

## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Holyoke Community College

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 8:00 AM to April 28, 2026 at 9:30 AM EST hybrid

### ATTENDANCE

**Trustees Present:** Trustee Julius Dixon, Trustee Nayroby Rosa, Trustee Patricia Samra, Trustee Ivonne Vidal, Trustee Sonia Dinnall (in person 8:28 a.m.), Trustee Yolanda Johnson (in person 8:28 a.m.), Chair Vanessa Smith

**Trustee Absent:** Trustee Charles Epstein

**Trustees Remote:** Trustee Sonia Dinnall (until 8:28 a.m.), Trustee Yolanda Johnson (until 8:28 a.m.), Trustee Aaron Vega, Trustee Todd McGee

**Routine Invitees Present:** Angela Cardenas, Dr. Katherine Douglas, Jeffrey Hayden, Jennifer Kerr, and Narayan Sampath

### MEETING

I. Call to Order – Chair Smith called the 447th Meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees to order at 8:10 a.m.

II. Roll Call

**Roll Call Vote:**

**YES:** Trustee Dixon, Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Johnson, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra Trustee Vega, and Chair Smith.

III. Consent Agenda

A. Consideration of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees Special Meeting of March 7, 2026, Special Meeting of April 6, 2026, and Board of Trustees Meeting of March 24, 2026.

A motion was made by Trustee Dixon and seconded by Trustee Vidal to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

B. Report of Personnel Actions dated April 28, 2026 (See Attached)

C. To empower the President of the College to approve all personnel actions prior to the next meeting.

**Roll Call Vote** to approve consent agenda at 8:13 a.m.

**YES:** Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Dixon, Trustee Johnson, Trustee McGee, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, and Chair Smith.

IV. Committee Reports

A. **By-Laws and Governance Committee**

Trustee Vidal discussed the upcoming summer retreat and retreat focus. She indicated a main topic will be alignment of the Board's committee structure to the strategic plan. In addition, she noted that work will begin soon related to the annual presidential evaluation.

## **B. Strategic Planning Committee Update**

Trustee Rosa discussed the special board meeting held on April 23 with CampusWorks, at which the Board received an update on the development of Strategic Plan 3.0 and plans for the Plan's implementation. Chair Smith thanked Board members for their attendance at this meeting and noted the high level of engagement and participation by Board members in this important discussion.

## **C. Foundation Board Update**

Chair Smith reported that the HCC Foundation Board hosted the Taste of Gratitude luncheon, where 30 guests gathered at the Culinary Institute to hear firsthand about the impact of philanthropy through the fall micro philanthropy campaign.

The 2026 scholarship season is well underway. This year we had 640 applications, a 5% increase over last year. Scholarships are being reviewed and students are being notified of their selections this week. Congratulations in advance to everyone.

## **V. Report of Chair Smith**

Chair Smith reported on the AACC (American Association of Community Colleges) conference, which she and Dr. Timmons, along with a strong contingent of HCC staff, attended earlier this month. She provided a brief update on sessions she attended related to governance and a highlight of keynote addresses that underscored the impact of community colleges across the country. She distributed copies of AACC's Strategic Compass 2035. She said that in preparation for the upcoming Board Retreat scheduled for June 1- 2, the retreat facilitator will reach out to Trustees for short conversations to provide input related to finalizing the retreat agenda. She reminded Trustees that the Trustee Compact was approved at a recent meeting and said that Trustees will be asked to sign the Compact as a next step.

## **VI. President's Report**

President Timmons expressed that Massachusetts community college presidents are in alignment with more competitive wages for faculty and staff. He mentioned that community college presidents had requested in writing that the Legislature include funding for wage increases. He noted that the Department of Higher Education conducting a classification study is the first step needed for more competitive wages, and that such a study is underway. And as part of that process, HCC is working alongside the other community colleges and the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges. He said HCC looks forward to collaborating with the union on any subsequent steps that might help advocate for the need for more competitive wages. Low wages are a problem not only for individuals who are trying to make ends meet, but also for all the colleges trying to meet the demands of their students. He reiterated that Massachusetts community college presidents are in full agreement with the union related to competitive wages and that he looks forward to working with the unions to increase community college faculty and staff wages to attract and retain high quality individuals who make their careers here at HCC.

President Timmons shared that HCC's leadership team met with the DHE to discuss the draft strategic plan and received very positive feedback on that plan.

HCC has named the next Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Jessica Nickland, who will join us in June. He thanked the committee chairs and all of the people who participated in that national search.

Related to academic distinction and student experience, HCC continues to be recognized on the national stage. He recognized several HCC employees who presented at the AACC conference, including the Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. Veena Dankher; Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Renee Tastad, and Ben Ostiguy from the Thrive Center; Jane Lerner, Director of our Learning Collaborative, and Pat Sandoval, \_\_\_\_\_. Dr. Timmons thanked them for continuing to put HCC on the national stage and for presenting at the flagship conference for our sector.

President Timmons announced that the theater department's production, *The Last Giving Gun*, received three awards at a recent American College Theater Festival in Albany, New York, and that HCC's Integrative Learning Department was invited to join the 5 college consortium. Kudos to all.

He congratulated Mark Broadbent for being awarded the Dr. Mary E. Dunn Lifetime Achievement Award and transfer award from the New England Transfer Association. The award recognized Mark's years of work opening doors and creating transfer paths for countless HCC students. Mark continues to elevate HCC as a college of academic excellence through his work at the state level and on MassTransfer initiatives, including Gen Ed foundations, A to B Pathways, MassTransfer tuition waiver programs and reverse transfer.

President Timmons reported a recent \$750,000 award over three years for apprenticeship degrees from the Smith Family Foundation and Accelerate the Future Foundation, as well as additional grants received, such as \$455,000 from Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to continue to refine HCC's energy careers; \$167,000 from the Massachusetts Office of Education to expand HCC's green jobs climate related workforce training initiatives; and \$41,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Education Bridges to College partnership with the Hamden County Sheriff's Office in Western Mass for supporting justice-impacted individuals. A huge thank you also to the Institution of Advancement, grants team, and other HCC teams for these efforts.

And finally, President Timmons shared the latest edition of HCC's award-winning Connections alumni magazine with the group.

A. Presentation: Pathway to Workforce Pell, presented by: Vice President of Business and Community Services, Jeff Hayden, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Kate Douglas, and Mark Hudgik, Dean of Recruitment, Admission and Financial Aid, Polly Silva, Training Manager, Aimee Funk, Jump Start Program Director, Andrew Baker, Workforce Development, and Mary Wagner, Training Manager.

VII. Trustee Spotlight - Trustee Yolanda Johnson provided details on her professional experience and background, highlighting work she does in the community to promote and support education and personal development of students in Western Massachusetts. Chair Smith thanked Trustee Johnson for being the longest serving Trustee currently on the Board. Trustee Dinnall thanked Trustee Johnson for her faithful service to the Springfield Public Schools, Holyoke Community College, and the Western Massachusetts region.

VIII. Board Engagement Opportunities (See attached)

A motion was made by Trustee Rosa and seconded by Trustee Samra for adjournment

**Roll Call Vote**

**YES:** Trustee Johnson, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega and Chair Smith

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela O. Cardenas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela O. Cardenas  
Board Professional, Board of Trustees

Approved: Vanessa L. Smith  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Approved: Ivonne Vidal  
Secretary, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees