

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Holyoke Community College

October 28, 2025 at 8:00 AM EST in-person and via Zoom

Attendance

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

Trustees Absent: Sonia E. Dinnall, Charles Epstein and Evan Plotkin

In-Person Guests: Angela Cardenas, Linda Chaver, Veena Dhankher, Mayra Diaz, Katherine Douglas, Kermit Dunkelberg, Jeffrey Hayden, Kim Hicks, Jane Lerner, Jason Maurice, William Reyes-Cubides, Kris Ricker Choleva, Narayan Sampath, Doug Scanlon, Amanda Sbriscia, Renee Tastad, George Timmons, Rebecca Townsend, and Marlowe Washington.

Remote Guests: Sue Bacchiocchi, Pesh Black, Julissa Colon, Anna Marie Herrera, Andrea Hojnacki, Mark Hudgik, Liza Hurley, Olivia Kynard, Oscar Lanza-Galindo, Johanna Lebron, Lauren LeClair, Arvard Lingham, Bonnie Mannix, Anne Morales Medina, Michelle Robak, Robin Rondeau, Momina Sims, and Bob Turkowski.

MEETING

- I. Call to Order – Chair Smith called the 442nd Meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees at 8:18 am.
- II. Roll Call
Roll Call Vote:
YES: Julius Dixon, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa, Ivonne Vidal, and Chair Vanessa Smith.

- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Consideration of the Minutes for the Board of Trustees Meeting of September 23, 2025.
 - B. Report of Personnel Actions dated October 28, 2025. *(See Attached)*
To approve the personnel actions listed above for the Non-Unit and MCCC Professional Appointments.
 - 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 Dixon and seconded by Trustee Vidal to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

- IV. Trustee Spotlight – Trustee McGee
Trustee McGee shared a personal testimony of his upbringing in Holyoke, his education at HCC, Northeastern University, Western New England School of Law, and Boston University School of Law, and deep appreciation for his time at HCC. He also shared about his time as a Holyoke city council member and municipal official, and his new role at MassMutual as the in-house attorney for estate and business planning.

V. Committee Reports

A. **Audit & Finance Committee**

VP Sampath reported the committee met on October 16, 2025 with HCC's money managers.

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

- Trustee Vidal stated the Governance Committee continues to work on bylaws and a committee charter. The Committee welcomed two new members; Trustees Johnson and McGee. The Governance committee will begin visiting each of the committees for further discussion about goals and plans.

C. **Nominating and Presidential Evaluation Committee**

- Chair Smith mentioned there are several people being considered to serve on the Board of Trustees. Names must remain confidential until approved by the Governor.
- The Presidential evaluation report was circulated to all Trustees. The Presidential evaluation was developed from data collected from a survey sent to all Trustees and members of the President's Cabinet who report directly to President Timmons, as well as the President's self-evaluation. Chair Smith indicated Dr. Timmons continued the positive work that he achieved during his first year in office, with positive reviews among all of those groups that we talked about. Under his leadership the College saw increased enrollment and received \$5.4 million in state, federal, and private grants, as well as \$8 million in annual philanthropic funds.
- Chair Smith recommended the Board adopt the committee's recommendation to the Commissioner that Dr. Timmons receive the maximum amount of increases that has been determined appropriate by the Commissioner, whether that be salary, merit, cost of living, or whatever the Commissioner deems is appropriate.

Roll Call Vote to approve the Presidential Evaluation report to the Commissioner as proposed and the recommendation that President Timmons receive all allowable increases for presidents, as determined by the Board of Higher Education, including but not limited to merit, cost of living, and/or equity increases, in acknowledgment of his leadership and performance as reflected in his annual 2025 evaluation.

Roll Call Vote:

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

D. **Strategic Planning Committee**

- Trustee Rosa noted the SP 3.0 video shared with other Trustees, and highlighted the mission and vision discussion with Trustees hosted by CampusWorks.
- Trustees received a 1-page SP 3.0 summary document in their Board materials, which included upcoming events such as the December 2 Community Breakfast and Virtual Future Summit.

E. **Equity Committee**

- Trustee Johnson stated the committee is revisiting its role based on feedback from the summer Board retreat.
- She indicated the Equity Committee plans to jointly meet with the Governance Committee to discuss alignment and future direction of the Equity Committee.

F. **Foundation Board**

- VP Sbriscia indicated there are three major priorities for the Foundation. First, the President's Fund for Opportunity, which has flexibility to allocate funds to address opportunities as they arise, be those opportunities for students, faculty, or staff. Second, the Opportunity Circle is focused on moving donors through that pipeline from annual fund gifts to leadership-level gifts of \$1,000. Finally endowed funds are the third priority for the Foundation.

- VP Sbriscia mentioned upcoming events such as the annual alumni event on November 20 at Fame and a micro-philanthropy campaign to support faculty and staff needs.
- Finally, she mentioned that the Foundation Board continues to update governance policies and is engaged in the recruitment of new Foundation Board members.

VI. Report of Chair Smith

- Chair Smith reported about a recent conference she attended on the topic of civic discourse at Fitchburg State.
- She reminded Trustees about the November 7th Governance Leadership Institute sponsored by Mass Association of Community Colleges and encouraged other Trustees to attend.

VII. President's Report

- In the interest of time, President Timmons truncated his report. He highlighted the 2025 Fast Facts for HCC sheet included on Board materials, which details enrollment information like student headcount, full-time equivalencies, as well as the percentage of students who are full-time and part-time.
- He also noted this academic year, HCC's student population is 50% minoritized students and 50% white students. He also shared a document created by Excelencia in Education, which detailed information about higher education for the Latinx population in Massachusetts.
- HCC was awarded \$123,000 for the training resources and internship networks, also known as TRAIN from the Governor's Office. A second grant of \$11,500 to support students who were at the highest risk of dropping out was received from Western Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.
- HCC launched a pilot solar tech pre-apprenticeship program running December to March, aligning with regional green economy growth and workforce needs.
- A joint letter with regional leaders was created to position HCC as a center for quantum computing and AI, leveraging partnerships with MIT, Harvard, and local economic councils to capture emerging tech opportunities.
- AJ Jones, an Environmental Science and Natural Resources major, was selected for a Newman Civic Fellowship, a student program that nurtures the development of future civic leaders.
- HCC participated in a regularly scheduled re-accreditation site visit by American Culinary Federation (ACF). ACF recommended HCC apply to be used as an ACF certification site, which would be the first in New England.
- On October 21, as part of SP 3.0, over 80 students participated in the Student Experience Workshop, where they discussed the future of HCC and the student experience.
- The MA Senate has approved the supplemental budget that included \$18.3 Million FY26 Backfill for Book Allowances for community colleges, including \$1,200 book allowance for low-income students.
- HCC and STCC signed a MOU with Elms College, which now supports eight HCC students housing, providing stability and transfer pathways. The eight students living at Elms College include out-of-state students from California and Wisconsin.
- Community engagement remains strong, with over 300 attendees at the Trunk or Treat event, reinforcing HCC's role as a community hub.
- Two presentations were shared at the meeting; Restorative Mediation Program by Dr. Linda Chavers and Campus Climate Survey by Dr. Veena Dhankher (*See Attached*).

VIII. Board Engagement Opportunities (*See Attached*)

IX. Adjournment

Roll Call Vote for Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Dixon and seconded by Trustee Rosa to adjourn the 442nd meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees at 9:53 am.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "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