

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Holyoke Community College

September 23, 2025 at 8:00 AM EST in-person and via Zoom

Attendance

Trustees Present: Julius Dixon and Chair Vanessa Smith. (Trustee Rosa entered in-person at 8:25 am).

Trustees Remote: Charles Epstein, Yolanda Johnson, Todd McGee, Nayroby Rosa (until 8:25am), and Ivonne Vidal. Trustee Dinnall entered at 8:30 am.

In-Person Guests: Pesh Black, Kevin Booker, Angela Cardenas, Julissa Colon, Katherine Douglas, Kermit Dunkelberg, Carlos Garcia, Raul Gutierrez, Jeffrey Hayden, Kim Hicks, Jane Lerner, Michele Mariani, Jason Maurice, Irma Medina, Gloria Penagos, William Reyes-Cubides, Narayan Sampath, Amanda Sbriscia, Renee Tastad, George Timmons, Rebecca Townsend, Marlowe Washington, and Chris Yurko.

Remote Guests:

Shakara Acoff, Janet Aracena, Susan Bacchiocchi Misco, Beth Breton, Saul Caban, Sintique Carrillo, Linda Chavers, Vanny Chen, Mayra Diaz, Andrea Hojnacki, Mark Hudgik, Liza Hurley, Jane Johnson Vottero, Christine Janik, Olivia Kynard, Johanna Lebron, Lauren LeClair, Arvard Lingham, Vanessa Martinez, Anne Morales Medina, Andrea Picard, Kayla Ramos, Kris Ricker Choleva, Michelle Robak, Cindi Schroeder, Momina Sims, and Kim Straceski.

MEETING

- I. Call to Order – September Meeting (441st Meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees) at 8:02 am.
- II. Roll Call
Roll Call Vote:
YES: Julius Dixon, Charles Epstein, 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 August 26, 2025.
 - B. Report of Personnel Actions dated September 23, 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 Epstein and seconded by Trustee Vidal to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

IV. Trustee Spotlight – Trustee Vidal

Trustee Vidal spoke about her background and upbringing in Cuba, her transition to the United States, including her experience learning English, and her professional experience as a public defender, a role she's held since 2011. She has served on the Board of Trustees since 2017. She stated she is very grateful to be on the Board and be able to support the students here and hear their stories, and that HCC is an oasis for the City of Holyoke.

V. Committee Reports

A. **Audit & Finance Committee**

VP Sampath reported that the next meeting of the committee will be on October 16, 2025.

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

- Chair Smith stated that in follow-up to the Board's summer retreat, one of the first tasks the Committee has undertaken is to revise a number of our governance practices and documents, including by identifying which Board committees are appropriate going forward to allow us to complete the Board's work on behalf of the College and drafting charters for each committee. With the work of the Foundation Board as an example, we will ensure that we formalize appropriate governance policies and practices. There will be further updates at future meetings, and any proposed changes will come to the full Board for approval before being implemented. She then led a discussion among Trustees regarding a key goal coming out of the summer retreat, that we return to primarily in-person Board meetings. Trustees expressed agreement regarding the value of in-person meetings, including in terms of relationship building and enhancing Board engagement. After a discussion about potential barriers to in-person attendance and consideration whether changing the day and time of meetings would facilitate in-person attendance, it was decided that a poll will be sent to collect additional information about individual Trustee preferences.
- Regarding the anticipated restructuring of Board committees, Trustee Vidal stated that the Governance Committee would be visiting each of the committees for further discussion. In addition, the Committee is planning to develop orientation materials for new Trustees, with the support of Angela Cardenas.

C. **Nominating and Presidential Evaluation Committee**

Chair Smith mentioned the Committee met on September 18, 2025 to discuss the findings of the evaluation survey and creation of a draft report to the Commissioner. The Committee will bring the proposed final report to the Board for approval at next month's meeting.

D. **Strategic Planning Committee**

- Trustee Rosa thanked everyone for a great kickoff to the Strategic Plan 3.0 on September 9th.
- The Committee met to discuss the College's Mission and Vision statements. An additional virtual session will be held with all Trustees and CampusWorks to further discuss these statements. A survey will be sent to determine time/date for the session.
- Angela Cardenas will send the SP 3.0 SWOT survey to all Trustees.

E. **Equity Committee**

Trustee Johnson stated there was no report at this time.

