)

3. After reviewing the NIOSH and program-specific checklists, are there any areas where our facilities, equipment, or practices do not fully align with current standards?
 - a. [NIOSH Department Checklist Review](#) & [All Programs Checklist Review](#) (Each Program Lead should provide their PAC with a copy of the applicable NIOSH Checklist for review)

Status Report:

- a. Capital Equipment Planning & Investment
 1. Equipment replacement:
 - a. -80 freezer needs to be replaced, Masy is a business out of Pepperell validation for freezers, incubators... DNA sequencers.

- b. Digital hemocytometer- Nexalon/Revedy – Countis is another possible system
 - c. Fluorescent microscopes
 - d. Keyence- microscope analysis tool for slides
 - 2. Emerging tools & industry upgrades:
 - a. Basic floctometer, guava
 - b. Shaking incubator is necessary for cell culture
- b. Facility Design, Functionality & safety
 - 1. Shop design & industry alignment:
 - a. A separate room for chemicals is needed, should be locked.
 - 2. Safety, repairs & functionality:
 - a. No comments at this time.
 - 3. Facility conditions & improvements
- c. Compliance & Program Review
 - 3. Review NIOSH & program-specific checklist:
 - 1. What feedback or insights can the PAC provide?
 - 1. The team toured the shop area and found there was nothing to discuss at this time.

Recommendations:

Motion: Mr. Ciarla made a motion that we purchase a -80 freezer.

2ND: Ms. Walker

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Mr. Wholly made a motion that we purchase digital hemocytometers.

2ND: Ms. Walker

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Mr. Ciarla made a motion that we purchase a couple fluorescent microscopes.

2ND: Ms. Lamoy

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item #5 Equipment / Budget

Review Budget for FY26/27 & Prepare Budget for the upcoming school year (SY27/28)

- a. Review [Voc Budget FY 26/27](#) and begin Draft Budget for FY27/28.

Status Report:

- a. Review of FY26/27 Budget and Draft Budget for FY27/28
 - i. Purchases (Record Discussion)
 - 1. Gel boxes needed
 - 2. Subscriptions for AI software, Biotech are going very AI students need to learn how to use it.
 - 3. Many table top balances are out of specification and should be replaced.
 - 4. Create Approved Supplier list–a comprehensive list
 - 5. As a result of our new frameworks and the biomanufacturing curriculum the consumable chemical budget may need to be increased.
 - ii. Appropriate Equipment (Record Discussion)
 - 1. Microscopes with camera attached needed approximately 8- this will allow students to see their slides more clearly.
 - 2. Multichannel pipettes, Integra Voyager repeaters.
 - iii. What tools and/or equipment replacement needs
 - 1. As discussed a new -80 freezer
 - iv. 5 year outlook for tool/equipment replacement needs (Record Discussion)

Recommendations:

The team recommends the department purchase digital microscopes with cameras and prescriptions for AI software to keep students up to date with the biotechnology trends.

Motion: Ms. Lamoy made a motion that we purchase 6 digital microscopes with cameras.

2ND: Mr. Deoliverio

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Mr. Ciarla made a motion to purchase AI software.

2ND: Ms. Walker

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Ms. Walker made a motion that we replace the table top balances.

2ND: Mr. Ciarla

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item #6: Curriculum

- a. **Emerging Technology & Techniques:** What new technologies, tools, or techniques are gaining traction in the industry that students should be exposed to?
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year)** How has the industry changed over the past year, and what new or evolving skills are now essential for entry-level employees?
- c. **AI Integration & Readiness** What specific AI tools or applications are becoming essential in our industry, and what foundational skills do students need to use them effectively and ethically?
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation** How are emerging technologies, beyond AI (e.g., automation, sustainability practices), fundamentally changing job roles, and how quickly should our curriculum be adapted to address these new industry needs?
- e. **Outdated Skills & Equipment** Are there any tools, equipment, or skills that are becoming outdated or no longer widely used in your industry that we should consider reducing or phasing out?

