



Ratified at April 16, 2025 meeting

**Board of Trustees Meeting
March 19, 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 3 PM in the Student Center Event Room.

Trustees Present:

Dr. LeRoy Mitchell, Chairperson, Dr. Norman Jacknis, Vice-Chairperson, Robin Bikkal, Esq., (via videoconference) Clara Carnot, Susan Gerry, Esq., Hon. John Nonna, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Sergio Serratto, Hon. Lyndon Williams.

Trustees Excused:

Deborah Raizes Vice Chairperson, Yolanda Howell, Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Guest

Alexandra Giusto

Cabinet Members Present:

Dr. Belinda S. Miles, President, Dawn Gillins, Acting Vice President and Dean of Administrative Services, Dolores Swirin-Yao, Vice President and Dean, External Affairs, Executive Director, WCC Foundation, Tere Wisell, Vice President and Dean, Community Education and Workforce Development, Garrett McAlister, Acting Vice President, Information Technology, Dante Cantú, Vice President of Student Access, Involvement & Success, Ben Naylor, Chief of Staff & Vice President of Strategic Affairs.

Call to Order

Chairperson LeRoy Mitchell called the meeting to order.

INFORMATION AND DECISION

A. President's Report

Dr. Belinda S. Miles reported:

I would like to acknowledge the passing of our dear friend Congresswoman Nita Lowey an enthusiastic supporter of Westchester Community College and higher education nationally. I would like to ask for a moment of silence in remembrance.

This week spring break marks the mid-way point in the semester, a time for faculty and students to recharge and get ready for the excitement and flurry of activity leading up to May commencement.

Our ceremonies and celebrations are on the horizon – ordering caps and gowns, student excellence and achievement events, faculty and staff excellence events – all the rituals that weave throughout the fabric of our college community.

We are also celebrating Women’s History Month, and we thank our planning committee for the robust programming that offers opportunities for teaching and learning. Our events are posted on our website and include a poetry open mic session, lectures, book discussions, films, and more.

In celebration of Women’s History Month, I attended a luncheon yesterday in Albany with Governor Hochul and several women leaders from around the State including several SUNY & CUNY college presidents, State and County legislators, as well as Westchester's own Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

We truly are springing forward, in our work and especially in our commitment to fulfilling our mission and to helping students achieve their academic goals.

Student Excellence

- SUNY celebrates EOP Student Excellence: SUNY WCC student Amy Fanini was honored for her academic achievements at the Norman R. McConney Jr. Award for EOP Student Excellence Recognition Ceremony in Albany earlier this month.
- Four of our students will receive 2025 SUNY Chancellor Awards for Student Excellence during a ceremony next month in Albany. Please join me in congratulating
 - Ana Da Rosa
 - Josiah Farrell
 - Ray Katz
 - Adiel Vanegas-Robles
- Additionally, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation named 467 semifinalists for the prestigious Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. This scholarship recognized the outstanding achievements of exceptional community college students. Three of these 467 student-scholars are right here at SUNY WCC. We wish the very best to these students as they progress through the rigorous scholarship application process.

Of these eight student scholars, five have either taken honors courses, are in the Honors Program or are enrolled in the Honors College.

Staff Excellence

Tomorrow our staff members will partake in their annual professional development day learning opportunities. At their luncheon, we look forward to honoring this year's Staff Excellence Award winners. While the awardees have been notified, I don't want to divulge names before tomorrow's celebration. But I do want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of our staff to our college community.

Legislative Advocacy

Last month we welcomed local and regional legislators and representatives to the campus for our annual legislative luncheon – an opportunity to advocate for resources that benefit students and the college.

Federal Legislation

- Virtual meeting with NYS Attorney General Letitia James focused on policies impacting higher education
- SUNY meetings & Communications
- Sector groups – New York Community College Association of Presidents (NYCCAP), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), New York Community College Trustees (NYCCT), Presidents' Alliance on Higher Ed & Immigration.

Lastly, I share the following enrollment info:

- Enrollment for Spring 2025 is still ongoing, with the opportunity to register for the second 7.5-week session. Currently, 11,754 students are enrolled for Spring 2025, reflecting an 11.5% increase compared to Spring 2024. Similarly, there is an 11.1% increase in FTEs when comparing Spring 2025 to Spring 2024.
- We have finalized our Fall 2024 FTEs submission to SUNY. We are happy to report that the final Fall 2024 FTEs, including credit and aidable noncredit, is 3,475.01, an increase of 4.5% compared to Fall 2023, which stood at 3,323.80 FTEs.
- The most recent Graduate Report has been posted on our Institutional Research website. The report highlights that our graduates had an overall positive experience at SUNY Westchester Community College:

- *Academic Goals* received the highest satisfaction ratings, with 90.2% of respondents indicating they were either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with achieving their goals, followed closely by *Personal Goals* at 89.4%.
- Graduates also reported positive experiences with their overall college experience (94.0%), quality of instruction (93.0%), and courses within their major (93.6%). Satisfaction with courses outside their major (92.9%) and the social climate (91.0%) also remained notably high.
- Among the survey respondents who are employed, 88.3% are working in New York State, while 11.7% are employed outside of New York State. Employers include: Weill Cornell Medical, Westchester Medical Center, Northwell Health, Con Edison, Elisabeth Haub Law School, Phelps Hospital, and Nuvance Health.