F. **Foundation Board**

VP Sbriscia indicated the Foundation's FY 25 Audit is complete. The Foundation has \$19M in Investments and \$22M in assets. She mentioned the multiple levels of donors, noting that the TogetherHCC campaign is an entry point to giving for many donors; this campaign and work with major donors is going well. The focus of the Foundation at present is on strengthening the middle of the giving pyramid.

VI. Report of Chair Smith

- Chair Smith reported on College events she has attended since the last meeting and encouraged Trustees to attend events on campus. She reported that Professional Day was a standing-room-only event, full of energy. She also stated that Community College Night at the WooSox in Worcester was well attended by HCC students, faculty, and staff and was a great evening.
- She continues to attend regular meetings with Dr. Timmons and Angela to receive appropriate updates between meetings and to collaborate on improvements to our governance practices.
- She reviewed her goals as Chair for the coming academic year. The first is to fill the two vacant Trustee positions and then address replacements for those Trustees whose terms have expired. Another goal is to increase Board engagement. Related to this goal, she plans to develop and present for Board consideration a Trustee Compact (to be approved by the Board and signed by each Trustee) setting out expectations for service on the Board.
- Chair Smith said that ideally all Trustees would participate in some form of continuing education related to Board service every year; this could include attendance at webinars or at in-person conferences. She said that there are two in-person conferences coming up: the ACCT Leadership Conference in New Orleans from October 23-25, 2025, and February 9-11, 2026, the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC, and she encouraged those with interest in attending to contact her.

VII. President's Report

- The Commonwealth Children's Fund, through the Boston Foundation, awarded HCC \$352,000 over two years to support the Early Childhood Initiatives program that will be used to analyze Early Education Supports and Infrastructure in Western MA, and Kimm Quinlan, Director of Early Childhood Initiatives will lead this.
- Tomorrow (September 24, 2025), the reopening of the Itsy-Bitsy Child Watch Program will take place. This was made possible by the generous support of the Davis Foundation. Senator Velis, Representative Duffy, and Commissioner Kershaw will be in attendance.
- On October 8 at 3:30pm, Elms College will host a signing ceremony for the agreement among HCC, Elms, and STCC under which the Elms will provide housing on its campus to HCC and STCC students. All are invited to attend.
- Other events and activities held at HCC over the last few weeks included Professional Day on August 27; on September 13, a delegation of HCC staff attended the first Puerto Rican Day breakfast, followed by over 35 faculty, staff and students attending Springfield's Puerto Rican Day Parade; on September 18, over 100 students, faculty and staff attended MACC's Community College Night at the WooSox Game in Worcester; and lastly, on September 20, the Phillips Theater Festival and Green Carpet Alumni Reception was held in the Leslie Phillips Theater.
- The U.S. Department of Education has issued changes in funding and policy, including that Title V funding (HSI-specific funding) will be reprogrammed in the upcoming fiscal year. This does not impact current HCC funding. With or without the HSI designation, this institution will continue to be one that serves our community.
- Thanks to those who joined him at the Taber Art Gallery 25th Anniversary, with a huge thank you to the hosts, Dave McBride and Linda Drury. He stated that at the event, the college received a generous donation of \$10,000 toward the Taber Scholarship fund.
- Dr. Timmons has given several media interviews, including one related to winning the Reader Rave's award for best college; in addition, he was interviewed by MassLive for a forthcoming story on HSI and his perspectives on HSIs.

- Strategic Plan 3.0 was officially kicked off on September 9 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm in the Leslie Phillips Theater. A survey of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) was sent out to staff last week to collect information for SP 3.0. This same survey will be sent to the Trustees to provide input, as well as the Foundation Board and other community members.
- This year NECHE will review Non-Credit Providers Programs. This process will begin this fall and be completed by June of 2026.
- A group of faculty and staff presented on programs and services supporting our Latinx students. Latinx Heritage Month and Programs
(See Attached).



