

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Holyoke Community College
January 27, 2026 at 8:00 AM EST
Via Zoom

Attendance

Trustees Remote: Sonia Dinnall, Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Chair Vanessa Smith, and Ivonne Vidal.

Trustees Absent: Charles Epstein and Evan Plotkin.

Remote Guests: Ash Aliengena, Pasha Black, Kevin Booker, Angela Cardenas, Linda Chavers, Veena Dhankher, Mayra Diaz, Katherine Douglas, Kermit Dunkelberg, Gina Ferrante, Curt Foster, Aimee Funk, Adina Giannelli, Jeffrey Hayden, Mark Hudgik, Jennifer Kerr, Olivia Kynard, Johanna Lebron, Arvard Lingham, Bonnie Mannix, Jason Maurice, Anne Medina, Irma Medina, Chris Pelland, Julie Phillips, William Reyes-Cubides, Kris Ricker Choleva, Narayan Sampath, Julianne Schortmann, Amanda Scibricia, Thomas Stewart, George Timmons, Carl Todd, Marlowe Washington, Chris Yurko, Jane Voterro.

MEETING

- I. Call to Order – Chair Smith called the 444th Meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees to order at 8:03 a.m.
- II. Roll Call
Roll Call Vote:
YES: Sonia Dinnall, Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Chair Vanessa Smith, and Ivonne Vidal.
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Consideration of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of November 25, 2025.
 - B. Report of Personnel Actions dated November 25, 2025. *(See Attached)*
 - C. To empower the President of the College to approve all personnel actions prior to the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote for Consent Agenda:

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

YES: Sonia Dinnall, Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Chair Vanessa Smith, and Ivonne Vidal.

- IV. Trustee Spotlight – Student Trustee Julius Dixon
In his semi-annual report, Trustee Dixon spoke about his journey as a student leader. He mentioned challenges he faced in the Fall semester and how he overcame them successfully, highlighting campus programs and resources through which he received support.

V. Committee Reports

A. **Audit & Finance Committee**

Chris Pelland of Witham and Gina Ferrante presented the 2025 annual audit report and financial statements. The auditors stated no material weaknesses/significant deficiencies were noted within the Independent Audit's Report on Internal Control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters. They issued an unmodified opinion on the College's financial statements, which was a clean opinion.

Roll Call Vote to Approve the Annual Audit Report and Financial Statements:

A motion was made by Trustee Dixon and seconded by Trustee Johnson to acknowledge and accept the Annual Audit Report and Financial Statements as presented.

YES: Sonia Dinnall, Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Chair Vanessa Smith, and Ivonne Vidal.

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

Trustee Vidal reported on the committee's meeting on January 20, 2026, at which the committee discussed a draft Governance Committee charter and new Trustee orientation materials. A working draft of the Governance Committee charter was included with materials posted in OnBoard for today's meeting for consideration by the full Board. Trustee Vidal noted that a key topic on which full Board input is needed is the Board committee structure going forward to ensure that we have the right committees to ensure the Board is working on the right things to further the College's mission. To allow time for a meaningful discussion on this topic, the Board will hold a meeting on Saturday, March 7, to discuss committee structure, composition, roles, and responsibilities.

C. **Strategic Planning Committee**

Kris Ricker Choleva provided a report on several recent events related to SP 3.0, including a Community Breakfast held on December 9 and a Virtual Future Summit on December 2 via Zoom. The Board of Trustees will be more heavily involved in the strategic planning process in the Spring and will approve objectives developed for the SP 3.0 and the entire plan in May/June.

D. **Foundation Board**

Chair Smith reported on the Foundation Board's latest activities, including the opening of the HCC Foundation Scholarship application season on January 20th. Chair Smith mentioned the Inspired Giving event scheduled for February 18 at the CAI cohosted with New England Public Media, and the sixth annual Drive to Change Lives campaign scheduled for March 4th. She encouraged all Trustees to donate, with the goal of 100% Trustee participation.

VI. **Report of Chair Smith**

- Chair Smith reported on her participation in the Future Summit and Community Breakfast in December. At these events she saw the power HCC holds as a convener of community partners, which is vital to leverage in the future. She attended the NECHE annual meeting in Boston where she met other colleagues and commissioners and learned about the new standards. She closed by mentioning 2026 goals she has for the Board, which include populating the Board with new members and working with all Trustees to identify their personal goals for engagement; over the coming months, she will be meeting one-on-one with all Trustees.

VII. **President's Report**

- President Timmons welcomed Athletics Director Tommy Stewart who recognized the women's volleyball team for an outstanding season, including a declaration from the Mayor of Holyoke

and personalized congratulation letters from Representative Neal. President Timmons also recognized Tommy, who was recently inducted into the NJCAA Track and Field Hall of Fame.

- President Timmons reported on the Fall Graduate Ceremony and Reception, held on December 1, where 198 Fall graduates were celebrated. On December 2, HCC hosted the Future Summit as part of SP 3.0 planning, and on December 9, the college hosted a community breakfast as part of SP 3.0 planning.
- Additional news shared by President Timmons included that the Culinary Arts Program was awarded a 5-year accreditation by the Culinary Arts Federation. The HCC Foundation's micro-philanthropy campaign raised \$33,000 for 11 different projects.
- President Timmons mentioned engagement with Chicopee School District to build connections with their workforce development programs. He discussed the Spring Professional Day on campus, which focused on inclusivity and supporting digital accessibility. He mentioned several new funding awards for HCC and closed with highlights from HCC's Legislative Conversation.
- Presentation by Vice President Jeff Hayden on accreditation from New England Commission on Higher Education for Non-Credit Courses.

VIII. Board Engagement Opportunities (*See Attached*)

IX. Adjournment

Roll Call Vote for Adjournment:

A motion was made by Trustee Vidal and seconded by Trustee Rosa to adjourn the 444th meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees at 9:42 am.

YES: Sonia Dinnall, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Chair Vanessa Smith and Ivonne Vidal.

Julius Dixon (left early) and Yolanda Johnson (left early)

Respectfully submitted,



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