Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Holyoke Community College
Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 8:00 AM EST to Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 9:30 AM EST
Remote and In Person, Frost 309

Attendance
Trustees Present in Person: Sonia Dinnall (joined at 8:20 a.m.), Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson (joined at 8:27 a.m.), Aaron Vega, Vanessa Smith
Trustees Remote: Charles Epstein, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Patricia Samra, Ivonne Vidal
Routine Invitees Present in Person: President Dr. George Timmons, Vice President Narayan Sampath, Vice President Jeffrey Hayden, Angela Cardenas, Jennifer Kerr
Routine Invitees Remote: Interim Vice President Dr. Katherine Douglas

MEETING

I. **Call to Order the 449th Meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees at 8:03 a.m.**

II. **Roll Call:**

Yes: Trustee Dixon, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, Chair Smith

A. Chair Smith reported on the actions taken at the executive session held on May 26, 2026, after the last regular board meeting, as follows:
- The Board voted to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2026 executive session.
- The Board voted that those March 25, 2026 executive session minutes should remain confidential and not subject to disclosure because disclosure would defeat the lawful purpose of the executive session.
- The Board voted that the minutes of the December 8, 2025 executive session should also remain confidential and not subject to disclosure because disclosure would defeat the lawful purpose of the executive session.

III. **Consent Agenda**

A. **Consideration of the Minutes for the Board of Trustees Meeting of May 26, 2026.**

B. **Report of Personnel Actions June 23, 2026**

To approve the personnel actions listed above for the Non-Unit and MCCC Professional Appointment recommendations.

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

Chair Smith asked whether any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda, and there were none.

- **Motion:** Trustee Rosa moved and Trustee Epstein seconced to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
- **Roll call vote on motion: Yes:** Trustee Dixon, Trustee Epstein, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, Chair Smith

IV. **Student Trustee Report - Trustee Dixon**

Student Trustee Julius Dixon presented his final report to the Board, highlighting student engagement initiatives during the spring semester, including:

- Fresh Check Day promoting student mental health and wellness
- Student Government Association leadership development workshops
- Kindness Week activities to foster belonging and community
- Student Government fundraising efforts supporting student activities
- Cougar Conversations, which provided opportunities to gather student feedback and strengthen communication between students and campus leadership

Trustee Dixon thanked the faculty, staff, Student Government Association, and members of the Board for their support throughout his service as Student Trustee. He welcomed incoming Student Trustee Jess Heredia and encouraged the Board to offer her the same support he had received.

Board members expressed appreciation for Trustee Dixon's leadership and service during his tenure.

V. Committee Reports

A. By-Laws and Governance Committee Update

Chair Smith reported on the June 1–2 Board Retreat, noting:

- Strong Trustee participation and engagement
- Presentations served as orientation for new Trustees and a refresher for others
- Productive discussions regarding Trustee responsibilities
- Significant focus on the Board’s role in the implementation of the College's Strategic Plan 3.0
- Discussions regarding restructuring Board committees to better align with the strategic plan

Chair Smith encouraged Trustees to complete the retreat evaluation.

B. Presidential Evaluation Committee Update

Chair Smith provided an update on the annual presidential evaluation process. The committee met with consultant Liz Denny and President George Timmons to begin preparing the evaluation process, including stakeholder surveys. Trustees and members of the college community were encouraged to participate when survey requests are distributed.

C. Foundation Board Update

Chair Smith shared several Foundation updates, including:

- Launch of the "Grads on the Go" campaign recognizing the Class of 2026
- Announcement of a July 17 check presentation recognizing a $10,000 gift from Hyundai America to the Thrive Center Food Pantry
- Recognition of a $100,000 scholarship commitment from alumna Jane Meyers (Class of 2019)
- Announcement of the Tabor Art Gallery's alumni exhibition, *Constellations*, scheduled for August
- Reminder of the annual 24-Hour Phillips Festival scheduled for October 2–3

Trustee Sonia Dinnall entered the meeting at 8:20 a.m..

D. Audit and Finance Committee Update

FY2027 Budget Presentation, Vice President Narayan Sampath presented the proposed FY2027 operating budget.

Highlights included:

- Overview of the Commonwealth's budget development process and projected state appropriations
- Review of enrollment trends, tuition revenue, and financial aid
- Discussion of grant funding, deferred maintenance needs, and capital improvement challenges
- Explanation of increasing institutional costs resulting from reductions in certain federal and state funding sources while maintaining student services
- Overview of investments supporting Strategic Plan 3.0
- Presentation of the proposed FY2027 operating budget totaling $66.7 million, representing approximately 5% growth over the previous fiscal year
- Discussion of projected enrollment, revenue sources, expenditures, and continued investment in student success initiatives

Trustee Yolanda Johnson entered the meeting at 8:27 a.m.

Trustees asked questions regarding:

- State appropriations
- Deferred maintenance and capital needs
- Support for students with disabilities
- Federal funding reductions
- Long-term fiscal sustainability

Questions were addressed by Vice President Sampath and members of the administration.

