



Ratified at October 15, 2025 meeting

**Board of Trustees Meeting
September 17, 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 3 PM in the Student Center Event Room.

Trustees Present:

Dr. LeRoy Mitchell, Chairperson, Deborah Raizes Vice Chairperson, Robin Bikkal, Esq., Anabella Delduco, Susan Gerry, Esq., via video conference, Hon. John Nonna, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Sergio Serratto, via video conference, Hon. Lyndon Williams, Yolanda Howell, Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Trustees Excused:

Dr. Norman Jacknis, Vice-Chairperson.

Cabinet Members Present:

Dr. Belinda S. Miles, President, Dr. Vanessa Morest, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs, 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, Vice President, Information Technology, Dr. Rinardo Reddick, Acting 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.

Ratification of Minutes

Trustee Nonna made a motion seconded by Trustee Williams to ratify the minutes of the June 18, 2025 and July 26, 2025, Board meetings. The motion passed.

INFORMATION AND DECISION

A. President's Report

Dr. Belinda S. Miles reported:

Today we put our Viking pride on display during Blue & Gold Day.

Convocation

Thanks to trustees Mitchell, Raizes, Nonna and Williams for joining us this morning as we celebrated our annual Convocation, bringing together faculty, staff, and administrators to mark the start of a new academic year. Thanks to Professor Kamil Hamoui our Presiding Officer over the faculty, and to and Monique (Nikki) Rutledge, for her awesome coordination of the mornings event in making sure that everything was in place. This is an opportunity to reconnect as a college community, welcome new colleagues, and celebrate this year's WCC Foundation Faculty Excellence and SUNY Chancellor Award recipients. We look forward to receiving additional information on new colleagues and award recipients from Creative Communications.

Enhancing the Student Experience

Students are settling into their classes, joining clubs and student events, finding their places within our college community, and working toward achieving their academic goals.

Building connection begins before students arrive on campus – Commitment Day, New and Transfer Student Orientation – where this year, Student Involvement Director Tiago Machado reports that 1,338 First-Year students attended orientation in August – 912 in person and 426 virtually – an increase of about 200 more students compared to last year. And, over the first few days of classes, students are greeted by faculty and staff at the Welcome Tents set up across campus to assist students in finding buildings, resources, and more.

Enrollment Management

Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness reports the following data.

- The Spring 2025 Average Annual Full-Time Equivalent (AAFTE), which includes credit, non-credit (aidable), and tutorial FTEs, has been finalized and submitted to SUNY. We are proud to report that the final AAFTE for Spring 2025 is **3,702.95**, representing a **10.4% increase** compared to Spring 2024.

- Enrollment for Fall 2025 is still ongoing, with **9,074** students currently registered. This reflects a **3.9% increase** compared to Fall 2024. Fall 2025 FTEs have similarly increased by **3.6%**.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

On September 4 and 5, we welcomed our MSCHE team to campus for our Monitoring Report visit. While we are not permitted to make public comment until the formal report is issued by Middle States, later this fall.

SUNY Info

Next week, we will welcome SUNY System Administration's new Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, Valerie Dent to campus. We welcome the opportunity to highlight all that SUNY WCC has to offer, including initiatives such as Reconnect and more.

Also, we are working with the Chancellor's office to schedule Dr. King's visit to WCC as part of his Reconnect Tour where he is visiting each community college to help promote this new initiative offering free community college for adult learners.

To date, we have almost 400 adult students registered in Reconnect. This number will continue to increase as registration continues, and as our Enrollment Management team verifies additional students identified as potential Reconnect students.

Intro Acting VP – Student Affairs

Dr. Rinardo Reddick, our Chief Diversity Officer, is currently serving as Acting Vice President of Student Affairs while the search for a permanent Vice President gets underway. Dr. Reddick holds a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, with a focus in Community College Leadership and DEI. We appreciate his willingness to serve during this period of transition.

B. Board Chair's Report

Trustee Mitchell reported:

- BOT Committee Chairs
 - Trustees Gerry and Jacknis will continue in their roles as Chair for the Governance and Program Committees.
 - Trustee Williams has been appointed Chair of the Finance Committee.
 - Thanks to Trustee Robeson Smith for his many years of service as finance committee chair.