Introductions



Irma Medina
(She/Her, Ella)
Director of Integrative
Learning
hcc.edu



Julissa Colón
(She/Her, Ella)
Director of El
Centro



Raúl D. Gutiérrez
(He/His, Él)
Professor of Latinx Studies and
Spanish
Learning Communities Coordinator
Chair of Language and Latinx
Studies Department

Local Context: Growth of the Hispanic population in Western Massachusetts

Source: U.S Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2020 Census; OIESA Freeze data

Year	MA	Hampden County	Holyoke	Springfield
2010	10%	21%	48%	39%
2020	13%	26%	51%	47%

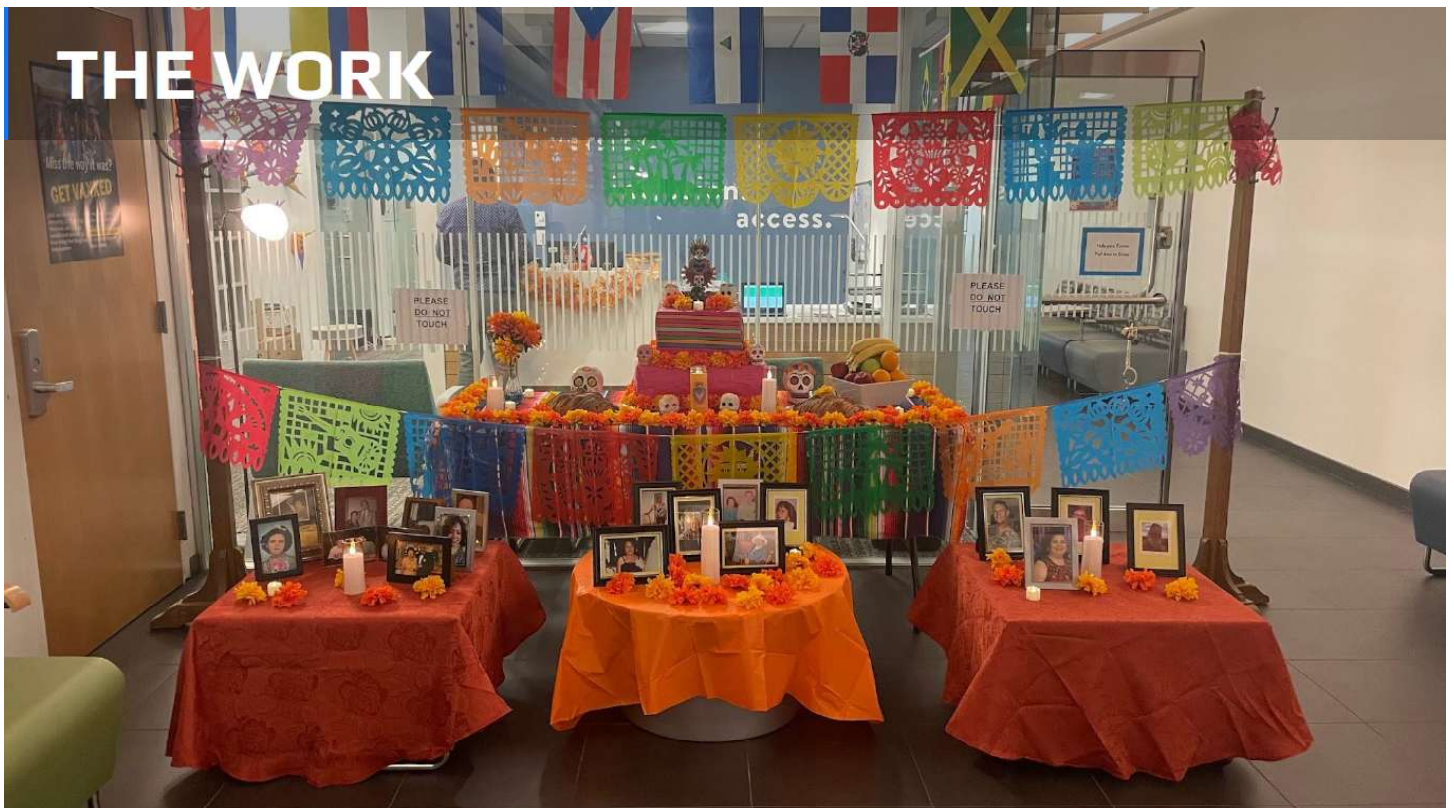
HCC also experienced an increase in Hispanic student enrollment since 2010 and became a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in 2016 From 20% of known race/ethnicity in Fall 2010 to 33% in Fall 2024

SERVINGNESS



- Garcia's theory of *servingness* argues that HSIs must go beyond simply enrolling Latinx students to actively fostering their success through intentional policies, practices, and campus cultures.
- Garcia emphasizes that true servingness requires institutions to implement equity-driven efforts that support Latinx students holistically—academically, culturally, and socially.