Chairman Mitchell asked a question regarding our progress on Middle States.

Dr. Miles stated that we are doing well and that we are in the process of hiring some talent that will be a great help in the process.

Hector Graciano, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

We have hired an Assistant Dean of Academic Assessment who will be working with faculty members and collecting all the assessment reports. We have developed a structure where we will have an annual cycle of academic assessment. We have implemented the college's first academic assessment system which will enable us to efficiently collect academic assessment data. It also integrates with our learning management systems. We will be working with the Chairs in the upcoming months and years to make sure that they are aware of how to utilize the system and how to also collect reports with assignment scores and have that aligned with our programing outcomes.

In summary we have a plan to look at standard five and collect all the artifacts needed in time to do a report for the Middle States site visiting team.

B. Board Chair's Report

Trustee Mitchell reported:

- Nominating Committee
 - A nominating committee was appointed today at the Governance Committee meeting to select a new slate of Board Officers. The committee consists of Trustees Nonna, Gerry and Bikkal.

- NYCCT (New York Community College Trustees)
 - I attended the Finance Committee meeting. We set the budget and the fees for the next fiscal year for community colleges.
 - I also attended a virtual meeting with Senator Shelly Mayer. She expressed her concerns regarding the disparity in student funding for community colleges as opposed to four-year colleges.
 - NYCCT is currently accepting nominations for awards for their annual conference.
 - NYCCT had a meeting regarding the resolution from the SUNY Chancellor regarding reappointments and evaluations of Presidents. NYCCT has hired an attorney to pursue the matter. We are currently in the process of having discussions with the Chancellor and his legal team.

C. Committees

Governance Committee

Trustee Gerry reported:

The Governance Committee had discussion on the following:

- Nominating committee for board officer positions.
- Revisions to the posting material on campus policy.
- Update on State Budget and One House proposals.
- New Bargaining Unit with the Teamsters Local 456 for a specific set of titles within the college.
- Campus naming opportunities.

Program Committee

Trustee Jacknis reported:

The Program Committee had discussion on the following:

- Update on Yonkers [and plans for branches generally]
- Strategic Plan

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Carnot reported:

- I will be graduating this year, and I invite all of you to attend the ceremony on May 15. My school's ceremony will begin at 10 am.
- The Student Government Association (SGA) passed two resolutions regarding student support services. Below is a **brief summary** of one of the resolutions.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the college will continue this partnership and fund the following positions permanently:

Adjunct Counselor Student Support Services (College)

Adjunct Counselor Student Support Services (College)

and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities should be prioritized to attract and retain qualified staff, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the College shall allocate sufficient annual budget funds to support Student Support Services operations, including staffing, programs, and partnerships, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Student Support Services as a department of the college will continue to develop compelling grant proposals that outline program goals, implementation plans, and potential impact on the campus and broader community, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Student Support Services as a department of the college will actively seek and apply for federal, state, and private foundation grants that focus on addressing homelessness, student support, or community development. This process will involve identifying suitable grants, preparing compelling applications, and adhering to all relevant guidelines and deadlines.

- The other resolution is regarding Mental Health Aid.
 - Students would be allowed to request two mental health days per semester without a doctor's appointment, or a therapist note.

Finance/Facilities

Trustee Robeson Smith reported:

The Finance committee had discussion on the following topics.

- Operating Forecast
- Capital Projects Update
- Contracts

Trustee Robeson Smith asked Acting Vice President Dawn Gillins to go over the forecast for the month ending February 28, 2025, and the contracts.

Acting Vice President Gillins presented the contracts to the Board.

Resolution: Contract Ratification

WHEREAS, Westchester Community College is required to enter into agreements for the continued operation of the College; and

WHEREAS, the attached schedule represents those agreements approved by the College since the last meeting of the Board of Trustees; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College hereby ratifies the aforementioned agreements.

<u>CONTRACT #</u>	<u>CONTRACTOR NAME</u>	<u>CONTRACT DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TERM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
24-0240-594	Energy Management of Facilities, Inc. dba EMF Name change only to Technical Building Services, Inc. Originally approved Jan. 17, 2024 BOT.	Andover system maintenance of our HVAC controls.	3/1/24 – 2/28/26	
25-88102-411	NYS & CSEA Partnership For Education & Training	Provider agreement for tuition voucher program with NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education & Training	4/1/25 – 3/31/26	\$15,000 (Revenue)
25-8102-408	Brenshirer Consultants & Contractors, LLC	Provider agreement of OSHA and site safety training services	4/1/25 – 3/31/27	\$70,500 (Revenue) \$53,500 (Expense)
25-8221-410	Environmental Leaders Of Color (ELOC)	ELOC to use office space in the Mt. Vernon Center	4/1/25 – 8/31/26	\$7,607.67 (Revenue)
25-9131-039	Nancy Kaplan	Amendment to contract to include Increased hours of service for Sign language interpreting Original contract approved at July 24, 2024 BOT.	9/1/24 – 8/31/26	\$2,700 Grant Funded
25-9110-409	D'Anthony Photography, LLC	Photography and photo edits for WEOC Graduation	6/12/25 – 6/30/25	\$6,050 Grant Funded