- Convocation
 - Congratulations to all the honorees.
 - These kinds of celebrations truly bring out the spirit of the college and help remind everyone that this is a wonderful place to work—where their contributions are seen and valued. Thank you very much, and please extend the Board’s sincere appreciation to all those involved. Their efforts are genuinely recognized and deeply appreciated."
- NYCCT
 - Chief of Staff, Ben Naylor attended the conference.
- ACCT
 - I will be attending the October conference.
 - September is Student Parent Month.
 - The Department of Education is ending discretionary funding for several important programs, including those supporting minority-serving institutions. The justification provided is that these grants are racially and ethnically discriminatory. Consequently, funding for the 2025 award and non-competing continuations will be cut for programs such as:
 - Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions
 - Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions
 - Strengthening Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions
 - Strengthening Native Americans Studying Nontribal Institutions
 - Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions
 - This last category impacts us directly and significantly, as approximately \$660 million in TRIO Grant funding is being withdrawn. This loss is a direct result of executive action in Washington. As Dr. Miles mentioned, we will be exploring how best to fulfill our obligations and seek alternative funding sources to mitigate the severe impact this reduction may have on the programs supported by these resources.

C. Committees

Governance Committee

Trustee Gerry reported:

The Governance Committee had discussion on the following:

AES Assessment Process

This process reflects how the college self-governs and monitors the performance of its non-academic units. These include student services, administrative offices, support functions such as mental health counseling, and other departments that provide critical infrastructure to support the academic mission.

It serves as an important tool to assess institutional effectiveness beyond the classroom, ensuring that all aspects of the college are aligned with our broader goals. This annual review is ongoing and involves each non-academic department tracking and managing its performance metrics, which are then integrated into the college's strategic plan.

This initiative is a key part of the college's feedback loop. Many of these services directly impact students' ability to succeed academically and thrive in the college environment, making their performance vital to the institution's overall success.

Furthermore, this process is not only essential for internal planning and improvement—it is also a required element of our Middle States accreditation review. We look forward to receiving regular updates from college administration on the progress and effectiveness of these non-academic units as part of our continuous improvement and strategic alignment efforts.

Trustee Orientation Process

We also had a conversation about our trustee orientation process, which is ongoing, and we hope to wrap that up in the next meeting or two and then practice on our newest trustees and see how that process goes.

2026 BOT Meeting dates

We will vote on this at our October meeting.

Program Committee

Trustee Raizes reported:

The Program Committee had discussion on the following:

Viking Book Bundle update

We had a productive discussion about the Viking Book Bundle program, a new initiative launched in partnership with Barnes & Noble. The goal of the program is to ensure students have affordable, streamlined access to the course materials they need to succeed.

Under the program, students are automatically enrolled and charged \$24 per credit to receive all required textbooks and materials in a bundled format. However, students may choose to opt out of the program if they prefer to obtain materials on their own. The opt-out deadline was set for the end of September, giving students approximately a month to decide whether the bundle offers value for their specific situation.

So far, the participation data is as follows:

- **3,919 students have opted into the program**, choosing to receive bundled materials.
- **Over 1,200 students have opted out**, electing to source their materials independently.
- **Approximately 680 students** have expressed interest but have not finalized their decision.
- **An additional 3,000 students** have not yet responded, and outreach efforts (via text and email) are ongoing to ensure they understand their options and the implications of not taking action.

Initial estimates suggest the bundle could save students **35% to 50%** on course materials compared to traditional purchasing methods. While this is the first year of implementation, early indicators suggest that the program is gaining traction and has the potential to significantly benefit our students.

Middle States Visit

The Program Committee has been deeply engaged in discussions surrounding the Middle States accreditation process. Leading up to the site visits, there was significant attention given to ensuring that the Board was kept fully informed and up to date on all developments. The initial visit was a major milestone, and there was substantial preparation leading into the follow-up visit in September. We now anticipate receiving the final report in November, which we are all eagerly awaiting.

Throughout this process, the Board has been consistently well-informed and appreciates the transparency and thorough communication provided. We also want to acknowledge the extraordinary effort that has gone into this from all areas of the College. The level of work required—from detailed preparation and report writing to the coordination of the visits themselves—has been immense.

The Board sincerely thanks the faculty, administration, and staff for their dedication and hard work throughout this process. We recognize that the commitment involved goes far beyond what is visible to us, and we are truly grateful. We look forward to hearing the final outcome in November and remain optimistic and excited about what's to come.

Fall 2025 Enrollment

Dr. Miles has already provided a comprehensive enrollment update, but I'd like to add a few additional points of interest.

One notable statistic is that approximately 25% of our enrollment is online, which means the majority of our students are choosing to attend in person. We see this as a very positive sign—it suggests that students are actively seeking and benefiting from the full college experience on campus, which is encouraging for our community. We're also pleased to report continued growth in overall enrollment year over year, which is a strong indicator of the college's appeal and effectiveness.

In terms of specific programs, we're seeing exciting growth:

- Veterinary Technology has doubled in size since last year.
- Human Resources enrollment is up 30%.
- There are increases in Paralegal and Law programs.
- Accounting is up 18%, representing an addition of 100 new seats.

