



Ratified at December 10, 2025 meeting

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

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

Trustees Present:

Dr. LeRoy Mitchell, Chairperson, Dr. Norman Jacknis, Vice-Chairperson, Deborah Raizes, Vice Chairperson, Robin Bikkal, Esq., (via videoconference), Anabella Delduco, Susan Gerry, Esq., (via videoconference), Hon. John Nonna, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Sergio Serratto, Hon. Lyndon Williams, (via videoconference), 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, 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 Raizes to ratify the minutes of the October 15, 2025, Board meetings. The motion passed.

INFORMATION AND DECISION

A. President's Report

Dr. Belinda S. Miles reported:

- Our college community is officially in our Season of Giving. We've just wrapped up our annual UNHunger to END Hunger Food Drive with student clubs, various offices and departments, as well as college organizations working together to restock our Food Pantry so that our students and community have the resources to fight food insecurity and hunger. Even the SUNY Chancellor joined our efforts to replenish our Food Pantry with a generous donation while he was on campus last week.
- Sample of just a few events that have taken place since we last met:
 - Dedication & Ribbon-cutting: Health Sciences Simulation Center for Interprofessional Education (SIM Lab) – described as a “beacon of innovation.”
 - PTK Fall Induction Ceremony
 - PepsiCo Foundation Uplift Scholars
 - Fall Open House – welcomed 507 attendees – a 171% increase over Fall 2024.
 - SUNY Chancellor King – campus visit – Reconnect program.
 - Welcomed SUNY colleagues as well as members of the State Assembly Roundtable – Reconnect students.
 - Kudos to our women's volleyball team - after winning the Region 15 and North Atlantic District A Championships, the team earned a spot at the NJCAA Division III Women's Volleyball National Tournament in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Our student athletes gained tremendous experience and although they didn't take the title, they finished their season with an astounding 22-5 record and have earned a place in SUNY WCC history as the fourth team to make it to a National Championship.

Enrollment Management

- We are ending the fall semester strong and expect enrollment to hold for the 3-week Winter Session – classes starting December 22.

Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness Update:

- Fall 2025 undergraduate headcount has been finalized and submitted to SUNY. We are pleased to report a total headcount of 9,709, a 3.7% increase compared to Fall 2024

- We have 468 Reconnect students registered for Fall 2025. Top three majors among these students are:
 - Health Studies (AS)
 - Cybersecurity (AAS)
 - Health Information Technology (AAS)

Looking ahead:

- Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution
 - Monday, November 24. Volunteers are in place from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.
 - Distribution will occur here on campus as well as at our Yonkers, Mt. Vernon, Ossining, and Peekskill extensions.
 - We are grateful for continued support from our partners, including ShopRite, DeCicco & Sons, Feeding Westchester, the WCC Foundation and especially our campus volunteers and Student Involvement who work tirelessly to provide a memorable Thanksgiving meal for students and their loved ones.
- 2025 Completion Ceremony
 - Looking forward to celebrating students completing their degree or certificate programs at our December 18 Completion Ceremony, 4 pm – 6 pm – Physical Education Building.

B. Chair's Report

Trustee Mitchell reported:

Report on ACCT 2025 Congress

I attended the ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans from October 21–25, 2025. I arrived early for committee meetings, including the Trustees Advisory Board, where we discussed trustee education and ACCT's new badging and certificate system launching this winter through ACCT Connect. The first modules—such as Trusteeship 101 and Governance 101—will recognize trustees' professional development, whether completed in person or online.

I also participated in the pre-conference session *The Big Pivot*, which focused on maintaining compliance with federal mandates while continuing our mission of supporting student success, workforce preparation, and economic mobility. With the

Department of Education's shift away from DEI, ACCT has amended its bylaws to rename the DEI Committee as the Impact and Success Committee.

Throughout the conference, I attended sessions on legal issues affecting community colleges and on the growing role of Artificial Intelligence. Colleges are encouraged to embrace AI while adopting clear policies developed collaboratively by faculty, students, administration, and trustees. I've asked Trustee Norman Jacknis to help develop such a framework for us.

I also attended a session on Data-Informed Policy and Decision-Making, building on earlier work supported by ACCT and Achieving the Dream. Additionally, I served as Coordinator of Tellers during the Senate meeting, where four at-large board members were elected and two bylaw amendments passed. At the Northeast Regional Caucus, Deborah Briggs of SUNY Ulster was elected to the ACCT board, bringing New York's representation to three trustees.

