



Ratified at September 21, 2022 meeting

**Board of Trustees Call Meeting
July 22, 2022**

Minutes of the call meeting of the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College held on Friday, July 22, 2022, at 3:30 PM via zoom video conference.

Trustees Present:

Dr. LeRoy Mitchell, Chairperson, Deborah Raizes Vice Chairperson, Robin Bikkal Esq., Susan Gerry, Hon. John Nonna, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Lucas Peixoto, Hon. Lyndon Williams.

Trustees Excused:

Dr. Norman Jacknis, Vice-Chairperson, Yolanda Howell, Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Cabinet Members Present:

Dr. Belinda S. Miles, President, Dr. Vanessa Morest, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs, Dr. Shawn Brown, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Strategic Operations, Brian Murphy, Vice President and Dean of Administrative Services

Call to Order

Chairperson LeRoy Mitchell called the meeting to order.

INFORMATION AND DECISION

Report from Board Chair:

Thanks everyone for your attention on Friday afternoon.
Today's Call Meeting is to consider a matter on revisions to the 2022-2023 operating budget.

A 2022-2023 operating budget was previously recommended by the College's Finance and Facilities Committee and approved by the Board on April 21, 2022.

The approved budget included an increase of student tuition of \$50 per semester from \$2,365 to \$2,415 for full-time credit courses and an equivalent increase for part-time credit courses.

In approving this budget in April, the Board carefully considered the experiences of families that continue to struggle with the economic fallout of the pandemic and persistent food and housing insecurity affecting many community college students. Even with this small increase in tuition, SUNY Westchester would remain the most affordable community college in the SUNY system, the lowest-cost college in Westchester County, and cost-competitive with most CUNY options.

On July 12, the Westchester County Budget Office initiated discussion with the College suggesting revisions to the College's operating budget to address quickly evolving concerns regarding the impact of growing inflation and other financial hardships facing students and families throughout the County.

Time was of the essence given that the College's operating budget was due from the County Executive to the Budget and Appropriations Committee of the County Board of Legislators on July 15.

Significantly, the County Executive offered to increase the county's sponsor support of SUNY Westchester by \$557,000 versus \$350,000 requested while eliminating the planned tuition increase.

SUNY WCC expressed appreciation for the open and mutual partnership with the County to address the impact of pandemic and economic issues facing individuals and families. The Board also recognized that there is a delicate balance between sponsor influence alongside the Board's authority and responsibility for the College, a highly valued and respected part of our successful shared governance experience.

With the County's generous offer to increase sponsor support, the Board evaluated several models that could achieve the objectives of reducing financial burdens on students, balancing the operating budget, and positioning the college for long term future viability.

Accordingly, the College Finance and Facilities Committee has prepared a resolution to revise the 2022-2023 operating budget to include an increase in the county sponsorship and no tuition increase (tuition freeze) for students during the next academic year. These options were reviewed during the Finance and Facilities Committee prior to the Board of Trustees meeting on July 20, but preparing a new budget is a monumental task, which is why the formal resolution is coming forward two days later.

The Board Chair asked for a motion to suspend the 30-day reading rule in order to bring a budget resolution to the Board.

****Motion: Robeson Smith/Nonna – all in favor**

Resolution

The Board Chair asked for a motion to adopt the resolution on the 2022-23 operating budget.

WHEREAS, Westchester Community College seeks to provide accessible, high quality and affordable education and related services to meet the needs of its diverse community; and

WHEREAS, Westchester Community College must balance financial stability with affordability to ensure the continued success of its mission; and

WHEREAS, Westchester Community College seeks to freeze tuition this year only to address financial burdens faced by students and families; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College herewith approves the College's 2022/23 Unrestricted Operating Budget Request in the amount of \$101,424,000; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the following fee increases effective Fall 2022: 3% increase in Children's Center fees; an increase in the Student Activity Fee from \$7.50 per credit to \$8.50 per credit up to a maximum of 12 credits; an increase in the Student Services Fee from \$4.00 to \$4.50 per credit up to a maximum of 12 credits; establishment of a \$50 fee for students electing a Bursar Deferment.

****Motion: Robeson Smith/Nonna – all in favor**

Trustee Peixoto asked a question about the bursar deferment; Controller Gillins answered.

Trustee Williams commented that a robust enrollment marketing plan must be instituted so that the college does not rely on county sponsorship increases.

Trustee Nonna commented that the presentation from the July 20 board meeting on the Yonkers Campus marketing plan was robust.

President Miles thanked VP Murphy, VP Brown, Controller Gillins, and Board Secretary/President's Secretary Howell for their leadership and coordination. President Miles commended the Board for its vision and leadership.

Trustee Robeson Smith commended the Board and College on successful advocacy for an increase in county sponsorship.

Board Chair Mitchell provided closing remarks:

Critically, the tuition freeze is a one-year measure to support access and affordability. Thanks to trustees for attending this Call Meeting outside of our regular schedule and for their extensive, thoughtful deliberations on these consequential decisions involving budget, institutional sustainability, and college affordability.

Thanks to President Miles and members of her team on their leadership and focused and proactive responsiveness on these matters including extensive collaboration with their County counterparts to bring forward the information and analysis needed for the Board's deliberation.

The Board calls on President Miles to take deliberate haste to convey this information to the College community and to students to encourage their enrollment.

The College community is reminded that this tuition freeze is intended to help students and families who are facing extraordinary financial burdens and struggling to re-emerge from the pandemic – but it also puts additional stress on the college to increase enrollment and diversify programs offered, which is the only way we remain a strong institution.

We know we are up to the challenge and look forward to our future collaborations and accomplishments to this end.

Adjournment

****Motion: Gerry/Nonna – all in favor.**

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for September 21, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shawn Brown

Chief of Staff and
Vice President of Strategic Operations