These numbers reflect strong student interest in programs that are aligned with workforce needs and career opportunities, and they speak to the hard work of our faculty and staff in delivering quality education.

There's also a noticeable energy and buzz on campus, which our student representative commented on as well. It's a great time for the college, and we want to extend our congratulations and gratitude to everyone who contributes to creating what we hope is an exceptional student experience.

Thank you all for your continued dedication.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Delduco reported:

In the past few weeks...

- Viking Days and Collaborations with DSI
- SGA welcomed students into the semester by engaging them directly at the Involvement Fair.
- SGA successfully partnered with the Radio Club and Westchester Events Board to deliver music, activities, and food at Blue and Gold Day. Facilitating

an opportunity for students to connect with each other and cultivating an environment to make new students feel welcomed.

- Partnered with extension centers for ‘mini blue and gold day’ to encourage involvement outside of the main campus
- SGA president representation for convocation

Looking ahead...

- Senate elections
- Updates to the bylaws are underway to clarify Senate roles.
- Senate elections will be held at the end of this month
- Career Services Initiative
- SGA identified Career Services as a key area for collaboration this year.
- Our initiative is to help amplify Career Services’ resources and share student success statistics more broadly, ensuring students connect academic life with professional growth.
- First step- contacting Gilane and getting up to date with what’s already being offered, current statistics, and collaborating with Gilane to see how we can help emphasize these services

Finance/Facilities

Trustee Williams reported:

The Finance committee had discussion on the following topics.

- Operating Forecast
- Capital Projects Update
- Contracts

Trustee Williams asked Acting Vice President Dawn Gillins to go over the capital projects and the forecast for the month ending August 31, 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>
26-8102-696	BDI Datalynk LLC	Provider agreement for sharing program with BDI Datalynk, LLC for non-credit courses in fiber optics.	1/1/26 – 12/31/27	\$87,000 Expense \$138,760 Revenue
26-9585-419	NACADA	NACADA will provide professional development workshops for academic counselors focused on best practices in advising adult learners.	10/6/25 – 10/2/25	\$12,760 Grant funded
26-8221-697	Environmental Leaders of Color (ELOC)	Year-round Saturday program serving 25 students per term in grades 9-12 in advanced Computer Science studies.	9/27/25 -6/6/26	\$2,916 Revenue
26-9608-698	Hanover Research Council LLC	Consulting services for research, facilitation and and strategic guidance in developing an actionable plan for the adult learner leadership initiative.	9/17/25 – 2/28/26	\$42,000 Grant funded
26-9110-418	J & R Tours	Provide bus transportation for WEOC students to visit SUNY colleges in upstate NY and historic black colleges and universities in Maryland and Washington, DC.	11/3/25 – 4/30/26	\$18,685

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

Trustee Nonna presented the following resolution

RESOLUTION: APPROVAL TO SETTLE THE LAWSUIT OF RICHARD FIELDS v. THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, et al.

WHEREAS, the lawsuit entitled Richard Fields v. The County of Westchester, Westchester Community College, et al., Index No. 50797/2016, is currently pending in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of Westchester; and

WHEREAS, the matter arises from allegations made against Westchester Community College and its officials following a transcript forgery investigation dating back to 2014, during which the plaintiff, a former assistant basketball coach, claimed defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and wrongful termination; and

WHEREAS, after consideration of the risks, costs, and uncertainties associated with litigation, a tentative settlement agreement has been reached in the total amount of

\$200,000.00 inclusive of attorney's fees, with the County of Westchester contributing \$180,000.00 and the Faculty Student Association contributing \$20,000.00; and

WHEREAS, approval of the settlement by the Westchester Community College Board of Trustees is required before final authorization by the Westchester County Board of Legislators;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of SUNY Westchester Community College hereby approves the settlement of the lawsuit Richard Fields v. The County of Westchester, Westchester Community College, et al., in the total amount of \$200,000.00, inclusive of attorney's fees, with contributions allocated as described above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the appropriate College and County officials are hereby authorized and directed to take all actions necessary or desirable to effectuate the settlement.

****Motion: Nonna/Williams – all in favor**

Public Comment

Trustee Mitchell invited members of the community for public comment.

No public comment

The Chairperson convened an Executive Session under provisions of Section 105 of Article 7 of the Public Officers Law to discuss personnel matters.

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

****Motion: Williams/Nonna – all in favor**

Motion out of Executive Session

****Motion: Raizes/Bikkal – all in favor**

Adjournment

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

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for October 15, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Yolanda Howell

Yolanda Howell, Secretary, Board of Trustees