Status Report:

- a. **Emerging Technology & Techniques:**
 - a. Cell counter
 - b. Flow cytometer Quava Cite
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year):**
 - a. The industry is fully using electronic notebooks, students should learn how to use them.
- c. **AI Integration & Readiness:**
 - a. Software for AI databases are needed, science is going AI students need to learn the current method
 - b. AI scientist and AI lab software allows for trouble shooting different issues in the lab.
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation:**
 - a. Biomanufacturing curriculum is currently being developed to meet the new frameworks.

Recommendations:

- a. Proteomics is a big part of the future of biotech. This is another reason why the DNA sequencer is needed.
- b. Teachers can put batch records in Adobe so students can enter the data directly in there this will be a part of electronic notebooks.
- c. Risk mitigation and management.
- d. Bioinformatics: different data bases that students can use to model different molecules.

BLAST should be included more often. Adriana discussed how the BROAD internship has students use bioinformatic tools.

Motion: Mr. Wholly made a motion that the department purchase bioinformatics software.

2ND: Ms. Lamoy

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Mr. Wholly made a motion that the department purchase a DNA sequencer.

2ND: Ms. Walker

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item #7: Cooperative Education/Industry Trends

1. HIRING & SKILL GAPS

- a. When hiring entry-level employees, what skill gaps do you most commonly see?
- b. What are your biggest challenges when hiring new employees in your industry?

2. TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- a. What technical skills are essential for success in entry-level roles at your company?
- b. What specific professional (“soft”) skills do you prioritize, and what distinguishes a strong candidate from an average one?
- c. In the first 90 days, which professional skills most impact whether a new hire succeeds or struggles?

3. PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION

- a. If you have hired our co-op students or graduates, what are their strengths? Where do they need further development?
- b. What should we be doing differently in our programs to better prepare students for success in your company/industry?

4. FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION

- a. As technologies (including AI) evolve, what new skills or competencies are becoming most important?
- b. Which skills, tools, or processes are becoming less relevant or outdated? Where should we consider reducing emphasis to make room for higher-impact learning?

5. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- a. What other companies or organizations would you recommend we partner with for co-op placement?

Status Report:

1. HIRING & SKILL GAPS

- a. Norline would like to meet with the Co-op director to discuss biotechnology needs. We will set that up.
- b. The co-op program has some gaps because the entry level positions in the industry are much more simple than the complex advanced labs we’ve been doing
- c. Competition is a barrier for students, it is very competitive to get an internship/co-op they are competing with college students.
- d. Norline– students should be able to rotate through a pharmaceutical company to learn the importance of the different departments. Scott- the issue is the employers are looking for students to do work not engage in training the students in different areas.

2. TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- a. Adrianna– students struggle writing emails and communicating with others. Melanie– something AI can help with.
- b. Andrew– many people do not check the emails, this is a problem. They need to understand that Email is a professional communication.
- c. Cheri– the department is trying to mitigate this issue by pushing down the curriculum so juniors are learning the advanced skills and not missing out on any of the “cool” stuff.

Senior year they will be applying their skills in more advanced ways. Melanie– this will really be great for their resume.

- d. Scott–Helping students with their communication skills. Soft skills are important.
- e. Norline–Students need to be able to use flow diagrams

3. PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION

- a. Tristin: Certificates and credentials will help with students getting hired. Employers will see that they are trained in skills: pipetting, aseptic technique, solution prep...
- b. Cheri– there are micro-credentials that are available and the department is working on getting students scheduled for testing.

4. FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION

- a. Getting students
- b. Biomanufacturing curriculum
- c. AI tools
- d. Software

5. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- a. It is agreed that we need more partnerships. It was mentioned that we should ask the Broad if they can match us with other companies.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that students take as many microcredentials as possible.
Students need to be taught better communication skills; verbal and written.

Motion: Ms. Lamoy made a motion that the department include microcredentials in their budget.

2ND: Ms. Walker

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item #8: Other:

Status Report:

Recommendations:

Motion:

2nd Motion:

Vote:

ADJOURNMENT

Recommendations: Facilitator should make a recommendation for a motion to adjourn

Motion: Ms. Walker

2ND: Mr. Ciarla

Vote: Unanimous

Next Meeting: October 2026

Respectfully Submitted: Cherilee Lewis