4



Integrative Learning Department

lected text



6 programs

4 Academic Programs:

- Liberal Arts
- Honors
- Community-Based Learning
- Learning Communities

2 Student Services Programs:

- Pathways
- Academic Internships

LEARNING COMMUNITIES / HONORS

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- Pa'lante Compañeros: Social Movements in Brown and Black Communities
- Teatro Nuestro: Performing Latinx Cultural Identity, Community, Aesthetic, Movement, and "Conexión"
- "Our America": Latin American Literature and Political Thought
- In America: Immigrants, Refugees, Departures, Arrivals, Hopes, and Dreams
- Who Gets to Be Captain America? An Exploration of Difference
- Living with Two Languages: Spanish Language Learning and Bilingualism in Education and Literature
- Aliens. Anti-Citizens. and Identity

HONORS

- Caribbean Feminisms
- The Open Wound in Latinx Literature: Gender Variance and Racial Politics in the Borderlands: Latinx Studies
- Reimagining Diaspora: Identity, Politics, Culture in Exile



LANGUAGE AND LATINX STUDIES


- LATINX STUDIES OPTION
 - SINCE 2019
- COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE
 - SINCE 2023
- SPANISH LANGUAGE COURSES
- LATINX EMPOWERMENT ASSOCIATION (LEA)

*HOLISTIC APPROACH
TO STUDENT LEARNING /*



 Academic & Transfer Advising

 Financial Aid Advising

 Wraparound Support Services

 Cultural Belonging

 Community Engagement



Beyond Latinx Heritage Month

Community Networking and Internship Fair

October 22 at 11 am-1 pm

Student Voices: Conversation with HCC Alums - Jason Pérez and Emma Pouliot

October 23 at 11 am-12:15 pm

3rd Annual Día de Los Muertos Event

October 30th at 11 am – 12:15 pm

Symposium on Justice, Community & the Law @ HCC

November 13 at 10 am-10:45 am / Justice Bethzaida Sanabria-Vega, Holyoke District Court

Community Leadership Week

November 13 at 6 pm – 9 pm - Community Leadership and Agency: Grassroots Organizing

November 14 at 12 pm -2 pm Community Leaders: The Intersection of Passion & Purpose

My congressional Internship from start to finish, Jerónimo Monsalve

November 20th 11 am - 12-30 pm



LATINX HERITAGE MONTH 2025

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15 Our Heroes, Our History Mural
Experience the stunning mural by Puerto Rican muralist Betsy Casillas, located by El Centro in the Campus Center. The piece celebrates Latinx activists, artists, musicians, and educators whose vision and courage have shaped our history. Across from the mural, a companion poster exhibit on the glass wall shares the stories behind each figure, inviting you to learn more about their lasting impact.
Halfway between El Centro & Student Engagement, Campus Center

El Centro's Pop-Up Cinema: Latinx Film Festival - Thursdays • 11 a.m.
Join us each Thursday at 11 a.m. for a special Latinx Heritage Month pop-up cinema series featuring powerful films from across Latin America and the U.S. Each screening highlights stories of resilience, culture, and identity, from Mayan traditions in Icazul and Amazonian journeys in Embrace of the Serpent to Puerto Rican community resistance in Todavía Estamos Aquí and the inspiring activism of Dolores Huerta in Dolores. *Campus Center Cafeteria*

SEPTEMBER 14 Puerto Rican Day Parade • 11 a.m.
Join the HCC contingent at the Springfield parade at the intersection of Main Street and Wason Avenue. *Stop at and receive a t-shirt.*

SEPTEMBER 17 Family Story Time: ¡En español! • 5:30 – 7 p.m.
Join the Marielo Adult Learner Success Center, HCC Chief of Police Jackie Robles, and special guest readers for a multilingual story time featuring Harold and the Purple Crayon in English, Spanish, and ASL. Enjoy fun arts and crafts, free school supplies, exciting giveaways, and a chance to connect with the community! *Frost Building, 2nd floor*

OCTOBER 1 Latinx Fiesta • 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Food, music, crafts, and a celebration of Latinx Heritage Month brought to you by HCC students, staff, and faculty. *Campus Center Cafeteria*