Motion: Trustee Dixon moved and Trustee Vidal seconded to approve the FY2027 Operating Budget as presented

Roll call vote on motion: **YES:** Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Dixon, Trustee Epstein, Trustee Johnson, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, Chair Smith

Chair Smith thanked Vice President Sampath and his staff for the comprehensive budget presentation and responsiveness to Board feedback in putting together the presentation.

Trustee Spotlight - Trustee Sonia Dinnall Trustee Sonia Dinnall shared reflections on her educational journey, describing how her mother's advocacy for educational opportunity shaped her career and leadership philosophy. Trustee Dinnall spoke about her service as Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools and her commitment to educational equity, student success, and public service. Chair Smith and other Trustees thanked Dr. Dinnall for her reflections and her service on the Board.

IX. New Open Meeting Law Complaint dated June 17, 2026 (received on June 18, 2026)
The Chair reported that the College received an Open Meeting Law complaint regarding the April 6, 2026 special meeting, alleging that the meeting notice had omitted the required meeting location or remote access information. Chair Smith acknowledged that, after review, it was determined that as a result of an administrative oversight, the meeting location/remote access information had not been made publicly available in the notice of the April 6, 2026 special meeting. She reaffirmed her commitment as Chair and the commitment of the entire Board to compliance with the Open Meeting Law. In an effort to make publicly available information discussed during the April 6, 2026 special meeting, Chair Smith reviewed in detail the matters discussed during that meeting to ensure they were reflected in the public record. Specifically, Chair

Smith summarized, in turn, the Open Meeting Law complaints dated March 19, 2026, and March 24, 2026 and the claimed violations set forth in each complaint regarding executive sessions held on December 8, 2025, and March 24, 2026, respectively, and she invited Board discussion of each complaint. Discussion ensued, including the Board's observations that it appeared that all appropriate Open Meeting Law processes had been followed during the December 8, 2025, and March 24, 2026 executive sessions.

The Chair also reported that the Board had voted on April 6 to delegate to the General Counsel's Office preparation and submission of responses to the March 19, 2026, and March 24, 2026 Open Meeting Law complaints, and that since the meeting such responses had been submitted by the General Counsel's Office. She also reported that the Board had voted on April 6, 2026 to pursue Open Meeting Law training for the Board and that this training is being scheduled.

Chair Smith asked that the Board authorize the General Counsel's Office to prepare and submit a response on behalf of the Board to the June 18, 2026 Open Meeting Law complaint.

Motion: Trustee Dixon moved and Trustee Vidal seconded to delegate to the General Counsel's Office the drafting and submission of a response on behalf of the Board to June 18, 2026 Open Meeting Law complaint and to include with this response a resubmission of the April 17, 2026 response to the March 19, 2026 and March 24, 2026 complaints.

Roll call vote on motion: Yes: Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Dixon, Trustee Epstein, Trustee Johnson, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, Chair Smith

Chair Smith also requested a motion for the Board to confirm its agreement to pursue Open Meeting Law training.

Motion: Trustee Dixon moved and Trustee Johnson seconced that the Board seek out Open Meeting Law Training.

Roll call vote on motion: Yes: Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Dixon, Trustee Epstein, Trustee Johnson, Trustee McGee, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega, Trustee Vidal, Chair Smith

Trustee Vidal left the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

VI. Report of Chair Smith

Consistent with past practice, we will have no meeting in the month of July. The next meeting will be on August 25, 2026. After that meeting, we will have a campus tour for Trustees available to join us.

Chair Smith congratulated Jeff Hayden and Kermit Dunkelberg and their teams for a successful NECHE visit over two days related to recognition of quality assurance for our non-credit programs.

VII. President's Report

President Timmons provided brief remarks recognizing the successful conclusion of the academic year, highlighting the celebration of 784 graduates at Commencement and noting continued enrollment growth in graduating students over the past three years. He encouraged participation in the *Hampshire Gazette* Readers' Choice Awards and invited trustees to the College's Fourth of July campus celebration. The President also highlighted recent academic and workforce achievements, including the success of the Gateway to College program, and expressed appreciation to the College community for its continued dedication. He concluded by looking ahead to the College's 80th Anniversary celebration and the continued development, rollout and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Pride Month Presentation: Representatives from S.A.M.P. and the All Out Club presented an overview of the College's Pride Month initiatives and year-round LGBTQ+ programming. Highlights included community-building events, educational programming, fundraising efforts benefiting Transhealth, the repainting of the campus rainbow crosswalk, a student trip to Boston Youth Pride, the annual Pride celebration, the inaugural Lavender Graduation, and a Pride display in the Library. Presenters acknowledged the many students, faculty, and staff whose collaboration contributed to the success of these initiatives and emphasized the College's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming campus community.

VIII. Board Engagement Opportunities

Chair Smith called to the Board’s attention Board Engagement Opportunities listed in materials posted in OnBoard.

VIX. Adjournment

Motion: Trustee Dixon moved and Trustee Vega seconded to adjourn the meeting
Roll call vote on motion: YES: Trustee Dinnall, Trustee Dixon, Trustee Epstein, Trustee Johnson, Trustee Rosa, Trustee Samra, Trustee Vega and Chair Smith

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Cardenas

Angela O. Cardenas
Board Professional, Board of Trustees

Approved via email: Vanessa L. Smith
Chair, Board of Trustees

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