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

Resolution

Trustee Gerry reported:

**APPROVAL OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS BOARD SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
BETWEEN TEAMSTERS LOCAL 456 AND WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

WHEREAS, Westchester Community College (the “College”) is required to enter into agreements for the continued operation of the College;

WHEREAS, Teamsters Local 456 (“Local 456”) filed a petition for certification for a bargaining unit of employees of the College with the Public Employment Relations Board (“PERB”) docketed as PERB Case No.: C-6702;

WHEREAS, The College entered into a Stipulation of Agreements dated September 26, 2024 and a Second Stipulation of Agreements dated February 10, 2025 (collectively the “Agreements”) with Local 456 in settlement of PERB Case No.: C-6702 pursuant to the directive of Administrative Law Judge Angela M. Blassman; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College hereby approves the Agreements as set forth in Exhibit A;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Local 456 shall be the exclusive bargaining agent for the titles designated the aforementioned Stipulation of Agreements;

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

Public Comment

Trustee Mitchell invited members of the community for public comment.

Sarah Saumahoro, SGA Director of Public Relations addressed the board regarding the Adjunct Counselor Student Support Services positions.

Good afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you all today because this is an issue that deeply affects our students, staff and the overall well-being of our college community. Over a year ago the SGA called the potential loss of staffing in the student support services department. Since then, students and staff have remained engaged to look for real and sustainable solutions. As student leaders we have been have taken action because we believe in solutions. The SGA passed a resolution. We created a petition that gathered over 700 signatures in a week and a half. We also emailed the board and copied key stakeholders. Yet we did not receive a response or acknowledgment to said emails. We want to work together toward a resolution, but we also would like to emphasize that this is not just a financial matter. It is also an issue of equity and inclusion. The two adjunct positions most affected are held by new mother and a black woman. This highlights, the importance of ensuring that decisions made at the institutional level align with the colleges, as stated DEI values. We also want to highlight an important point SUNY has awarded our college, a generous grant which included a freezer to operate our food pantry. This investment reflects a clear commitment to student welfare. How can we ensure that same level of commitment when it comes to this issue? So, to the college and the Board we ask what steps has the Board taken to hold the college accountable since then? What contingency plans are in

place to ensure stability moving forward? What steps have been taken to fund this department? To which grants have you applied and why aren't these steps public information? What is the contingency plan, and do you have the data metric on areas that directly impact student success and how does that data inform your plan of actions? If these staff members resign due to chronic anxiety and uncertainty what is your plan? We have discussed with the Senate and believe that the next step, should the college and board should not present a long-term sustainable contract. We are committed to finding solutions and ensuring the best outcome for students and staff. If necessary, we are prepared to express our concerns to the news and the Chancellor. We will email the Middle States Team and will not stop until our demands are met. We demand transparency and to be included during contract negotiations we hope to move forward and partnership with the board and the college to reach a sustainable solution thank you for your time and we look forward to your response.

Response from Chairman Mitchell

As far as emails are concerned, I can't remember getting emails. We as a board are committed to the welfare of our students. Otherwise, we would not be sitting here. The mental health issue is one which I personally have been fostering for years. In fact, I attend national conferences where we have this at the forefront of the ACCT agenda, to support mental health, so whatever has been done here in support that has been a result of combined efforts to acknowledge, particularly after Covid it was recognized that the students were under stress, and we had to do things to address them, and address those issues. So as to your threatening to publicize or to move forward with a perceived lack of attention, I think it's very, very discourteous because we as a college have been doing everything we can within our resources and our power to assist the students, as a matter of fact, even the Foundation is involved in addressing the mental health issue.

From Dr. Belinda Miles

May I request copy of the statement so that we can look at some of the areas because we've addressed many of them and perhaps, we need to communicate that more effectively.

Response from Chairman Mitchell (continued)

Your point is well taken. We understand what we have done will continue to do what we have done within our resources and abilities and that's it. I can assure you that the welfare of the students is our primary responsibility our primary goal at this board. To assume otherwise is disingenuous.

Response from Sarah Saumahoro

We are aware of everything that you guys have done, that being said we would just like to work together we would like transparency we just wanted to our voice our concerns, as students and as representatives for the student body, so apologies if you took that in a negative manner that being said that was not our goal.

A discussion was then held by several trustees regarding the rules and regulations for convening an executive session.

Adjournment

****Motion: Jacknis/Gerry – opposed Carnot – all in favor**

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for April 16, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Giusto

Alexandra Giusto
On behalf of Yolanda Howell
Secretary, Board of Trustees