OCTOBER 2 Frutería Dos • 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Join ALANA, SAMP, and El Centro while we: Eat! Frutas! Play Lotería! Win Prizes! *Campus Center 224, Staff and Faculty Lounge*

OCTOBER 3 The Curet Alonso: Lírica y Poesía • 7:30 p.m. (Community event)
BorlCorridor presents Tite Curet Alonso: Lírica y Poesía (in Spanish). Actor and playwright Josean Ortiz performs a moving monologue inspired by folklorist Norma Salazar's book on the life of Puerto Rican composer Tite Curet Alonso. The piece honors the centenary of Curet Alonso, one of Latin America's most influential salsa and bolero composers. Limited tickets available. Stop by El Centro, CC 248 to reserve your seat. First come, first served! *Holyoke Media Theater, 1 Court Plaza, Holyoke, MA*

OCTOBER 14 NUESTRAS HISTORIAS, NUESTRAS VOCES, NUESTRA PERSPECTIVA:
Una conversación intergeneracional con artistas latinx/e locale • 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Our Stories, Our Voices, Our Lens: An intergenerational conversation with local Latinx Artists. Join El Centro as we engage in a conversation with local artists on how the use of different art mediums contributes to the memorialization, preservation, and celebration of our histories through time and space. This event is a panel discussion format with a Q&A portion to follow. *Area between El Centro and Student Engagement*

**HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**
hcc.edu/lhm

Latinx Heritage Month





LATINX STUDENTS ARE OUR FUTURE AND OUR COMMUNITY

¡GRACIAS POR SU APOYO!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!

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 441st meeting of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees at 9:35 am.

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

(Trustee Epstein left the meeting at 9:20 am, Trustee Johnson left the meeting at 9:17 am, and Trustee Vidal left the meeting at 9:03 am.)

**HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. George Timmons, President

DATE: September 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Personnel Update

MCCC Faculty Appointment – Academic Year 2025-2026 – State Funded

Name	Title/Area
Maria Moreno Contreras	Instructor of Culinary/Baking & Pastry Arts/Health, Education, Culinary Arts & Human Services

SUGGESTED MOTION: To approve the personnel action listed above for the above MCCC Faculty.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES BOARD ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES - FY 2025-2026

SEPTEMBER 2025

- September 2, 2025 Fall Semester Begins
- September 10, 2025 Student Engagement Welcome Back BBQ (college-wide)
- September 18, 2025 Save the Date-Community College Night at the Woo Sox at Polar Park
- September 20, 2025 Phillips Theater Festival at HCC Doors open at 6:00pm, show starts at 7:00 pm

OCTOBER 2025

- October 21, 2025 Strategic Plan 3.0 Student Experience Workshop, 1:30 pm-4 pm
- October 22-25, 2025 ACCT 2025 Leadership Congress, New Orleans, LA
<https://www.acct.org/events/acct-leadership-congress>

NOVEMBER 2025

- November 7, 2025 ACCT Governance Leadership Institute (GLI) 9 am-4 pm. College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

DECEMBER 2025

- December 1, 2025 Fall Graduation Ceremony & Reception, 5:30 pm
- December 2, 2025 Strategic Plan 3.0-Community Engagement Breakfast and Future Summit (Zoom) More details to come

JANUARY 2026

- January 14, 2026 HCC Professional Day/President's Welcome
- January 20, 2026 Spring Semester Begins

FEBRUARY 2026

- February 8-11, 2026 ACCT Community College Legislative Summit, Washington, DC

MARCH 2026

- March 4, 2026 TogetherHCC Day of Giving
- March 16-21, 2026 Spring Break

APRIL 2026

- April 1, 2026 Assessment Day (8:30am-Details TBD)

MAY 2026

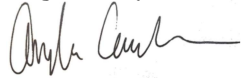
Presidential Evaluation Process Begins

- May 20, 2026 Celebration of Faculty & Staff (am) and Honors & Awards Night (pm)
- **May 30, 2026 HCC Commencement at MassMutual Center 10-12 pm**

JUNE 2026

- Annual Board Meeting
- Summer Retreat (Details TBD)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela O. Cardenas', with a stylized, flowing script.

Angela O. Cardenas

Board Professional, Board of Trustees

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

Approved: Vanessa L. Smith
Chair, Board of Trustees