C. Committees

Governance Committee

Trustee Gerry reported:

The Governance Committee had discussion on the following:

- Involuntary Leave of Absence for Students Policy
 - This policy is intended to address situations in which a student may pose a concern to the college—whether due to risks to their own health and safety, the health and safety of others, or behavior that significantly disrupts the campus environment. It replaces the current involuntary withdrawal policy and aligns with SUNY's 2024 adoption of the new Involuntary Leave of Absence Policy, which reflects national best practices. After reviewing SUNY's approach, we developed our own updated policy, which is now before the board for consideration. We will bring this policy forward for a vote at our December meeting.
- Other policies that may need some re-evaluation by the Board
- Presidential Evaluation
 - We discussed the annual presidential evaluation and how we might approach it in future years. We also talked about the possibility of

conducting a survey at some point to gauge the broader community's perception of the college, which could provide valuable insights.

Program Committee

Trustee Jacknis reported:

The Program Committee had discussion on the following:

- Discussion about AI uses
 - Some of our faculty are already using AI in various ways. Although we are still in the early stages of adoption on campus, there is understandable uncertainty—and even a sense of threat—about what these tools will mean for teaching and learning. What is clear is that AI will significantly influence education over the next few years, and we must think carefully about what we expect students to learn in an AI-enabled world. We also need to determine how we will measure that learning, how we will deliver instruction, and how we will adapt our practices accordingly. There has already been considerable discussion among faculty, and we have heard about some of the initial research taking place. One message that consistently emerges is the need for clear guidance—for faculty, students, and administrators—on how to use AI tools responsibly and effectively as they continue to evolve. We understand there is a proposal to formalize this work, potentially through a presidential task force, and we look forward to reviewing that. We were told that we can expect to see some of these initiatives begin to take shape over the next several months, which would be very encouraging. I could say more, but the key point is this: AI is one of the most important strategic issues facing the college, and we are pleased to see it being taken seriously. As a board, we are committed to supporting this effort in every way we can.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Delduco reported:

- E-board traveled to Syracuse to represent WCC at the SUNY Student Assembly
- Transition from Career Service initiative to food insecurity: more immediate need for Food Insecurity
- Currently working on facilitating relationships with organizations that would be willing to assist us in our initiative to help student support services
- 2021 Discrimination survey reevaluation from SGA Impact & Success Committee

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 October 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>
26-0130-739	Pleasantville Union Free School District	For academic and support services for the Pleasantville Union Free School District Lab	9/1/25 – 8/31/26	\$99,415.50 Revenue

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

Resolution: Capital Budget

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees of SUNY Westchester Community College hereby approves the 2026-2027 Capital Program.

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

Public Comment

Trustee Mitchell invited members of the community for public comment.

No public comment.

Comment from Trustee Robeson Smith

Chairman, before we go on, I just want to compliment the college the president for this scholarly journal of the Honors Program “Verdandi.”

In Norse mythology, Verdandi is one of the three Norns, powerful female beings who weave the fate of gods and mortals. She specifically represents the "present," while her sisters Urðr ("past") and Skuld ("future") represent the other two temporal states. Her name translates to "what is happening" or "becoming," and she is often associated with the act of weaving the present moment into the tapestry of destiny.

You can't always judge a book by its cover, but as soon as I glanced at the titles of these essays—written by first- and second-year students—I was immediately intrigued. I started reading a few, and if our meeting hadn't begun, I would still be absorbed in them. I'm genuinely looking forward to reading the rest. The range of topics—feminism, pacifism, and many others—is impressive, and I'm not sure I could have written on subjects like these at their age. The students deserve real praise; it's a remarkable publication.

From Dr. Belinda Miles

We must recognize Provost Vanessa Morest, Dean Robert Mangione, our Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Dean Pamela Pollard in our Library.

From Provost Vanessa Morest

I would also like to also commend the faculty leadership of the Program because they help guide that along with our students as well.

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: Nonna/Serratto – all in favor**

Motion out of Executive Session

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

Adjournment

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

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for December 10, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Yolanda Howell

Yolanda Howell
Secretary, Board of Trustees