

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 Stewart	CTE Program: Culinary
Recorder: Kate Henry / Otavia Tropeano	
Materials Manager: Melissa Nova	
Dialogue Monitor: Molly Hanson	
Timekeeper: Heather McCall	
Faculty Present	Instructor
Scott Stewart	Instructor
Heather McCall	Instructor
Molly Hanson	Instructor
Kate Henry	Instructor
Melissa Nova	Instructor
Otavia Tropeano	Instructor
Advisors Present	Name of Business
Alex Scanlon	Former GLTS student
Yazmery Ortiz Torres	GLTS Student
M. Brigid Flanigan	SNHU Culinary Department
Dennis King	Piantedosi Bread Bakery
Michael Lewis -Chairman	Cafe Services
Al Ampollone	Tripoli Bakery
Guest Present	
Mel Johnson	GLTS Student
Mr. Johnson	Parent of Mel

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order a. Welcome/Introductions
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 by Mr. Stewart.
- b. Mr. Stewart asked for members to review representative populations. Members were unable to complete the Google form due to technology issues.

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. Mr. Stewart reviewed the minutes from Fall 2025 advisory.
- b. No discussion at this time.
- c. Brigid Flanigan solicited a motion to approve minutes, Al Ampollone solicited a 2ND motion.

Recommendation: Facilitator should recap the conversation and make a recommendation to approve.

Motion: Bridgid Flanigan moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2025.

2ND: Al Ampollone

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: New walk-in refrigerator and freezer in bakery as discussed in many previous meetings.
 2. Emerging tools & industry upgrades: Brigid Flanigan and Chef Tropeano discussed adding kitchen display system for restaurant tickets.
- b. Facility Design, Functionality & safety
1. Shop design & industry alignment: No discussion at this time.
 2. Safety, repairs & functionality: Mr. Stewart highlighted the need for new kitchen floors as there are many cracks which are a sanitary issue.
 3. Facility conditions & improvements Install convection oven which is currently located in the loading dock area.
- c. Compliance & Program Review
3. Review NIOSH & program-specific checklist:
 1. What feedback or insights can the PAC provide? Mr. Stewart was unable to access the NIOSH report. No discussion at this time.

Recommendations The board recommended planning for major facility and equipment upgrades, including replacing the bakery walk-in refrigerator and freezer, installing a kitchen display system for restaurant tickets, and relocating the convection oven into the kitchen space. They also identified the need to repair or replace cracked kitchen floors due to sanitation concerns and approved the addition of the POS system to support industry-aligned operations

Motion: Michael Lewis made a motion to approve the POS

2ND: Dennis King

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 A blast chiller was added for the upcoming fiscal year draft budget. The POS screen will be added to the draft budget as well. We have also changed uniform vendors and are moving from Vestis to Cintas for the upcoming fiscal year.
 - ii. Appropriate Equipment No discussion at this time.
 - iii. What tools and/or equipment replacement needs The walk in refrigerator and freezer in the bakery will need to be replaced.
 - iv. 5-year outlook for tool/equipment replacement needs New ranges and repair the floor.

Recommendations: The board recommended approving the FY27/28 draft budget, which includes purchasing a blast chiller, adding a POS screen, and transitioning uniform services from Vestis to Cintas. They also identified future equipment and facility needs, including replacing the bakery walk-in refrigerator and freezer, purchasing new ranges, and repairing the kitchen floor.

Motion: Al Ampollone made a motion to approve the budget as written.

2ND: Brigid Flanigan

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:** The group discussed the shift to a digital screen for POS tickets. This will help with students misreading tickets at the Reggie and Four Winds.
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year):** No discussion at this time.
- c. **AI Integration & Readiness:** No discussion at this time.
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation:** Literacy and basic math skills continue to be a challenge for our students due to our increasing special education population. We will continue to modify curriculum as needed.
- e. **Outdated Skills & Equipment:** We removed two outdated ovens from the shop area.

Recommendations: The board recommended integrating more industry-relevant technology into the curriculum, including a digital POS ticket screen to improve accuracy and workflow in student-run restaurants. They also emphasized the need to continue adapting curriculum to support literacy and math skill development, remove outdated equipment, and improve facilities by repairing the floors and replacing the walk-in refrigerator and freezer.

Motion: Michael Lewis made a motion to purchase the digital POS screen and to fix the floors and walk-in refrigerator/freezer.

2ND: Al Ampollone

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. Ms. McCall mentioned that many of our students are in fast food establishments such as Chick Filet. This can limit their growth as a future chef.
- b. Ms. Hanson and Ms. Henry stated that many high-level chefs start out in fast food.

2. TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- a. Reading at grade level, basic math skills. Speed and efficiency, food safety knowledge
- b. Strong candidates stand out because they show reliability, communicate clearly, take initiative, and support their team, while average candidates typically complete only what is asked of them.
- c. In the first 90 days, students succeed when they consistently show up on time, communicate clearly, follow directions, stay positive, and take initiative to help their team, while those who struggle often lack reliability, avoid asking questions, and wait to be told what to do.

3. PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION

- a. No one has hired our students in this advisory. However if they did our co-op students and graduates demonstrate strong hands-on skills, understand kitchen safety and sanitation, and are eager to learn in a fast-paced environment. They would benefit from developing greater independence, stronger communication under pressure, and more consistent professionalism and time management.
- b. Programs should incorporate more real-world, problem-based scenarios that require students to make decisions, adapt, and explain their thinking rather than just follow steps. Increasing focus on time management, teamwork, accountability, and handling feedback will better prepare students for success in the workplace.

4. FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION

- a. As technologies like AI evolve, the most important skills are critical thinking, adaptability, communication, and the ability to evaluate and apply information rather than just find it. Students also need to develop digital literacy, problem-solving skills, and the ability to use tools responsibly and effectively in real-world situations
- b. Skills that rely heavily on memorization, rigid step-by-step processes, and repetitive tasks without context are becoming less relevant in today's fast-changing environment. Programs should reduce emphasis on these areas and instead prioritize real-world application, decision-making, collaboration, and flexible thinking

5. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our members discussed and recommended partnering with a mix of restaurants, hotels, healthcare, and food suppliers to give students a range of industry experience. Some of the suggestions discussed were:

Restaurants:

- Grassfields Steak & Seafood
- Vivacino
- Tavern on Merrimack

Hotels / Hospitality:

- Holiday Inn Express Andover North-Lawrence
- La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Boston-Andover

Healthcare / Institutional Food Service:

- Lawrence General Hospital

Food Suppliers / Industry Exposure:

- Restaurant Depot
- Gourmet Specialty Foods
- Colony Foods

Recommendations: The board recommended increasing focus on real-world workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and adaptability to better prepare students for success in the culinary and hospitality industries. They also recommended expanding co-op partnerships with restaurants, hotels, healthcare facilities, and food suppliers to provide students with a wider range of industry experiences and career opportunities.

Motion: Al Ampollone made a motion to implement the topics discussed

2ND: Brigid Flanigan

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item #8: Other:**Status Report:****Recommendations:****Motion:****2nd Motion:****Vote:****ADJOURNMENT**

Recommendations: Scott Stewart made a recommendation for a motion to adjourn

Motion: Brigid Flanigan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

2ND: Michael Lewis

Vote: Unanimous

Next Meeting: October 2026

Respectfully Submitted: Melissa Nova